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The Indelible Mark of Springfield College: Its Role in Developing Recreation Leadership in Canada 1915 to 1935

The YMCA has been instrumental in promoting recreational activities and services at both the national and local level. In August, 1917 the playgrounds superintendent for the City of Halifax, Nova Scotia was a student from the YMCA's college at Springfield, Massachusetts. In an interview with one of the local newspapers, he was described as bringing to his work "the asset of belief in the sacredness and dearness and potentiality of childhood' as well as "enthusiasm in his work"-a set of beliefs attributed to his "physical training and playgrounds work" at Springfield. Forty-eight years later, Hugh Noble, in his role as the Nova Scotia government's Director of Physical Education and Recreation, considered that "one of the greatest contributions of the YMCA has been trained leadership. The YMCA Training College at Springfield, Massachusetts, sent into the provinces of Canada a number of men who have left an indelible mark upon the life of their times." This paper explores the extent of that "indelible mark" on the delivery of community recreation services in Canada, particularly in the first third of the twentieth century. It uses archival records from Springfield College, publications authored by its faculty, and records of Springfield College alumni. The latter include the Physical

Education *Alumni Roster*, the *Senior Class Folder* and the Springfield College Yearbook *Massasoit*. The *Alumni Roster* provided information about the positions Springfield College alumni held in 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930 and 1935, each individual's degree (if completed), and year of leaving Springfield College. Thus, it was possible to determine which alumni were working in Canada, and which of those alumni working in Canada were originally from Canada.

Canada and Springfield College had long standing ties-not the least of which involves James Naismith and basketball. Five Canadians attended Springfield College in its first year of operation and Canadians also provided funding and trustees to the College. Within two years of the College's opening, donations to support the program were being received from four of the seven existing Canadian provinces. But what became of the products of that flow of students, funds and trustees to Springfield College? What came back to Canada?

Accounts of the early years of the YMCA note that the College played a substantial role in training staff. Springfield College alumni also delivered community recreation services in Canada, as workers in the community, in school and university settings and in commercial enterprises. *The Alumni Roster* publications of 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930 and 1935 show that 43 alumni were employed in Canada. Information on the country of origin was available for 25 of these: 18 were from Canada, 4 were from the United States, and 3 were from Australia or England (two of the latter worked in Canada just before going to Springfield). When they came to Canada after their studies at Springfield College, the Canadians scattered to seven provinces: the Americans worked in Nova Scotia and Quebec; the Australians went to Quebec; and the Briton went to British Columbia. Of the alumni employed in Canada, 24 worked in Canadian YMCAs; 10 were in school and university settings; 6 operated in assorted commercial enterprises, only one of which was related to physical training; 2 were working in community settings; and 1 gave no information about his work. Among these men are three whose careers are worth investigating in depth. Arthur S. Lamb (B.P.E., 1912), originally from Australia, was the long time Director of the McGill University Physical Education program and founding president of the Canadian Physical Education Association. Hart Devenney (B.S., 1927), went from Ottawa to Springfield College and returned to Canada to work first with the YMCA in Montreal and later as director of youth programs for the Province of Manitoba and contributor to the development of national policy on recreation. Terry Osborne (B.P.E., 1922), originally from Port Jefferson, New York, came to Canada after Springfield College and became Director of Physical Education at Acadia University and participated in several national and international conferences on recreation and leisure. Each of these made his own indelible mark on his times. This paper describes more fully the lives of these three individuals, their work in the context of their times and the contribution of Springfield College to that work.