

Sport, Not Savagery:
Resistance to Hockey Violence in BC Media, 1875-1911

by

Taylor McKee
BA, University of Calgary, 2012

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Departmental Member**Abstract**

A pervasive fiction has permeated a particular historical narrative regarding hockey's history in North America. This narrative suggests that violence is woven tightly into the fabric of hockey, due to the prevalence of violent incidents in the history of the game. Many authors, especially those writing for popular audiences, have argued that simply because violent incidents have been recorded throughout the history of hockey, violence must have been condoned in the past, and therefore should continue to be a part of the game. The purpose of this study is to examine the history of hockey violence in British Columbia by evaluating media reactions to violence, as published in newspapers across BC from 1875-1911. However, to describe the early years of organized hockey in Canada as simply being a less-evolved 'blood sport' is to marginalize the voices of those individuals that spoke out against violence during this time period.

This thesis evaluates the way newspaper reporters reacted to hockey violence during the first years of organized hockey in western Canada. To conduct this appraisal, specific attention is paid to the language used by reporters to characterize violent play, a lexicon shaped by sensationalist trends in Canadian media during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to conduct this study, I begin by detailing media response to hockey violence in central Canada, thereby establishing a comparative framework with BC. Having consulted the relevant

secondary literature and primary source materials, I argue that although violence, in various forms, has been a part of organized ice hockey since its earliest years, the desire to eradicate violence is just as old. By observing the treatment of violence in BC media from 1875-1911, this study supports the conclusion that violence in organized hockey is no older than attempts to eliminate violence from the game.

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Dedications

To my wonderful, supportive grandparents, parents, and sisters, I cannot thank you enough for helping me through this process.

To Brittany, for your patience, guidance, and love. You are my light.

Chapter I

Cracks in the Ice: An Introduction

Modern hockey¹ is approaching a crisis of conscience. The emerging science surrounding Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, coupled with a rash of ex-hockey player suicides in the summer of 2011 re-ignited a debate surrounding the extent of acceptable violence in present-day hockey, and more acutely, the viability of fighting in professional hockey. The crisis of conscience, as I perceive it, is represented by the unprecedented steps taken by professional hockey in North America to address the spectre of long-term effects of head trauma to its players. In doing so, the National Hockey League (NHL) has acknowledged the danger that concussions pose to players while simultaneously allowing fighting to remain a component of its professional brand.² The NHL has attempted to eliminate ‘targeting the head’ by suspending players who deliberately make contact with the head as the principle point of contact. However, fighting remains perfectly legal despite the fact that targeting the head is paramount to the act of fighting. When compared with other violent acts such as stick swinging and slashing opponents in the head, fighting is not considered to be an act of extreme violence. Historical accounts of a more violent time in hockey’s past are often used to justify excessive violence in the modern game. At present, the NHL is struggling to discern the acceptable amount of violence in today’s game, as it attempts to negotiate between a glorified past filled with instances of violence, and renewed calls for increased player safety.

A pervasive fiction has permeated a particular historical narrative regarding hockey’s history in North America. This narrative suggests that because violence has been present

¹ For the purposes of this thesis, the term “hockey” is used exclusively to refer to ice hockey.

² It is important to note that fighting has steadily decreased in the NHL over the past ten seasons. During the 2014-15 season, there were 331 total fights compared with 509 total fights in the 2008-09 season. See “NHL Fight Stats,” <http://www.hockeyfights.com/stats/>, accessed 10 February 2015.

throughout hockey's past, violence's place in present-day hockey is justified. Evidence of this narrative was plainly evident in western Canadian media during the first years of the twenty-first century. On March 8, 2004, Todd Bertuzzi of the Vancouver Canucks grabbed Steve Moore of the Colorado Avalanche from behind, struck him in the back of the head, and drove him to the ice, fracturing three vertebrae, lacerating his face, and giving Moore a significant concussion. Moore never again played professional hockey. On February 16, 2006, Moore filed a lawsuit against Bertuzzi, and several other Canucks personnel, seeking millions in damages caused by his shortened NHL career.

The event is viewed as one of the most extreme acts of violence in the NHL's history, which sparked a heated debate in Canadian media surrounding the place of violence in hockey. The Bertuzzi-Moore incident was shocking, however it should be noted that media response to extreme hockey violence often involves a largely fictionalized version of hockey's past and this incident was no exception. For example, in a 2004 editorial for *The Globe and Mail* addressing the aftermath of the Bertuzzi-Moore incident, Lawrence Scanlan maintains, "Truth is, now more, now less, it [hockey violence] has *always* been this way. And maybe, just maybe, that's why we like it. Maybe we like a little blood with our beer and our popcorn and our 'He shoots! He scores!'"³ Scanlan argues that the Bertuzzi incident was just another occurrence in a long list of violent episodes in hockey's history, and that to some extent the public accepts these violent acts as an intrinsic part of organized hockey.

Similarly, many authors, especially those writing for a popular audience, have argued that simply because violent incidents have been recorded throughout the history of hockey, violence

³ Lawrence Scanlan, "We Like Our Hockey With a Little Blood," *The Globe and Mail*, 11 March 2004, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/we-like-our-hockey-with-a-little-blood/article1346469/>, accessed 3 May 2015.

must have been condoned in the past and should continue to be in the future. For example, the *National Post* published an editorial by Jesse Kline in 2011 arguing that:

In Ancient Rome, upwards of 50,000 people would fill the Colosseum to watch men battle condemned criminals and wild beasts. But like many things in life, sports have become far more civilized ... Fighting has always been a part of hockey. There was a time when our great Canadian heroes took to the ice without helmets or body armour, and got into scraps far more brutal than what we are used to seeing today.⁴

Similarly, in 2013, Greg Oliver and Richard Kamchen explain the emergence of the NHL ‘enforcer’ compared with the early years of professional hockey in the following terms:

The game of those early days makes today’s hockey seem tame. The players were ruthless and brutal, many seemingly on a mission to stop the opposition by any means necessary. And often those means included a heavy stick, which they used with little or no restraint, chopping one another down with crushing blows that would earn them lifetime suspensions and perhaps even lengthy prison terms today. Then along came the enforcer, who would instil fear into opponents who previously had no qualms about belting smaller, more talented players into submission.⁵

During an April 16, 2012 episode of “Coach’s Corner” on *Hockey Night in Canada*, Don Cherry, one of the most prominent members of Canadian sports media, criticized the Swedish captain of the Vancouver Canucks, Henrik Sedin, for questioning apparent inconsistencies in disciplinary punishments handed out during the NHL playoffs.⁶ Cherry responded to Sedin by explaining that the NHL playoffs are full of examples of violent incidents and therefore his questions are due to a lack of understanding of hockey history:

[Sedin] doesn’t understand. This is war. This has been going on forever ... This stuff [hockey violence] has been going on in the playoffs for a long time and I know a lot of you people don’t realize it ... but this stuff has been going on forever, the 20’s, 30’s ...

⁴ Jesse Kline, “Don Cherry is Right, Fighting is an Essential Part of Hockey,” *National Post*, October 13, 2011, available <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/jesse-kline-don-cherry-is-right-fighting-is-an-essential-part-of-hockey>, accessed 6 May 2015.

⁵ Greg Oliver and Richard Kamchen, *Don’t Call Me Goon: Hockey’s Greatest Enforcers, Gunslingers, and Bad Boys* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2013), 7.

⁶ Sedin’s comments were largely taken out of context by Cherry. For the original story referenced by Cherry see: Sean Gordon and Eric Duhatschek, “Sending the Message: Bad Blood Spatters All Over the Stanley Cup Playoffs,” *The Globe and Mail*, 15 April 2012, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/hockey/bad-blood-spatters-all-over-the-stanley-cup-playoffs/article4100554/>, Accessed 11 July 2015.

all I am saying is quit whining that all this stuff hasn't been going on and it's not hockey. It's hockey the way it's played [sic] and if you don't like it, take up tennis.⁷

After Prime Minister Stephen Harper published a 2013 book on hockey history, entitled *A Great Game: The Forgotten Leafs and the Rise of Professional Hockey*, he was asked about the place of violence in present-day hockey.⁸ In a *Toronto Star* report, Harper maintained:

'I'm not trying to be nonchalant about some of these incidents, which I think are of concern to any parent watching this and seeing examples set and worrying about what could happen to their own boys and girls when they step on the ice,' Harper said ... 'That all said, what we all have to realize is that this debate is as old as the game itself.' ... Matters are actually less rough today, said the prime minister, who called the level of violence in pre-war hockey 'quite shocking.'⁹

These authors reference incidences of violence during the early days of organized hockey in Canada. Harper notes that violence during the early years of hockey would be "quite shocking," and that today's violence would pale in comparison. In a drastic historical leap, Kline explicitly compared violence in modern hockey to the violence seen in Ancient Rome, and appeared comfortable drawing comparisons between hockey players and ancient Gladiators. Oliver and Kamchen characterize the history of hockey as brutal and seemingly lawless. In present-day hockey, however, acts of extreme violence might result in "lifetime suspensions and lengthy prison terms."¹⁰ Oliver and Kamchen argue that hockey violence was extreme during hockey's early years and that such acts as players are prevented when players are permitted to seek retribution through fighting. To describe hockey's early years as a less-evolved blood sport is to marginalize the voices of those that spoke out against violence during the early years of

⁷ Transcribed from "Don Cherry on Reporters," YouTube Video, 4:34, from "Coach's Corner" broadcast by CBC on April 16 2012, posted by TheBadQuality on September 21, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDxilzh-DuU>

⁸ Stephen J. Harper, *The Great Game: The Forgotten Leafs and the Rise of Professional Hockey* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

⁹ Bruce Cheadle, "Hockey Violence Has Always Been Controversial, Harper Points Out," *Toronto Star*, 8 October 2013, http://www.thestar.com/sports/hockey/2013/10/08/hockey_violence_has_always_been_controversial_stephen_harper_points_out.html. Accessed 14 June 2015.

¹⁰ Oliver and Kamchen, *Don't Call Me Goon*, 7.

organized hockey in Canada. The aforementioned authors are representative of an undercurrent of support for modern hockey violence, which has arguably led to a present-day NHL crisis. These authors employed historical arguments to explain and legitimize violence in contemporary hockey by constructing an imagined past on which to project their conceptions of acceptable hockey violence today.

Oliver and Kamchen, Harper, and Kline essentially argue that because hockey's history is violent (and perhaps even more extreme than today's game) the continued existence of violence in the game can be accepted as a type of heirloom from hockey's early years. Furthermore, these authors suggest that hockey's past represents an extreme version of hockey violence that would abhor and astound today's more moderate public.¹¹ For example, Oliver and Kamchen argue that the arrival of "the enforcer" in the middle of the twentieth century put an end to extreme acts of violence in the game. Putting aside the notion that "enforcers" allegedly ended extreme hockey violence, Oliver and Kamchen make no mention of the efforts that existed to curb extreme violence in the game long before the mid-twentieth century.¹² Additionally, this type of argument does not consider how the public received violence during these early years. As such, hockey enthusiasts from these years are relegated to the role of, at the most extreme, complicit supporters, and at the mildest, acquiescent non-participants.

The Goal Line: Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the history of hockey violence in British Columbia by evaluating media reactions to violence, as published in newspapers across BC from 1875-1911. This study evaluates the way newspaper reporters reacted to hockey violence during these early years of organized hockey in western Canada. To conduct this appraisal, specific

¹¹ Ibid; Kline, "Don Cherry is Right," *National Post*.

¹² Oliver and Kamchen, *Don't Call Me Goon*, 7.

attention is paid to the language used by reporters to characterize violent play, a lexicon shaped by sensationalist trends in Canadian media during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to conduct this study, I begin by detailing media response to hockey violence in central Canada, thereby establishing a comparative framework with BC. Having consulted the relevant literature and source materials, I argue that just as violence, in various forms, has been a part of organized ice hockey since its earliest years, so has the desire to eradicate violence. By observing the treatment of violence in BC media from 1875-1911, this study supports the conclusion that violence in organized hockey is no older than attempts to eliminate violence from the game.

Contextualizing Hockey Violence: Justification for the Study

Hockey's historiographic record is rich in detail on hockey in central Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since Canadian organized hockey was essentially created in Montreal during the late nineteenth century, it follows that the literature about the history of hockey in central Canada would be richer than that of western Canada. However, documentary records indicate that hockey in some form was played as far west as the Fraser Valley as early as the 1860s, and that organized hockey was taking place in what was considered to be the Colony of British Columbia.¹³ The goal of this project is to contribute to a sparse historiography regarding the history of organized hockey in western Canada. Much of this literature focuses on the professional game,¹⁴ or simply chronicles past games played between

¹³ British Columbia became Canada's sixth province on July 20, 1871. Prior to joining Confederation, this region was known as the Colony of British Columbia. See Rev. John Sheepshanks and Rev. D. Wallace Duthie, *A Bishop in the Rough* (New York: E.P Dutton and Company, 1909), 56-57.

¹⁴ See John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Craig H. Bowlsby, *Empire of Ice: The Rise and Fall of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, 1911-1926*, (Vancouver: Knights of Winter Press, 2012); Steven Sandor, *The Battle of Alberta: A Century of Hockey's Greatest Rivalry* (Surrey: Heritage House, 2005).

western Canadian teams, thus offering little or no critical insight.¹⁵ Furthermore, there are no sources available that focus specifically on the question of violence during these early years of organized hockey in western Canada. The absence of literature on hockey violence from 1875-1911 presents a unique opportunity because much of the discourse surrounding hockey is inextricably linked to the history of hockey violence. The goal of this project is to examine the way violence was received in the westernmost regions of Canada through the evaluation of media sources from towns in British Columbia, notably Victoria, Vancouver, and Kootenay towns from 1875 to 1911.

Back-Checking: A Survey of the Literature

There is a significant amount of literature written on the topic of violence in Canadian sport, and many sources specifically reference the history of hockey violence. When surveying relevant literature, it was important to broaden the scope of research beyond exclusively hockey. In doing so, I sought to include theorists and scholars who provided valuable insight into the nature of violence in various Canadian sports and, at times, the media reactions to that violence. In sources where hockey is the primary topic for discussion, various authors incorporate historical overviews of the sport's long history of violence, which frame present-day debates surrounding violence in hockey. Some of these sources contain thoroughly researched investigations of specific research questions, while others rely on caricature and cliché. In many regards, the methodological choices made by these authors significantly shaped the research directions of this study. Both the scholarly and popular literature are valuable as the former provides an empirical framework, and the latter imports critical analysis.

¹⁵ See William M. McLennan, *Sport in Early Calgary: An Account of the Sports, Games, Personalities, Facilities, and Recreation of the Pioneers in the Early Calgary Area* (Calgary: Fort Brisebois, 1983); Craig H. Bowsby, *The Knights of Winter: B.C Hockey 1895-1911* (Vancouver: Knights of Winter, 2006); Gary W. Zeman, *Alberta on Ice* (Edmonton: Westweb Press, 1986).

One approach used when writing about violence in hockey involves the use of present-day circumstances to frame the writer's examination of the past. Despite the fact that many of these authors endeavoured to historicize their arguments, generally speaking, these sources were not particularly useful when trying to trace the evidential support for their arguments. For instance, Lawrence Scanlan's *Grace Under Fire: The State of Our Sweet and Savage Game* (2002) used media sources, including newspaper reports, to reference the particularly bloody hockey season of 1905, when a player named Allan Loney was killed on the ice as the result of a stick-swinging incident.¹⁶ Similarly, Adam Proteau's *Fighting the Good Fight: Why On-Ice Violence is Killing Hockey* (2011) cites historical examples of hockey violence. In doing so, Proteau places emphasis on the influence of past violence on the modern NHL, and seemingly overlooks the historical context in which these events occurred.¹⁷ Furthermore, Proteau does not fixate on media reaction to hockey violence in the same way that Scanlan focuses on such reactions. Written for primarily popular readerships, Scanlan and Proteau employ evocative language and focus their discussions on modern hockey. Nonetheless, the works of both these authors contain useful information about the reception to, and the abhorrence of, violence during the early days of organized hockey in Canada.

One characteristic of sources written by academic historians, as opposed to those written by journalists or hobbyists, is the careful detailing of evidence in the footnotes. It is not always easy to find scholarly sources featuring professional standards of documentation. Perhaps the most valuable secondary source on the subject of violence in hockey is Stacy Lorenz's 2012 doctoral dissertation entitled, "Manhood, Rivalry, and the Creation of a Canadian 'Hockey

¹⁶ Lawrence Scanlan, *Grace Under Fire: The State of our Sweet and Savage Game*, (Toronto: Penguin, 2002), 54-56.

