

A HISTORY OF SPORT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA  
TO 1885:  
A CHRONICLE OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the development of early sporting activities in the province of British Columbia. Contemporary newspapers were scanned to obtain a chronicle of the significant sporting developments and events during the period between the first Fraser River gold rush of 1858 and the completion of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. During this period, it is apparent that certain sports facilitated a rapid expansion of activities when the railway brought thousands of new settlers to the province in the closing years of the century.

During the early years of settlement, the physical recreation activities of dances and balls, picnics and sports days, and other festivities provided the community with an opportunity to acquaint itself with new members and customs, while they relaxed in a common leisure pursuit. The addition of an element of competition into such day to day activities as hunting, fire-fighting, and occupational trade appear to have lent excitement and enthusiasm to frontier existence. The almost universal enthusiasm for betting or wagering provided an element of anticipation to add further zeal to life.

The following activities attained some degree of organization in the region during the 1860s: Billiards, Bowling, Boxing, Canoeing, Gymnastics, Handball, Sailing, Skating

and Quoits. By the 1880s, Curling, Cycling, Lacrosse, Sailing, and Tennis had also become established. The major sports during the period were Baseball, Cricket, Football, Horse Racing, Rifle Shooting, Rowing, and Track and Field.

Competition in all of these sports was initiated in the early 1860s. With the exception of Baseball, an American derivative of the English 'rounders' these sports were all actively promoted by the Royal Navy, stationed at Esquimalt. Significantly, the officers of the fleet served as models of upper class behaviour and had a marked influence on the emerging colonial society. As representatives of the gentry of England, these officers provided leadership in the sports and activities which were a part of their British heritage.

Throughout the period, regular participation in sporting activities was restricted to the wealthy, leisured class. The participation of the majority of the population was limited by long hours of work, which were not significantly reduced until after the period. The completion of the transcontinental railway in 1885, marked a new era for British Columbia and for the history of sport in the province. The huge influx of settlers brought new technology and ideas and radically altered the population distribution within the province. Thus, as the turn of the century approached, many new sports groups were formed to meet the needs of the increased population.

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PREFACE

In the haste and turmoil of modern society, the relevance of history may well be obscure, but the past is so often the key to understanding the present. In describing the benefits of historical study, Wilcox stated that

The discipline is much more than a frustrating effort to satisfy curiosity about the past. Its value for contemporary society is real if indirect; it provides no reliable basis for extrapolating the process of future change, but it can reveal, however imprecisely, the forces of change that are molding the present ... Historical inquiry, like any emphatic engagement with human beings in their full complexity, has for its main result not theory, but a deepened awareness.<sup>1</sup>

The development of this awareness, a heightened consciousness and understanding, can be of great value to society, permitting a more sensitive and knowledgeable appraisal of present conditions.

The very nature of sport, with its rhythmic, seasonal variations, accelerates change with a tempo that thrusts us from one championship series into the middle of another, denying a 'time-out' for reflection. In the excitement and anticipation by which we devour the prospectus for the forthcoming series, the results of the previous season lose their significance and the attention we devoted to our heroes of yesterday is transferred to new and seemingly brighter stars. Through this constant process of turnover and change, "the past and its heroes are soon lost to the collective memory".<sup>2</sup> To preserve these memories, it seems essential that they be properly recorded in the present, while efforts should be made to rediscover the experiences of years gone by.

CHAPTER 1INTRODUCTION

The importance of sport within the historical context is evidenced by the fact that psychiatrists, sociologists, and particularly, educators have recognized sport as a part of every culture that has ever existed.<sup>1</sup> Thus, sports and games have been seen to "provide a touchstone for understanding how people live, work, and think and may also serve as a barometer of a nation's progress in civilization".<sup>2</sup> Yet, there is a great dearth of historical analysis of sport. The explanation for this lack of acknowledgement of sport as a significant factor in cultural history is simply due to the nature of historical inquiry. History is written and, in many ways, created through the interpretation of past events according to those factors which the scholar considers significant - and certainly, the drama and intrigue of the political arena are the factors to which the historian has conventionally been drawn. Cozens and Stumpf have commented on this phenomenon by stating that

...an examination of the works of early historians would lead the reader to believe that individuals were born and they died, they earned a living, fought in wars, and elected other individuals to political office, but they never played.<sup>3</sup>

This general lack of historical consideration of the leisure activities of our ancestors raises intriguing questions. For example, just what did the miners of the great Fraser and Cariboo gold rushes do to occupy their non-working time? Are we to be satisfied with an assumption, based on the legends of

frontier existence, that recreational time was spent only in the saloons and at the gambling tables. Such an assumption would logically suggest a stereotype of the early miners as being a rough and ready lot with little interest other than a lust for gold and wealth. However, if we question the stereotype, we are forced to re-appraise the nature of the frontiersmen and to ask again, what did they do in their leisure time? And what of the people in the cities? Were their activities similar or did their urban residence cause them to engage in significantly different activities? How were those activities influenced by the changing times, new technology, new settlers? By asking such questions we may find answers which lead to a completely new perspective in the analysis of our culture. As Sir Arthur Lunn has said,

The historian...is apt to forget that sport in some form or other is the main object of most lives, that some men work in order to play, and that games which bulk so largely in the life of an individual cannot be neglected in studying the life of a nation<sup>4</sup>

In sport there are many fascinating stories to be told. These stories will not merely reflect the chronology of sporting developments, but they will increase our understanding of the whole life of our ancestors and of our heritage.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly true in British Columbia where, during a few short years the influx of divergent ethnic and cultural groups transformed a vast wilderness to support a booming industrial society. Since the social conditions of both integration and the preservation of ethnicity have been seen to be profoundly influenced by recreational activities,<sup>6</sup> the sporting history

of British Columbia promises to present a fascinating and colourful image of a significant part of Canadian life. As William Perkins Bull has written,

The spirit of a nation expresses itself no less in its play than in its work, and no history of any British people would be complete without a reference to sport.<sup>7</sup>

The following paper is an attempt to describe a small portion of Canada's sporting history and deals only with the early, formative years of British Columbian society. Hopefully, it will serve as a foundation for further research into the province's sports heritage.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of sporting activities in British Columbia during the period between the first Fraser River gold rush of 1858 and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. The intent is to obtain a concise chronicle of the significant developments and events in sport as the early British colonies matured through rapid expansion toward stability as a province in the Dominion of Canada.

#### NEED FOR THE STUDY

1. A thesis on an aspect of a nation's culture would seem to need no further justification than the fact that it chronicles and submits to some analysis, a fascinating and colourful image of that nation's life. Yet, an important institution such as sport has generally received little attention from

historians, causing a recent author, G.M. Lewis, to state that,

Sport was and is such an important part of the American experience that its past neglect as suitable subject matter can not continue.<sup>8</sup>

2. Since sport is part of the over-all life experience of man, we may be better able to understand the structure and function of society through the study of sport. In tracing the development of sport in British Columbia, its pattern of growth may serve as an indicator of a shift in its position within society, reflecting a change in societal values. Thus, the history of the culture may be incomplete without adequate investigation of the sports institution.

3. A knowledge of our heritage will give us a better self-understanding and a better understanding of how the contemporary sports scene has been established.

4. The need for a study of sport in British Columbia during this period is further justified by Lindsay's comment that

only by further delimitations in time span and regional consideration can such a general topic [as history of sports in Canada] be more fruitfully examined.<sup>9</sup>

#### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Background information for the general history of the region has been taken from the authoritative work of Margaret Ormsby, British Columbia: A History. The information on sport has been gleaned primarily from contemporary newspapers. The major source has been the British Colonist of Victoria, while the British Columbian and the Mainland Guardian of New

Westminster and the Cariboo Sentinel of Barkerville have also been most informative. When available, the original newspaper was consulted, but the vast majority of the research involved the use of microfilms. The method of researching these newspapers was to quickly scan the pages of each edition, concentrating on the third page, on which the bulk of community news and events were generally reported. However, for the editions of the British Colonist published after 1870, a more expedient method of research was employed by referring to the sporting topics listed in the index to that newspaper, which is housed in the provincial archives at Victoria.

The criteria for examination, or the determinants of significance, of sporting activities has been based on the major elements of sports as cited by Kenyon: forms, participants, facilitators, and situations.<sup>10</sup> These include such factors as the nature of the activity (ie. distinguishing between types of football - rugby, association, and Canadian) and the commonality of rules; the extent of participation, the level of competition, and the degree of spectator appeal; outstanding individuals and groups; and unique, prestigious, or otherwise historically important occasions (ie. the first recorded event).

By the nature of historical investigation, the inter-relationships between disciplines within history is inevitable. According to Commager,

Tackle any major problem in history and you will discover at once that you can not understand it in isolation, but that you are involved in politics, international relations, science, technology, economics, psychology, and morals... The fact is that men and women do not live in compartments labelled 'politics' or 'law' or 'religion' or 'economics', they live in all simultaneously...History is as all embracing as life itself and the mind of man.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, in order to maintain historical continuity and significance, an attempt has been made, where appropriate, to include brief references to factors beyond the scope and intent of this paper.

### LIMITATIONS

Wedgewood described the most important limitation placed on every historian when she said that

The historian ought to be the humblest of men; he is faced a dozen times a day with the evidence of his own ignorance; he is perpetually confronted with his own humiliating inability to interpret his material correctly; he is, in a sense that no other writer is, in bondage to that material.<sup>12</sup>

The historian is the victim of fortuity. He must work with whatever material comes to hand and often, much of the relevant and essential material is lost to his investigation because it has never been compiled or because of the erosion of time, whereby valuable information has suffered from neglect, natural causes, or even deliberate destruction.

Another limitation of historical inquiry is that of distortion. As readily evidenced in modern newspapers, what attracts the record-keeper is the dramatic, bizarre, and catastrophic. Thus, the record of events may be contaminated by the biases and interests of the writer, resulting in either exaggerated narrative or complete neglect. A particular limitation of this study is that the contemporary newspapers did not provide systematic or thorough sports coverage, and, due to the limitations of space, often gave only brief announcements regarding community activities.

This study is further limited by the impracticability of reading the contemporary publications in their entirety. The sheer volume of the literature may well have concealed notes on sporting activities which are significant to the study. Furthermore, some sections of the original newspapers and some of the microfilms were extremely difficult to read, thereby increasing the possibility that significant data has not been uncovered. Such is the problem of historical investigation in which there is always the chance of new information coming to light, new ideas, or new interpretations to rewrite history. Thus, it may be said that the historians' work is never complete.

#### DELIMITATIONS

1. This investigation will be confined to sporting activities which are basically of European origin. Activities of the indigenous population are not discussed unless they can be seen to have particular relevance to the development of sports within British Columbia. This does not dismiss the games and contests of the native Indians as being insignificant to British Columbian culture, but they can not be included within the scope of this paper because a completely different method of research is required to do more than a superficial survey of Indian sport.

2. The investigation is confined to the area known as the Province of British Columbia, on the western coast of Canada.

3. The time period under consideration ranges roughly from 1858, the year the first contemporary newspapers were published, to the year 1885, when British Columbia entered a new era of population growth, following the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

### DEFINITIONS

The term sport has many ambiguous connotations. On the one hand, it may be considered to refer to a game occurrence in which elements of activity, competition, and organization are present. However, in modern times, it may be necessary to distinguish between such competitions as a pick-up game of football or street hockey and a highly organized competition in a stadium or arena. The former is termed a game and the latter, a sport, the discrimination being based on the wide discrepancies of competition, organization, and skill requirements, whereby the sport gains a marked increment in public interest and influence. In order to avoid these distinctions, a more encompassing definition may be used, such as that provided by Loy, who said that sport refers to "the totality of institutionalized games whose outcomes are dependent upon physical prowess".<sup>14</sup> However, neither of these definitional efforts is completely appropriate to the activities of the period with which this paper is concerned.

Since the paper deals with a time period in which the sporting activities of the region were in the early stages of organizational development, current definitions of sport lack meaning and context. Thus, for the purposes of this study,

sport is considered to loosely refer to a host of physical recreation and leisure pursuits which generally involve some form of competition or gross bodily movement.

