

From Knickers to High Fives. "The History of Fitness and Sport in the Quad City Region." Putnam Museum, 1717 West 12th Street, Davenport, Iowa 52804. On exhibit from October 23, 1988-February 5, 1989.

"Grandma, I didn't know you played basketball. And on a team called Suffragette! You really wore that outfit in 1914?" "Can you believe that Chief Black Hawk and the other Sac and Mesquakie men played ball games with as many as 500 men on a side and that they played for guns, horses, blankets and other property?" "Look over here, Augustana College students in 1910 demon-

strated against the football ban at their school. And now in the 1980s they've been division III NCAA champs several times. That's a real switch." "Why, I didn't know the Rohlf's started an exercise club when they came from Germany in 1856." "Look here's pictures of the Quad City Times— Bix roadrace." These remarks could have been voiced by Quad Cities residents and other visitors as they viewed the "From Knickers to High Fives" exhibit at the Putnam Museum in Davenport, Iowa. That exhibit covered 2500 square feet and was preceeded by a brief pictorial and video taped presentation.

The museum staff gathered more than 600 photographs, 300 artifacts, and stories from many people from such diverse places as homes, schools, bars, and of course the *Quad City Times* and its Quad City Sports Hall of Fame.

The exhibit was organized chronologically as well as somewhat thematically. Viewers could readily understanding the relationship between leisure, everyday work activities and community life. Selected titles of the display cases and accompanying articles included the following; the Indians were the First Sportsmen, the Turners Clubs, the Swedish Clubs, From the '30s to the '60s, High school and college athletics, The AIC Steno—an AAU women's basketball team, Fitness is Discovered, Title IX brings a New ERA, and the Tradition Continues.

The Indian exhibit, which included lacrosse sticks and a Mesquakie snow stick, was particularly striking. And the Turner section which included an elaborately beaded and embroidered Turner Society Award belt along with Indian clubs and fencing equipment, club photos, society records, and awards were the visual highlight of the exhibit.

Museum goes left this three dimensional exhibit with a heightened awareness that community history included the story of real, identifiable, knowledgeable people in sport. As in other communities, exercise, fitness, sports, athletics and physical education are part of the life story of almost everyone in the Quad City.

An underlying assumption in the exhibit was that sport provided a neutral and useful vehicle for bringing social and political groups together. As the 12 page exhibit catalogue states, "people who could scarcely agree on anything could come together to support a community team such as the 1933 Davenport Blue Sox baseball team, or to follow local wrestler Farmer Burns on his way to fame or to take pride in local folk who made it to the professional ranks in football, baseball, golf, boxing, and cycling." The exhibit effectively correlated the past with the present.

For several years the Putnam Museum had been considering conducting research on area sport. In 1987-88 the museum received a Federal Institute of Museum Services grant and Director Michael J. Smith and staff decided to use a portion of the grant for sport and fitness research. Two interns spent nine months conducting the research beginning by contacting local people with sport stories. Putnam professional staffers directed the researcher as well as several volunteers in selecting, organizing and arranging the stories, and

The 12-page catalogue with 45 illustrations and several brief descriptions of particular groups and exhibits was underwritten by the *Quad City Times*. In addition, there were approximately 150 individuals or entities that donated or loaned items for the exhibit. Concurrently, the museum scheduled weekly public presentations by “sport history experts.”

The exhibit evidenced careful research in sport history and accurately interpreted the role of sport during the different periods. It was particularly effective in portraying the contribution of the various ethnic groups, the Indians, Germans, Belgians, Swedes, Italians, Irish-who settled in that Mississippi River Region.

The exhibit is not a permanent or traveling exhibit although a videotape has been made and could be procured from the museum. The catalogue is available for purchase. A 20 minute videotape describing and showing the exhibit is also available from the museum.

Iowa State University

Jan Beran