¹⁷ Adam Proteau, *Fighting the Good Fight: Why On-Ice Violence in Killing Hockey*, (Toronto: Wiley and Sons, 2011), 32-45.

World': Media Coverage of Early Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1894-1907."¹⁸ In this study, Lorenz investigates a research question that is very similar to the goal of this study, however, he focuses specifically on Stanley Cup challenges. In the fourth chapter titled "Hockey Violence, and Masculinity," Lorenz details numerous newspaper accounts of violence in early twentieth century hockey games from across Canada, which greatly informed my own examination of BC newsprint sources in my fourth chapter.

In order to properly define the terms of this study, it was crucial that a definition of violence be established, and that implications for incidents of violence be contextualized within late nineteenth and early twentieth century conceptions of gender. In their article, "Social Class and Gender: Intersections in Sport and Physical Activity," Peter Donnelly and Jean Harvey further describe relationships between class and violence in Canadian sport with some specific reference to hockey.¹⁹ Arguments presented by Donnelly and Harvey inform the second chapter of this study, which discusses relationships between social class and early amateur hockey. Donnelly and Harvey contrast middle and working class conceptualizations of acceptable violence in hockey as well as the relationship between gender and violence,²⁰ providing a research focus and methodological approach that greatly informed this study on violence in the early years of hockey.

Gender and masculinity are concepts that are inextricably linked to the history of Canadian hockey violence. Bruce Kidd, a former Olympic athlete and reputed sport historian, addresses notions of gender and masculinity in many texts on the history of sport in Canada. In

¹⁸ Stacy Lyle Lorenz, "Manhood, Rivalry, and the Creation of a Canadian 'Hockey World': Media Coverage of Early Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1894-1907" (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 2012).

¹⁹ Peter Donnelly and Jean Harvey, "Social Class and Gender: Intersections in Sport and Physical Activity," in *Sport and Gender in Canada*, ed. Kevin Young and Philip White (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2007), 95-110.

²⁰ Ibid.

1972, Kidd and John Macfarlane published one of first monographs on hockey, entitled *The Death of Hockey*.²¹ In this work, Kidd and MacFarlane provide heavy-handed critiques of the perceived creed that permeated professional hockey in the 1960s and 1970s. Kidd and MacFarlane include several notable passages that provide insight into their understanding of the inter-relationship between hockey and masculinity, which are common in the discourse that surrounds the history of hockey:

A boy learns more than stickhandling at the community arena. Hockey, as a unique expression of our culture, is also a vessel for its values, passing them from father-to-son from one generation to the next. In the corners and along the boards, in dressing rooms and on the bench, in the clash of body against body ... a boy learns our attitudes towards team play, fair play and dirty play, towards winning and losing, tolerance and prejudice, success and failure ... It is through hockey that a Canadian boy first perceives his geographic horizons.²²

The language used by Kidd and MacFarlane is significant because of its gendered nature. The wording selected by the authors is gendered and implicitly addresses aspects of masculinity. The authors describe hockey as experienced by an average “Canadian boy,” however, they provide minimal insight into what this boy looks like, where he lives, or the background of his parents and families. Kidd and MacFarlane consistently use the term “our” when referring to normative values, including “prejudices” or “attitudes.”²³ This naturally assumes that readers are not only Canadian, but also share the writers’ beliefs about universal Canadian attitudes. This is, of course, a significant oversimplification of the Canadian experiences, and thus weakens the arguments. Nonetheless, this broad-based and over-generalized way of describing hockey in Canada is a useful point of departure when examining the historiography of Canadian hockey history. Later scholarship on the history of hockey in Canada, some produced by Kidd, offers more analytical clarity and critical insight.

²¹ Bruce Kidd and John MacFarlane, *The Death of Hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972).

²² Kidd and MacFarlane, *The Death of Hockey*, 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5-14.

One source that problematizes Kidd and MacFarlane's notion of a singular Canadian experience takes a socioeconomic approach to the history of sport in Canada. Canadian historian S.F Wise's 1989 article on sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "Sport and Class in Ontario and Quebec," considers a myriad of sports including cricket, basketball, snowshoeing, gymnastics, football, soccer, curling, and hockey. Wise notes the variance in socioeconomic background for the players and patrons of each sport and even links notions of masculinity to class-conscious conceptions of gentlemanly codes of conduct. As Wise maintains, "The relationship of sport to national athletic traditions, to social class and to certain dominant ideas centring upon the code of the gentleman and the concept of manliness seems plain enough, although each of these matters warrants further investigation."²⁴ Wise's approach is historically rigorous, as it draws on the work of several other scholars in relevant fields. Wise does not make broad assumptions about the nature of Canadian athletes, but rather offers a number of different examples of sports that were largely played by members of the various classes.²⁵ Wise highlights the gentlemanly code of conduct and its relationship to acceptable masculinity in numerous sports. For example, Wise notes that football players were "expected to exhibit qualities of manliness, courage, and gentlemanly behaviour in the most trying conditions."²⁶ Wise further argues that even in a game that required physical violence, a properly masculine player would adhere to the rules of the game and behave appropriately. This example could certainly be extended to hockey.

While characterizing the nature of violence in Canadian hockey, it is also important to discuss the nature of masculinity and 'manliness' in sport during the late nineteenth and early

²⁴ S.F Wise, "Sport and Class in Ontario and Quebec," in *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings*, ed. Morris Mott (Toronto: Pitman, 1989), 126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 120-28

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

twentieth centuries. Accordingly, it was necessary to consult source materials outside of the historiography of hockey, including sources written about other Canadian sports. While hockey players were subject to distinct cultural expectations regarding manliness and masculinity, similar examples are also present in other Canadian sports. For example, lacrosse is another sport with a history of institutionally condoned violence. Gillian Poulter's 2013 analysis of lacrosse in nineteenth century Montreal contextualizes the concept of masculinity within a continuum of physical aggression. Masculine expectations in the sport of lacrosse in nineteenth century Montreal, as described by Poulter, included both physical violence and generally accepted codes of conduct for gentlemen.²⁷ John Matthew Barlow's 2009 article entitled, "Scientific Aggression: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901" discusses acceptable codes of masculine conduct (similar to Poulter's work on lacrosse) in hockey late nineteenth century Montreal. Barlow directly references spectatorship of lacrosse as a major influence on conceptions of "masculinity" and "manliness" in the sport of hockey.²⁸ Barlow references the work of Gail Bederman (1996) in order to delineate an explicit distinction between masculinity (a term that was not used colloquially in the late nineteenth century) and manliness. Bederman argues that it was "manliness" and not masculinity that a man possessed, or didn't possess, as the two terms carried different connotations at this time. For Bederman, the term "manliness" carried with it a moral dimension that "masculinity" did not; "manliness" meant adhering to a code of conduct that Victorian society valued in all men.²⁹ This is an important distinction that is recognized by Bederman because the two concepts are

²⁷ Gillian Poulter, "Embodying Nation: Indigenous Sports in Montreal 1860-1885," in *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 85.

²⁸ John Matthew Barlow, "Scientific Aggression: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901," in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 39.

²⁹ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilisation: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 15-17.

sometimes used interchangeably or without explanation. For instance, Wise employs the term manliness without explaining his word choice or defining the term. Barlow also highlights an apparent emphasis on “scientific” play in the nineteenth century, which Poulter also includes in her work. However, Barlow links the need for organized, scientific play to class, and maintains, “This middle-class masculinity promoted notions of respectability and ... fair play, with less of an emphasis on winning than on the joy of the sport itself, especially in the 1860s and 1870s.”³⁰ Barlow refers to the scientific style of lacrosse teams as being representative of “middle class masculinity” during this period, which is a class-based distinction that was not underscored by Poulter.

In some ways, the notion of masculinity, as entrenched within the history of Canadian hockey, parallels Judith Butler’s notion of gender performativity. Generally speaking, Butler contends that discrete gender norms are only as true as their performance is convincing.³¹ Middle class masculinity, as described by Barlow, certainly had implications for Butler’s performative masculinity as well. Barlow notes that the print media played a significant role in growing the sport of hockey in Montreal. By extension, the press was responsible for spreading normative notions of masculinity that existed within hockey frameworks at this time, including what Barlow describes as ‘middle class masculinity’. For example, Barlow quotes a *Montreal Gazette* article that criticized the Montreal Shamrocks players for focusing on individual goals at the expense of team play.³² This is an important aspect of the article, as Barlow strengthened his notion of middle class masculinity with evidence from the print media. The press outwardly endorsed the notion that gentlemanly hockey players focused equally - if not more in some cases

³⁰ Barlow, “Scientific Aggression,” 39-40.

³¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179.

³² Barlow, “Scientific Aggression,” 60.

- on the style of play rather than on winning or losing. The Montreal Shamrocks were evaluated not only on the results on the ice but also on their adherence to notions of gentlemanly play. Barlow implicitly underscores a form of performative masculinity by detailing how games were recounted in the local print media.³³ Furthermore, as Barlow and Poulter demonstrate, the print media played (and perhaps continue to play) a very important role in constructing and reinforcing notions of masculinity as well as in passing such messages on to mass audiences.

Another significant aspect of Barlow's work is his emphasis on the nationality of hockey and lacrosse teams playing in Montreal at the end of the nineteenth century. In focusing on the Montreal Shamrock Hockey Club, Barlow explores the club's conscious desire to maintain its "Irishness" throughout its history.³⁴ For Barlow, Irishness and manliness were interconnected qualities, as many players identified toughness and courage as traits that represented an idealized Irish gentleman. Barlow also focuses on the national and political identities of Shamrock players who were loyal to both Canada and Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁵ Barlow's understanding of masculinity and manliness is unique among other source material because he connected the idea of manliness to the players' politics, and to contemporary political struggles at this time.

British Columbia has a long and rich hockey history, boasting some of the most colourful and popular characters during the early years of organized hockey in Canada. A noteworthy source that details the history of hockey on Canada's west coast is Craig H. Bowsby's 2012 book entitled, *Empire of Ice: The Rise and Fall of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, 1911-*

³³ The Montreal Shamrocks went on to become Stanley Cup champions in 1899 and 1900

³⁴ Ibid., 42-45.

³⁵ Ibid., 67.

1926.³⁶ This source provides valuable insight into the emergence of a hockey culture in BC, which ultimately culminates with the establishment of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association (PCHA) in 1911. This source not only chronicles the history of the PCHA, but also details hockey's arrival in BC, which was largely facilitated by Lester and Frank Patrick. Bowsby's book details the history of the Patrick family, and explains how they became so important to BC's hockey history. This source is a meticulously constructed, year-by-year account of the PCHA, and provides exceptional detail regarding the history of the league, as well as its players, owners, and teams.

Of particular significance to this study are the detailed accounts of violent incidences that are recorded in *Empire of Ice*. For example, in a chapter titled "The Bloodiest Battle in Toronto," Bowsby provides an account of a particularly hostile Stanley Cup final between the Vancouver Millionaires and the Toronto Arenas in 1918.³⁷ Bowsby references a seeming distaste that the Vancouver players had for the nature of violence they experienced while playing against Toronto. Furthermore, Bowsby includes various quotes from Frank Patrick, as recorded in the *Vancouver Province*, expressing disgust with the rough play and acts of violence committed by both sides in the Stanley Cup final.³⁸ Curiously, the referee of that game, Art Ross (a former player in the PCHA), believed that the Vancouver players were at risk during the 1918 Stanley Cup final. As Ross explains, "The Blues [Arenas] gave a most brutal exhibition, and unless the Western club gets protection from the referees, they will all be killed."³⁹ Ross' comments are significant in that the referee believed the game to be out of control. As demonstrated by these sources, during the early years of hockey in Canada, a pattern of resistance to hockey violence

³⁶ Craig H. Bowsby, *Empire of Ice: The Rise and Fall of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, 1911-1926* (Vancouver: Knights of Winter Publishing, 2012).

³⁷ The Toronto Arenas were champions of a rival North American league called the National Hockey Association.

³⁸ Bowsby, *Empire of Ice*, 133-34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

emerged. This resistance certainly persists into the twenty-first century. Furthermore, there appears to be a complex east/west dichotomy, as evidenced in this game, and how western newspapers seemingly blamed Toronto team for excessive violence.

The topic of media bias and the need to create heroes and villains is also an important aspect of this study, as is the distinction between differing approaches to violence in diverse regions of Canada. As such, this study questions whether or not the game itself was different on the west coast from other places in Canada, in terms of the threshold of acceptable violence, and whether local media simply empathized with the readership of the west coast. In either case, *Empire of Ice* has helped establish pertinent questions surrounding the degree of violence, as well as resistance to such violence during the early years of hockey on the west coast. Additionally, *Empire of Ice* provides useful references to reports from newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria, which directed the researcher to valuable and relevant primary and secondary source materials.

Although there are many sources written about the Patrick brothers and their influence on hockey history on the west coast, few sources situate these individuals within the historical context of western Canadian history. John Chi-Kit Wong's work is an exception, effectively contextualizing the rise of hockey on the west coast within regional history. In an article entitled, "Boomtown Hockey: The Vancouver Millionaires," Wong divides the history of the Vancouver Millionaires into smaller subsections, which address larger contextual issues relating to sport in western Canada.⁴⁰ For example, in one subsection, titled "Economic Development, Class, and the Creation of Leisure Culture - Vancouver before 1911," Wong methodically places hockey within larger social, political, and economic contexts, which allows readers to view sport as

⁴⁰ John Chi-Kit Wong, "Boomtown Hockey: The Vancouver Millionaires," in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 223-257.

subject to, and an expression of, these conditions.⁴¹ Within a section that addresses the development of leisure culture in Vancouver, Wong explains that the emergence of the “business of leisure,” due in large part to an emerging middle class, helped create the necessary conditions for hockey to survive on the west coast.⁴² Wong’s chapter within this edited collection is an especially valuable source on the social context in which hockey was established on the west coast. While Wong’s essay does not specifically address instances of violence, it does situate hockey within a larger social milieu during the early part of the twentieth century. Accordingly, Wong’s essay compliments Bowsby’s *Empire of Ice*, as the latter employs a more concise approach to the history of hockey on the west coast. Considered together, these two sources meticulously detail the history of hockey within BC, providing an invaluable foundation to the study of hockey violence during the early years of hockey in the province.

Another important source dedicated to late nineteenth-century hockey in BC is Bowsby’s 2006 monograph entitled, *The Knights of Winter: The History of British Columbia Hockey from 1895 to 1911*.⁴³ Similar to *Empire of Ice*, *The Knights of Winter* omits scholarly sources, but contains a lengthy bibliography, which details where the author obtained his evidence. Bowsby catalogues every team that played in BC between 1895 and 1911, preserving what he considers to be a history that was in danger of going extinct. More important, he documents examples of objections to violence occurring in games throughout BC.⁴⁴ For example, in chronicling a 1905 game between Fernie and Rossland, he references a *Rossland Miner* article that was titled, “Hockey for Blood.”⁴⁵ This type of source material is exceptionally

⁴¹ Ibid., 224.

⁴² Ibid., 233-34.

⁴³ Craig H. Bowsby, *The Knights of Winter: The History of British Columbia Hockey from 1895-1911* (Vancouver: Granville Island Publishing, 2006).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 157.

valuable to this study, as it identifies a seeming rejection of violence in hockey during this period, particularly in the media.

Brian MacFarlane's 1973, *The Story of the National Hockey League: An Intimate History of Hockey's Most Dramatic Half Century*, provides a detailed history of the early years of the National Hockey Association, a rival league to the PCHA.⁴⁶ This book seemingly asserts that hockey contained violence *a priori* and that it was an accepted part of the sport. This study highlights such assumptions about violence in Canadian hockey history by problematizing the notion that violence and hockey have evolved concurrently and that they are inextricably linked due to an historic connection. In the introduction of *The Story of the National Hockey League*, MacFarlane claims that fans were drawn to the game because of the violence they observed, as well as the violence that would occur among spectators. As MacFarlane explains, "The post-game battles between rival factions in local bars were often far more spectacular than the donnybrooks on the ice."⁴⁷ MacFarlane asks his readers to accept his assumptions about audience expectations of violence in hockey during this period, despite evidence to the contrary. These kinds of statements are found throughout many different sources in the historiography of hockey in Canada. As such, they are passive acknowledgments of the violent nature of hockey that do not question audience reactions to violence or an apparent distaste for this violence from those who watched or reported on the games. In responding to MacFarlane's argument, and others like it, this study produces a historically-contextualized reading and examination of newsprint sources from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which counter claims that violence always has been an accepted feature of hockey.

⁴⁶ Brian MacFarlane, *The Story of the National Hockey League: An Intimate History of Hockey's Most Dramatic Half Century* (New York: Scribner's, 1973).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, ix.