CHAPTER IIBACKGROUND HISTORY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Until late in the eighteenth century, the Pacific North West lay undisturbed by the white man. It was only through the need for a shorter route to the Orient, triggering the search for a North-West Passage, that the European civilization came to recognize the value of this remote region. In 1764, Russian explorers discovered the riches of sea otter fur, arousing the curiosity of the Spanish, whose ship Santiago, captained by Juan Joseph Perez, gained the first recorded glimpse of the Queen Charlotte Islands on July 17, 1774. Four year later, in 1778, England's Captain James Cook found not only shelter in Nootka Sound, but an abundance of furs and strong timbers to repair his ships.

In subsequent years, Russian, Spanish, American, and British vessels sailed the coast in the two-fold objective of obtaining furs from the Indians, to be sold for high prices in China, while hoping to stumble on the elusive passage through the continent. Thus, by the time Captain George Vancouver reached North America, in April of 1792,

fur-traders had named coves, islands and capes after their patrons, sponsors, and relatives, and had visited all the western inlets between the mouth of the Columbia River and the Queen Charlotte Islands.<sup>1</sup>

However, their hurried excursions had failed to provide an accurate knowledge of the coastline, leaving Vancouver's charting crews to discover that a North-West passage through the continent did not exist.

Meanwhile, the search was continuing from the opposite direction - by land. On July 22, 1793, Alexander Mackenzie pushed his way out of the forest to reach Bella Coola Inlet, missing one of Vancouver's charting crews by only a month.<sup>2</sup> Succeeding voyageurs also penetrated the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains and, in the name of the North West Company, built small stockaded forts on the upper reaches of the Peace and Fraser Rivers, to form the nucleus of the first permanent white settlement in the Pacific North West. Fort St. James, built on Stuart Lake during the summer of 1806, became the capital of a rich fur trading district which the explorer, Fraser, called New Caledonia. On his travels south, Fraser was able to reach the delta of the treacherous river which bears his name. Here he visited the Indian village of Musqueam, containing a house fifteen hundred feet long and ninety feet wide.<sup>3</sup> Other explorations discovered the lakes of the Okanagan valley and soon, a chain of forts was established along the principle waterways leading to the coast.

Life on these distant forts was undoubtedly lonely, but on the larger posts, pleasant diversions could be found. At Spokane House, which even had a ballroom,

traders and clerks sat down to a good table and fine wine, and enjoyed the companionship of attractive native women, music and a supply of fairly entertaining literature.<sup>4</sup>

During the summers, the Canadian traders were kept busy trying to outwit their American counterparts, who were also striving to capture the monopoly on bartering with the Indians.

However, with the importation of Iroquois and Sandwich Islanders,

the traders had more leisure time and became almost sedentary during the long winter months, when the major recreation was "strolling on the rocky beach or on trails cut through the deep forest".<sup>5</sup>

The thrust of the overland beaver trade rapidly changed the economic orientation of the region.<sup>6</sup> Ties with Canton were weakened in favour of the lucrative European markets via San Francisco. In order to offset the natural intrusion of American influence into what had been a Canadian financed venture of exploration and development, it became essential to establish a more self-sufficient community. The vessel Beaver was dispatched from Gravesend in August of 1835, destined for Fort Vancouver, where it was to be fitted as a steamer and fueled by the coal deposits in the north of Vancouver Island. Here, it would provide a speedy service between such concerns as the flour mill at Fort Alexander and the fishery at Fort Langley, as well as efficiently carrying furs and trade goods throughout the region. In order to maintain control of the coast, the Hudson's Bay Company, (H.B.C.), which had recently absorbed the North-West Company, contracted to supply food from its new agricultural settlements to the northern Russian posts. Thus, "the price of victory on the sea coast was the expansion of farming and the introduction of settlement inland".<sup>7</sup>

The threat of American expansion continued in this area which, as yet, had no boundaries. As the beaver and marten populations became ravaged, forcing the price of pelts to a level which London tastes and pocket-books were reluctant to

pay, the H.B.C. clampered for protection of its industry from the spread of American traders. To investigate the situation, Captain, the Honorable John Gordon, was sent to the post of Victoria, which had been established on Vancouver Island on March 3, 1843, by James Douglas, the Chief Factor of the H.B.C. Here, Gordon was entertained by Roderick Finlayson, who took him riding and hunting in the vicinity of Cedar Hill.<sup>8</sup> The British government was impressed by the urgency of his report and, on June 15, 1846, signed the Oregon Boundary Treaty, agreeing with the American government to extend the boundary along the 49th parallel. Although the agreement was not to the liking of the H.B.C., which was desirous of a more southern boundary, the British decided not to press the point in light of such political considerations as fear of war with the United States (at a time when relations with France were strained), restricted finances, and the fact that the recent repeal of the Corn Laws might bring down the cabinet before the treaty was settled.<sup>9</sup> At least, the treaty provided a recognized boundary, assuring lands over which the H.B.C. had legal authority.

Despite the treaty's recognition of sovereignty, the proximity of the area to American settlement would always hold the danger of absorption by an American population, unless the region was properly colonized by Britain. In particular,

...the need for a British foothold on an island with harbours suitable for naval stations, had acquired a new significance with Mexico's cession of California and other territory to the United States in the spring of 1848.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, consistent with its policy of using private companies as colonizing agents throughout the Empire, the British government

issued the H.B.C. with proprietary rights over the new Colony of Vancouver Island, on the condition of settlement, and appointed Douglas as Governor in May of 1851.

The development of Vancouver Island was intended not only as a bulwark against American land-grabbers, but as a colony of British landholders who would maintain the social and ethical standards of mid-Victorian England.<sup>11</sup> The English settlers and visiting naval officers slowly had an impact on the life of the old fur-traders, whose Indian women learned the dance steps they saw aboard Admiral Fairfax Moresby's flagship, the Portland, and quickly acquired the graces, manner and speech of more polite society.

Men who had danced reels, perhaps once a year to the tune of a fiddle at the exclusively male celebrations on New Year's Day at fur-trading posts, adjusted to the new ways,<sup>12</sup>

while their children attended school and sometimes picnics held by Mrs. Douglas at the North Dairy Farm. Here, they learned new games, replacing their bare-fisted scuffles with Indian boys for the more genteel cricket and rounders.

The promised wealth of the California Gold Rush drained the labour supply of Vancouver Island, but the stable population of Victoria reached some four hundred adults in 1855. In March of that year, the Craigflower School was opened. Riding parties for visiting mid-shipmen were organized by the pretty daughters of Captain Langford, and the whole community celebrated the annual Victoria Day with races at Beacon Hill.<sup>13</sup> Also in that year, a great picnic was held to celebrate the fourth birthday of the Governor's son, while other entertainments

during the year included theatrical balls and plays performed by the H.B.C. workers. In Nanaimo, where coal-fields had been opened by the Company in 1852, the miners were used to more simple pleasures and fewer comforts. Guy Fawkes Day was an occasion for a great celebration, but apart from this outburst of frivolity, the community centred its activities in the church.<sup>14</sup>

In 1857, the economy of the colony was once again dramatically changed. Gold had been discovered on the North Thompson River and a great rush of American gold seekers brought new prosperity to the region. For some years, the H.B.C. had been quietly collecting gold dust from Indians and its French-Canadian employees. In 1852, iron tools and some primitive implements had been provided the Indians for early mining attempts, but until 1856, the amount of gold procured by the Company had been small. Once news of the find leaked out of the colony, the rush was on and some ten thousand men started up the Fraser River between May 15 and June 1 of 1857. By the end of the year, that number had swelled to twenty-five thousand.<sup>15</sup> The following spring, Victoria became crowded. American steam companies capitalized on the bonanza by reducing the fare from San Francisco to Victoria from \$75 to \$30 and filled their ships to three times their normal capacity. The rush brought not only miners, but merchants and other people of standing, so that within a period of six weeks, two hundred and twenty-five buildings, including nearly two hundred stores, were constructed.

The Fraser Gold Rush, one of the most sudden in history,

produced another threat to British sovereignty and the commercial monopoly of the H.B.C. American enthusiasm for expansion was exemplified by these lines from the newspaper, the Pioneer and Democrat of Olympia,

Soon our banner will be streaming,  
 Soon the eagle will be screaming  
 And the lion - see it cowers  
 Hurrah, boys, the river's ours.<sup>16</sup>

Alarmed by this disrespect for imperial rights and concerned by the danger of Indian warfare spreading from Washington Territory into Crown lands, Douglas demanded that miners obtain British permits for their ventures. To further protect its sovereignty, the British government backed up Douglas' demands by establishing, on August 2, 1858, the new and separate Colony of British Columbia on the mainland. Shortly thereafter, Colonel Moody of the Royal Engineers, dispatched to build a communications system for the colony, to provide military protection, and to enforce British laws, established the capital at the townsite of Queensborough, later renamed New Westminster.

In the ensuing years, the quest for gold pushed farther north, into the Cariboo country, attracting colonists to establish agricultural settlements in the Interior. Large strikes at Keithley Creek and at Antler, where shafts of forty to fifty feet were required, forced the miners into formal partnerships in order to raise the essential capital. There were often good returns for the investment and by the end of 1862, the Cariboo district alone produced over \$2.5 million of gold. For those miners not so fortunate to find a strike, good wages could be had by working on the roads. Thus, by

the end of 1863, British Columbia was able to boast an extensive inland highway and permanent agricultural settlements.<sup>17</sup>

The major communities of the new colony prospered and rapidly advanced their cultural pursuits. In April of 1864, the capital at New Westminster had a population of two to three hundred people and was equipped with a small public school, some fine churches, and a hospital named the Royal Columbian. The government officials and other notable citizens enjoyed amateur theatricals, music, literature, card-playing, tennis, cricket<sup>18</sup> and balls, such as that held by the new Governor, Seymour, in honour of the Prince of Wales' birthday. Meanwhile, the bustling northern mining towns of Camerontown, Richfield, and Barkerville (the latter soon to become temporarily, the largest centre of population west of Chicago and north of San Francisco)<sup>19</sup> supported numerous saloons, supplying meals, liquor, card rooms, and dance halls. Communication with the outside world was greatly enhanced by the arrival of the telegraph, recently connected with the Atlantic Cable, reaching New Westminster in April of 1865, and soon extending to Quesnel. The circuit ridings of Judge Matthew Begbie ensured a just enforcement of the laws, enabling the colonials to conduct their affairs with a considerable degree of security. Thus, surrounded on British soil by an overwhelming number of foreign opportunists, Douglas' prompt action on behalf of his Crown and Company "had firmly planted British institutions in their midst and engendered respect for British authority".<sup>20</sup>

The stability of the region seemingly established, the

next significant colonial development was the union of the mainland with Vancouver Island. On November 19, 1866, the two colonies were united under the single name of British Columbia, but the colony's destiny as part of the British Empire was still not secure. Incensed by the monopoly of the H.B.C., a group of businessmen with strong ties to San Francisco, proposed union with the United States and even petitioned the American President for annexation. In the face of this threat, coupled with the problem of increasingly expensive colonial administration, it was finally agreed that the colony should enter the recent Canadian confederation, itself largely a response to fear of American absorption. Thus, on July 20, 1871, British Columbia became a province in the Dominion of Canada.

Internal discord was not only evident between British and American interests. While the interior settlers had felt they were forgotten by the government officials in New Westminster, the removal of the capital to Victoria fanned an already bitter commercial rivalry between the two ports. The editorial exchanges exemplified the tone of the rivalry as, in 1867, the British Colonist of Victoria described the Fraser River as a "stream of liquid mud" and New Westminster as "a pimple on the face of creation". Meanwhile, in New Westminster, both Governor Seymour and the editor of the British Columbian were quoted as having referred to Victoria as being located on a "frog pond".<sup>21</sup> This sectional rivalry flared again with the deliberation of terms of British Columbia's entrance into Confederation, as the merits of Burrard Inlet clashed with those

of Esquimalt as a terminus for the proposed trans-continental Canadian Pacific Railway. Similarly, the act of 1890, seeking to establish a provincial university, was confronted with the crippling problem of where to locate - on the Island or on the mainland. In fact the rivalry was so intense that the Capital became permanently 'anchored' in Victoria only after the construction of the palatial new government buildings in 1893.

Along with the province's internal differences, it was soon apparent that communication and parallel development with Eastern Canada would be no easy accomplishment. History and the population density would ensure that social, economic, and technological advancements of the rapidly expanding North American society would be centred in the east, belatedly filtering across the expanse of the continent to the Pacific coast. However, British Columbia was separated from the rest of Canada by more than a vast sea of mountains and endless plains. According to Ormsby,

The community, particularly at the southern end of Vancouver Island, where there was the greatest concentration of population, had never been a typical North American frontier settlement. Here, in this "second England on the shores of the Pacific", life was not a desperate struggle against a harsh physical environment.<sup>22</sup>

The pleasant climate and supply of Chinese and Indian labour provided many British Columbians with a highly comfortable life style, afforded them greater opportunities for leisure pursuits, and encouraged a slower pace of life than that experienced in other parts of the country.

