

VISITING NASSH
(North American Society for Sport History)
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It wasn't difficult to enjoy the annual NASSH convention, held this year at the beautiful UBC campus with a magnificent backdrop of towering snow-capped mountains. The atmosphere was friendly and informal like ASSH.

I noticed some significant differences, however. NASSH is a lot bigger: there were 150 registrants and some 70 papers crammed into three days. With two and sometimes three sessions running concurrently there were some tough decisions; whether, for instance, to listen to Alan Metcalfe speaking on C.L.R. James or Steve Riess on white ethnics in baseball. I chose Metcalfe on the grounds that I could heckle him if he got any of his cricket wrong.

It is also a much tougher schedule with an 8.15 a.m. start on the first morning and only a concession (for late nights) of an additional 15 minutes - an 8.30 a.m. start - on subsequent days. There were also honour addresses rather than trivia quizzes at the dinners: the John R. Betts Address and Luncheon on the first day and the Maxwell Howell Address and Banquet on the final evening.

Another significant difference was the much higher proportion of women. While a number of them were 'social' registrants - possibly coming for the Expo - there were a significant number of papers given by women. Usually, according to Roberta Park, women give about one-third of the papers. Most of the women in NASSH are human movement scholars who have been prominent from the early days of NASSH when it was dominated by human movement members. Anyway it poses the question: why aren't there more female members of ASSH?

Most of the delegates appeared to be either historians (around 60 per cent) or human movement scholars (most of the remainder). The sociologists and anthropologists have their own societies and journals in North America. Scholars from English, economics, geography, law and other disciplines do not seem to have found their way to NASSH, although some are now coming to ASSH.

With so many papers being given there was all too little, and sometimes no time for discussion of papers in the sessions. However, there was a very successful debate on Saturday night on the future of sports history which generated a very lively discussion. The debate was sparked off by three speakers who took respectively an optimistic (Jack Berryman), a pessimistic/cautious (Bob Morford) and a cautious/realistic (Harry Jepsen) view of the future.

NASSH has one significant advantage over ASSH in that it attracts a wider range of international scholars. NASSH provides the opportunity to meet some of the leading lights of the United States (such as Bill Baker, Ben Rader and Roberta Park); of Canada (Rick Gruneau, Alan Metcalfe and others); of Britain (Tony Mangan, James Riordan and Peter McIntosh) and a few scholars from other parts of the world. I also enjoyed meeting some of the younger scholars now making a name for themselves like Steve Riess and Mel Adelman.

NASSH has built itself up from a membership of 171 in 1973 to 804 in 1985. Initially, the membership consisted of 163 individuals and 8 institutions but now there are a total of 353 individuals and a very impressive figure of 451 institutional members.

Last year we benefited by the presence of two members from NASSH (Chuck Korr and John Osborne) and in a way it was fitting that ASSH could respond with an unofficial delegation of two (Richard Baka of Footscray and myself) here at UBC in 1986. NASSH members don't know a great deal about developments in sport history in Australia but are interested to become more informed.

Past President, Thomas Jable and President Richard Crepeau, and Steve Riess, Editor of the **Journal of Sport History**, are keen to establish greater contact between the two societies. Steve would like to review more Australian books (and I passed on to him a list of books published since 1980) and to publish articles written by Australians. Steve noted, at the Annual General Meeting, that submissions to the **Journal of Sport History** had declined by 50 per cent in the past year due to much greater competition from the expanding number of sport journals.

We have probably reached the stage where more of our members should consider publishing occasional and appropriate articles overseas in the British or North American journals and also publishing material in non-sporting journals, such as **Historical Studies**. This should not, however, be at the expense of our own journal; hopefully, it might be in addition to articles published in **Sporting Traditions**. In addition, too, we might encourage more overseas scholars to publish material in our own journal.

Next year NASSH will meet at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio; the venue in 1988 will be in the south (either at Clemson or North Carolina); and in 1989 there will be a convention at Banff. Richard Baka suggested that ASSH members could organise a panel on Australian sport at some future NASSH meeting. Why not give this some consideration?