The Boundaries of Play: Limitations and Delimitations

The years chosen for this study are 1875 to 1911, a period that represents the earliest years of organized hockey across Canada. This project aims to study the history of violence, specifically media reactions to such violence, from the inception of organized hockey in BC. Accordingly, it is important to establish what exactly is meant by the term “organized” hockey and to identify the first instance of organized hockey in Canada. The year 1875 was chosen because it is the year James Creighton’s hockey game was played at the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. According to Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, this particular game represents the genesis of organized hockey. As far as addressing the precise origins of hockey in North America, Gruneau and Whitson rightly asserted that there is little point in trying to identify which ancient game is the closest relative to the modern conception of hockey if one is attempting to analyze the modern game itself.⁴⁸ Consequently, the literature surrounding the evolution of hockey, and its distinction from other folk games, is not a focus of this project as it is not of central importance to the discussion of media reaction to violence during the early years of organized hockey.

Although Creighton’s 1875 game takes place in Montreal, and not western Canada, it is still the best entry point for the study of organized hockey in British Columbia. As Gruneau and Whitson aptly argue, “sport historians are virtually unanimous in their recognition that hockey’s organizational roots, early written rules, and formally regulated codes of conduct first took hold in Montreal in the 1870s.”⁴⁹ Hockey similar to Creighton’s game, complete with the written rules and codes of conduct, became the game emulated on outdoor and indoor rinks all over Canada.

⁴⁸ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 37.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Creighton's game is a useful benchmark for establishing the historical starting point for organized hockey and, thus, 1875 serves as the starting point for this study.

The year 1911 represents the beginning of a new age of hockey in western Canada, as Lester and Frank Patrick established the Pacific Coast Hockey Association (PCHA) at this time. With the creation of the PCHA, organized hockey underwent a paradigm shift in the western regions, thereby moving towards a professional game. Prior to the PCHA, organized hockey was essentially absent from coastal BC despite being widely played in the BC interior. The PCHA was one of the most sophisticated and competitive hockey leagues in North America, and essentially made the Pacific Northwest a hockey hotbed for decades to come. However, the PCHA featured many innovations that distanced itself from the kind of hockey that had been played throughout Canada in the previous four decades. As such, the PCHA introduced new rules concerning the goal crease, forward passes, numbered hockey sweaters, and goalie positioning. These changes became mainstays of modern hockey. The Patrick brothers aided hockey's rapid expansion in western Canada, building large, opulent indoor arenas in Victoria and Vancouver for their teams. Due to the rule changes and indoor arena construction, the arrival of the PCHA saw hockey in western Canada evolve from a game that was exported from Montreal's Victoria Skating Rink and into a sport more closely aligned to the game of hockey we know today. The stated goal of this project is to analyze violence during the earliest years of organized hockey in British Columbia, and for this reason, I have chosen to end the study in 1911 - the year the PCHA was created.

The debate on amateurism was one of the most important issues facing sport in Canada during late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The PCHA was a strictly professional league and its arrival on the west coast drastically shifted the paradigm of organized hockey, thereby

bringing the game into professional realms. This project briefly addresses the question of amateurism versus professionalism, as is examined by distinguished sport historians such as Bruce Kidd and John Chi-Kit Wong.⁵⁰ In order to maintain the focus of the study on violence in organized hockey of any kind, it is important to not delve too deeply into the discussion of amateurism versus professionalism. For the purposes of this project, studying the delineation between amateurism and professionalism is not as important as evaluating media reaction to violence from any type of organized hockey. However, the amateur and professional debate informed the way that the public conceptualized acceptable violence and, when relevant, this distinction will be addressed in the study. Consequently, the definition of organized hockey, as presented by Gruneau and Whitson, includes amateur and professional hockey, and, is used throughout this study.

This focus of this study is limited to British Columbia as this provides specific historical and geographical contexts. There are two primary reasons why BC was chosen as the region for study. First, due to the nature of this project, I was limited financially and geographically in my ability to access archives outside of western Canada. Second, choosing this region is important as this study examines reactions to hockey violence in a region of Canada that does not have significant scholarship written on this subject matter. As such, evaluating similarities and differences between hockey violence in central and western Canada can only be accomplished if exhaustive research has been conducted in both regions. Some source materials examined in this study were written before BC joined Confederation in 1871. Therefore, when relevant, the project will refer to this as the “western region” in order to acknowledge the changing political landscape in BC prior to 1871.

⁵⁰ See Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996).

Violence and the Public's Gaze: Methodological Choices

Considering that the primary goal of this project is to evaluate the way in which violence was perceived during the early years of organized hockey in the western regions of Canada, it is important to outline methodological choices. In order to measure public response to violence in early hockey, a particular set of relevant primary sources were identified and contextualized. The primary source materials chosen for this project are late nineteenth and early twentieth century newspapers from British Columbia. The newspapers selected for this study include: *The British Colonist*, *British Columbian*, *The Daily Colonist*, *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, *Toronto Daily Mail*, *Nelson Tribune*, *The Miner*, *Mining Review*, *Sandon Paystreak*, *Boundary Creek Times*, *The Economist*, *Fernie Ledger*, and *Atlin Claim*. These newspapers were selected because they provide examples of responses to hockey violence across Canada while focusing specifically on towns in BC. Newspapers from this period were subject to the changing landscape of the newsprint media in North America towards sensationalist content. Gruneau and Whitson posited that newspapers changed during the late nineteenth century due to the culmination of a greater appreciation for the role of the “common man” in the emerging market economy.⁵¹ In central Canada, newspapers often used sensationalism to describe violence in hockey games. Much like the rules of the game itself, newspaper sensationalism also spread to western Canada.

As hockey spread, one of the most marked characteristics of sensationalized sports writing was the use of melodramatic tropes when describing hockey violence. As such, writers

⁵¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 80-81.

expressed abhorrence towards the extreme acts of violence that was seen in early hockey games, and even warned audiences about what they might see if they attended games. Newspaper articles that referenced violence at the turn of the twentieth century are an important part of understanding the way that violence was perceived by the public as “[t]he Canadian news media began to play a much more direct and important role in narrating and popularizing high-level sport than in the past.”⁵² In so far as newspapers were popularizing and narrating, they were also arbiters of social acceptability. For instance, when articles discussed violence from opposing teams, either positively or negatively, the readership was inculcated with attitudes and biases towards teams. Furthermore, articles written about games between premiere hockey clubs from central Canada often appeared in western Canadian newspapers. As such, while the sport of hockey was in its nascence, newspaper reporting from central Canada significantly influenced how western Canadians understood the game. Violence proved to not only be a prominent aspect of the game, but also an important topic in newspaper reporting. Additionally, the vast majority of those who read about these games, even those played in the western regions, were beholden to the interpretation of journalists. The fact that these articles were subjective interpretations of events, and not simply an impartial record, provides a necessary precondition and limitation of the documentary record of newsprint.

The archives used when selecting primary source materials were from different locations across British Columbia. One secondary source that was valuable in identifying relevant games was Bowsby’s *The Knights of Winter: Hockey in British Columbia, 1896-1911*. Bowsby’s manuscript chronicles a vast number of games played in BC during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This source provides a number of excellent suggestions for further study as it

⁵² Ibid, 85.

helped focus the search criteria when evaluating the digital databases from numerous small towns in BC. An example of one of these digital databases is the British Columbia Historical Newspapers Collection, which is curated through the University of British Columbia. This database was an invaluable resource in obtaining source materials from smaller towns in British Columbia as it allowed individual newspapers to be searched by keywords. For example, this database includes newspapers from gold rush towns that have long been abandoned. Additionally, the University of Victoria has digitized *The British Colonist* collection, which contained various references to hockey games played in Victoria as well as games played throughout British Columbia (as well as other regions throughout Canada). In keeping with the stated goal of this study, only primary sources that reference violence in hockey were included in order to limit the sample of materials collected.

While the focus of the project is specifically limited to BC there were some methodological choices that limited the focus even further within the province. On the west coast of BC, weather conditions made outdoor ice and organized hockey nearly impossible. Due to these restrictions, the concentration of the project shifted east toward the Kootenay region, which had a thriving hockey community during these years. The Kootenay region refers to a southeast portion of present-day British Columbia. This territory's western border is marked by "The Boundary Territory,"⁵³ which includes towns such as Greenwood and Sandon, and extends to the eastern limits of the modern day border between BC and Alberta. Due to the climate of the Kootenay region, which was far more hospitable to outdoor hockey, the local media produced a far greater quantity of media sources, many of which discussed hockey violence. For the

⁵³ For a more detailed history of "The Boundary Territory" consult: "History Still Standing: A Guide to Historical Mine Sites of the Boundary Country," http://www.empr.gov.bc.ca/Mining/Geoscience/EducationalResources/Documents/Historical_Mine_Sites.pdf, accessed 3 May 2015.

purposes of brevity, only a select number of sources were chosen from Kootenay newspapers between 1875 and 1911. The articles selected for this study provide a chronological overview of reactions to hockey violence in the Kootenay region during this period.

Changing on the Fly: Organization of the Study

In an attempt to examine the history of hockey violence in British Columbia, as published in newspapers across BC from 1875 to 1911, this study is organized into five chapters. Chapter II describes the historical framework. This chapter offers a brief description of hockey from 1875 to 1911 and establishes the terminology relevant to the kind of hockey discussed in later sections. Chapter III contextualizes media source materials used to collect the information for this project and examines media from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the lens of performativity and dramatic theatre. Chapter IV is devoted to BC's hockey history and serves as a case study for the concepts and analysis developed in the two previous chapters, thereby locating the history of public reception to hockey violence in a specific geographic context. Chapter V concludes the study and summarizes the main arguments and provides recommendations for further study.

Chapter II

“Royal Winter Game” to “A Sport No Longer”: Hockey’s Early Years in Canada

In order to understand the nature of violence in hockey from 1875-1911, it is crucial to contextualize the game of hockey during this period and summarize key aspects influencing its development. Such issues include the amateur and professional question in Canadian hockey; the relationship between industrialization and recreation; and the nature of organized hockey and its relationship to social class in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada. For example, the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal is a significant case study as this site that hosted a hockey game considered to be the birth of organized hockey in Canada. In Montreal during the late nineteenth century, the arena was a significant meeting place for social elites.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section outlines the origins of organized hockey in Canada, specifically central Canada. Although the focus of this project is on western Canada, sport studies scholars are in agreement that the origins of organized hockey are in central Canada. For that reason, it would be irresponsible to exclude source materials, and thus a discussion on the history of organized hockey in central Canada from this study. The second section examines the debate between amateurism and professionalism. In order to understand complexities surrounding the rise of modern sport and thus hockey in Canada, it is important to contextualize the question of amateurism and professionalism within the early years of organized hockey. In both sections, newsprint media depictions of hockey violence are introduced and discussed.

Creighton's Experiment: The Origins of Organized Hockey in Canada

Given the focus of this project on hockey violence and its connection to hockey's history, it is necessary to make distinctions between the terms "hockey" and, "organized hockey," in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada. Despite a healthy scholarly debate concerning the origins of organized hockey in North America, there is no consensus on its precise starting point.⁵⁴ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson offered a valuable characterization of the debate surrounding hockey's origin in Canada:

There is little point in engaging in debate about which folk game, played where, or when, is the true precursor to the modern game of hockey. The real origins of the game as we know it are synonymous with the beginning of hockey's institutional development. Once this is acknowledged there is no mystery about the birthplace of modern hockey in Canada.⁵⁵

It is generally agreed upon that the "institutional development" of Canadian hockey occurred in Montreal. The precise moment that many historians use as a point of departure is a game played on March 3, 1875 organized by James Creighton, a figure skating judge and engineer at the Victoria Skating Rink in Montreal. Creighton was raised in a middle-class household in Halifax, Nova Scotia and was exposed to many sports during his youth, including figure skating. Creighton's father had gained notoriety as a figure skating judge, and James followed in his footsteps after arriving in Montreal⁵⁶ with a Dalhousie University engineering degree. He quickly became a prominent member of the white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class community in

⁵⁴ For select scholarship directed at the origins of hockey in North America and abroad, see Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 31-53; Robert A. Styer, *The Encyclopedia of Hockey* (New Jersey: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1970), 9-17; Neil D. Isaacs, *Checking Back: A History of the National Hockey League* (New York: Norton, 1977), 17-20; Alexander Poulton, *A History of Hockey in Canada* (Toronto: Overtime, 2010), 1-24; Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 43-46; Michael McKinley, *Hockey: A People's History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2006), 1-36; Michael McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter: Hockey's Rise from Sport to Spectacle* (Vancouver, Greystone, 2000), 2-20; Carl Gidén and Patrick Houde, "Timeline - Stick and Ball Games," *Society for International Hockey Research* (2010); Garth Vaughan, *The Puck Starts Here: The Origin of Canada's Great Winter Game* (Toronto: Goose Lane, 1996).

⁵⁵ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 37.

⁵⁶ McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 4.

Montreal. Sport was an important part of the middle-class lifestyle in Montreal and Creighton's participation in sport clubs, including rugby and skating, helped him become a "sportsman of note and clearly a man to be followed."⁵⁷ As Michael McKinley notes, Creighton's exact motivation for organizing a game of hockey is unknown, but it perhaps arose from a desire to keep his rugby teammates in shape during winter months.⁵⁸ In the end, a sort of nine-versus-nine hockey game was played the evening of March 3, 1875. As evidenced from the accounts of this earliest game, from the very outset, media depictions of hockey violence were indeed controversial.

The following day, the *Montreal Gazette* reported on the mechanics of the new game, comparing it to the sport of lacrosse and claiming that it was "much in vogue on the ice in New England ... [but] not much known here."⁵⁹ The article included the surnames of the players who played the previous evening, and further, detailed the "merriment" the audience experienced when watching the players artfully dodging and wheeling around the ice.⁶⁰ The *Gazette* omitted any sort of violence from its account of the exhibition despite the fact that following the game, a brawl broke out between the hockey players and Skating Club patrons who wished to re-claim the ice.⁶¹ The local Montreal media was not the only newspaper to write about Creighton's experiment. The Kingston *Whig-Standard* newspaper had a much different interpretation of the night's activities, describing what happened at the end of the hockey game as "disgraceful." Furthermore, this article alleged that benches were smashed, shins and heads battered, and female spectators forced into retreat in the face of the carnage.⁶² The explanation given by

⁵⁷ Ibid.,5.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Hockey," *Montreal Gazette*, 4 March 1875, 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ McKinley, *Hockey: A People's History*, 9.

⁶² *Kingston Whig-Standard*, 3 March 1875, cited in: McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 11.

McKinley for the asymmetrical interpretations is speculative, as he posits that perhaps violence was exaggerated by the time the story reached Kingston. The omission of this violence on the part of the *Gazette*'s reporter is certainly an interesting editorial choice, perhaps attributable to the writer's sense that mentioning violence would have been inappropriate, especially given the decision to name young middle-class participants. Perhaps the writer did not want to slander the names of those who participated in such violence. No matter the reason, it is clear that from the very beginning of organized hockey in Canada, including the very first organized game, violence was deeply connected to the game as well as to the way the game was covered by the media.

When Creighton moved the game into the Victoria Skating rink, he altered the physical character of hockey, away from the ponds and into clearly defined boundaries. McKinley argued that this new space played an important part in shaping the game. For McKinley, once hockey shifted into regimented spaces, there was a greater chance for aggression as players were in closer-quarters.⁶³ Moving the game indoors literally and metaphorically moved hockey away from nature and into a more regularized and structured setting. Beginning with the first indoor game played in 1875, hockey slowly began to move away from the unrestricted outdoor setting that spawned shinny games on river banks, towards a form of codified, commoditized, and systematic competition. It is important to acknowledge that indoor hockey did not immediately render outdoor rinks obsolete after 1875. Hockey maintained its connection to outdoor play, as the sport was played on outdoor rinks in towns and cities across the country throughout the twentieth century (and into the twenty-first century). Nonetheless, as hockey organized indoors, the sport began to be defined through developments associated with Creighton's indoor game: "It would be indoors where hockey became a sport, gaining definition and character by the very fact

⁶³ McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 10.

of its physical confinement ... Hockey would become refined in its structure and rules, it would develop standards to surpass.”⁶⁴ Even outdoor games were eventually fashioned after the conventions brought through hockey’s “physical confinement.” This shift from pastoral pastime to structured spectacle correlated with the rise of Canadian industrial capitalism at a time when, according to Colin Howell, “existing class relations were constantly being renegotiated. For these reasons, it is important to investigate sport as an aspect of the emerging capitalist economy.”⁶⁵

Moving the game indoors meant that organized hockey began to be shaped by the economic realities of the late nineteenth century. The way in which hockey was played certainly reflected a changing society outside of the rink. As John Matthew Barlow contends, “The development of a scientific style of play can be seen as keeping step with the modernization of society as a whole at the turn of the century in Montreal, and urban industrial Canada in general.”⁶⁶ For example, in 1899, Arthur Farrell, a former player for the Montreal Shamrocks, wrote the first hockey book entitled *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game* as a guide for those wishing to play the game.⁶⁷ In this book, Farrell outlined the rules (adjusted correctly for play in different provinces), the benefits of playing the sport, and the preferred way in which hockey should be played. Farrell believed that hockey should be played with discipline, which meant that players should choose the most direct plays rather than engaging in irrational and self-serving displays:

The fancy play, the grand stand play, is a waste of energy, childish, worthless. The play that counts, the play that shows the science of the man who makes it, is the immediate

⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁵ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 53.