The arrival of the telegraph had greatly enhanced contact with the centres of the world and speeded the flow of news and

ideas. The telephone was probably of similar value for local news once the novelty of the new device wore off:

Parties wishing to use the telephone will find the editor's room of the Colonist office open at any reasonable hour day or night, and the curious little transmitter of the human voice on the table at their disposal.<sup>23</sup>

However, it was the railroad which would really unite British Columbia with the rest of Canada. The rapidity of direct rail travel would bring B.C. into much more immediate contact with people from the great cities of the East.

On May 14, 1880, just eighty-seven years after Alexander Mackenzie reached the Pacific coast, British Columbia entered a new era. The dynamite blast that echoed through the Fraser Canyon at Yale that day, heralded the start of the most difficult stage in the construction of the trans-continental rail link with the rest of Canada. In the next five years, thousands of men would work on the road and make their homes in British Columbia. Among these new settlers were great numbers of Chinese, imported by Andrew Onderdonck, the contractor responsible for the B.C. section. These diligent workers provided not only essential labour for the railway, but also added depth and character to the social fabric, as evidenced by the following comment.

The scene at Yale on Saturday beggars description. A thousand white men recently employed on the railroad rushed out of the cars and into the saloons. In two hours the streets were full of lunatics...Twelve hundred Chinese arrived by the same train and went into the woods, and cooked their rice. It is amusing to see the difference between Pagans and Christians.<sup>24</sup>

High in the Rocky Mountains, on November 7, 1885, the last iron spike was driven into the ties at Craigellachie to unite Canada with a ribbon of steel. The following spring, July 4, 1886, saw the arrival of the first passenger train from Montreal to Port Moody, formally initiating the next great wave of growth for the province. The new city of Vancouver, established on a site adjacent to the tiny town of Granville, held the promise of becoming the final terminus of the railway. Within weeks of its incorporation on April 6, 1886, it sported eight hundred businesses and a population of two thousand. By the end of 1887, the population had risen to five thousand and the city which "had sprung to life with all the trappings of the industrialist-capitalist system",<sup>25</sup> welcomed distinguished visitors and more settlers with every arriving train or boat. Despite the fire in 1886, which destroyed all but two sawmills, one hotel, and a few shacks, within two years of its incorporation, Vancouver's population had exploded to eight thousand citizens. This busy centre now contained thirty-six miles of graded streets and miles of wooden paving; held a waterworks and sewerage; numerous warehouses, foundries, and factories; plus the buildings of the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.), its wharves, round-houses, office buildings, and even a four-storey hotel.<sup>26</sup>

In the interim between the driving of the last spike and the turn of the century, startling changes took place in the province. Vast mineral deposits were found in the Kootenay region, creating new mining communities deep in the Interior,

while on the coast, great fishing and lumbering industries were flourishing. The merchants did a roaring trade, benefitting not only from the industry within the province, but from yet another gold strike - the Klondike Rush, which brought prospectors and settlers through the province. The city of Vancouver had mushroomed in size. Only five years after its incorporation, it achieved a population of nearly fourteen thousand, and then more than doubled that number by 1901. Meanwhile, in Victoria, the ten years preceding 1891 saw the city grow by some eleven thousand citizens, reaching a total of nearly seventeen thousand that year (see Table 1). However, in the following decade, with the effects of the railway evident, Victoria grew by only four thousand, being outstripped by Vancouver, which had become the most prominent city in the province. Thus, the advent of the railway had not only promoted a great surge in the provincial population, but it had radically altered the distribution of that population, and had diminished the influence of Victoria. By the turn of the century, less than fifty years after the establishment of the first British colony in the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia had become a prosperous province, supporting a population of 178,000 people<sup>27</sup> and firmly linked with the new and thriving Dominion of Canada.

Table 1 - Distribution of Population  
in British Columbia, 1870-1901

Population of Major Centres in British Columbia*		Populations of Cities and Towns of British Columbia, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901**				
1870		1871	1881	1891	1901	
Victoria & District (Esquimalt)	4,540	Victoria 3,270	5,925	16,841	20,919	
New Westminster	1,356	New Westminster	1,500	6,678	6,499	
Nanaimo	729	Nanaimo	1,645	4,595	6,130	
		Vancouver		13,709	29,432	
		Nelson			5,273	
Cariboo	1,637	Trail			1,360	
Fraser Canyon (Hope, Yale, Lytton, Lilloet)	1,385					
		<u>Total Province</u>			178,000	

\*Adapted from  
Census of Canada, Ottawa,  
1870/71, Vol. 4, p. 376

\*\*Adapted from  
Canada Year Book,  
1936, Ottawa, p. 125

Table I - Distribution of Population  
in British Columbia, 1870 - 1901

Population of Major Centres  
in British Columbia\*

Populations of Cities and Towns of British  
Columbia, Having Over 5,000 Inhabitants in 1931,  
Compared with 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901\*\*

	1870		1871	1881	1891	1901
Victoria & District (Esquimalt)	4,540	Victoria	3,270	5,925	16,841	20,919
New Westminster	1,356	New Westminster		1,500	6,678	6,499
Nanaimo	729	Nanaimo		1,645	4,595	6,130
		Vancouver				5,273
		Trail				1,360
Cariboo	1,637					
Fraser Canyon (Hope, Yale, Lytton, Lilloet)	1,385					

\*Adapted from  
Census of Canada, Ottawa,  
1870/71, Vol. 4, p.376

\*\*Adapted from  
Canada Year Book,  
1936, Ottawa, p. 125

CHAPTER IIIINTRODUCTORY FEATURES OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The intent of this chapter is to enrich further the background of the developing colonial society in British Columbia. The following features provide a little more colour to highlight the growth and organization of sports events.

DANCING

Although dancing was non-competitive during the time period under discussion, it is necessary to make reference to it because of its importance to the social development of the early community. The fur-traders had enjoyed dancing reels amongst themselves, or with their native women, and had even constructed ball-rooms at the larger posts, such as that mentioned at Spokane House.<sup>1</sup> With the arrival of English settlers to initiate colonization of the region, dancing became particularly important as a means of social intercourse, through which the community was to learn new manners and customs. The Royal Navy played an integral part in this social life by providing both the music of the navy bands and the facility for dancing aboard the vessels of the fleet. The arrival of a ship in port provided ample excuse for a dance, and members of the colony were welcomed aboard such vessels as H.M.S. Portland<sup>2</sup> and H.M.S. Ganges.<sup>3</sup>

Since dancing was probably the most popular pastime on the west coast,<sup>4</sup> it was a major event of any celebration. Newspaper notations, such as the following, were common.

A ball was given on Tuesday Evening by the officers of H.M. Ships Satellite and Plumper, and of the Boundary Commission, which was honoured by the presence of His Excellency Governor Douglas, and the elite of the city.<sup>5</sup>

BALL - On the return of the 'Eliza Anderson' this evening, from the excursion to Port Townsend, the excursionists will repair to Assembly Hall, and conclude the celebrations of the Fourth by a Ball - A large company and gay time is anticipated.<sup>6</sup>

GRAND NAVAL BALL - The ball given by Commodore Spencer and the officers of H.M.S. Topaze, on board their ship in Esquimalt Harbour, which took place on Wednesday evening, is pronounced without exception to have been the most magnificent entertainment yet witnessed in this portion of the Queen's dominions.<sup>7</sup>

Some two hundred and fifty people were said to have attended this event.

As noted above, the Assembly Hall of the colonial militia, as well as the vessels of the fleet, were used for balls in Victoria, but the flood of visitors and settlers following the gold rush led to the construction of hotels which also contained dance floors. One of the more popular hotels was the 'Royal', which held a ball to celebrate its opening in 1858.<sup>8</sup> These hotel facilities and other dance floors (ie. Union Hotel and Colonial Theatre) were open to accommodate the general public, but the dearth of female partners undoubtedly contributed to the numerous brawls which occurred.

OUT AGAIN - Singleton Kimmel, stabbed at the dance house by Nelson Hawxhurst, some two weeks since, is now able to walk out. His escape from death is considered almost miraculous.<sup>9</sup>

THE DANCE HOUSE - this institution was re-opened on Tuesday night. A few minutes after the doors were opened, a row commenced; and the regular and special police were called in and cleared the establishment.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from fulfilling the communal needs of the colony, dances were used as a means of raising funds. Various organizations sponsored balls, such as that of the First Hebrew Benevolent Society who, in 1858, realized a profit of \$158 from a Thursday night ball, at which the music was supplied by the band of H.M.S. Tribune.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, a ball was "given in aid of the Victoria Royal Hospital, on Monday Evening, October 31".<sup>12</sup> Talented individuals also used dancing as a means of raising funds for their personal profit, as exemplified by Miss Caroline Chapman, who

...dances more artistically and gracefully than many who are called by the multitude stars. She dresses with a becoming modesty that speaks volumes for her parents and herself, and she is justly entitled to the applause which greets her at every performance. On Wednesday evening she has a benefit.<sup>13</sup>

Miss Chapman was later to travel to Nanaimo to create similar "amusement".<sup>14</sup>

As the colony became more stable, its clubs and societies could afford to become more exclusive and refined. The increasing sophistication of such events as the Mason's Ball, in honor of their patron, St. John,<sup>15</sup> and the functions of the Deluge Engine Company,<sup>16</sup> created a need for dancing instruction. Thus, a Mrs. Nunn was able to open her "Dancing Academy", offering eight lessons per month, on Wednesday and Saturday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.<sup>17</sup> By January of 1863, the city's Dancing Club was able to hold its second "Grand Soiree" of the season<sup>18</sup> and the concern for proper dancing skills soon

led to the opening of another class. Mrs. Digby Palmer's advertisements offered instruction for Ladies and Gentlemen on Tuesday and Friday evenings, at eight o'clock, and for children on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at half past three.<sup>19</sup> Fees for her classes were "adults - \$5, Juveniles - \$3, Private Lessons - \$8."<sup>20</sup>

On the mainland, dancing was also popular. In 1858, a Christmas Ball was held at Fort Yale<sup>21</sup> and, two years later, the non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers at New Westminster "gave a ball at the theatre they have erected by private subscriptions among themselves".<sup>22</sup> In the gold fields, dance hall girls performed in many of the saloons, but more formal evenings were also held. For example, in a single edition, the Cariboo Sentinel referred to a Grand Ball at Camerontown's Pioneer Hotel as being "well attended by ladies and gentlemen from all parts of the creek",<sup>23</sup> while also advertising a forthcoming Miner's Ball and Concert as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations on the 24th of May.

### HUNTING

It is virtually impossible to distinguish between hunting for pleasure or for sport and hunting as a source of provender or security. The two objectives were most likely interwoven and so, it seems likely that such events as the tracking of the various 'panthers' which prowled the woods and farms, also served to provide a strong sense of camaraderie and helped to fulfill the recreational and social needs of some of the members of the community. Thus, the descriptions outlined below are

example characteristics of the times and are used to provide an insight into contemporary life. For instance, the following excerpt from the British Colonist indicates that some of the colonials took an interest in collecting hunting trophies.

LARGE ELK HORNS - We were shown yesterday by a game dealer in Oriental Alley a pair of horns belonging to an elk killed in one of the Gulf Islands, which had 15 sprouts, all told, and weighed 31 pounds.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps sensitized by the rapid depletion of the beaver and marten populations by the greedy fur-traders, it appears that the colonials quickly recognized the need to conserve the stock of wild life. In the spring of 1859, the colonial government passed an act which prohibited the traffic of game (birds) killed during the restricted season. This act was later ammended to completely disallow the killing of game during that period. The following comments are indicative of the concern for the enforcement of the laws and the preservation of game.

