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## **Manipulating Movement: Official Rendering on Native Cultural Practices, 1880-1930**

Last year at NASSH, I outlined the historical patterns of various North American Native cultural practices (i.e., sports, indigenous games, ceremonials, powwows), relative to each other, from 1880 to the present, based on secondary accounts of various activities. My intent was to remove socially constructed separations between the various activities and their historical renderings, and instead to view them as a totality, noting their relationship to each other. This paper continues that process. Using the same broad definition of physical cultural practices, I intend to examine the “official” federal government accounts of Native cultural activities in Canada from 1880-1930 to construct a history of government attitudes towards the various traditional (e.g. indigenous games, potlatches) versus mainstream (e.g. sport, agricultural fairs) Native activities. This paper thus provides 1) a history, across Canada, of various physical cultural practices, 2) government attitudes towards each of these activities, and 3) government efforts to foster or eliminate these various activities. In this way, I will be exploring the thesis that the federal government actively supported competitive physical cultural practices, such as sport, in order to supplant traditional physical cultural practices along with their underlying religious systems. Theoretically, I am examining the ways in which select cultural practices are actively marginalized, while other activities are naturalized as “appropriate”, over time.

The Sessional papers for the Department of Indian Affairs will be used to explore this thesis, beginning with the inception of the Department in 1880, and continuing until the cessation of the Sessional Papers in 1930 (at that time, they were replaced by Annual Reports for each federal department). Within these Sessional Papers, I am analyzing the extensive annual reports of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs concerning matters of a cultural nature (e.g. sport, powwows, ceremonials, fairs). I will also examine annual reports on the Six Nations Reserve (by the local Indian Agent) and the nearby Mohawk Institute, a residential school. I am comparing the patterns found in the local Six Nations context with broader patterns evident across Canada and secondary accounts on Native cultural practices in the literature. We know that the Potlatch Law of 1885, making potlatches illegal, was followed by further federal amendments to the Indian Act controlling Native cultural practices, such as the banning of the Sun Dance and Native involvement in fairs without permission from the Indian Agent. We also know that recreation, in some form, was present in residential schools, and that traditional cultural practices were removed from the Indian Act, but it is not clear how, and when, the shift occurred in attitudes towards these cultural practices, and how this shift was influenced, if at all, by sport. By analyzing government records throughout this time period, I will

thus try to explain the ways that sport has been used by government to shape the lives of Native Canadians, and provide a systematic look at the practices and attitudes of a select community and residential school, contextualized within broader Canadian developments. Finally, this analysis will serve as a basis for future work looking at the histories of other Native groups in Canada and the United States, and the federal American government treatment of Native Americans concerning their various cultural activities.



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