⁶⁶ John Matthew Barlow, “‘Scientific Aggression’: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901,” in *Coast to Coast*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong, 37.

⁶⁷ Arthur Farrell, *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game* (Montreal: C.R. Cornell, 1899).

execution, in the simplest manner, of a plan that a player conceives, when he considers the object of his playing. In other, geometrical words, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and applied to the science of hockey, it means that a player should take the shortest and quickest way of obtaining the desired effect, which, by analysis, is oftentimes the most scientific.⁶⁸

Farrell stated that structured direct play was the most desirable for hockey players, as it represented an appreciation for the economy of action. Applying Farrell's logic, the game of hockey and its players are mechanized. Accordingly, each player should contribute to the efficient functioning of the whole rather than strive for individual success. Farrell's emphasis on finding the "most scientific" and most direct method of play is analogous to the workplace dynamic of the nineteenth century factory. For Farrell, players should focus on performing their tasks as quickly and efficiently as possible and re-create the division of labour seen inside a factory. By moving the game indoors and codifying the instructions for play, Creighton played an important role in the modernization of hockey. This modernization of hockey is analogous to the economic and social process of industrialization, which suited the tastes of the industrial consumer.

Due to a rapidly industrializing Canadian society, new opportunities for middle class recreation emerged. According to Gruneau and Whitson, "The economic successes of nineteenth and twentieth century industrial capitalism expanded disposable incomes and created new demands for consumption and entertainment."⁶⁹ Creighton's new form of hockey, though in its infancy in 1875, was well suited to meet a growing demand for spectator entertainment. For example, the game organized by Creighton drew a large and curious crowd.⁷⁰ All of the players in Creighton's game, and many of those who watched this first game, represented a select group of white, Anglo-Saxon local citizens, and not the entire linguistic or racial demographic of

⁶⁸ Farrell, *Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game*, 64-65.

⁶⁹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 16.

⁷⁰ "Hockey," *The Montreal Gazette*, 4 March 1875, 3.

Montreal during this time. It was at the Victoria Skating rink that the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada (AHAC) was born and became an important symbol of class superiority in the recreational space of Montreal in the nineteenth century. As John Chi-Wit Wong contends, “By the early 1860s, the social elite in Montreal built the Victoria Rink for the skating socials.”⁷¹ The Victoria Skating Rink then, was explicitly reserved for Montreal’s upper class, explicitly restricting the membership of patrons. It wasn’t until the Victoria rink started experiencing financial difficulties later in the nineteenth century that membership expanded to include Montreal’s middle-class.⁷² It is significant that at this rink the AHAC was formed, as it demonstrated the relationship between the upper class and early hockey clubs in Montreal. The AHAC (as were many other similar associations throughout Canada) was instrumental in enforcing hierarchical distinctions among amateur hockey teams. However, the amateur sporting notion of ‘sport for honour’ (rather than financial compensation) began to run counter to ongoing shifts in North American class consciousness.

From the very beginning of Canadian organized hockey, ethnicity and class were inextricably linked to the game and its players, particularly in urban centres where the game was established. As McKinley notes, newspapers such as the *Montreal Gazette* “paid attention to James Creighton’s indoor game likely because of the pedigree of players.”⁷³ McKinley further argues that, due to the Scottish and English surnames of the players listed in the *Gazette*, the distinct ethnic makeup of the players would have been noticed by Montreal’s French and Irish communities, which were largely ostracized from English sporting society.⁷⁴ Even though a relatively small group from Montreal participated in Creighton’s experimental hockey game, this

⁷¹ Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 16.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷³ McKinley, *Hockey: A People’s History*, 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

is an important event in the history of hockey in Canada. Beyond codifying the rules of organized hockey, further analysis of this experimental hockey game indicates that tensions between social classes existed as early as 1875, and that the newsprint media was cautious when reporting on hockey violence.

The Amateur and Professional Question in Canadian Sport

The roots of organized hockey in Canada can be traced to Montreal and, more broadly, central Canada. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, organized hockey appeared throughout Canada. Hockey teams and leagues emerged through every imaginable aspect of social life including the workplace, church, social clubs, and small, town-wide select-teams facing off against rival teams from nearby communities. As hockey expanded, the organization of the game remained closely tied to social class. One of the most important expressions of class division in Canadian sport during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is the question of amateurism versus professionalism. There has been a significant amount of scholarly work written on this topic with special attention paid to central Canada.⁷⁵ The history of amateurism and professionalism in Canadian sport highlights the struggle between those who believed that sport should be played for intangible, esoteric reasons such as the love of competition or pride in one's town, and those who believed that participation in organized sport was a form of labour and subject to equitable compensation. Gruneau and Whitson summarize sociological differences

⁷⁵ For a more thorough examination of the amateurism and professionalism debate in Canadian sport see Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1960); McKinley, *Putting a Roof Over Winter*, 54-88; Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 56-77; Stephen Hardy and Andrew Holman, "Periodizing Hockey History: One Approach" in eds. Jamie Dopp and Richard Harrison, *Now is the Winter: Thinking About Hockey* (Hamilton: Wolsak and Wynn, 2009), 19-36; Isaacs, *Checking Back*, 30-37; Brian McFarlane, *The Story of the National Hockey League: An Intimate History of Hockey's Most Dramatic Half Century* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1973), 13-23; Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 51-82.

between the two perspectives, by characterizing the relationship between leisure time and amusement:

By the turn of the century a clear distinction between the rational use of leisure time and seemingly irrational amusement had become fully institutionalized in Canada. Rational recreation was promoted in amateur sports organizations, schools, municipal parks, and libraries. Irrational leisure - typically associated with drinking, gambling, and 'rough' sport - was patrolled by the police. Amateur hockey was championed as a form of rational recreation, and its emerging rules and organizational structures were largely in the grip of the moral entrepreneurs.⁷⁶

The "moral entrepreneurs" referred to by Gruneau and Whitson are the businessmen and professionals who comprised the English-speaking, white, middle-class, sporting elite. These men were champions of "moral propriety and self-improvement" and represented the vanguard of amateur sport, specifically hockey, in Canada.⁷⁷ However, McKinley concisely describes the ideological underpinning of Canadian amateur hockey's forefathers: "Canada's amateur athletic clubs were forged in the smithy of British Victorian idealism, in which gentlemen engaged in sport for the honour of competition."⁷⁸ McKinley maintains that the ideal of amateurism reflected "British" design, an antiquated notion of honourable conduct imported from overseas.

During the nineteenth century, morality was an important topic in Canadian sport. So-called "blood sports" such as bear and bull baiting, dog fighting, and cock fighting that had become popular in England were also starting to appear in Canada in the nineteenth century. However, the Canadian government banned blood sports and prize fighting in 1870 and attempted, though unsuccessfully, to cleanse Canada of behaviour deemed "disreputable and irrational diversions from honest labour."⁷⁹ Howell further explains that nineteenth century blood sports were a product of Canadians' fascination with "the lines of demarcation between the

⁷⁶ Whitson and Gruneau, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 56.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ McKinley, *Putting a Roof on Winter*, 57.

⁷⁹ Howell, *Blood Sweat and Cheers*, 11.

‘civilised’ and the ‘savage,’ the ‘normal’ and the ‘degenerate,’ the virtuous and the vicious, the human and the beastly.”⁸⁰ The reaction to these blood sports among the Canadian bourgeoisie was to develop the definition of a ‘sportsmen’ as one who avoided blood sports in favour of respectable sports. The reaction to blood sports in Canada is important context for the history of resistance to hockey violence. Hockey, a relatively new sport in nineteenth century Canada, interacted with the same social forces that banned prize fighting and blood sports.

The AHAC was created in 1887 in order to “regularize competition” among four amateur hockey clubs from central Canada. From 1887 to 1892, in order to decide club supremacy, the AHAC decided upon a single-game challenge format popular in sports such as boxing and wrestling at that time.⁸¹ After the 1892 season, officials adopted a system where the regular season championship was awarded to the club that had won the most games during the season. Aside from establishing a regularized schedule for amateur hockey in central Canada, the AHAC was also considered to be a beacon of ‘gentlemanly’ hockey. The donor of the first championship trophy – Lord Fredrick Stanley, the 16th Earl of Derby and the Governor General of Canada (1888 to 1893) – endorsed this principle. In 1893, Lord Stanley donated a championship cup to the AHAC:

I have for some time been thinking it would be a good thing if there were a challenge cup, which could be held from year to year by the leading hockey club in Canada ... considering the interest that hockey matches now elicit, and the importance of having the games fairly played under generally recognized rules, I am willing to give a cup that shall be annually held by the winning club.⁸²

Having hockey games “fairly played” was important for Lord Stanley when he decided to donate the challenge cup that would become the basis for the famed Stanley Cup of present-day hockey.

⁸⁰ Ibid.,12.

⁸¹ John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 17.

⁸² Lord Stanley, quoted in *One Hundred Not-Out: The Story of Nineteenth Century Canadian Sport* by Henry Roxborough (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966), 143.

However, media reports of amateur hockey games during this period would undercut the notions of fair play as described to Lord Stanley when he donated the challenge cup.

Upper-middle class amateurs were expected to not engage in violence in sport, as this type of behaviour was associated with the irrational tendencies of the lower class. As Howell maintains, “Typically, the explanations for the violence associated with hockey had class connotations.”⁸³ An 1890 game played between the Rideau Hall Rebels, a Government House team sponsored by Lord Stanley that featured two of his sons, and the Toronto Granites sparked media outrage when the game devolved into *mêlée*: “It is greatly to be regretted that in a match between amateur teams, some players should so forget themselves, before a large number of spectators, many of whom were ladies, as to engage in fisticuffs.”⁸⁴ The scolding tone used by this *Toronto Daily Mail* reporter is certainly indicative of class-specific expectations applied to amateur hockey players. Furthermore, the *Montreal Gazette* had previously expressed similar distaste for violence, as displayed in an AHAC game. Following an 1886 game between the Montreal Crystals and McGill University, two founding AHAC clubs, the *Gazette* reported:

While in the fault-finding strain, we might allude to the roughness in the game of hockey as exhibited in the match between the Crystals and the McGill team at the Crystal rink last Friday ... Every [hockey] game can be played without a trace of roughing and when this element comes into it, it becomes a sport no longer. The *Gazette* has before now waged war against the brutal part of some sports, and if hockey is to be played as it was last Friday, it has to be modified in some way ... Though last Friday’s game is our text, we do not wish to bring any individual names up for discussion, yet on both teams the fouls were too noticeable to escape the most unpractised eye ... The worst feature of it is that the boys playing are all of the same class, and there is no room for differences of any kind.⁸⁵

⁸³ Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 45.

⁸⁴ *Toronto Daily Mail*, quoted in *One Hundred Not-Out: The Story of Nineteenth Century Canadian Sport* by Henry Roxborough (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966), 143.

⁸⁵ “Sports and Pastimes: Note and Comment,” *Montreal Gazette*, 20 January 1886, 8.

In this article, the *Gazette* takes an unequivocal stance against violence in hockey. By claiming, “roughing ... makes hockey a sport no longer,” the *Gazette* reporter explicitly condemns the kind of violence displayed in this game. The *Gazette* separates violence from the game of hockey itself, insisting that hockey be “modified in some way” in order for the sport to survive in Canada. It is implied by this *Gazette* reporter that the modification would be to play hockey “without a trace of roughing.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, the *Gazette* mentioned that it would not single out any individual names as culpable for the roughness that it so disliked. This editorial decision perhaps implies that if the newspaper was to mention the names of the players, it might besmirch their social standing in Montreal. Such omissions in reporting illustrate a discrepancy between what was expected of upper-middle class hockey players and the violence that was seen at the hockey rink. During the earliest years of hockey in Canada, resistance to hockey violence was not only present but highly visible, especially in the reporting of the newsprint media. Hockey violence, though believed to be a result of behaviour exclusive to the lower class, was clearly evident in upper-middle class amateur hockey in Canada. Despite Lord Stanley’s desire for hockey to be “fairly played” in Canada, the accounts given in the *Montreal Gazette* and *Toronto Daily Mail* offer a much more complicated depiction of the state of violence in early Canadian hockey.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, changes to the relationship between recreation and commerce were underway in Canada. As expressed by Gruneau and Whitson, “In the second half of the nineteenth century money became indispensable for virtually every kind of sporting pastime, from casual recreation commercially oriented spectacle ... The resulting commodification of urban space ... immediately began to exert powerful pressures on

⁸⁶ Ibid.

recreational land use.”⁸⁷ Throughout Canada, some middle-class purveyors of sport began to capitalize on sports’ rising popularity and the newly commercialized recreational land by charging admission to games and paying players to play for specific teams. As Howell maintains, “These men were less interested in the notion of sport as a moral tonic than many of their middle-class associates – especially to those who were committed to the amateur ideal – and regarded sport as a commodity to be bought and sold.”⁸⁸ The attempt to monetize sport was the antithesis of the ‘amateur ideal.’ The amateurism versus professionalism debate led to a vibrant and spirited debate into the early years of the twentieth century over proper compensation for athletes.

The framework of organized hockey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is marked by the attempts to codify and commoditize the game while debating the proper way to compensate players for their labours. However, another controversial issue present from the very beginning of organized hockey in Canada was hockey violence, especially in the newsprint media. The extent to which violence should be permitted in hockey was important to newspaper reporters who observed hockey games during this period. Most reporters agreed that violence should be discouraged, and some reporters even called for reformation to the rules of hockey in order to discourage violence.⁸⁹ Certainly, these sources seem to contradict the perception that hockey communities simply accepted hockey violence. Furthermore, these newsprint sources support the notion that there was a lively resistance to hockey violence that dates back to the early years of organized hockey in Canada.

⁸⁷ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 57.

⁸⁸ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 54.

⁸⁹ “Sports and Pastimes: Note and Comment,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 20 January 1886, 8.

Chapter III

“Ordinary Men into Heroes”: Newspaper Reporting and Hockey

One important way to understand the link between hockey’s distant past and the game today is to evaluate the way that hockey was discussed historically in the newsprint media. In present-day, many writers use a perceived historical link in order to rationalize hockey violence seen in the twenty-first century. Violence in early hockey history is said to have been far more malicious and, by comparison, hockey violence seen in the twenty-first century is often considered to be mere child’s play.⁹⁰ It is important to acknowledge that from a pure violence standpoint, these arguments are correct in that the early years of organized hockey were some of the most dangerous, and in some cases, deadliest years in Canadian hockey history. However, the way in which these arguments are framed does not recognize that there was significant opposition to violence in hockey at this time. The historical argument often fails to present violence as controversial and, in so doing, characterizes the reception to hockey violence in the past as acquiescence. The game itself may have been more violent, however, this does not mean that this level of violence was widely tolerated or encouraged. For example, Greg Oliver and Richard Kamchen explain the development of designated fighters in the twenty-first century in the following terms:

The game of those early days makes today’s hockey seem tame. The players were ruthless and brutal ... often those means included a heavy stick... chopping one another down with crushing blows that would earn them lifetime suspensions and perhaps even lengthy prison terms today. Then along came the enforcer, who would instil fear into opponents who previously had no qualms about belting smaller, more talented players into submission.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Essentially, this argument downplays violence in contemporary hockey through citing examples of more extreme acts of hockey violence from the past. See Dan Mason, quoted in “U of A Hockey Expert Says Violence Has Always Been a Part of the Game,” *Folio* 48, 16 (22 April 2011).

⁹¹ Greg Oliver and Richard Kamchen, *Don’t Call Me Goon: Hockey’s Greatest Enforcers, Gunslingers, and Bod Boys* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2013), 7.