ENFORCEMENT OF GAME LAW - The destruction of game during the breeding season is as cruel as it is inexpedient, we think that a few words in relation to the matter may not be inopportune, as several stores in prominent situations daily exhibit for sale the contraband article.<sup>25</sup>

Thursday being the 10th of August, the day upon which the prohibition against killing grouse, and c., expired, there was a general rush of sportsmen, and many a brace of birds were bagged before breakfast. We understand grouse is unusually abundant in the forest back of the city [New Westminster], probably in some degree attributable to the protection of the new game law.<sup>26</sup>

Good shooting could also be found in the northern interior, as evidenced by the report that a Mr. William Forest, while out hunting on snowshoes, was able to bag twenty snipe in one day.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, ducks were so plentiful in the southern region that a party of Victorians, shooting at the mouth of the Snohomish River, "telegraphed to a friend that they were bagging 200 ducks daily".<sup>27</sup>

While hunting and fishing were primarily life support activities, several people participated merely for recreation. Apparently, Governor Seymour was a hunting enthusiast. In the fall of 1864, accompanied by the Honorable A.N. Birch, he travelled to the Sumas prairies aboard his steam-yacht, the Leviathan, to "enjoy a day's sport amongst the game with which the marshy lands abound at this season of the year".<sup>29</sup> In Victoria, the Vancouver Times report on angling was "glad to find that the lakes in the vicinity of the town are affording much sport to the lovers of this act".<sup>30</sup>

Hunting parties were organized on a social and competitive note as exemplified by:

A HUNTING PARTY will start from the Royal Oak Hotel, Saanich Road, on Thursday next, at 9½ a.m., returning at 5 o'clock p.m. The losing party - that is, the man who kills the least game, must pay for supper. A free ball will take place at the hotel in the evening.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, shooting contests were advertised, as in the 1868 grand shooting for geese with shotguns, at Swan Lake, which was followed by a ball. Buses for this event were to leave Victoria at all hours of the day.<sup>32</sup> Later, contests for pigeon shooting from a trap were organized, such as that held on New Year's Day, 1875, at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, at Diver Lake, near Wellington (Nanaimo district).<sup>33</sup> Numerous other shooting contests were also held, but since they were largely

fixed target contests organized by the militia and riflemen's associations, they will be discussed in a later chapter, entitled 'Rifle Shooting'.

Dogs were imported and trained to assist with hunting. The first grey-hound arrived aboard the vessel Helvetia in 1863<sup>34</sup> and later, six fine English harriers were shipped on the Prince of Wales from London, by Wilson Brown of Victoria, and were trained by a club of gentlemen.<sup>35</sup> The use of these particular dogs is not clear, but it is unlikely that they were used for fox-hunting because the heavily wooded terrain of Vancouver Island was not conducive to such an event. It is probable that they were used primarily in the hunting of deer, as evidenced by this story which appeared in the British Colonist in 1868. Following the capture of a live stag, sport was promised in that,

At 2 o'clock on Thursday his stagship will be set at liberty at Ogden Point, and left to run for his dear life, followed by a pack of trained hounds.<sup>36</sup>

However, the hounds were released too soon and the stag was quickly downed, unhurt. When released for a second time, and given a fifteen minute grace, he was off and avoided further capture, causing the British Colonist to remark,

We don't think much of that stag hunt; we don't think much of Wilson Brown's hounds, and we think much less of the management of the whole affair, which otherwise might have ended in a very agreeable day's sport.<sup>37</sup>

Another event involving dogs was the ratting match.

Our sporting readers will be glad to learn that a match has been arranged between George Baker's dog 'Billy', and McDougalls dog 'Pepper', to kill 50 rats for twenty-five dollars aside, to come off at Joe Eden's, Round the Corner saloon on Wednesday evening next.<sup>38</sup>

Again at the Round the Corner Saloon, on Langley Street, a sweepstake ratting match was held in a ten foot circular pit.<sup>39</sup> The results were reported in the Islander.

Baker's poodle, 'Lola', 6 lbs, 3 rats - 2 min. 13 sec.  
 Howard's dog, 'Vic', 19 lbs, 5 rats - 33 sec. (declared foul)  
 Eden's dog 'Rattler', 19 lbs, 6 rats - 1 min.  
 Crockford's 'Vic', 20 lbs, 6 rats - 54 secs.  
 McDougal's dog 'Pepper', 21 lbs, 6 rats - 45 secs.,  
 Shirpser's dog 'Rose', 25 lbs, 6 rats - 45 secs. Shirpser's  
 dog 'Rose' came off victorious.<sup>40</sup>

In an attempt to standardize the competition, handicaps were given to dogs according to weight. For example,

Mr. J.T. Howard's 'Vic', entered the ring last evening to contest the Champions belt with 'Lilly'. As she weighed two pounds heavier, 'Vic' had to kill two rats more within the time allowed her, but she failed to dispose of number 12 in less than 2 min. 48s., thus leaving 'Lilly', who killed 10 rats in 1m. 48s., in undisputed possession of the silver collar, as the Champion ratter of Victoria.<sup>41</sup>

In a later contest, separate divisions were established by size so that while Shirpser's dog 'Joe' took one minute and ten seconds to kill eight rats, Eden's 'Jock' "did the same service to the community"<sup>42</sup> in fifty seconds, to become champion of the heavy weights.

The dogs were used in a more traditional manner in the Interior, where Ormsby reports that Clement Francis Cornwall and his brother Henry had introduced fox-hounds for coyote-hunting at Ashcroft Manor.<sup>43</sup> However, on Vancouver Island, where traditional fox-hunting was virtually impossible because of the heavily wooded terrain,<sup>44</sup> an interesting variation was employed to simulate the hunts of England. The British Colonist announced:

The Paper Hunt - The hares will leave Maplewood (Admiral Hasting's residence) at 2 p.m. to-day. Ladies and Gentlemen who purpose joining in the hunt will be entertained by Admiral and Mrs. Hastings at lunch at 10 o'clock. We hope that a goodly number of our citizens will join in the sport which the Admiral, with a public spiritedness that does him great credit, has inaugurated here.<sup>45</sup>

One of the first hunts was advertised in January of 1863 and had such organization that a manager, Mr. Howard, had been appointed.<sup>46</sup> It would appear that participation in these hunts was permitted by social standing, since one article refers to a hunt being held on Thursday and open to restricted persons.<sup>47</sup> Another hunt, held on a Wednesday, was said to have attracted thirty participants, including several ladies, one of whom made the "kill". The object of the hunt was to trace the appointed "hares", riders who would lead the hunt over interesting terrain, choosing a suitable number of fences and other obstacles to jump.<sup>48</sup> Inevitably, such forays led to complaints from the local farmers, who were distraught about the number of broken fences and unlocked gates which freed their stock.<sup>49</sup> To these complaints, a prompt apology was offered, along with the promise to provide a special rider who would carry out repairs in all future events.<sup>50</sup> However, it is apparent that proper care was not exercised because farmers were again forced to complain to the press<sup>51</sup> following a hunt at Clover Point, in which Wilson Brown's harriers were employed.<sup>52</sup> Despite this conflict between farmers and riders, the hunts continued and, during the Royal Visit of 1882, a hunt was held for the entertainment of Princess Louise.<sup>53</sup>

SPORTS DAYS AND PICNICS

The early colonists enjoyed competition in numerous physical activities. Among these were the games in addendum to other events, such as the Horse Races at Beacon Hill, where there was also "lots of fun, - catching pigs by the tail, climbing a greased pole and running in sacks".<sup>54</sup> Most celebrations, regattas, races, etc. included similar events for the spontaneous enjoyment of adventurers.

Other competitions were scheduled with a more practical intent. The volunteer fire departments often established competition between themselves and with other fire companies, thereby adding incentive and fun to the rigors of practicing speedy drills. The Tiger and Deluge Companies of Victoria engaged in several competitions similar to an event listed in Barkerville. The Cariboo Sentinel reported that part of the 1874 Queen's Birthday celebrations, members of the local Fire Brigade competed

...for a purse of \$10 for the first water thrown from 200 ft. of hose, attached to the upper hydrant. At the tap of the bell, the hose carriage was taken out of the engine house, the hose attached to the hydrant, and water thrown by both parties in less than two minutes.<sup>55</sup>

In other activities, a major social function during the summer months was the picnic, which added much zest to life on the west coast.<sup>56</sup> Particularly during the early period of settlement, when the development of social cohesion in a small community was essential, these gatherings were open to the general public and advertisements appeared in the press to solicit participation. However, since it is unlikely that

anyone but a member of the upper-class would be in the position to participate during the middle of the week, it is significant to note that attendance was often restricted by the date of the event. One such event was an excursion and picnic to the American garrison on San Juan Island, on Thursday, August 27, 1863. Some 180 ladies and gentlemen,<sup>57</sup> travelling via the steamer Enterprise, enjoyed "All kinds of Sports, such as cricket, base ball, foot ball, quoits, together with sundry games for Ladies, and Dancing".<sup>58</sup>

It is important to note that these picnics were of great value to the development of sport. Such an event was probably the first opportunity for people to come together during a common time in which they could enjoy sports activities with their fellows. No doubt the discovery of mutual interests among new acquaintances hastened more regular participation.

As the population increased, special interest groups arose to hold their own functions. Possibly the first was that of the Independent Order of Good Templars, whose picnic on Wednesday, September 16, 1863, was attended by people who travelled by stage coach to Oak Grove, Cadboro Bay, to enjoy "a variety of Sports and Amusements".<sup>59</sup> In the Interior, particular societies were promoting gatherings, as evidenced by the Cariboo Sentinel's report, that:

Picnics are the rage, now, the season having commenced in true earnest. The British Benevolent held their annual picnic at Saucelito on the 21st, and the Odd Fellows followed suit on the 26th; both affairs were exceedingly successful. A succession of minor ones follow during this and the coming week.<sup>60</sup>

The proliferation of these picnics is indicative of their popular appeal. At Nanaimo, upwards of ninety people attended a picnic sponsored by the Wesley Sabbath School, in 1865.<sup>61</sup> The Victoria Firemen's Picnic of 1868 drew six hundred spectators<sup>62</sup> in what must have been its first annual event, since the Victoria Daily Standard reported the third annual affair in 1870.<sup>63</sup> By this time, the picnics were making a very specific contribution to the development of a particular area of sport - Track and Field, which will be discussed later in a separate chapter.

The most prominent organization sponsoring sports and games at its gatherings was the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society. According to the Victoria Daily Standard's reference to the upcoming eighth annual meeting on July 4, 1871,<sup>64</sup> the society apparently began holding annual meetings in 1864. The British Colonist described one such event -

CALEDONIAN PICNIC - The Caledonian Society, with a number of their friends, will go up the Arm this morning to some available spot, where they will indulge in dancing, athletic games, and other sports. Mr. Sandrie will provide the music. The boats will start from the ferry from 8 to 10 o'clock and all intending to join the party are requested to be punctual.<sup>65</sup>

The list of winners in the 1868 Caledonian Games, held on the grounds of J.D. Pemberton, Esq., is an example of the kind of athletic contests involved:

150 yd. run	William Tolmie
250 yd. run	William Reynolds
Running Leap	McCallum
Quoits	McDougall and Allett
Hop, Step, and Leap	William Robertson, William Tolmie
Race for Boys	B. Durham
Tossing the Cäber	Alex Young

Other sports held that year were archery and football.<sup>66</sup>

Another type of competition was that sponsored by the agricultural community. As early as 1863, a 'Ploughing and Spading Match' was scheduled in the fields near Judge Pemberton's residence on Tuesday, September 29, at 9 a.m.,<sup>67</sup> but was cancelled due to lack of contestants.<sup>68</sup> A later attempt, scheduled for May 18, 1868, was postponed due to the heavy work load of spring plowing.<sup>69</sup> However, two years later, the Saanich Agricultural Association was able to hold an autumn meeting in which the contest was to plow one-half an acre in six hours, for the prizes of merchandise plus \$10 for adults and \$3 for lads.<sup>70</sup> Also included in the festivities were cricket, foot races, jumping, and horse races.<sup>71</sup>

As the agricultural community prospered, more frequent and elaborate meets were arranged. Thus, the Lake District Ploughing Match, at John Manson's Farm, in front of the 'Royal Oak', was able to offer the following competitions:

Swing Beam Ploughs for	\$14, \$10, and \$6
Wheel Ploughs	\$10, \$ 7, and \$4
Amateur Ploughing	\$10, \$ 7, \$5, and \$2
Boys - open to any plough	\$7.50, \$5, and \$2.50

One quarter acre to be ploughed by each person entering; ploughing to be nine by five inches deep,<sup>72</sup> and the quarter acre to be ploughed in five hours.

