

Early American Hockey: St. Paul's School, 1860-1915

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St. Paul's School in Concord, NH has often been called the "cradle" of American hockey—an entrepot for the Canadian game that in 1896 began arousing great winter interest in many northern cities, schools, and colleges. In fact, St. Paul's boys played several versions of hockey dating back to the school's opening in 1856. The transformations from "shinny" to an ice version of field hockey to "ice polo" to the "Montreal" game yield valuable insights into how hockey may have evolved elsewhere. But that is only half the story. St. Paul's' hockey prominence stems from the tireless efforts of Malcolm Gordon, who from 1882 to 1915 was a student, player, master, coach, and alumni editor of the school newspaper. Gordon's histories provide the critical clues to the development of hockey at SPS; without his work there would be no history. A closer inspection of the existing documents, however, indicates the complex relationships between performance, memory, tradition, and documentation in the recursive "making" of this hockey history.