Although Oliver and Kamchen wrote for a popular readership, they use the spectre of a more violent past to downplay violence seen in twenty-first century hockey. There is no consideration given by Oliver and Kamchen to how violence was received by the public during hockey's early years. In fact, when Oliver and Kamchen characterise the violence from these years as "brutal," they borrow a phrase used by those who witnessed some of the most egregious examples of hockey violence.⁹²

While hockey does have a long history of violent incidents, it is important to consider the kinds of source materials historians have used to inform the assertion that hockey's past was indeed violent. Our most basic understanding of the early years of hockey in Canada is heavily informed by the way that the newspaper reporters wrote about sport. However, newspaper reporting from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries must be examined within economic, cultural, and even theatrical contexts. This chapter addresses each of these specific subsections. Before an accurate assessment of the primary source material from the newsprint media can be made, it is important to discuss the way in which hockey, and indeed all sport, was reported during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Understanding the nature of sports reporting during this time period is crucial to understanding the way in which the game reached people in the communities where hockey was played and observed. Firstly, as described in great detail by Minko Sotiron, the commercial dynamics of print media were drastically changing by the end of the nineteenth-century. Due to growing urban centres and advances in printing press technology, newspaper readership and circulation was rapidly expanding: "In Canada overall, the number of dailies rose from 119 in 1899 to 143 in 1911 and ... Newspaper readership rose in the country as a whole during the first decade of the twentieth century.

⁹² Stacey Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne, "Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey, Violence, and Manhood and the 1907 Season" in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada to the Second World War*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160-202.

Circulation increased from .106 per person in 1899 to .186 in 1911.”⁹³ During this rapid expansion, many media markets in Canada became oversaturated with newsprint, some cities supporting three daily newspapers at once. In response to this oversupply, newspapers all over Canada began to expand in both their size and reach. Larger newspapers crept into smaller city markets in an attempt to reach new readerships that were removed from cramped urban print media landscape. Simultaneously, newspapers expanded from four pages, at the beginning of the 1890s, to upwards of twelve pages at the close of the nineteenth century.⁹⁴

The readership of each of the local newspapers varied among socio-economic groups in Canada, which is significant as participation in hockey was similarly divided as well. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, hockey in central Canada almost exclusively involved young, middle-class males.⁹⁵ This middle-class influence on hockey is also directly related to the exceptionally important influence that amateurism had on the development of organized sport in central Canada.⁹⁶ Essentially, in its earliest years, the working class was largely excluded from organized hockey in Canada. For example, Alan Metcalfe argues that in Montreal, there was simply no proof to suggest that the working class “had any degree of permanence” in organizing teams in many different sports, including hockey.⁹⁷ However, newspaper readerships were not exclusively middle class, as several newsprint sources emerged during the late nineteenth century, catering exclusively to the lower class. Many of these newspapers became exceptionally successful in the process. These profit-oriented ‘people’s journals’ targeted readers from a wide

⁹³ Minko Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁵ Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport Identities and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 47.

⁹⁶ There are many sources devoted to the topic of amateurism in Canadian sport, none better than Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996).

⁹⁷ Alan Metcalfe, “Organized Sport and Social Stratification in Montreal: 1840-1901,” in eds. Richard Gruneau and John G. Albinson, *Canadian Sport: Sociological Perspectives* (Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Canada, 1976), 96.

array of social classes. The newspapers of the people's press focused on sensational topics such as crime and entertainment while paying less attention to politics, editorials, and foreign affairs.⁹⁸ Many of these people's journals competed successfully for market share throughout Canadian cities, which in turn forced the older, more established newspapers to adopt some of the practices seen in the people's press. By the end of the nineteenth century, most Canadian newspapers, people's press or otherwise, were far better suited to meet the needs of the consumer:

To sell newspapers the news had to be attractively displayed. Successful newspapers increasingly used photographs and design changes to make the news easier to read and thus more saleable. Information was packaged like merchandise in department store display cases with local news separate from provincial, national, and international news, and sports separate from business or women's news.⁹⁹

The use of the consumer-oriented strategies by the people's press certainly influenced an emerging desire for sensationalized content in every section of the newspaper. Furthermore, it even created space for the new sports section, which had become a distinct part of the newspaper.

As Stacey Lorenz maintains, "By the end of the nineteenth century, detailed summaries of sporting events appeared in Canada's leading dailies almost every day, and reporters were hired specifically to cover local athletes and competitions."¹⁰⁰ By 1895, sports had become a daily section in newspapers such as the *Montreal Star* and the *Winnipeg Tribune*. As early as 1896, due to technological improvements to the telegraph, journalist accounts of games were printed in the sports pages of newspapers. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was commonplace for telegraph operators stationed at sporting events to relay updates to bulletins that were posted at meeting places (such as gymnasiums, taverns, etc.) across Canada. The

⁹⁸ Lorenz and Osborne, "Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle," 167.

⁹⁹ Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Stacey Lorenz, "Manhood, Rivalry, and the Creation of a Canadian 'Hockey World': Media Coverage of Early Stanley Cup Hockey Challenges, 1894-1907," (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 2012), 100.

technological advancements allowed the public to hear the scores and descriptions of the gameplay in close to real-time.¹⁰¹ These meeting places or bulletins became centres of community for sports fans who wished to get the most current results from their teams playing on the road. Newspapers began to boast about the speed with which their telegraphs would reach their home cities no matter where the games were being played. During a 1903 Stanley Cup match, the *Winnipeg Tribune* claimed that “The Tribune is recognized as the leader for bulletin facilities and tonight’s service will be strictly up-to-date ... the service will be practically instantaneous, and there will be scarcely a second’s delay posing the results of the games.”¹⁰² The telegraphic efficiency of sports reporting became a selling point for the newspaper, marking another opportunity to gain market share in Canada’s crowding urban newspaper landscape.

With sports acquiring regular space in most newspapers, many papers hired sports editors. The qualities of an editor at a late nineteenth century newspaper are described by Rutherford as being a “gatekeeper who selected from the detail available the items which he thought would satisfy the tastes of readers.”¹⁰³ These sporting “gatekeepers” provided the directives for the reporters and telegraphers who covered the games. On the topic of newspaper coverage of hockey games, Daniel Mason and Gregory Duquette’s article on the history of print media and hockey proves to be invaluable. Mason and Duquette assert that due to emerging economic factors driving print media towards the people’s press during the late nineteenth century, newspaper editors began to seek out scintillating materials in order to drive readership as “sport provided the type of exciting news item that editors were seeking.”¹⁰⁴ Mason and

¹⁰¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 85.

¹⁰² “Hockey,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 January 1903, 8.

¹⁰³ Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 134.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel S. Mason and Gregory Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey: The Discourses of Class and Control,” *Media History* 10:3, (2004): 160.

Duquette evaluated newspaper coverage of games played in the short-lived International Hockey League, which existed in Canadian and American cities from 1904-1907, and found that working and middle-class communities often had differing interpretations of the games that revealed class-based notions regarding violence and masculinity.¹⁰⁵

Complicating matters, in terms of more contemporary notions of journalistic ethics, is the fact that some reporters were paid extra to work exclusively with particular teams. The ability to describe the game via telegraph allowed telegraphers and reporters to write not just an account of the game, but also weigh in on the spirit of the game. Many newspapers expanded their reporting beyond tedious summaries of games, providing reporters with the freedom to portray the game as they saw fit. Gruneau and Whitson discuss the nature of reporting on hockey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the following terms:

Growing numbers of new fans wanted to know the score, but also wanted to hear and read about the flow of the game, the emotions of the crowd, and the character demonstrated by the players ... A more self-consciously dramatic style of sports journalism emerged as a way of representing the excitement of contests that most hockey fans were unable to witness firsthand. The Canadian news media began to play a much more direct and important role in narrating and popularizing high-level sport than in the past. A key element to this popularization was the way the daily press and the telegraph were combining to make “ordinary men” into heroes.¹⁰⁶

Reinforcing this point, a *Montreal Star* article written after the Montreal Hockey Club won the 1902 Stanley Cup characterizes the celebrations on Saint Catherine’s Street in Montreal in the following terms: “Not satisfied with standing on the pavement, they climbed on top of every possible thing that could afford them a place to see ... When it was all over, and there were no more bulletins, they divided up into battalions, and paraded in the streets, literally singing the

¹⁰⁵ Mason and Duquette, “Newspaper Coverage of Early Professional Ice Hockey,” 160.

¹⁰⁶ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84.

praises of their heroes, till a very earlier hour this morning.”¹⁰⁷ The transformative effect that Gruneau and Whitson identify is directly related to the changing dynamics of the print media newsroom and the added pressure to draw in more readers using sensationalised subject matter. The way that reporters described the games had an enormous impact on the way that fans related to hockey players, not only on their own team but on opposing teams as well. Gruneau and Whitson note that telegraphers relied heavily on player names when re-telling the events, and that reporters used colourful prose and verbose language to cultivate celebrity status for skilled players.¹⁰⁸

Reporting on these early games took on a form of boosterism, with reporters editorializing controversial events in order to suit the tastes of the targeted readership. Though the readership varied throughout North America, and reporters covered very different games and teams, biases became clear when reporters commented on violent incidents in hockey games. Throughout hockey’s early years, violence was prevalent at rinks throughout North America. For example, in an article entitled, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle: Hockey Violence, Manhood, and the 1907 Season,” Stacy L. Lorenz and Geraint B. Osborne focus on the particularly bloody 1907 hockey season in terms of masculinity and hockey in newspaper reporting. Lorenz and Osborne also examine the complicated issue of objectivity when examining a particularly violent game between Ottawa Silver Seven and the Montreal Wanderers on January 12, 1907. Lorenz and Osborne compare the account provided by a Montreal newspaper, which described the event as a “brutal butchery,” against that of an Ottawa newspaper that deems it to be a “strenuous spectacle.”¹⁰⁹ Montreal reporters called for criminal

¹⁰⁷ *Montreal Star*, 18 March 1902, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 84.

¹⁰⁹ Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle” in *Coast to Coast*, 165-172.

charges to be laid due to the many attacks against the integrity of Ottawa's players, coaches, and even the media. Conversely, Ottawa reporters interpreted the game as merely rough, an example of perfectly acceptable, ruggedly masculine hockey.¹¹⁰ The contrasting accounts of the violence in this game reflected biases in favour of each home team, which is hardly surprising given that late nineteenth and early twentieth century newspapers were featuring sensationalist content to attract new readerships.

The practice of boosterism in sports media was not limited to newspaper writers in central Canada. For example, in Alberta as far back as 1898, the newsprint media interpreted instances of violence in hockey in a way that reflected a home-town bias. In *The Battles of Alberta: A Century of Hockey's Greatest Rivalry*, Steven Sandor details a particularly bloody February 3, 1898 game between the Edmonton Shamrocks and the Calgary Fire Brigade Tigers. This game proved to be one of the most widely publicized hockey games reported on in both papers. Notably, Calgary's Everett Miller had to have his eye removed after he was struck on the head with a stick from an Edmonton Shamrocks player.¹¹¹ In a very brief front-page description of the game, the *Edmonton Bulletin* reported the injury, and described its severity. However, it was further reported that other Shamrocks players were injured as well.¹¹² The *Calgary Weekly Herald* maintained, "The play was rough, considerable carelessness being evident in stick handling which resulted in injuries to two of the brigade team."¹¹³ Though the *Herald* mentioned that the injury to Miller was due to an accidental, ill-timed stick to the head, suffered in the act of shooting a puck, there was an attempt to assign blame for the incident. In subsequent years, much more egregious examples of hometown favouritism followed in newspaper reporting

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Steven Sandor, *The Battle of Alberta: A Century of Hockey's Greatest Rivalry* (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing, 2005), 11.

¹¹² "Local," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 3 February 1898, 1

¹¹³ "The Hockey Match: Brigade vs. Edmonton," *The Calgary Weekly Herald*, 3 February 1898.

throughout Canada. This 1898 example connects some of the foremost mentions of hockey violence in newsprint media in the western regions of Canada to the sensationalism that became commonplace in early twentieth century sports media across Canada.

The examples provided by Lorenz and Osborne illustrate particular challenges when evaluating newsprint materials from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Reporters did not pretend to be objective observers of the game (as was the expectation by the late twentieth century). Canadian reporters were under the instruction of editors, and therefore obliged to move towards sensationalist writing styles in order to provide materials that would elicit emotions in their readers. Hockey provided the perfect subject matter to satiate the demand for sporting drama in Canadian newspapers.

“Fancy Designs in Attempted Murder”: Connections between Hockey and Melodrama

During the late nineteenth century, Canadian newspapers were still trying to develop an appropriate style for reporting sporting events on to mass readerships. The stylistic choices often made by newspaper writers demonstrated a similarity to English melodramatic theatre, especially when reporting on violent incidents. In many reports, the term “audience”¹¹⁴ was used when referring to those assembled at sporting events. This reinforces the notion that hockey games were considered entertainment, and therefore not separate from other modes of performed entertainment (including theatre). The economic factors shaping the desire for sensationalized content influenced the way sporting events were re-told by reporters. Often, reporters would focus on the performative aspects of sport, choosing to emphasize crowd reaction to the events in order to provide the reader with a better sense of what it was like to be present at the event. For newspapers, especially those that comprised the people’s press, reporters consciously amplified

¹¹⁴ “First Hockey Match,” *Calgary Weekly Herald*, 23 December 1897, 3.

emotional responses experienced by spectators and relayed them to their readerships. As Sotiron maintains, at the beginning of the twentieth century, “Getting the news out as speedily as possible became the order of the day. Less and less emphasis was placed on the context of news; newspapers strove more often to highlight the spectacular and the unusual.”¹¹⁵ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when hockey games received attention in the media, especially in the people’s press, the focus was quite often on violence.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Canadian theatre was concentrated in central urban centres, and had yet to be recognized as a formalized institution distinct from other theatrical traditions.¹¹⁶ While the Canadian theatre was in its nascence, the rink often became the stage for dramas featuring costume and stagecraft, scenery and spectacle, villainy and heroism. Accordingly, the media, tasked with collecting sensational and scintillating stories, was sensitive to the dramatic quality of hockey’s early years in Canada. For an emerging readership accustomed to the sensationalized media through the people’s press, late nineteenth and early twentieth century hockey could be akin to theatrical performance. Furthermore, the way that violence the media reported during these years resembled a specific contemporary theatrical tradition. Hockey media used language that evoked the conventions and language of melodramatic theatre, common to the nineteenth century in England and the United States. Through the use of archetypal representations, clear moral divisions, conventionalized plotlines, and an emphasis on audience enjoyment, the melodrama defied social stratification by making performances accessible through visual storytelling.¹¹⁷ These marked characteristics of

¹¹⁵ Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit*, 17.

¹¹⁶ Alan Filewod, “Named in Passing: Deregimenting Canadian Theatre History” in *Writing and Rewriting National Theatre Histories*, ed. S.E Wilmer, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 111.

¹¹⁷ Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

melodrama are found within media accounts of late nineteenth and early twentieth century hockey games, particularly in their treatment of violence and perceived brutality in hockey.

Similar to early accounts of hockey games, the melodramatic form was exceedingly participatory. Melodramatic performances relied on audience reaction and encouraged immediate responses to character dynamics presented on stage. As Ben Singer maintains, “Over and above the poignant emotion of pathos, melodrama thrives on stimulating the sensation of agitation.”¹¹⁸ This stimulation of agitation perfectly describes the emotions that many newspaper writers sought to elicit in readers when reporting on violence committed against local teams.¹¹⁹ In keeping with the modus operandi of the people’s press, reporters for the *Montreal Star* worked tirelessly to conjure up feelings of agitation in their readership towards the villainy of the Silver Seven. This strategy of placing a very clear good and evil binary on two parties is another shared characteristic between melodramatic theatre and early twentieth century hockey. As Judith Flanders maintains, “Melodrama characters have preordained parts: a villain is a villain and will not become a hero. Costume was as much an indicator of character as occupation.”¹²⁰ The parallels between the stage costume of the melodramatic villain and the hockey costume of the “brutal butchery” of the opposing team are clear. Furthermore, in melodramatic theatre, violence not only increased interest in other performances, it drove customers to the box office in greater numbers. As Crone contends, “The largest audiences were drawn by melodramas that promised dramatic scenes of high-level violence.”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 41.

¹¹⁹ As demonstrated in Lorenz and Osborne’s evaluation of the perceived “brutal butchery” of the Ottawa Silver Seven by Montreal media following the 1907 game.

¹²⁰ Judith Flanders, *The Invention of Murder: How the Victorians Revelled in Death and Detection and Created Modern Crime* (London: HarperCollins, 2011), 32.

¹²¹ Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 133.