The same year, 1872, was host to the first annual Provincial Exhibition of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society,<sup>73</sup> which thereafter sponsored the Fall Horse Races for Victoria.

GAMBLING AND BETTING

Given the sudden influx in number of adventurers in pursuit of gold, it is little wonder that the early colonies had very strict laws against gambling. Apparently these were well enforced in Victoria, although the comparative lawlessness of the mainland allowed gambling to flourish, as noted in the Victoria Gasette:

GAMBLING - There are very stringent laws here for the suppression and punishment of gambling...Hereafter there will be no mercy shown the gentlemanly blacklegs who have done so much to bring disgrace upon some of the towns which have sprung into existence within the last few months, but who have, so far, given Victoria a pretty wide birth.<sup>74</sup>

In an article headed "Public Gambling in British Columbia", the British Colonist described conditions in Langley.

Every game from mente to euchre has its professors and its victims...Life and property are rendered insecure. The exhibition of deadly weapons, and often their use, around the gambling tables, are the order of the day.<sup>75</sup>

The newspaper later reported on the situation at Williams Creek, in the Cariboo.

A notice prohibiting gambling, under a penalty of \$100 for each and every offence was struck up by Commissioner Elwyn, but the games go on openly, as before.<sup>76</sup>

However, the restriction of gambling was only levied on card games. In other activities, gambling and betting were part of the way of life and, as will be seen in the discussion of individual sports, virtually every event carried a wager. Examples of this characteristic are the following:

Notice - TO ALL COOPERS A CHALLENGE. The undersigned is willing to bet that he can make more barrels that will pass the inspection of judges than any other cooper in British Columbia or Vancouver Island, in one day, or one month, according to terms of the bet. Is willing to take from \$250 to \$500 on his capabilities....F.G. Odin.<sup>77</sup>

SPORTING - Our old friend Larry desires to state that he has been challenged by an adept to throw the stone with him for \$50 against \$5 a side. Larry has accepted it and intends giving his adversary a 'merry shake' one of these days.<sup>78</sup>

Betting was so much a part of the custom in these days that even youth openly indulged in the activity. However, in this following example, their lack of the required sportsmanship was quickly reprimanded. In 1870, the British Colonist reported that a boys' boat race was called off because

...one of the crews and their friends were offering to bet very freely. This aroused suspicion and an investigation showed that a plot existed that the crew most likely to win should throw off on their backers by allowing the other crew to win and divide the spoils with their opponents. Under these circumstances, Lachapelle, declining to be a party to such immorality, very properly refused to allow the boats to start.<sup>79</sup>

### GENERAL INTEREST

The contemporary newspapers held numerous reports of major sporting events taking place in other parts of the world, reflecting a high degree of colonial interest in athletic endeavour. In the early days, news arrived by steamer from San Francisco, and brief notes were inserted in the press. For example, in October of 1859, the British Colonist reported: "The great trotting match which came off

on the 24th near Liverpool, was won by the English horse Dan".<sup>80</sup> Likewise, when news filtered to the Interior, the Cariboo Sentinel would report on such events as the Anglo-American Boat Race between James Hamill of Pittsburgh and Henry Kelly, the champion of the Thames.<sup>81</sup> With the completion of the telegraph link, the newspapers carried more frequent, extensive, and up to date stories of outside sports events, often using bold type for the headline. By the early 1870s, the British Colonist even developed a special layout for major local events, providing charts for the batting and bowling averages of international cricket matches<sup>82</sup> and for the rifle competition between H.M.S. Sparrowhawk and the New Westminster Volunteers.<sup>83</sup>

Another source of communication and entertainment from the outside world was the travelling circus. Bartholomew's Great Western Circus<sup>84</sup> seems to have made an important contribution to Victoria's sporting community by providing a riding school and gymnasium, which also offered instruction in sword, bayonet, and fencing exercises.<sup>85</sup> A particularly curious entertainment was provided by James Cooke, a visiting circus performer,<sup>86</sup> who rode through the Gorge in a wash tub pulled by four geese. One hundred and fifty people watched as the geese were

...harnessed and yoked to a board circular in shape, about four feet in length and 2½ in width, - in fact four holes, each sufficiently large to admit a goose, had been cut in the board and in these holes the geese sat and swam, and swam, and swam, ye bold navigator, meanwhile, holding a paddle in each hand and with it directing his 'steeds' in the way they should go.<sup>87</sup>

Apparently, Cooke had tried this stunt before, in San Francisco, where his geese were drowned four miles from shore, forcing him to paddle with his hands for seven hours.<sup>88</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Typical of life in developing communities, the physical and recreational activities of early British Columbians fulfilled both social and practical functions. The various dances, balls, and picnics were excellent opportunities for the community to acquaint itself with new members and customs, while relaxing in a common leisurely pursuit. The addition of an element of competition into day to day activities, such as hunting, fire-fighting, and occupational trade, lent excitement and created enthusiasm for tasks which might otherwise be monstrous. Similarly, the almost universal enthusiasm for betting or wagering provided an element of anticipation to add zeal to life, and the entertainment at numerous events and spectacles provided the promise of further enjoyment. Combined, these features gave expectancy to life and helped the community build spirit and cohesion.

CHAPTER IVMINOR SPORTSARCHERY

The only apparent reference to archery during this period is in connection with the annual Foresters' Picnic on Vancouver Island. For example, during the 1879 meeting, the results of the archery competition were:

Ladies - first, Miss M. Randle; second, Mrs. Van Houten.

Gentlemen - first, W. Clarke; second, J. Curry.

Special - first, James Lewis.<sup>1</sup>

BILLIARDS

As early as 1858, advertisements appeared in the press to promote the sale of billiard tables imported from San Francisco.<sup>2</sup> However, during this period, an indoor space set aside primarily for games was a luxury which few could afford.<sup>3</sup> Those areas which did exist were run by commercial interests, such as the Star and Garter Hotel in Victoria, which not only operated a Billiard Saloon, but also served as agent for Jacob Strahle and Company's Billiard Tables.<sup>4</sup> The number of advertisements for the sale of tables (M. Bach's Billiard Factory of San Francisco, as another example<sup>5</sup>) suggests that perhaps some people were buying tables for their private use, but undoubtedly, most of the sales were to other hotels and saloons.

By 1859, the game could be played even at Fort Hope, where the British Colonist reported:

The billiard Saloons appear well supported. Messrs. Crowe and Thompson have just completed their spacious Billiard Saloon, which will vie for comfort with any in Victoria.<sup>6</sup>

The British Columbian, commenting on the opening of the new Colonial Hotel and Billiard Saloon in New Westminster, in 1862, provided the following description of the facility:

The Billiard Saloon is 27 x 70 feet with a 17 foot ceiling and three large sky-lights. It is furnished with 15 crystal lamps, three first-class Billiard tables, with Phelan's combination cushions, a Roulette-table and everything to match.<sup>7</sup>

In that same year, a dollar a game was charged for play on the two tables which were installed in a saloon on Williams Creek.<sup>8</sup> This fact gives further evidence to the popularity of the game, because at that time, a road did not exist in the area and so goods were carried either on the backs of mules or on one-wheeled hand carts. As the northern population increased and conditions improved, more tables were installed, so that in 1865, Patrick Kirwin was advertising his Billiard Saloon in Richfield<sup>9</sup> and, in 1867, a Bowling and Billiard Saloon was advertised in Barkerville.<sup>10</sup>

No doubt the commercial value of the tables lay not so much in the charge levied against the players, but in the sale of liquor to the numerous enthusiasts who patronized the saloons. The British Colonist provided an indication of the popularity of special games.

GREAT BILLIARD MATCH - A game of billiards was played last evening between Messrs. P.M. Backus and W.H. Robinson - 1,000 points aside. Robinson made 633 points to Backus 339, when the latter gentleman made a run of six hundred and eighty-eight, and was declared winner by 367 points. Robinson's treatest run was 42 points. Both gentlemen displayed great skill during the progress of the game, which was closely watched by a large number of people.<sup>11</sup>

By 1871, billiard tournaments had been inaugurated and, in that year, Joshua Davies, formerly of Victoria, won a \$175 ring in Portland Oregon.<sup>12</sup> Later that year, two champion players, Dion and Rudolph, played a special game at Victoria's Alhambra Hall.<sup>13</sup> In the same city, five years later, the Adelphi Saloon was crowded as W. Nelles defeated J. Welton for a prize of \$200.<sup>14</sup> Two months later, the Adelphi was again the site of another profitable victory for Nelles. This time he defeated a Mr. Davis of Portland (possibly Joshua Davies), in a four-ball American carom game for \$100 aside, again before a large crowd which exchanged a considerable sum of money on the game.<sup>15</sup>

The final apparent reference to a billiards competition during the period is that of the match game for \$100, between F. Tully and D. Morgan, at Nanaimo's Provincial Hotel, in December of 1882.<sup>16</sup>

### BOWLING

Bowling Saloons were not as prevalent, but often occupied the same facilities as the billiard rooms, as noted in the advertisement for the Bowling and Billiard Saloon at Barkerville, in 1867.<sup>17</sup> However, other establishments, such as that on Victoria's Waddington Alley, appear to have striven for a more refined clientele, advertising their fine wines, spirits, liquors, cigars, and latest European and Atlantic newspapers.<sup>18</sup> Yet, in 1863, while supporting a population of only four hundred whites, Lilloet was reported as having a bowling alley.<sup>19</sup>

By 1872, major challenge matches had been organized, as in the following event reported in the Victoria Daily Standard.

There will be a match game at ten-pins, to be played at the Ten-Pin Saloon, this evening, between a gentleman from the other side [U.S.A.] and one of the best players in town. After which, games will be played for a variety of fancy articles, - munschaum pipes, etc.<sup>20</sup>

### CROQUET

By nature, the game of Croquet was a light-hearted activity in which people would indulge at garden parties and picnics. Such a game would not generate sufficient interest to require newspaper coverage. However, the arrival of equipment in June of 1867 did result in an announcement in the British Colonist.

CROQUET - Lovers of this favorite game will find the necessary implements at Victoria House (corner of Fort and Douglas streets), several sets having been received per Princess Royal.<sup>21</sup>

### HANDBALL

According to Lindsay, there were only two matches of this game reported in the 1860s press of British North America. One of these was in St. John's, New Brunswick, and the other in Victoria<sup>22</sup> where, in January of 1865, the Vancouver Times reported:

A match of hand-ball has been arranged between two Victorians and two Caribooites for \$100 aside, to be played next Monday, in Buckley's Ball Court. As the men are experts in the manly game some excellent play may be anticipated.<sup>23</sup>

Although no details of the method of play were given,

Menke states that until 1900, the typical handball court had four walls, each 22 feet high, with a playing surface of 46 feet by 22 feet, and that only a hard handball was used.<sup>24</sup> From the single reference in the Vancouver Times, it is apparent that the game was played regularly in Victoria, since not only was there a specific ball court, but also "expert" players.

The origin of handball dates back to tenth Century Ireland and is considered to be a parent of tennis. Often referred to by its old name of 'fives', derived from the five fingers with which the ball was hit, the game was also played regularly in New Westminster by 1870, as indicated by a report in the Mainland Guardian.

Interesting Match - A match at fives was played on Tuesday last by one of our crack players against six of our agile citizens. The affair created much interest and resulted in a victory for the adept.<sup>25</sup>

## TENNIS

An offspring of handball, tennis became popular in British Columbia because the small space required for a court was relatively easy to find in an area "where the dense woods and surrounding mountains made it difficult to find enough clear space for a number of sports during the early years of settlement".<sup>26</sup> In a letter from Victoria in 1887, Clive Phillips-Wolley wrote,

It is almost impossible to believe that I am not dreaming. Sitting by the open window, the drowsy summer air comes in off the sea and fans my forehead; from the lawn outside I can hear, "Well played", "Love thirty", "Deuce", and other scraps of tennis jargon from lips of English men and women. In fancy I can see the grey stone walls of your old English rectory and its wreaths of blue clematis; but if I open my eyes, they look, it is true, across green tennis-lawns and past English players, but the skies are bluer than those skies of Gloucestershire even were; instead of the Cotswold hills are the snow caps of the Olympian Mountains...<sup>27</sup>

The Victoria Lawn Tennis Club was formed in 1885 and organized its first open tournament in the following year.<sup>28</sup> Thus, by 1886, tennis had been "established on a definite footing" in British Columbia, with J. Handcock becoming the champion.<sup>29</sup> A club was formed in Vancouver in 1889 and, in 1890, the Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club was formed.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, in New Westminster, lawn tennis was a "tea party game" during the eighties, but became more competitive in the nineties, with a club finally forming in 1900.<sup>31</sup>

### LACROSSE

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Lacrosse became Canada's most popular team sport and was adopted as the national game in 1867. However, since it did not become popular in British Columbia until after 1885, it is listed here as a minor sport and is briefly described for background purposes.

