

Organized Sport Among the 'Other' Segments of Society: An Introductory Analysis of Canadian Sport: 1830- 1890

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This paper examines the evidence of the active involvement of other segments of the community in playing the sports that developed during the nineteenth century. The involvement of the upper and middle classes is well known and this paper assesses the evidence of involvement by the rest of society as active participants. The objectives of the paper are first to describe who, other than the middle class, participated in the various activities and second to offer tentative explanations for the patterns of involvement with special reference to the nature of the social system.

The involvement of "other" segments of society in organized, amateur sport was neither accidental nor widespread. It occurred only under certain well defined conditions; available free time and the existence of groups large enough to enable individuals to form teams. This occurred first among wholesale and retail outlets, factories, ethnic societies, and two service groups, policemen and firemen. In fact, it occurred only among a very limited segment of society. However this was not the full extent of the involvement of other groups; they were also visible in the growing professional and semi-professional activities. For the most part these involved limited facilities and usually were the result of a challenge from one individual to another.

It would appear, therefore, that *embourgeoisement* would be a more appropriate term than *democratization*. For the most part individuals and groups who were involved in organized amateur sport by 1890 were those most closely allied to the middle classes in occupation and ideology. Participation in organized sport was still restricted by invisible but nonetheless effective barriers of social discrimination.