Melodramas were exceedingly interactive, involving a dynamic relationship between the audience and the performers, often with the reactions influencing the outcome of the performance. As Crone explains, “We can see how the gallery, through their expression of rage at the villain, encouraged him to yet further, more dramatic violence, which in turn increased the satisfaction, sense of relief and emotional release felt by the audience on his punishment.”¹²² The condemnation of violence in melodrama is important because melodramas were largely conservative by nature. Melodramas were simplistic morality plays intended for the edification of the audience member. As was the case when violence was perpetrated against the home team in hockey games, audience members in melodramatic theatre did not condone violence. In fact, “Audiences showed no sympathy towards violent villains. They fervently condemned acts of extreme violence performed before them and loudly demanded justice.”¹²³ Calls for justice, both implicit and explicit, were exceptionally common in newspaper reports of hockey violence, especially in the people’s press. In an editorial published after the aforementioned Ottawa Silver Seven versus Montreal Wanderers game, the *Montreal Star* article openly called for criminal charges to be levied against Ottawa players: “The police authorities have a responsibility in this case ... there should be competent police officers present to put under immediate arrest any player who is guilty of an assault” and featured a cartoon captioned, “The Ottawa hockey team may not be able to play hockey, but it can show the excited populace the latest fancy designs in attempted murder.”¹²⁴

Though the *Montreal Star* editorial is an example of a call for justice taken to the extreme (“attempted murder”), other examples of this kind of language often focused on authority figures

¹²² Ibid., 144.

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ *Montreal Star*, 14 January 1907, 1,4, quoted in “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle,” in *Coast to Coast*, 167.

within the game. Referees were often blamed for losing control of the game, triggering violent incidents. Countless examples of news reports blaming officiating exist in the documentary record, including one especially interesting quote that stems from a game involving the Vancouver Millionaires in 1918. Art Ross¹²⁵ commented on the violence he perceived in a 1918 Stanley Cup match: “If the Vancouver club gets protection, they have a good chance to win ... the [Toronto] Blues gave a most brutal exhibition, and unless the western club gets protection from the referees they will all be killed.”¹²⁶ What makes this statement from Ross curious is the fact that he was the referee for that very game. Even though he embodied the game’s institutional authority to curb “brutal” plays, Ross felt the need to further emphasize the need for additional assistance.

These kinds of dramatic reports of hockey violence were not limited to central Canadian newspapers. Some of the earliest accounts of hockey games played in western Canada depict violence similar in melodramatic terms. In 1896, Alberta was nine years from joining Confederation, but organized hockey had been played for at least five years and newspaper reporting was beginning to expand beyond detailing the essential information and scores. For example, a brief front-page *Edmonton Bulletin* article described a game between two local teams (the heavy and light-weights) as follows, “The hockey game of the season took place Thursday afternoon last ... The game was for blood, all played forward at times the players were piled four feet deep, with the puck at the other end of the rink. The list of casualties is too long to report.”¹²⁷ Although the article consisted of less than ten sentences, the writer took time to include a description of the violence that ensued. The language used by the writer was more

¹²⁵ Art Ross was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1949 after a long, successful career as a player, manager, as well as coach of professional hockey teams all over North America.

¹²⁶ “Third Contest on Card Tonight,” *The Toronto World*, 26 March 1918, 9.

¹²⁷ “Hockey,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 19 March 1896, 1.

reminiscent of a battle scene than a hockey game, describing the “casualties” and the size of the body piles. It was clearly the intent of the writer to include dramatic language when describing the game rather than simply reporting the score of the game.

In one of the first accounts of organized hockey in the *Calgary Weekly Herald*, the reporter referenced the violent slashing of sticks: “The city team did not disappoint the audience either, and no doubt the majority of them will be able to secure jobs as axe men on the survey parties going north next spring to open the Klondike road.”¹²⁸ In British Columbia too, some of the earliest accounts of organized hockey games discuss violence. In an article from Atlin, a small gold-rush town in northwestern BC, one of the first hockey games is described in unflattering terms:

From a scientific point of view, the game showed little merit, but was an excellent exhibition of brute force and utter ignorance ... and looked more like a whirlwind of feet, clubs, and skates than a hockey match. Hitherto, the mortality in the [mining] camp has been insignificant, but with a similar game only once a week, we give the tip gratis, there should be a first class opening for an enterprising undertaker. We should suggest that the players pay a little more regard to the rules, and choose [a stick] suitable for the game which it is intended, and less as if they were going to take fencing lessons with an orangutan.¹²⁹

Hockey was in its infancy in western Canada, and newspapers adopted the stylistic traditions of Quebec and Ontario media outlets when reporting on these sporting contests. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the topic of violence sparked morbid curiosity in newspaper reporting across Canada. Violence became inseparable from the events of the games, especially if they were committed against home teams. For these newspapers, reporting on these perceived atrocities fuelled greater interest in subsequent games, and thus greater interest from the readership. To borrow from Lorenz and Osborne, readers were invited to share in the outrage

¹²⁸ “First Hockey Match,” *Calgary Weekly Herald*, 23 December 1897, 3.

¹²⁹ “Hockey Match,” *Atlin Claim*, 22 December 1900, 3.

or admiration, depending on whether the violence was perceived as brutal or strenuous. During these formative years, violent incidents became a point of entry for readers, thereby drawing their attention to hockey.

The comparison between melodramatic theatre and hockey is most germane when evaluating instances of violence in media sources. For example, in their analysis of media accounts of the 1907 game between the Wanderers and the Silver Seven, Lorenz and Osborne note that both media sources (Ottawa and Montreal) focused on the effect violence had on the audience.¹³⁰ Newsprint sources from these two cities produced vastly different accounts of the game and yet acts of violence were at the centre of the controversy in all accounts. An *Ottawa Citizen*'s report, titled "Wanderers and Ottawas in Terrific Match," focused on the "rough" play and described crowd reaction to the violence in the game: "The big rink was in an uproar from beginning to end. Wanderers supporters hooted the Ottawa players, mercilessly applauding every time one of the [Ottawa players] went down."¹³¹ The account from the *Citizen* mentioned specific acts of violence committed by Ottawa players and admits that they caused serious harm to Montreal players. However, given the headline of the story, the general impression was that the game was "rough" and "aggressive"¹³² but within the confines of acceptable hockey aggression. The account provided by the reporter from the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, a paper that closely aligns with the style of the people's press, is by contrast enthusiastic about the violent episodes and specifically warned the reader that attending these games led to an exciting night of entertainment:

For people with weak hearts to go to many such matches it would be a straight case of suicide ... The excitement was intense throughout the entire match and at times the

¹³⁰ Lorenz and Osborne, "Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle" in *Coast to Coast*, 166, 170.

¹³¹ "Wanderers and Ottawas in Terrific Match," *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 January 1907, 8.

¹³² *Ibid.*

crowd would rise to its feet when some mix-up occurred... An official of the arena said he never seen more feeling shown or a more excited crowd in the spacious rink ... When the match had finished many pools of blood could be seen on the ice.¹³³

Although the reporter acknowledges that violence did occur during the game, there was no attempt to editorialize or assign blame for the violent events. Instead, violence served as a promotional tool, implicitly encouraging readers to attend the next game. This tactic is reminiscent of the way in which violence was used to promote melodramatic theatre. According to Crone, “Words such as ‘horror,’ ‘fatal,’ ‘blood,’ ‘crimson,’ ‘death,’ ‘crime,’ ‘assassination,’ ‘hanging’ and ‘gallows’ frequently colored the bills. Descriptions of scenes and action highlight the centrality of violence to the plots of melodramas, especially as words promising violent action were enlarged or placed in bold, contrasting fonts.”¹³⁴

The Montreal account of the game provided a different perspective on violence in hockey, clearly assigning ‘blame’ to the Ottawa team for the events that unfolded. In doing so, the author used the violent incident as a means of stimulating interest in future games. Considered to be one of the most prominent ‘people’s press’ newspapers in Canada, the *Montreal Star*, featured a front page article detailing “inexcusable” acts of violence committed by Ottawa players and chronicled one of the more serious offenses:

The one by Spittal on Blatchford ... [Spittal] deliberately tried to split [Blatchford’s] head by bringing down his hockey stick upon it with all the force his two hands could command. Blatchford was carried off senseless, the blood which dripped down in his wake marking the progress of his body to the dressing room.¹³⁵

Throughout this front-page piece, violent and gruesome incidents are repeatedly mentioned. On January 14, 1907, the following day, the *Montreal Star* also ran a satiric account of the game:

¹³³ *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 14 January 1907, 2, quoted in *Coast to Coast*, 170.

¹³⁴ Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 134.

¹³⁵ *Montreal Star*, 14 January 1907, 1, quoted in *Coast to Coast*, 167.

The professional Butchers' Association of Ottawa organized an excursion to Montreal on Saturday, and had a most successful and pleasant outing. After a most entertaining exhibition of their skill and prowess, attended by about seven thousand people in the Montreal Arena ...they returned to Ottawa well satisfied with the work done.¹³⁶

This sarcastic account further demonstrated obvious contempt for the Ottawa team, referring to its players as “butchers.” Again, in keeping with the traditions of melodramatic theatre, the response of the audience was referenced by noting the large crowd that witnessed Ottawa’s allegedly inexcusable on-ice behaviour. By evaluating the way in which newspaper reporters discussed violence in Montreal, it is clear that violence was transforming journalistic interpretations of hockey games into melodramatic spectacles.

This description in the *Montreal Star* of the Silver Seven as ‘brutal butchers,’ prone to acts of extreme violence (“fancy designs in attempted murder”) perfectly casts Ottawa players as melodramatic villains.¹³⁷ Conversely, as Lorenz and Osborne note, Ottawa’s coverage emphasized the excitement of the Silver Seven’s ‘strenuous’ play, thereby ignoring violent acts. In melodramatic theatre, the villain was characterized by extreme acts of brutality and the audiences demanded punishment for his or her actions. The melodramatic hero was one who only engaged in violent acts as appropriate to punish the deeds of the villains.¹³⁸ Lorenz and Osborne maintain, “Hockey brutality may have been repugnant – especially when perpetrated against the home team – but it still demanded the readers’ attention.”¹³⁹ This is an important point for two reasons. First, it acknowledges that writers used violence was a tool used to garner interest in their subject. Second, the perceived repulsive nature of hockey violence is addressed most acutely when it hindered the writer’s home team. Boosterism certainly influenced the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 10.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Juliet John, “The Villains of Stage Melodrama: Romanticism and the Politics of Character,” in *Dickens’ Villains: Melodrama, Character, Popular Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 42-69.

¹³⁹ Lorenz and Osborne, “Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle” in *Coast to Coast*, 168.

hockey writer's interpretation of violent events on the ice, serving as a means to cast the roles of melodramatic heroes and villains. The marked characteristic of hockey writing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the abhorrence of violence from newspapers associated with teams perceived to be victimized by hockey violence. Within media accounts - no matter how exaggerated or extreme - hockey violence is often used to condemn the actions of the opposing team, whether the games were played in Montreal, Calgary, or Atlin, there was a clear resistance to violence in hockey.

Chapter IV

The Science and the Skirmish: Resistance to Violence in BC Newsprint

The focus of this chapter turns towards western Canada and, more specifically, British Columbia. In this chapter, BC serves as a case study for examining reactions to violence in newspapers from 1875 to 1911. Reporters in central Canada had already cultivated an approach to dramatizing and re-animating hockey games, which was later replicated in western Canada as the game developed. As noted by Gruneau and Whitson, technological advancements enhanced a sense of national identity and “The completion of a national rail link ... matched with coast-to-coast wire services, greatly enhanced the abilities of Canadians to imagine themselves as a national community.”¹⁴⁰ This burgeoning “national community” described by Gruneau and Whitson enabled an exchange of ideas and practices between central and western Canada. Hockey’s rules and conventions, as well as its relationship to newsprint, was influenced by the industrial growth and economic dynamism of the late nineteenth century, as facilitated by new communication technologies.

This chapter begins by exploring the history of organized hockey in BC and chronicles examples of newspaper reporters describing early accounts of hockey on the Fraser River in 1862. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the environmental impediments to the spread of organized hockey in BC between 1875 and 1911. Specific attention is paid to the Kootenay region, as it proved to be a fertile locality for the growth of organized hockey in Western Canada. Media sources from the Kootenay region documented opposition to roughness and violent play in hockey, as was previously observed in central Canada. The newsprint sources

¹⁴⁰ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 79.

from the Kootenay region support the argument that during the early years of organized hockey in BC, there was significant opposition to violence in hockey.

“Cut From the Forest”: Hockey’s Wild Origins on the West Coast

There is plenty of documentary evidence available that detail games of hockey being played across Canada during the nineteenth century. Of particular significance to this project, hockey, although still in a nascent form, was played in western Canada prior to Creighton’s 1875 game in Montreal. Despite the fact that organized hockey (as described by Gruneau and Whitson)¹⁴¹ was not played in BC in a substantive way until the last two decades of the nineteenth century, there is evidence that a game akin to hockey was played on the Fraser River in 1862. The memoirs of Royal Engineer chaplain Reverend John Sheepshanks, which was compiled in 1909 by author and fellow Reverend named D. Wallace Duthie,¹⁴² details this hockey game played in New Westminster, merely four years after the town’s founding. This game captured the attention of the print media in BC and, conceivably, marked the rise of hockey in western Canada:

In January 1862, winter set in with a severity unusual even in British Columbia ... The frost brought with it opportunities which no Englishman can resist. For the first time since the Creation skating began on the hardened surface of the river ... [quoting Sheepshanks’ diary directly] ‘Hockey sticks were cut from the forest and the male portion of the population ... were engaged in this exciting game upon the broad river... Business is at a standstill, and sleigh-driving and hockey have been the order of the day.’¹⁴³

This description characterizes hockey as being created from the environment, an activity born from nature. Hockey sticks were “cut from the forest,” a description that underscores hockey’s entrenched relationship with the land. In a sense, Sheepshanks’ description serves as a useful

¹⁴¹ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 37.

¹⁴² Craig H. Bowsby, *The Knights of Winter: The History of British Columbia Hockey from 1895 to 1911* (Vancouver, Bowsby, 2006), 19.

¹⁴³ Rev. John Sheepshanks and Rev. D. Wallace Duthie, *A Bishop in the Rough* (New York: E.P Dutton and Company, 1909), 56-57.

creation myth for hockey in western Canada: hockey was a wild sport hewn from nature and directly informed by the western Canadian landscape. Certainly hockey's history in the western regions was not simply a facsimile of central Canadian hockey. Thirteen years before the first 'organized' game was played in Montreal, hockey was alive in western Canada, though perhaps without the polish applied by Creighton.

Corroborating Sheepshanks and Duthie's account of hockey being played on the Fraser River is a newspaper report from January 16, 1862 in *The British Columbian*, a New Westminster weekly newspaper. The article noted that upon "safe passage" for skating being granted by the Fraser River's freezing, many residents began to scramble to procure skates and engage in "playing at ball" and "boyish sports" on the ice.¹⁴⁴ The article from *The British Columbian* does not specifically state that "hockey" was played, however, given the two accounts, it is likely that a form of early hockey was played on the Fraser River in January 1862. Bowlsby suggests that Sheepshank's British heritage allowed him to identify the game as "hockey" and not "playing at ball," likely because of its resemblance to English field hockey.¹⁴⁵ This description of hockey is important, characterizing the way in which the sport was perceived and experienced by those in the western regions. According to the description provided by Sheepshanks, the form of hockey played in 1862 was a wild, "boyish" game, born out of idle time during winter months. This type of game was similar to the various accounts of "shinny" hockey, which was played across North America throughout the late nineteenth century. These games of wild, "boyish" shinny contrasted starkly the more regimented, institutionalized hockey that was seen thirteen years later in Montreal's Victoria Skating Rink.

¹⁴⁴ "A Day Upon the Ice," *The British Columbian*, 16 January 1862, quoted in *The Knights of Winter* by Craig Bowlsby, 19-20.

¹⁴⁵ Bowlsby, *The Knights of Winter*, 20.

“Virgin Territory”: Hockey in Victoria and Vancouver

Though some version of hockey was played on the Fraser River in 1862, this does not mean that a thriving hockey community existed in the western regions prior to 1875. For example, Victoria and Vancouver’s hockey history was greatly affected by environmental impediments that prevented organized hockey from thriving as it had in other parts of Canada. This section addresses the tumultuous hockey history of Victoria and Vancouver prior to 1911 and examines media discussion of hockey games played both in the western regions and in central Canada as well.