The game was first mentioned in the region when the editor of the Mainland Guardian returned from a trip to the east in 1872.

Toronto is vivacious, racy fast. The game of La Crosse has almost superseded the old English favorite [cricket ?] and every lad of 5 with strength enough is now master of his La Crosse 'pitches' and 'flies'. You are nobody unless you run like an Indian and get your optics discoloured and framework battered.<sup>32</sup>

During the late eighties, clubs were formed in Victoria and Vancouver, but play was spasmodic until triangular competition could be established with a New Westminster club formed in 1888. The first lacrosse tournament was held in Kamloops during that year and Victoria beat Vancouver in the final game.<sup>33</sup> However, in the following year, both the Vancouver and New Westminster clubs made use of the railway to import a quick supply of re-inforcements from the east in preparation for the deciding match of the "Alhambra Cup", emblematic of British Columbian Lacrosse supremacy, which was first played for in 1889.<sup>35</sup> However, the game ended in a 2-2 draw, initiating an intense rivalry between clubs to secure experienced players from the east, many of whom were offered well paying jobs in one of the three cities.<sup>36</sup>

On March 22, 1890, the British Columbia Amateur Lacrosse Association was organized by the three coastal teams<sup>37</sup> and from that time, the sport rapidly gained popularity. During the first year of regular competition, crowds of over two thousand attended inter-city matches, fanning an intense and sometimes bitter rivalry, as evidenced by this partisan comment in the British Colonist: "the Victoria team would have won the game had they been given fair play. But a fair, square play with Vancouver is never looked for".<sup>38</sup>

The New Westminster team, were given the name 'Salmon-bellies' by their supporters in 1890, the year they won the British Columbia championship. Towards the end of that season, twelve members of the team financed their own tour of the east, visiting Montreal and Toronto. They played six matches in two weeks, winning five and drawing one with Toronto, while scoring forty goals with only thirteen against them during the tour.<sup>39</sup> Three years later, the Victoria Lacrosse Club, bolstered by former players from Ontario and Quebec, made a mark in Canadian lacrosse history on a similar eastern tour, defeating Montreal, Quebec, and the Torontos. A match with the 'Shamrocks' was a creditable tie and the only defeat was by a combined Ottawa team.<sup>40</sup> These two tours challenged the arrogance of the eastern teams and dispelled any doubts about western ability. As the Winnipeg Free Press commented:

The result of this tour suggest the advisability of instituting a Canadian Championship series which should embrace Canada as a whole. It has been shown that the west is not behind the east in the national pastime, why then should the championship of Canada be confined to Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and Cornwall?<sup>41</sup>

However, such a championship did not come about until May 31, 1901, when Lord Minto donated the cup which bares his name.<sup>42</sup>

It is apparent, then, that the trans-continental railway had a very marked influence on the development of lacrosse, not only in the West Coast, but across Canada. Furthermore, the railway played a prominent role in the promotion of local competition on the lower mainland. The early rivalry between Vancouver and Victoria lacrosse clubs was replaced by a stronger rivalry between Vancouver and New Westminster as, in

1889, the Canadian Pacific Railway began running special trains to Port Moody then to New Westminster, bringing hundreds of spectators to the matches. By 1890, inter-urban trains were carrying passengers from Vancouver direct to Queen's Park in New Westminster and multiple trains operated when the provincial finals were played in September of each year.<sup>43</sup> So great was the interest in lacrosse and the travel so easy, that fifteen to twenty thousand people attended important matches and, on the Saturday afternoons of those games, New Westminster stores were closed.<sup>44</sup>

### QUOITS

The earliest press report of quoits being played was a note in the British Colonist in 1860.

Hitting a Chinaman with a Quoit - A few days ago a party of sailors and marines were playing at Quoits near a Chinaman's house, at Esquimalt, when one of the marines, named Dennis McEvoy, struck a Celestial with one of the quoits. The Chinaman complained to the Police Judge yesterday, but McEvoy's officer stating to the Court that the man had been punished by his order, the case was dismissed.<sup>45</sup>

Such a statement raises the suspicion that the laws were not enforced equitably, possibly discriminating against race and favouring the military.

A quoits match was included during the Queen's Birthday celebrations at New Westminster, in 1862,<sup>46</sup> and in 1865, four experienced players<sup>47</sup> competed at Healy's Clover Point House, where the Clover Point players were defeated by a group from the Lion Brewery.<sup>48</sup> By the early seventies, quoits were advertised as part of the combined Dominion Day and July 4

celebrations in the Cariboo, where a \$20 prize was offered for competition in a sixteen yard toss.<sup>49</sup>

Quoiting was particularly popular in Nanaimo, where the prominent players of 1874 were listed as Messrs. James Harvey, Wilkes, and Willerson.<sup>50</sup> Two years later, in 1876, a silver cup was offered for competition at eighteen yards, with play by the North of England Rules, which were then posted at the bar of the Black Diamond Hotel.<sup>51</sup> By 1880, competition was offered in 21, 18, 14, and 10 yard events<sup>52</sup> and, in 1884, the most prestigious match of the period came off between Robert Aitken and R. Shepley, for \$250 aside at 18 yards, held at Wall's Wellington Hotel.<sup>53</sup> To further the festivities of this event, a foot race between W. Beveridge and L. Jones was included, along with a wrestling match in which a Mr. Hanson took two of three falls over a Mr. Lynch.<sup>54</sup>

Since quoits was a simple game to play, requiring little equipment and only two players, it can be surmised that the game was widely enjoyed as a pastime in British Columbia although not always generating enough interest to receive press coverage. However, it was included in the various festivities throughout the province, and received occasional coverage from the major newspapers, including the Kamloops Inland Sentinel, which reported quoits as part of the July 4 celebrations at Yale, in 1881.<sup>55</sup>

CHAPTER VAQUATIC SPORTSCANOEING

From the first days of settlement, the canoe influenced the lives of people throughout British North America. Its value was not only utilitarian, providing easy transportation of provisions and furs, but was also an instrument of fun. No doubt the early traders enjoyed the dangerous, yet thrilling experience of running rapids in their canoes, and later colonists used the native vessel in racing competitions.

The first formal competition appears to have been in 1862. The Queen's Birthday celebrations at Nanaimo that year included a canoe race for white men, who competed for the Nanaimo Regatta Cup and a prize of thirty dollars. This race was won by the canoe named Shooting Star, which defeated two others named Stormy Petrel and Flying Cloud. In a separate event for Indians, prizes of \$13, \$7, and \$4 were offered for the first three places of the eleven entries from various neighbouring tribes. The Comox Indians were the first group to cover the course of approximately three miles, followed in second and third positions by two groups of Nanaimo Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Canoe races were particularly popular at Nanaimo and, in the Queen's Birthday celebrations of 1863, the British Colonist reported that:

The most exciting [of competitions] were canoe races, if any reliance can be placed on the shouts which unintermittently proceeded from the gallery where the disciples of Bacchus were congregated.<sup>2</sup>

A canoe race was included on the programme of a regatta at Victoria in 1862<sup>3</sup> and, in the following year, an "Indian Regatta" was held in the city with a race

...round by the lumber yards and through the bridge into James Bay. The Indians paddled in excellent time, and accompanied their labours with a wild sort of boat song, which had a very pleasant effect.<sup>4</sup>

Canoe races also became a regular event in the New Westminster celebrations of the Queen's birth, beginning by 1862.<sup>5</sup> The following description is provided of the scene in 1865, when between eight thousand and ten thousand Indians were expected to attend the celebration.<sup>6</sup>

After a considerable amount of talking - and it was a perfect babble, several thousand tongues going at once in four or five different languages - the first race commenced by about 20 large canoes, carrying 21 men each. Off they shot in splendid style, and rounding the flag on the opposite side they were back in very quick time, the winner receiving the first prize of \$44...As each race was over all the competitors, both winners and losers, were presented with a plug of tobacco each with which to regale themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Another celebration, the Accession Day of June, 1870, saw Indian canoes race for twenty dollars in Victoria. The British Colonist reported that:

Two canoes competed for this race, which as a race, was the best of the day; for a long time the canoes were neck and neck, and it was doubtful for three-parts of the race which would be the winner; Although the Songish canoe drew ahead and won.<sup>8</sup>

Lady Dufferin provided the following description of a special regatta held in honour of her husband, the Governor-General, at Nanaimo, in August of 1876. Here, twelve tribes were represented by nearly four hundred Indians in thirty canoes.<sup>9</sup>

At twelve o'clock we went in carriages to see a regatta, which was to be held at the Gorge...Across one end there was a string of flags, which with the background of mountains, wood and water, looked very gay; a number of boats were dotted about, and arranged in three groups were twenty large canoes, filled with Indians, and covered from stem to stern with flags...There were some excellent races, four or five of the large canoes in a race, the men rowing, or rather paddling with all their might - eight strokes a minute - leaving quite a sea behind them.

There was, too, a most exciting squaw race. We rowed alongside most of the way, and saw the women well! One crew consisted of rather nice-looking young ones but these did not win.<sup>10</sup>

Around this time, groups of whites were developing an interest in canoeing and were attached to the various rowing clubs as they emerged. However, canoeing did not become a regular sport in British Columbia until the 1890s, when canoe divisions were finally established within the James Bay Athletic Association, Victoria, Burrard Inlet, New Westminster, and Vancouver Rowing Clubs. Singles, tandem, and Peterborough canoe races were included in the rowing regattas from 1892 until after the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup> During this period, two Vancouver canoeists, A. Marshall and J. Spencer, dominated canoe events.<sup>12</sup>

### ROWING

According to Menke, "Canada has produced some of the most skillful oarsmen the world has known".<sup>13</sup> Since the rowing elite of the period, such as Ned Hanlan, came from the centre of population in the east, rowing on the West Coast did not appear very significant. However, as the following will show, the history of rowing in British Columbia is rich with colour and endeavour.

The Royal Navy initiated interest in aquatic competitions in Victoria by holding regattas for the training and entertainment of the fleet and for the pleasure of the community. The first newspaper description of such a Navy regatta appeared in June of 1859, when the British Colonist reported:

On Tuesday and Wednesday a regatta took place in Esquimalt Harbour. The boats engaged were those of H.M.S. Pylades, Tribune, and Satellite. On the first day, the race was with boats rowed, and no pleasurable excitement pervaded the contests. On the second day, the race was between sail boats, which were well managed. A large number of spectators were present, among whom were many ladies, the varied colors of whose costumes imparted a lively gaiety to the same. During the first day's race two punts manned by the coal heavers of the ships, in grotesque costumes, who used their coal shovels for paddles, performed some novel and amusing feats.<sup>14</sup>

The ships' own boats were used for these contests. Even the launches, each of which carried eighteen oars in tiers, were used in one of the six rowing events.

The launch is the largest boat of the ship, and during service is armed with a ten or twelve pound cannon, and used for the conveyance of large bodies of men to the point of attack or landing.<sup>15</sup>

In the following year, 1860, another regatta was held at Esquimalt. Along with the boats of the fleet, several boats from the United States were involved in the competitions, which were under the patronage of the Governor. Messrs. Howard and Davis of Esquimalt, considered "old hands at such sports",<sup>16</sup> were to make the arrangements for the events.

