

## Dissertation Abstracts

*Compiled and Abstracted by Stephen R. Wenn*

PETER I. BERG, "A Mission on the Midway: Amos Alonzo Stagg and the Gospel of Football [University of Chicago, Illinois]" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Michigan State University, 1996).

Berg's effort reflects the unabated interest in the coaching career of Amos Alonzo Stagg. Berg examines contradictory evidence concerning Stagg's coaching practices as a means of penetrating the myth associated with him. The emphasis of this effort to deconstruct Stagg is placed on his tenure at the University of Chicago. While Stagg took great pains to position himself as an advocate of pure sport, states Berg, he was not averse to breaking rules in the pursuit of victory. While Berg confesses that "individual genius," his primary explanation for Stagg's success, does not provide the complete answer to this frequently visited subject, he believes that an examination of Stagg's career against the backdrop of an America beset by economic, social, and cultural change and his articulation of "manly gospel" through sport and family values provides further assistance to those interested in understanding the evolution of Stagg's status.

DOUGLAS A. BROWN, "Theories of Beauty and Modern Sport: Pierre de Coubertin's Aesthetic Imperative for the Modern Olympic Movement, 1894 to 1914" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Western Ontario, 1997).

Coubertin, notes Brown, considered Olympism, the ideological foundation of the Olympic Movement, in part, an aesthetic idea. He examines the evolution of Coubertin's aesthetic idea of Olympism during the initial two decades of modern Olympic history. In this vein, Brown focuses on Coubertin's efforts to merge philosophical ideas about art and beauty with Olympism. Primary sources for this study include correspondence between members of the International Olympic Committee, the pages of the *Revue Olympique* (a monthly periodical), and official reports from Olympic Congresses and Olympic festivals. Through an assessment of the aesthetic content expressed in these sources and its relation to Coubertin's theory of sport and the Olympic Games, Brown concludes that three distinct periods existed in which the aesthetic idea of Olympism became increasingly interwoven with a cultural theory of sport and public spectacle. He argues that the "aesthetic idea of Olympism reflected a belief that cultivating an

appreciation for the beauty of sport would produce a sound, class-based society capable of responding cohesively and morally to the challenging conditions of modernity.”

ROBERT S. BROWN, “Football as a Rhetorical Site of National Reassurance: Managing the Crisis of the Kennedy Assassination” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Indiana University, 1996).

With American society shaken and the country’s citizens in a state of mourning in the aftermath of the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a number of societal institutions such as the church, media, and government intervened in the mourning process to reassure Americans and fortify their feelings of national identity. Brown holds that sport can be viewed as an epideictic rhetoric, a provider of messages serving to shape identity, and it is in this fashion that college and professional football, in particular, acted during this period of national crisis, in a similar fashion to the aforementioned institutions.

JON D. CASH, “The Spirit of St. Louis in the History of Major League Baseball, 1875-1891” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Oregon, 1995).

St. Louis baseball fans revelled in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of their beloved Cardinals in 1992. While Cash concedes that the St. Louis Browns, the team that initiated play in the National League in 1892, represent the lineal predecessor to the modern-day Cardinals, he believes that the observance further obscured an earlier period of professional baseball in the city. Between 1875 and 1891, St. Louis baseball teams played in four different professional leagues, and the Browns, as a member of the American Association, battled the Chicago White Stockings in the 1885 and 1886 World Series. Cash examines issues touching upon this earlier period including Sunday baseball, alcohol sales, and the heated contests between the Browns and the White Stockings that reflected the civic rivalry between these two midwestern cities.

ANNE G. COLEMAN, “Culture, Landscape, and the Making of the Colorado Ski Industry” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Colorado at Boulder, 1996).

Through the thematic lenses of class, gender, and ethnicity, Coleman focuses on the emergence and growth of Colorado’s ski industry between 1860 and 1990. She addresses local leisure patterns in the nineteenth century and the change in the mountain communities resulting from the arrival of “European skiing” in the 1920s and 1930s. While urbanites established these regions as “playgrounds,” locals established club structures to facilitate their experiences. Ski communities remained primarily local until after the Second World War when former members of the U.S. Army’s Tenth Mountain Division carved out much of the state’s ski industry amidst a burgeoning consumer and leisure culture. In the post-war era, ski area designers catered to the interests of those seeking a resort experience as

Aspen, Vail, and Steamboat Springs had established historical landscapes based on mining towns or cowtowns by the end of the 1960s. Coleman also notes that the emergence of a culture based on “whiteness, wealth, fashion, fame, and sexiness” accompanied changes in the physical environment. Colorado resort operators have attempted to respond to concerns raised by environmental groups and minority interests in recent years.

DEANE A. LAMONT, “Sport and Leisure in the Building of an Urban Community: The Case of Oakland, California, 1850-1906” (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California, Berkeley, 1996).