There is plenty written about ‘hockey’ in Victoria, BC newsprint in the nineteenth century. However, the majority of these references are discussing field hockey, which was often played during the winter months. One of the first references to ice hockey appears in a Victoria newspaper in 1864, in a story from England about the health of Prince Albert Victor, the son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who was born prematurely. The succinct mention of hockey notes that the parents, briefly taking time to rest from caring for the child, retreated to Virginia Water where “a game of hockey was played on the ice by the gentleman, and the princess herself was propelled several times along the frozen lake in a sledge.”¹⁴⁶ Significantly, one of the first mentions of ice hockey in Victoria referenced an activity enjoyed by royalty, and was a far cry from the impromptu “wild” game described two years earlier on the Fraser River. Despite the mention of hockey in nineteenth century media and the noted occurrence of hockey on the Fraser River in 1864, organized hockey was still decades away from being regularly played in Victoria. In fact, organized hockey did not arrive in Victoria until the twentieth century.

¹⁴⁶ “Our London Letter: The Birth of the Prince,” *The Daily British Colonist*, 11 March 1864, 2.

Following the first instance of hockey in England, there are various nineteenth century accounts in Victoria newspapers of ice hockey games being played, almost entirely in central Canada. Most articles referenced famed nineteenth century teams, such as the Montreal Shamrocks and the Ottawa Hockey Club, which captured the 1892 Ontario Hockey Association Championship. The articles about ice hockey in Victoria newspapers were usually brief and lacking in detail. For example, Ottawa's victory in 1892 merited placement on the front page of *The Daily Colonist*, albeit in a brief section that simply reported the score of the game.¹⁴⁷ Conversely, using elements popularized by people's press newspapers in the nineteenth century, the *Toronto Daily Mail's* two-column, front-page account of the game is sensational, declaring it one of the finest games of hockey ever played despite the fact that their readership's home team, Osgoode Hall, was defeated. The *Toronto Daily Mail's* account of the game also praised the victorious Ottawa side for their "clean" play and for treating those assembled to "an exhibition of hockey as it is played in the home of the sport – and as it should be played."¹⁴⁸ The lack of nuanced reporting in Victoria's newspapers is understandable considering the majority of these games, including the 1892 OHA final, were played several hundreds of kilometres away by central Canadian players with little to no connection to any location west of Winnipeg. It was not until organized ice hockey arrived in Victoria that local media began to pay closer attention. Prior to that, organized hockey in Victoria and hockey media reporting were both in their early stages.

The most significant barrier to the development of organized hockey in BC during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was certainly the climate. For example, on the ice surfaces of Victoria during the first ice hockey game attempted in 1899, "Good play was next to

¹⁴⁷ "The Hockey Championship," *The Daily Colonist*, 5 March 1892, 1.

¹⁴⁸ "Hockey: Ottawa Defeats Osgoode Hall for the Championship," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 3 March 1892, 1.

impossible, but still there was enough fast play at times to keep the spectators interested.”¹⁴⁹ The only qualitative judgment of this early form of hockey was on the speed of the game, which was directly affected by the condition of the ice, while no reference to the events of the game was made. Bowsby notes that in order for this game to have occurred at all, there had to be a reasonably significant confluence of circumstances as, “[Victorians] were lucky if they received one week of ice per year. Vancouverites were lucky if they received two weeks. Thus, it required the conjunction of just the right cold weather, and a contingent of experts to show how the game could be played.”¹⁵⁰ Between 1899 and 1911, there was no mention of local ice hockey in newspaper records. It is likely that many impromptu games of shinny were played in Victoria and the surrounding areas when weather permitted, however, such events were not documented in newsprint.

Vancouver faced similar climactic constraints experienced in Victoria. Between 1900 and 1911, accounts of hockey seasons in Vancouver frequently referenced seasons being abbreviated due to unfavourable ice conditions.¹⁵¹ Prior to 1911, the year in which Lester, Joe, and Frank Patrick pooled their family fortunes together to finance the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, coastal BC was largely without permanent hockey institutions. Contributing to this view, Bowsby characterizes the west coast of Canada as “virgin territory” and noted that there “were no hockey arenas on the coast, let alone artificial ones, and at least half of the inhabitants had never seen the game.”¹⁵² As John Chi-Kit Wong suggests, “In part, the mild coastal climate could not maintain any natural-ice arena, and without such facilities, hockey was not on the local

¹⁴⁹ “Neither Team Won: First Ice Hockey Match Played in Victoria Results in a Tie,” *The Daily Colonist*, 8 January 1899.

¹⁵⁰ Bowsby, *The Knights of Winter*, 51.

¹⁵¹ See Bowsby, *The Knights of Winter*, 51, 60, 76, 105, 123, 164

¹⁵² Craig H. Bowsby, *Empire of Ice: The Rise and Fall of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, 1911-1926* (Vancouver: Knights of Winter Publishing, 2012), 6.

winter sports calendar.”¹⁵³ Between 1875 and 1911, hockey’s development on the west coast lagged behind other regions in Canada due to environmental impediments only overcome when hockey shifted indoors (with the arrival of the PCHA in 1911). However, the history of hockey on the west coast of BC is not fully representative of the entire province. Towns such as Nelson, Fernie, Sandon, Kaslo, Greenwood, and Rossland all had thriving hockey communities many years before the west coast moved hockey indoors. With the proliferation of organized hockey east of the Fraser River, media response to violence mirrored central Canadian trends.

“Savagery, Not Sport”: Organized Hockey in the Kootenay Region

From 1875 to 1911, the Kootenay region of BC was home to one of the most vibrant organized hockey cultures in western Canada. Nearly every town in the Kootenay region had a hockey team, and these teams often played each other in spirited, and sometimes violent games. These encounters certainly captured the imagination of the local media, countless newspaper articles treating hockey violence in the Kootenay region. In consideration of the scope and length of this study, only a select few are highlighted, but Kootenay region newspapers condemned violence through different literary and editorial strategies. For example, when discussing hockey violence or particularly violent players, many newspaper accounts from the Kootenay region used literary approaches, similar to those used in melodramatic theatre already discussed in the central Canadian context.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, in victory and defeat, some papers praised the “clean” play of the local team, coupled with approval for proper, “scientific” hockey, informing how ‘ideal’ hockey should be played.¹⁵⁵ This section discusses the praising of clean play in Kootenay newsprint and examines the negative association of violent play with racially suggestive

¹⁵³ John Chi-Kit Wong, *Lords of the Rinks: The Emergence of the National Hockey League, 1875-1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 64.

¹⁵⁴ This practice was discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 2, Arthur Farrell, *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game* (Montreal: C.R. Cornell, 1899), 64-65.

language. At times, these sources elicited notions of ‘savagery’ when discussing hockey violence. Resistance to hockey violence was clearly evident through the way in which violence was characterized in these newspaper accounts.

As on the west coast, environmental barriers hindered the growth of organized hockey in interior BC in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As recounted in the *Nelson Tribune*, in the Kootenay region there was limited access to ice:

The Rossland city hockey club is scheduled to play the lacrosse-hockey team on Saturday, but the game will have to be postponed as the local men will not be in shape to play even if ice should be available, which is extremely unlikely. When the season opens here, if it does at all, the Nelson club will have a long string of postponed games on their hands to play off in addition to scheduled games.¹⁵⁶

The exasperated tone of the *Nelson Tribune* writer indicates that this was likely not the first time that the issue of suitable ice was a problem for the team from Nelson. Even though the Kootenay region represented a more fertile ground for organized hockey in BC, environmental factors certainly hindered local teams from developing consistent hockey routines. Nevertheless, Kootenay region reporters had an obvious familiarity with the game of hockey, writing in nuanced and even inflammatory prose. Additionally, reporters covering these games often had clearly defined biases towards the home teams, typical of sports reporting throughout the nineteenth century. As a result, the documentary evidence begins to present a concerted critique of acts of violence, either by condemning the violence or by praising clean play.

Between 1875 and 1911, countless games of organized hockey were played in the Kootenay region. Readers of Nelson’s *The Miner* newspaper learned that:

Hockey is wholly a scientific game and while it possesses some of the characteristics of the boyhood game of ‘shinney’ [sic] it is only played by the most skillful skaters. To persons unacquainted with ice skating the agility and dexterity of the players is wonderful

¹⁵⁶ *Nelson Tribune*, 18 January 1900, 4.

and the novice, as he watches as the rapid gyrations of the participants, at once becomes an earnest and enthusiastic advocate of the game. There is probably no game in which the movements of the players are more rapid.¹⁵⁷

Here hockey is described as a “scientific” game,¹⁵⁸ one of speed, grace, and dexterity, echoing the language of Arthur Farrell’s 1899 *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*.¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, throughout these early years, there are many instances of violence in organized hockey throughout BC. Accounts of these ice hockey games in Kootenay region newspapers went well beyond factual recitations of game play, engaging with the emerging melodramatic lexicon seen in central Canadian newspapers.¹⁶⁰ For example, an 1897 game in Sandon, a mining hub in south-eastern BC, was reported in *The Mining Review* using excessively colourful language:

From the warhoops on the rink on Tuesday night, akin to those of the redskins at the battle of Tyconderoga [sic], a passerby could easily imagine there was something unusual on the wing at the rink. It turned out to be a hockey match for bivalves between picked men on both sides of Reco ave ... Referee Grierson had his hands full keeping ‘the house in order,’ though he considered choking off the laughter of the spectators a task too much for Hercules. After an hour’s lively fight with the sticks, it was found that Dr. Young’s side was ahead in the ballot box.¹⁶¹

Even though the game was played between two loosely organized teams, it is clear that the reporter regarded rough play and stick fighting as being less than desirable. This article, both in the description of the violence and the allusion to the battlefield at Ticonderoga, makes the game seem savage and brutal, and therefore free of the organized restraint expected of more experienced hockey players. Significantly, the racialized language which referred to the hockey

¹⁵⁷ “The First Hockey Game,” *The Miner*, 25 December 1897, 1.

¹⁵⁸ For further reading on the significance of “scientific” hockey and its relationship to hockey violence, see John Matthew Barlow, “Scientific Aggression: Irishness, Manliness, Class, and Commercialization in the Shamrock Hockey Club of Montreal, 1894-1901” in *Coast to Coast*, ed. John Chi-Kit Wong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 35-86.

¹⁵⁹ Arthur Farrell, *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game* (Montreal: C.R. Cornell, 1899), 64-65.

¹⁶⁰ See chapter 3.

¹⁶¹ “A Local Hockey Skirmish,” *The Mining Review*, 22 January 1898, 1.

players as “redskins” is meant to imply that the type of masculinity on display at the rink was unsuitable for ‘civilised’ players.¹⁶²

Central to the description of this particular hockey game is media focus on spectator response. In a manner akin to the melodramatic approach to hockey writing seen in central Canada, the reactions from the spectators feature prominently in this article. For example, *The Mining Review*’s reference to the referee’s attempt to quell the audience’s laughter is analogous to the relationship between melodramatic audiences and the performers on stage.¹⁶³ Clearly, the unruly spectators at this game were central to the spectacle of the “lively fight,” witnessed by the reporter. The articles from *The Miner* (Nelson) and *The Mining Review* (Sandon) represent alternative depictions of hockey, as either a science or a skirmish. The article from *The Miner* clearly represented hockey as an imagined ideal. Conversely, *The Mining Review*’s firsthand account of the Sandon game described the less uplifting reality of brutish and rough play. In both cases, the two newspapers present starkly different literary strategies for conveying their distaste for hockey violence, one newspaper choosing to praise clean play and the other criticizing the roughness. From the earliest descriptions of hockey, there seems to be a disjuncture between theoretical conceptions of idyllic game play and the harsh nature of hockey in practice.

In 1899, as Victorians first attempted to organize a game of hockey, a number of teams competed for local championships across the Kootenay region of BC. These often spirited contests occasionally resulted in violent incidents. The *Sandon Paystreak* described an 1899 game between the Sandon and Kaslo (a village in the west Kootenay region of BC) senior teams,

¹⁶² The exclusion of First Peoples from the notion of ‘sportsmen’ is a reoccurring theme in Canadian sports history. For example, in 1873, the Montreal Pedestrian Club specifically excluded “Indians” from their definition of an amateur athlete. See Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 47.

¹⁶³ Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth Century London*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 133.

as “particularly grotesque.”¹⁶⁴ Blending detail and humour, the writer complained that what had transpired barely resembled hockey:

On Thursday evening at 8:30 in the Sandon rink, one of the most remarkable interpretations of hockey yet perpetrated on an unsuspecting public was sprung on the innocents of Sandon ... Jack Crawford left Sam Hunter piled up in a hole in the wall and Bert Dill got so well posted that his bumps would lead a phrenologist to believe that his wife used a rolling pin to enhance connubial felicity ... During the ten minute pause the smoke cleared away and off they were again. This time was for gore ... A sort of aftermath will be arranged to take place in Kaslo under the auspices of the Victorian Order of Nurses.¹⁶⁵

The writer clearly deplored this “interpretation” of hockey witnessed by an “unsuspecting public.” While poking fun at the violence, the reporter was clear that the game bore no resemblance to the ideal game described in *The Miner* two years earlier.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, violence permeated Kootenay hockey and journalistic language became increasingly sensationalist. During the 1901 season, *The Mining Review* reported that “The senior and junior hockeyists met in mortal combat to test which were ablest ... This, like all games of its class, was not without the usual accidents, but we are glad to state that no one was seriously disfigured.”¹⁶⁶ The dramatic language emphasized the severity and ubiquity of violence in Kootenay region hockey games. For example, the use of terms such as “mortal combat,” expressions of relief when no player was “significantly disfigured,” and descriptions of “the usual accidents” illustrate the violent nature of early organized hockey in the Kootenays. Both Sandon newspapers used violence as focal points in game summaries and operated with a spectrum of hockey violence, which positioned acceptable, necessary, or “usual”

¹⁶⁴ *Sandon Paystreak*, 25 February 1899, quoted in *British Columbia Bizarre* by Rosemary Neering, (Victoria: Touch Wood, 2011), 100-1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ “Hockey Notes,” *The Mining Review*, 26 January 1901, 1.

violence against the brutality, sloppiness, and “gore” of the game.¹⁶⁷ This persistent tension between extreme, reprehensible violence and violence that is an accepted part of hockey is one of the most contentious issues among players, fans, coaches, commentators, and scholars, dating back to the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁸ Colin Howell discusses the nature of nineteenth century hockey violence through the use of player archetypes: “In the discourses about respectability and rowdiness in hockey, the key problem was how to distinguish the manly athlete from the violent brute.”¹⁶⁹ Howell’s argument considers the influence of gender and class on hockey violence by identifying that the “manly athlete,” usually from a middle-class background, was able to exercise restraint during game play.¹⁷⁰ Conversely, the “violent brute” appeared to be characteristic of the primal, savage form of athlete, as described in the 1897 article in *The Mining Review*. In socio-economic terms, the “manly” player was normally one from the middle or upper class, and those considered to be violent brutes were usually members of the working class.¹⁷¹

Howell further posits that hockey violence, though largely disliked, was permitted because of the class background of the majority of players in the early years of organized hockey. As Howell argues, “because hockey drew most of its players from the middle class – young businessmen, professionals, university students and so on – and because it had secured the support of important members of the social hierarchy, the game was never seriously threatened

¹⁶⁷ *Sandon Paystreak*, 25 February 1899, quoted in *British Columbia Bizarre* by Rosemary Neering, (Victoria: Touch Wood, 2011), 100-1.

¹⁶⁸ For an examination of violence and its sociological underpinnings in modern hockey, see Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 176-196.

¹⁶⁹ Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers*, 45.

¹⁷⁰ See *Toronto Daily Mail*, quoted in *One Hundred Not-Out: The Story of Nineteenth Century Canadian Sport* by Henry Roxborough (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966), 143, “Sports and Pastimes: Note and Comment,” *Montreal Gazette*, 20 January 1886, 8.

¹⁷¹ Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 45.

by its critics.”¹⁷² When Howell argues that wealth and social standing of players’ insulated organized hockey from serious threats, it was meant as a broad-stroke summary of this issue and should be read within this context. Howell’s method of contextualizing hockey violence through the class distinctions may explain larger trends in central Canada, however, the documentary evidence from the early years of organized hockey in British Columbia does not support such trends. Howell’s framework places order, reason, and middle-class respectability on one end of the continuum and lower-class brutishness at the other. Within this space, some forms of violence were permitted and even encouraged as long as they adhered to the rules agreed upon by hockey ‘gentleman.’ This interpretation offered by Howell marginalizes critiques of violence in the media, relegating criticisms of violence to a type of class-condescension when dealing with opposing teams. However, when the *Sandon Paystreak* reported the “remarkable interpretation of hockey perpetrated on an unsuspecting public,”¹⁷³ the issue of class was absent from the description of the game. Instead, violence, from both the Sandon and Kaslo teams, was interpreted as deplorable.