Throughout the period, contests such as the race between the gunboats Forward and Grappler<sup>17</sup> and the three mile match race for \$100 between the cutters of H.M.S. Mutine and Devastation<sup>18</sup> were held by the crews of the fleet. In 1868,

a major naval regatta had ten rowing races, including all classes of vessel (plus a sailing race).<sup>19</sup> But, probably the most spectacular of the navy contests occurred as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations of 1870, when Victoria's stores closed early on a Wednesday, and some five thousand spectators watched the competitions between the crews of ten of Her Majesty's warships - the Zealous, Liverpool, Lifley, Picone, Pearl, Seylia, Charybdis, Endymion, Sparrowhawk, and Boxer. According to the British Colonist, this regatta was "the largest ever held on the American side of the Pacific".<sup>20</sup>

Not only did the fleet organize regattas for its own crews, but many of the officers were leading citizens of the community and promoted civilian competitions. The city of Victoria held its first boat race in the fall of 1859. Marine officers, stationed at the James Bay barracks, along with some civilians, competed for a prize of one hundred dollars over a distance of five miles, "starting at the James Bay bridge, for the mouth of the harbour, then up the arm around Dead Man's Island, and back to the bridge".<sup>21</sup> Several hundred people attended the race to watch the three four-oared boats. The crews were: Speedwell, the civilians - Hicks, Wallace, Stamp, Broderick, and Bushby (coxswain); North Star, officers - Lieutenant Owens, Captain Blake, Henry Bazalgate, \_\_\_\_\_ (coxswain); Rough and Ready, combined officers and civilians - Trutch, Stevenson, Moberly, \_\_\_\_\_, and Clifton (coxswain); and the umpires were Captain J.M. Reid and Captain J. Nagle. The marine officers did not appear very adept, losing the race and

thereby having to pay for dinner at the Colonial Hotel.<sup>22</sup>

The youth of the city tried their hands at rowing in 1861. Boys from the Collegiate School were started in a race by Captain Nagle. George Little's boat won the first race for twenty dollars and, in the second race, Lester's boat won sixteen dollars which bought a knife for each of the boys.<sup>23</sup>

In September of 1862, a "Grand Regatta" was held in Victoria harbour and was open to all classes of boats, including sailing and canoeing, as well as rowing events.<sup>24</sup> Prize money of some two hundred and fifty dollars was collected from the community and participants competed in six races.<sup>25</sup> Two weeks later, a sculling match was held in which Fitzgerald beat "Frenchy".<sup>26</sup>

Since a fair competition between humans could not be achieved with boats of varying construction, contemporary rowers often had to exchange vessels to prove their prowess. Such an exchange occurred during the Queen's Birthday races of 1861, at New Westminster, which were no doubt organized by the Regatta Club, formed in the previous year.<sup>27</sup> In this race, the crew of the J.T. Scott defeated that of the Wakeman but,

...by way of testing whether the victory was owing to a superiority in the construction of the boat or to the better oarsmanship of the winning crew, an exchange of crews was made and another race run, on which occasion the 'Wakeman' won, which clearly settled the question in favour of the crew of the J.T. Scott.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, competitions between vessels were arranged to reduce the human factor, as the Vancouver Times of 1864 reported that the captain of the Blue Bonnet, defeated by the William Hunt, offered to back his boat for up to one thousand dollars,

provided the boats exchanged crews.<sup>29</sup>

In a further attempt to equate competition, rowers of different sizes and different pulling advantages tested themselves in boats of compensating weight. Thus, the Vancouver Daily Post of 1865 announced a fifty dollar race between Reid's Foam and Lachapelle's Surge

The Foam is a lighter boat than the Surge, and is manned by light weights; the crew is Edward Thain, stroke, T.A. Griggs, Sam. Dougal, Fred. Morrison, and Willie Cameron, coxswain. The Surge will carry heavy weight crew and pull a long stroke; their names are B. Vaux, stroke, J. Lachapelle, H. Howard, Urie, J. Anderson, coxswain. Both the crews have been practicing for some time and there is no doubt that it will be a very tight race.<sup>30</sup>

Lachapelle's vessel, listed later as the Glance, was announced the winner.<sup>31</sup>

By this time, interest in rowing had grown sufficiently that an official rowing club could be formed. According to The Press, efforts to form such a club had begun as early as 1862<sup>32</sup> and, in the spring of 1863, there was more talk about its formation,<sup>33</sup> but no real action until a concerted effort towards formalization gathered sixty signatures of prospective members, in August of 1865.<sup>34</sup> Finally, at the end of September that year, the British Colonist announced:

A meeting of gentlemen who propose to form a Rowing Club, was announced by circular yesterday afternoon, at the office of Messrs. Franklin, on Government Street. About twenty gentlemen attended. Capt. Lang, V.R.V. was requested to preside, and Mrs. S.S. Green to officiate as secretary... The association is to be styled 'The Vancouver Rowing Club'... The rules of the London Rowing Club are to be followed as far as practicable... The Committee will, we understand, forthwith order the construction of two four-oared gigs for models. The Club numbers about 75 members.<sup>35</sup>

W.A. Young, Esq., the Colonial Secretary, was appointed President of the club,<sup>36</sup> which was sometimes referred to as the Victoria Rowing Club. Its original name of 'Vancouver' should not be mistaken for the later club of that name, organized in the city of Vancouver.

Probably the first racing gig built in the Colony was that of a Mr. C. Coyle, of Alberni, who had his vessel launched and tested in the spring of 1864.<sup>37</sup> Messrs. Murray and Nagle also built boats,<sup>38</sup> but Lachapelle was the foremost racing boat builder of the period and it was he who supplied and maintained the boats for most of the Victoria races. For example, in the fifty dollar aside match between J. Eden (the tavern owner of 'Ratting Match' fame) and J. Hariman, Lachapelle's boats were used,<sup>39</sup> and again, the next day, when G. Francis beat G. Lawrence for two hundred and fifty dollars. At this time, the boat ordered by the Club from Lachapelle was announced as ready for service.<sup>40</sup>

In the following year, Lachapelle built another boat, ...a beautiful four-oared, whitehall race boat 20 feet long, by 3 feet 9 inches beam, to be called the 'Dart'. She is copper fastened throughout, and judging from her lines we should say she may defy any boat of her class in these waters for speed.<sup>41</sup>

Just a few weeks later, the Dart was engaged in a Good Friday race when four boys raced it against four men from Spratt and Kriemler's foundry in another of Lachapelle's boats, the 'old favorite', the Glance.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the period, regattas were held on days of community-wide celebration, allowing large numbers of people

to enjoy the competitions. The prominent celebration was, of course, the Queen's Birthday. In 1867, the annual Victoria regatta of that day had become so prestigious that the preparations included the chartering of a steamer to take spectators along the Gorge, at a price of twenty-five cents per person, while some three hundred Americans were expected to attend, paying six dollars (including meals and bed) for the trip from Olympia.<sup>43</sup> The British Colonist announced that,

A large number of boats have been entered, and in addition to our native talent, 'crack' rowers from the American side have consented to take part in the sport and exhibit their muscle. The rowers will dress in colours. Almost every object that will float has been engaged for the occasion by pleasure seekers who desire to see the sport - including lumber from Sayward's yard.<sup>44</sup>

The several races with purse prizes were concluded by a "Hunt the Duck", in which one person in a flat-bottomed skiff was to elude the pursuit of four men in a gig.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, in 1868, the regatta drew some one thousand people to watch a programme of eight rowing races and an Indian canoe race, organized largely by Messrs. Trahey and Lachapelle.<sup>46</sup> Spectators to such events travelled to the Gorge by land and even by barges towed by the Hudson Bay Company's steam vessel, the Leviathan.<sup>47</sup> The year 1870 has already been noted as having a special regatta. Organized on Accession Day by the Royal Navy and attracting some five thousand spectators, the programme included double sculls, four-oared gigs, "Blue Jackets" in ships' boats, single sculls, four-oared shells, canoes, copper punt races, and a "duck hunt".<sup>48</sup>

Regatta days were important events and the rowing fraternity took the impending competition seriously. In regard to the Accession Day regatta in June of 1870. the British Colonist noted:

The crews are in training for the Regatta. Outriggers and rowing gigs may be seen darting over the smooth surface of the harbour every evening, and numerous boating-parties are formed daily for the purposes of practice.<sup>49</sup>

In fact, rowing enthusiasts were even encouraged to dress for the occasion by at least one advertiser.

REGATTA HATS - Mr. Adams, of Government Street, has received, per Princess Royal, a splendid assortment of men's and boy's boating and regatta hats.<sup>50</sup>

Rowing had become so popular that it was not uncommon for people to challenge each other to a meet. Thus occurred such "novel" matches as the race between four old and four young men (also listed as marrieds vs singles), which was won by the former on a Sunday, in May of 1867.<sup>51</sup> Races between boys were held on a course from the dredger in Victoria harbour, around Dead Man's Island.<sup>52</sup> The Chinese community also rowed on occasion and, in 1872, the Chung Lung crew in the gig Amateur, defeated a dozen paddlers of the Kwong Sing crew in the Whitehall boat Glance, causing the British Colonist to remark,

In future regattas, the Chinese should be remembered and allowed a share in the programme; an Indian canoe race might also be a feature of the annual sports of the 24th of May.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, although Indian canoe races were often part of the celebrations, they had not been scheduled on a regular basis and the Chinese appear to have been excluded completely. In

less serious competition, possibly for those less adept at rowing, tub races were also included as part of the regatta programme,<sup>54</sup> foreshadowing the modern Nanaimo-Vancouver bath-tub races.

In New Westminster, rowing was becoming formalized by the end of 1869. The Mainland Guardian reported that a "select crew" had been practicing<sup>55</sup> in the city club's new racing gig called the Brunette. A few days later, the new vessel was manned by Messrs. Bushby, Pooley, Johnston, and Richardson, who were to compete against Calder's boat and George Odin's gig.<sup>56</sup> A month later, two stages were scheduled to carry spectators from the city to view a race in Burrard Inlet, which was to take place on a Wednesday at two o'clock.<sup>57</sup> The course was between Mr. Moody's and the British Columbia and Vancouver Island mills, a distance of two and a half miles. The New Westminster crew, pulling with four oars, defeated the Burrard crew of five pairs of sculls.<sup>58</sup>

Although a club was officially organized at Burrard Inlet in March of 1870,<sup>59</sup> competition on the lower mainland was sporadic for several years. Occasional races were arranged with visiting naval vessels, but the ships' boats were usually used because "the blue jackets are not well skilled in the handling of race-boats".<sup>60</sup> During the 1872 Queen's Birthday celebrations at New Westminster, the citizens of the 'Royal City' subscribed a seventy-five dollar purse, which was won by their crew over Burrard Inlet.<sup>61</sup> Another report of that year was of a match at Burrard Inlet in which a four-oared

racing gig could not match the speed of a canoe paddled by eleven Indians.<sup>62</sup>

Throughout the province, there was little of particular note until 1872, when the visiting Lord Dufferin provided the medals for the annual Victoria Rowing Club regatta.<sup>63</sup> In the following year, the Hastings Mills Regatta was held in conjunction with the Dominion Day celebrations on Burrard Inlet, enticing a number of people from Nanaimo to attend.<sup>64</sup> Still another year later, an international event saw the boats of H.M.S. Opal and the American ship Lachawanna compete, the American boat winning by fifteen seconds.<sup>65</sup> In 1878, a four-oared crew from Victoria travelled to Seattle to win a fourth of July race<sup>66</sup> and, in that same year, a reference appeared to a Moodyville Boat Club, which was said to have a boat called Pearl.<sup>67</sup> However, by 1879, the Burrard's Annie Fraser was recognized as having vanquished all-comers, including boats from Victoria and New Westminster.<sup>68</sup>

In 1882, the James Bay Athletic Association was formed in Victoria to promote athletics generally, but its principle interest was rowing. However, its activities were limited during the next decade, until 1892, when it entered the North Pacific American Association of Oarsmen.<sup>69</sup> In the Interior, a reference to a simple boat race appears in the Inland Sentinel of 1885, reporting a race for fifty dollars between F. Robinson's Greyhound, with two oars and carrying three persons, and A. McKinnon's Fanny, a larger boat with two oars and carrying seven persons.<sup>70</sup> Back on the coast, a club was formed in

Vancouver in 1886, but it experienced little competition until it merged with Burrard Inlet to form the Vancouver Rowing Club in 1890.<sup>71</sup>

Meanwhile, the Victoria Amateur Boating Club was formed in 1888, with Joshua Davis as President.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps the involvement of this club and the James Bay Athletic Association had detracted from interest in the old city rowing club because it appears to have been inactive for some time, causing the editor of the British Colonist to chastise its membership in 1889.