Lamont explores the use of physical culture and recreational opportunities as means of promoting the city of Oakland. In the 1850s, Oakland’s climatic and physical environment proved powerful attractants to nearby San Franciscans eager for a day of recreation. For the visitors and the locals, recreation served as a method of adjusting to a new environment or maintaining practices associated with their native culture. Entrepreneurial spirit soon enveloped recreation in Oakland, resulting in the commercialization of leisure practices in some quarters. The growth of this industry encouraged Oakland’s corporate and political leaders to co-opt recreational opportunities in Oakland for promotional purposes at the state and national levels. The positive benefits of sport and recreation to personal health stressed by civic leaders in their promotional campaigns was also transmitted to Oakland’s younger set within both the private and public school systems.

GORDON H. MACDONALD, “Regime Creation, Maintenance and Change: A History of Relations Between the International Olympic Committee and International Sports Federations, 1894-1968” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1998).

MacDonald examines the relationship between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its partner International Sport Federations (IFs) during the first eight decades of modern Olympic history. The emergence of the IFs as key players on the international sport scene, argues MacDonald, reflects a three-stage process. During the pre-World War I era, there was little interaction between the IOC and the IFs, although the period witnessed the creation of several IFs. During the interwar period, relations between the two agencies were often acrimonious as their respective leaders sought to establish the nature of their relationship and their respective responsibilities. It appears that the IOC and IFs had reached an accord on the nature of their interaction. In the post-World War II era, world geo-politics and revenue possibilities inherent in the expanding realm of sports television provided sources of confrontation for the IOC and the federations. Frustrated by the IOC’s sometimes dismissive attitude towards their concerns, the IFs established the General Association of International Federations (GAIF) in the 1960s as a lever for greater influence in Olympic decision-making.

“During this time [1894-1968],” concludes MacDonald, “these organizations created, maintained and changed a regime for Olympic sport through a process of negotiation marked by conflicts, confrontations and concessions.”

ALEXIS M. MCCROSSEN, “Holy Day, Holiday: The Rejuvenation of the American Sunday, 1860-1930” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Harvard University, 1995).

McCrosen examines the challenges to traditional Sunday observance in the U.S. in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She highlights technological innovations influencing travel patterns (railroad, automobiles) and immigration (Catholic and Jewish Europeans) and workplace changes as three significant forces that precipitated debate concerning Sunday customs during this period. Through exploration of diverse sources including congressional hearings, religious pamphlets, and sermons, McCrosen concludes that groups possessing competing interests opted for accommodation, resulting in the survival of Sunday as a day for worship, rest, and recreation.

JAIME W. OREJAN, “A Descriptive History of Tactics Used in Football Association from 1863 to the Present” (Ph.D. Dissertation: The University of Southern Mississippi, 1995).

While Orejan addresses the histories of football, the Football Association (est. 1863), and the game’s international sport governing body (FIFA), the emphasis of this work is placed squarely on the development of team tactics since 1863. Orejan identifies the playing nations and individual players and coaches who have been center stage in terms of the evolution of team tactics and formations. Other factors that have helped to shape tactical approaches to the modern game, such as physical conditioning, condition of the pitch, wind, weather, and equipment, are also reviewed.

TROY D. PAINO, “The End of Nostalgia: A Cultural History of Indiana High School Basketball During the Progressive Era” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1997).

Paino investigates the emergence of, and growing fanaticism towards, high school basketball in three Indiana cities (Muncie, Anderson, and New Castle) during the Progressive Era. He suggests that the high school basketball environment provided an answer to the change in the lives of the citizens of Indiana posed by an increasingly urban and industrial existence and served to foster a sense of community,

AYESHA E. SHARIFF, “Gendering the National Pastime: Representations of Femininity and Masculinity in American Baseball Fiction, 1910-1990” (Ph.D. Dissertation: The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997).

Baseball fiction in the twentieth century, argues Shariff, has provided a forum for authors to address and readers to glean insight concerning shifting gender norms in American society. Shariff based her assertion on a review of baseball fiction penned for an adult audience appearing in publications such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's* as well as a number of popular baseball novels published in the aftermath of World War II. While the national pastime provides the focus and backdrop for these narratives, directed primarily to a white, middle-class audience, authors also used baseball as a means of contextualizing cultural issues such as women's aspirations for work outside the home, women's efforts to engage in political discourse, and the extent of female involvement in sport, as well as subjects such as sexuality, race, and shifting cultural practices due to immigration.

CHARLES W. SINGLETARY, JR., "Senor: The Life of Al Lopez" (Ph.D. Dissertation: The Florida State University, 1996).

Al Lopez's playing career as a catcher stretched over nineteen years, during which time he amassed a total of 1,918 games caught. However, this did not mark his sole contribution to the game. Lopez later distinguished himself as a baseball manager, resulting in his induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame in the manager's category in 1977. Based on oral history and periodical literature, Singletary examines his experiences as a Latin youth in the Ybor City region of Tampa (Lopez was the first big league player born and raised in Tampa) and his place within the first influx of major league baseball players of Latin descent. Also, it should be noted that Singletary did not avoid dealing with a controversial element of Lopez's career, specifically issues pertaining to his treatment of African American baseball players fueled by the past comments of Larry Doby.