In the Kootenay region of BC in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hockey was being played alongside emerging class polarizations in Kootenay mining towns. In western Canada, many cities and towns experienced population growth fuelled by westward migration:

While central Canada began a period of industrialization, western Canada attracted immigrant farmers whose products required an adequate transportation system. It was also in the interests of the industrial East to ensure reliable transport to acquire the resources it needed and to carry its products to both domestic and overseas markets. British Columbia, in particular, experienced a surge in population during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ *Sandon Paystreak*, 25 February 1899, quoted in *British Columbia Bizarre* by Rosemary Neering, (Victoria: Touch Wood, 2011), 100-1.

¹⁷⁴ Wong, *Lords of the Rinks*, 65.

Furthermore, the Kootenay region experienced a drastic surge in population in the final years of the nineteenth century as hard-rock mining companies formed several new towns including Greenwood and Kaslo.¹⁷⁵ The relative newness of industry, and therefore class-structures, in Kootenay towns influenced the way that hockey was played and organized. Class tensions in Kootenay mining towns like Rossland were beginning to be recorded in 1899,¹⁷⁶ a dynamic that influenced the development of hockey in the Kootenays. Considered in this context, hockey that was played in the Kootenay region was a game enjoyed by members of an emerging western Canadian middle class. Resistance to hockey violence in the Kootenay region was not explicitly class-bound, but rather a more plainly evident critique of hockey violence. When newspapers critiqued hockey violence in the Kootenay region, their derision was aimed squarely at an aspect of hockey that they considered separate from the game itself.

Organized hockey games were governed by regulations that prohibited acts of extreme violence and lesser acts of aggression, such as tripping and slashing. However, from the early years of organized hockey, there were reports of violence occurring outside the rules of the game. For example, in an 1899 game played by Sandon and Kaslo, the *Sandon Paystreak* noted the game was a “time for gore.”¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, media reaction to such violence is seemingly more complex than simple praise or indictment. Media reports of extreme hockey violence often paradoxically manipulated public interest by simultaneously condemning the violence and promoting the spectacle of the game. As Gruneau and Whitson identify, early twentieth century promoters of organized hockey games believed that an occasional fistfight was

¹⁷⁵ “History Still Standing: A Guide to Historical Mine Sites of the Boundary Country,” accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.empr.gov.bc.ca/Mining/Geoscience/EducationalResources/Documents/Historical_Mine_Sites.pdf.

¹⁷⁶ Jeremy Mouat, *Roaring Days: Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), 89.

¹⁷⁷ *Sandon Paystreak*, 25 February 1899, quoted in *British Columbia Bizarre* by Rosemary Neering, 100-1.

probably good for business.¹⁷⁸ The dual use of violence as a tool for promotion and an issue worthy of public chastisement was also seen in other forms of entertainment during this period. Most notably, Sandon's two newspapers presented hockey violence as a type of melodramatic theatre. The tropes of melodramatic theatre are evident throughout the description of the game between Sandon and Kaslo where the writer strove to stimulate audience reaction to violence. This form of visual storytelling used vivid analogies and sensationalist retellings. The report of the game did not only critique the gameplay but also aimed to make the reader both repulsed and amused by the amount of violence described.

At times, the sensationalist style chosen by many Kootenay region newspapers also explicitly connected violent conduct with villainous character. For example, in 1904, a paper published in the Kootenay region town of Greenwood, BC called the *Boundary Creek Times*, printed an indictment of the violence seen during the "championship of the Boundary":

The hockey match Wednesday evening last ... was a good exhibition of the game if some of the roughness which the Phoenix team displayed had been left at home ... Phoenix may at one time had been proud of her hockey team but the team which played against Greenwood last Wednesday evening was anything but hockey players, not one spark of knowledge of the game was displayed by them from start to finish. Joe Stretzell, the bulley [sic] of the Phoenix team, was quietly placed away in the dressing room and as one of the spectators remarked 'It was worth the price of admission to see him get what he justly deserved.' Stretzell played a poor game, but tried to make up for lack of knowledge by slugging.¹⁷⁹

This description of the "Championship of the Boundary" illustrates a distaste for violence committed against the local team. To the *Boundary Creek Times* writer, the club from Phoenix resorted to violence out of ignorance rather than strategy, which is a curious attempt to rationalize rough play or "slugging." The clearest example of the dismissal of violent play is the

¹⁷⁸ Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 180-1.

¹⁷⁹ "Greenwood Wins: Boys From the City Ice Poor Players and Show Poorer Judgment Throughout the Hockey Game on Wednesday Evening," *Boundary Creek Times*, 26 February 1904, 5.

player identified as Stretzell, “the bulley” who only chose violence because of his poor play. The description of Stretzell’s play, and subsequent punishment, recalled conventions associated with melodramatic villains. In describing the melodramatic villain in *Violent Victorians*, Rosalind Crone explains: “We can see how the gallery, through their expression of rage at the villain, encouraged him to yet further, more dramatic violence, which in turn increased the satisfaction, sense of relief and emotional release felt by the audience on his punishment.”¹⁸⁰ In the aforementioned example, the writer uses a method of dramatic communication that renders the violent player (Stretzell) a melodramatic villain, thereby reducing him to a stock character worthy only of derision. Conversely, the writer praised the “clean” and “clever” game played by the home-town Greenwood team and offered seemingly sarcastic condolences to the losing side from Phoenix: “Any Greenwoodite who witnessed the game could not help but feel proud of the home team for the clean and clever game they played ... In conclusion we extend to Phoenix our sympathy, and invite them to come again, but first be fair, play more hockey and we will give you a right royal time.”¹⁸¹ This passage directly associated Greenwood with fairness and implied that the local team would welcome any challenge from a rival team as long as they adhered to the same level of moral correctness. The further that the player or team strays from the ideal, “scientific” form of hockey, as outlined in *The Miner* article from 1897 and in Farrell’s *Royal Winter Game*, the more that media seemed to criticize the player’s character. For this writer, when violence was brought into the game (in the manner shown by the Phoenix team) the sport of hockey was no longer being played. Most importantly, in the opinion of the *Boundary Creek Times* writer, acts of violence were separate from hockey, and not a part of the fabric of the game. This passage is reminiscent of Howell’s class-based framework, which separates heroic,

¹⁸⁰ Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth Century London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 133.

¹⁸¹ “Greenwood Wins,” *Boundary Creek Times*, 5.

middle-class restraint and brutish lower-class villainy. However, here the division between perceived good and evil is defined by actions on the ice, as opposed to social stratification.

Greenwood was not the only town in the Kootenay region of BC that struggled to accept the place of violence in early organized hockey. In 1905, *The Economist*, a paper published in Nelson, BC, printed a summary of the previous hockey season. The article warned readers that the violence seen in the previous hockey season should not spill over into the spring lacrosse season:

It is unfortunate that a first-class winter sport like hockey should be so often marred by disgraceful exhibitions on the ice on the part of the players. And the same thing might be said of the other great pastime—lacrosse. If rough play was not encouraged, it is not likely that the players themselves would so often resort to brutal practices on the lacrosse field. As is pointed out by an eastern expert on sport, the members of visiting teams are too often regarded, not as guests to whom every consideration should be paid, but as enemies, for whose defeat any unfair advantage may be taken. Instead of generous applause for good play, we hear yells of triumph for any success achieved by one side, and threats and insults against the other, and against the referee if his decision is displeasing. This is savagery, not sport, and indicates some evils that lie too deep to be eradicated by new rules. The Roman vice of taking pleasure in spectacles of cruelty and bloodshed is one against which we should be on our guard.¹⁸²

There are several issues addressed by the writer in this article regarding violence, proper audience etiquette, and the amateur and professional debate. First, *The Economist* article articulated similar sentiments to the *Boundary Creek Times* article from a year earlier, and the *Nelson Tribune* article from five years earlier. All three of these articles regretted, albeit in different ways, that violence had become a part of organized hockey. For example, in referring to “disgraceful exhibitions,”¹⁸³ *The Economist* article addressed notions of honour expected of amateur athletes during this time. According to this particular writer, however, the spectators were partially responsible for the “disgraceful” play from the previous seasons. As noted by *The*

¹⁸² “Prospects Good for Amateur Sport,” *The Economist*, 25 March 1905, 1.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

Economist writer, “If rough play was not encouraged, it is not likely that the players themselves would so often resort to brutal practices on the lacrosse field.”¹⁸⁴ The relationship between the game and the audience was characterized as participatory, with the crowd interacting with and influencing outcomes on the ice in keeping with the melodramatic tradition. Beyond simply feeling satisfaction at the melodramatic villain’s punishment, as was the case with the character of Stretzell in the 1904 *Boundary Creek Times* article,¹⁸⁵ the audience took on an even more direct, participatory role by encouraging them to “rough play,” as was implied in *The Economist*.

Significantly, *The Economist* writer identifies violent incidents in the previous season as indicative of “savagery, not sport,” implying that these were two mutually exclusive concepts. In the early twentieth century, the notion of “savagery” carried complex racial and social implications. Clearly, *The Economist* writer intended to indict violent hockey in some of the strongest terminology possible for that time period. Similarly, the 1897 article in *The Mining Review* made a similar literary choice when it referenced “warhoops ... akin to those of the redskins.”¹⁸⁶ The reader was encouraged to associate hockey violence with savagery, likely using imagery and allusions that would resonate strongly for readers in the late nineteenth century. Additionally, this description of hockey places civility and restraint against savagery, brutishness, and violence. In some sense, the use of this distinctly colonial analogy is an attempt to present violence in hockey as a cultural ‘other,’ distinct from the practices and beliefs of western civilization.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ “Greenwood Wins: Boys From the City Ice Poor Players and Show Poorer Judgment Throughout the Hockey Game on Wednesday Evening,” *Boundary Creek Times*, 26 February 1904, 5.

¹⁸⁶ “A Local Hockey Skirmish,” *The Mining Review*, 22 January 1898, 1.

Another method writers used to resist the influence of violence in early organized hockey was through positive reinforcement of “clean” play. It was common for newspapers to praise teams for not engaging in violent play, even if their local teams were defeated. For example, in 1907, the *Fernie Ledger* noted that, “An interesting hockey match was played here on Thursday night ... Although Fernie was defeated it is no disgrace as they played good clean hockey and are apparently a bunch of good clean fellows.”¹⁸⁷ Even in defeat, the writer mentioned the cleanliness of play. Accordingly, it would seem as though the Greenwood writer may have placed clean play on the same level as success for the Greenwood team. Significantly, it follows that if a team played clean then they maintained the upstanding reputation of the entire town, whereas violent play risked that reputation. In 1907, the *Ledger* used similar language when attempting to rally support for a local team: “We can make Fernie known as the home of good, clean sport and so let us go ahead and do so. We have the talent, we have the experience ... Let us advertise the town and make the name of Fernie known outside of the coal question.”¹⁸⁸ According to the *Ledger*, supporting the endeavours of the local hockey team would enhance the reputation of Fernie. Furthermore, it is noted that “good, clean sport” could remove Fernie from the context of industry (“outside of the coal question”), and the “clean” nature of Fernie’s play was a mark of distinction used to promote the team. In these two media accounts, positive reinforcement of clean play is demonstrated as a method of resistance to violence in organized hockey.

British Columbia certainly provides many interesting examples of resistance to hockey violence in newsprint. Due to BC’s diverse climate, the province’s hockey history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries varied depending on the region being examined. On the

¹⁸⁷ “Macleod,” *The Fernie Ledger*, 17 January 1906.

¹⁸⁸ “Sport,” *The Fernie Ledger*, April 27, 1907.

west coast of BC, organized hockey was hardly visible prior to 1911 whereas in the Kootenay region, hockey was thriving as early as 1897. The availability of newsprint sources reflected this disparity in organized hockey as well. The Kootenay region supplied ample newsprint source material from 1875-1911, while news sources from Victoria and Vancouver were scarce. When evaluating the responses to hockey violence in the Kootenay region newspapers, the evidence supported the notion that resistance to hockey violence was present in media from the first years of organized hockey in the region. To demonstrate this point, this chapter evaluated the way the newspapers praised “scientific” and “clean” play, characterized violent players as melodramatic villains, and dismissed rough play as uncivilised. The examples seen in BC newsprint provide significant evidence to support the notion that hockey violence was not accepted from the beginning of hockey in Canada. Furthermore, documentary evidence as uncovered in BC newsprint challenges present-day claims that Canadians have long accepted violence as a part of the fabric of hockey itself.

Chapter V

Parting Shots: Conclusion

The present-day NHL is faced with the difficult task of determining the appropriate level of violence to tolerate, while still protecting the safety of its players. It appears that with or without fighting, violence will remain a part of the NHL's brand for many years to come, as physical contact remains one of the hockey's most distinctive qualities. Furthermore, many have argued that violence should remain a part of hockey because of its link to the history of the game. For some, hockey's violent past justifies its continued existence in the present-day NHL, even when faced with acts of extreme violence (as seen in 2004 with the Bertuzzi-Moore incident). However, many have spoken out against hockey violence from the earliest days of organized hockey in Canada. The resistance has continued at every stage of hockey's growth in Canada, as similar phrasing has been used to describe events that occurred decades apart.

In 1904, Ontario Hockey Association President John Ross Robertson warned, "We must call a halt to slashing and slugging, and insist upon clean hockey before we have to call in a coroner to visit our rinks."¹⁸⁹ In the 1950s, *Detroit News* Sports Editor H.G Salsinger remarked that, "It is about time the men who own franchises in the NHL clean up their act. Professional hockey has gotten completely out of hand. It has become a mugg's game, where muckerism is condoned."¹⁹⁰ For Salsinger, NHL owners during the 1950s needed to "clean up their act," which is a sentiment shared by then Prime Minister Paul Martin in the aftermath of the Bertuzzi-Moore incident.¹⁹¹ Similarly, an editorial *Kamloops This Week* stated, "The incident was a mugging. If it

¹⁸⁹ John Ross Robertson, quoted in Lorenz and Osborne, "Brutal Butchery, Strenuous Spectacle," 161.

¹⁹⁰ H.G Salsinger, quoted in Adam Proteau, *Fighting the Good Fight* (Wiley Press: Hoboken, 2011), 37.

¹⁹¹ See Introduction.

happened on the street he would have done jail time.”¹⁹² Salsinger’s characterisation of hockey being a “mugg’s game” in the 1950s is consistent with a description from *Kamloops This Week*, which called the Bertuzzi-Moore incident a “mugging.”

The consistency of language used throughout the early twentieth century and into the twenty-first century is remarkable, as these examples serve as a microcosm of the arguments presented in the preceding chapters. In this study, I have argued that hockey’s history has many examples of resistance to hockey violence in the media, beginning with the earliest games of organized hockey. To that end, this thesis has examined the historical context of organized hockey in Canada, the changing landscape of Canadian media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and BC hockey history through the lens of media resistance to violence. This study focused on BC when evaluating primary source materials but other western Canadian locations still have little written about the history of hockey violence in their regions. In the introduction, this study made brief references to newsprint sources from Alberta, however, Alberta (and other prairie provinces) are certainly areas suitable for further study. Perhaps there are similarities between responses to violence among various locations in western Canada, and an exhaustive comparison between western newsprint sources media and sources from central Canada would make for an interesting extension of the issues raised in this study. Furthermore, this study only addressed men’s hockey in western Canada while there is evidence of organized women’s teams as far back as 1899 in Alberta.¹⁹³ Extending this research of media responses to violence into women’s hockey in western Canada is a logical next step and represents another field where scholarship has been scarce.

¹⁹² “Bertuzzi Back Too Soon,” *Kamloops This Week*, 14 August 2005, <http://www.kamloopsthisweek.com/bertuzzi-back-too-soon/> accessed May 28, 2014.

¹⁹³ Gary W. Zeman, *Alberta on Ice* (Edmonton: Westweb Press, 1986), 251.

If the NHL is facing a collective crisis, as outlined in the introduction, it is clear from newspaper accounts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that there were indeed warning signs as evidenced by resistance to violence in early hockey history. Resistance to violence is inextricably linked to the history of BC hockey violence. In chapter two, this study contextualized the history of organized hockey in Canada and discussed responses to violence during the first years of organized hockey in central Canada. In chapter three, this study described the changing dynamics of Canadian print media during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and explored links between melodramatic theatre and descriptions of hockey violence in newsprint sources. Attempts to evoke hockey's violent past as a means of justifying contemporary hockey violence fail to appreciate the extent of resistance to hockey violence from the first time this "grand experiment" captured the imagination of onlookers and, eventually, a nation.

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