The Victoria Rowing Club are most respectfully urged to be up and doing. A meeting was called a few days ago, but could not be held. Call another.<sup>73</sup>

The major rowing interest of these times was the single scull events. Most prominent in the latter part of the seventies was John (later listed as William) Cotsford. In 1876, when he was a twenty year old employee of J. Spratt's Albion Foundry, he defeated Alexander McLean in the Gorge, and won five hundred dollars.<sup>74</sup> Two years later, he travelled to Seattle and won the July 4 competition.<sup>75</sup> The year 1879 saw him compete in an event which was said to have created more excitement in Victoria than any other sporting event in recent years. Here, Cotsford defeated Henry Stewart for another five hundred dollars, prompting a Mr. Eugene Flanders, on hand representing the San Francisco Boating Club, to accept a challenge from Cotsford.<sup>76</sup> Cotsford lost that race in San Francisco, but his supporters were confident that he could have won if the race had been in familiar Victoria waters.<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, it was apparent that his efforts to earn professional fame had failed.

Another notable sculler was a Mr. Seeley, who had been trained by McDowell, the champion amateur walker of the province. In a race with Cotsford, Seeley was given a one minute head start, holding on to win the race by six seconds.<sup>78</sup> Several years later, in 1884, Seeley put on an exhibition in James Bay with the famed Edward Hanlan, who was on his way to Australia. The schools were closed for this event, to allow the children to see "the marvellous Canadian who has done so much to bring this, his country into notice abroad".<sup>79</sup> He and Seeley demonstrated various balancing acts (ie. Seeley standing on his head in the racing shell), changes of position in the shells, as well as speedy rowing. Meanwhile, on the same programme, Cotsford was beaten by Lee, another well-known rower from "abroad".

Other prominent scullers included New Westminster's Michael Law, who won the single sculls event at the annual Dominion Day every year from 1878-85.<sup>80</sup> Another reference, probably intending the same person, lists Messrs. Maurice and Robert Law as having received, in 1883, a double-scutt racing gig from Victoria, which had been outfitted with sliding seats, a major technological improvement to the sport. Messrs. Murray and Fry were also reported to be building a similar vessel in New Westminster.<sup>81</sup> Burrard Inlet's J. Bush was also a sculler of note and was reported to have had many successes from 1880-89.<sup>82</sup>

The pride of Vancouver Island was William Paine, the undefeated champion sculler of British Columbia from 1879-88.<sup>83</sup> His first match against an outside competitor was highly publicized and well attended as his opponent, Harry Ball, was a former member of the famed 'Chatham Four' and had recently moved to Vancouver. The match took place on Shawnigan Lake on May 19, 1888, in front of a crowd carried by special trains from Victoria. Paine's victory earned him front page coverage in the local press.<sup>84</sup> However, like Cotsford, his hopes for greater success were soon eliminated. Henry Peterson, a prominent American professional sculler from San Francisco, beat him on Shawnigan Lake in June of 1888, in an event which was touted as B.C.'s greatest sporting event to date.<sup>85</sup>

British Columbia rowers finally achieved recognition in the east when the Vancouver Rowing Club's four-oared crew impressed The Globe by its 1890 defeat of Seattle.<sup>86</sup> In the same year, R.N. Johnston won the single scull championships of the Vancouver Rowing Club, proceeding to further successes as an amateur and also as a professional, when he changed his status in 1896. In 1892, he defeated an American, Quackenbush, on Lake Washington, thereby winning the American Championship of the Pacific Coast.<sup>87</sup> Then, in 1898, the citizens of Vancouver raised a purse of twenty-five hundred dollars to finance a match race between Johnston and Jacob Gaudaur, the champion of the world. Gaudaur won that match by two lengths, in what was considered a very fast time.<sup>88</sup> When Johnston again challenged Gaudaur in 1900, the match was held at the new city of Nelson,

in the Interior, which was reputed to have the best course in Canada. Again, Gaudaur was the winner in a close finish.<sup>89</sup>

### SAILING AND YACHTING

As it had done with rowing, the Royal Navy introduced yachting as competitive recreation in one of the most beautiful cruising and racing areas in the world.<sup>90</sup> In 1859, the naval regatta at Esquimalt had been a two day event, one for rowing and the other for sailing competitions.<sup>91</sup> Launches, pinnaces, and cutters were employed, but the races proved to be unexciting due to the lack of wind.<sup>92</sup> Although, sailing events were included as part of the major regattas, particularly the Queen's Birthday celebrations, they did not gain an enthusiastic following until late in the 1880s.

As early as 1861, New Westminster included a sailing event in its Queen's Birthday festivities. In that year, the yacht Pilot defeated the Swallow, Chance, and Coquette over a seven mile course.<sup>93</sup> A few weeks later, a schooner race was recorded in which the Lallah Rookh defeated the Nanaimo Packet.<sup>94</sup> In the following year, 1862, a yacht race for the Queen's Cup of fifty dollars was won in Nanaimo by the Gone Coon, defeating the Look Out, Dolphin, Monad, Scotland, and the Flora.<sup>95</sup> However, a subsequent advertisement seems to dispute this victory: "The yacht 'Kelpie', the winner of the Queen's Cup at Nanaimo, is now offered for sale at the very low sum of \$300. W. Nagle & Co."<sup>96</sup>

In Victoria, a 'Grand Regatta' was held in early September

of 1862 and included a sailing race on the programme.<sup>97</sup> Eight years later, the great Royal Navy regatta of 1870 attracted thousands of spectators to Esquimalt to see the rowing and sailing matches. Hundreds of Washingtonians arrived aboard the American steamer Olympia, joining the throng to cheer races between various classes of vessels: cutters, galleys, launches, and pinnaces. Of the ten British warships in port, H.M.S. Scylla, Zealous, Sparrowhawk, and Boxer won most of the events, while the ships' bands urged them on with martial music such as 'British Grenadiers' and 'Rule Britannia'.<sup>98</sup>

Of later years, there is little to report during the period. The noted boat builder, Lachapelle, built a sixteen foot yawl for Edwin Johnson in 1872,<sup>99</sup> but the swiftest sail boat belonged to Thomas Jones. In 1879, his vessel Scud defeated four other vessels to win a silver cup.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps its most impressive victory came in 1888, when it won the annual Victoria regatta by defeating eleven opponents.<sup>103</sup>

A brief reference appeared in the British Columbian of 1885, noting an international race for the Queen's Cup,<sup>104</sup> but there does not appear to have been any standardized competition until 1888. At this time, Superintendent Roycroft, of Victoria, donated a trophy for competition between yachts of a stipulated waterline length.<sup>105</sup> In the following year, 1889, he organized a race for craft under eighteen feet in Victoria harbour.<sup>106</sup> Annual races followed and, in 1892, the Victoria Yacht Club was formed, with such prominent members as the patron, Col. E.G. Prior, Commodore J.G. Cox, J.H. Seeley,

A. Mulcahy, W.B. Charles, and H.E. Loewen. The club floundered around the turn of the century, due to lack of funds and the loss of clubhouse property, but in 1908, J.S. Gibbs and others revived the membership to some one hundred and seventy-five with twelve yachts. In that year, a Royal Charter was conferred on the club and it has prospered since.<sup>107</sup>

On the mainland, R.H. Alexander, of Hastings Lumber Mill, was a recognized supporter and enthusiast of yachting during the 1880s. At the same time, Andy Linton's May was regarded as the local speedster. Vancouver held its first regatta on Dominion Day, July 1, 1887, the year after its incorporation as a city. By the following year, after the new Canadian Pacific Railway had brought a rapid increase in population and wealth, seven sailboats participated in the annual affair, which was marred by the drowning of two men off the capsized Thistle.<sup>108</sup> The competition of 1889 saw the first organized race between yachts from Vancouver and Victoria<sup>109</sup> and, during the next decade, several clubs were started but, like those in Victoria, soon floundered. Henry Bell-Irving (a fish cannery magnate) was associated with the Burrard Inlet Sailing Club of 1887; Walter Graveley (a real estate dealer) with the British Columbia Yacht Racing Association of 1891; and R.Y. Ellis with the Vancouver Boating Club of 1896. Finally, in 1903, the Vancouver Yachting Club was successful, with Walter Graveley as commodore of one hundred members and twenty-eight yachts. The Royal Charter was conferred on the club by the British Admiralty in 1906.<sup>110</sup>

### STEAMBOAT RACING

Although the function of the steamboats was far more utilitarian than sporting, the competitions between the vessels did much to arouse the excitement of the early communities on the West Coast. Competitions between these ships carried on a tradition already established by commercial sailing vessels as in 1858, the Victoria Gazette reported:

A HEAVY WAGER - We hear it stated on the street that a heavy wager is pending as to which vessel - the bark Live Yankee or the schooner Horace, will arrive first at San Francisco.<sup>111</sup>

Then, in 1860, the British Colonist announced:

STEAMBOAT RACE - An exciting race between the steamers Beaver and Julia took place on the last trip to New Westminster. Both vessels having been recently repaired and their machinery thoroughly overhauled, the race was a test of their speed. From the moment the Beaver sighted the Julia off Trial Island, the Beaver (although the oldest steamboat on the Pacific Coast, and drawing ten feet of water and unable to take advantage of the shallows out of the influence of the tide) never allowed the Julia to gain an inch on her, and arrived at her destination (Holbrook's Wharf, New Westminster) 35 minutes before the Julia. We understand that considerable money changed hands on the occasion.<sup>112</sup>

Similarly, in 1867, the steamers Fideliter and Diana raced from Port Townsend to Victoria, the Fideliter completing the trip in three hours and thirty-eight minutes with the Diana only seven minutes behind.<sup>113</sup> Generally, such competitions were a natural occurrence throughout the period, whenever two vessels held the same destination.

SWIMMING

The lack of suitable swimming attire, combined with mid-Victorian prurience, no doubt inhibited the enjoyment of aquatic recreation and competition. In 1868, the British Colonist remarked:

BATHING - We have heard complaints, also, in regard to the habit of bathing, by both sexes at unreasonable hours, in other exposed portions of the harbour, as well as the gorge. We are pretty sure a newspaper notice will suffice to amend the objectionable practice.<sup>114</sup>

Yet, by 1873, the same paper stated:

It is astonishing that a city with the pretensions of Victoria can not afford some accommodation for bathers. A few planks nailed together at some convenient place in the harbour would answer the purpose. Bathing and particularly swimming should be taught and encouraged. A sea port town where young men are not expert swimmers is an anomaly.<sup>115</sup>

However, this support of the activity did not condone immodest behaviour, as this terse remark in the paper of 1876 indicates:

Boys bathe in the Arm on Sunday in full view of boating parties. Birch 'em.<sup>116</sup>

Nevertheless, the occasional swimming contest did occur.

One such event occurred in 1862, when a Frenchman beat a Kanaka by ten feet in a race over two miles and, in another event, the same man was able to stay in the water longer than his opponent.<sup>117</sup>

In 1869, a match race for twenty dollars aside was announced between Frank Campbell and William Dolby, to come off at the Gorge in Victoria.<sup>118</sup> By 1875, a swimming event was included as part of the Dominion Day celebrations at Nanaimo and was won in that year by James McGregor.<sup>119</sup> Swimming competitions did not become a regular event in Victoria until introduced into the Queen's Birthday regatta of 1888.<sup>120</sup>

SUMMARY

In many coastal communities, an interest in aquatic sports develops as an outgrowth of an economic dependency on the water. Such was not the case in British Columbia. Although passengers and goods were all transported by sea, the white social mix of gentry, merchants, and miners was not personally involved with the water. Thus, the handling of water vessels was alien to most of the population. It is therefore interesting to note the powerful influence of the Royal Navy, which eventually enticed many members of the community to take up aquatic sports.

The early naval regattas were a major social event for the Colony of Vancouver Island. Serving the dual purpose of training and entertaining the crews of the fleet, these regattas also provided excitement for the colonials. But the Navy did more to influence the community. Many of the officers of the fleet were also leading citizens of Victoria and, as they did with so many of the contemporary social activities, they provided inspiration and organization to assist the participation of the civilian population in aquatic sports. It was largely through their endeavours that a significant group of Victorians embraced the laborious and demanding sport of rowing. Once initiated, this rowing fraternity was further encouraged by the success of the noted Eastern Canadians, such as the crew which created so much excitement with its triumph in Paris.

Similarly, in sailing, the navy was the prominent influence on the beautiful West Coast. The regattas introduced the

civilians to the grace of the sails of various classes of vessels and the officers undoubtedly lent their expertise to the community. It is probably a safe assumption that one such officer, Captain Nagle, who was recognized for promoting rowing, was also the person who owned the yacht Kelpie, winner of the Nanaimo Queen's Cup yachting race of 1862. However, sailing vessels were expensive and few could afford them. Thus, it was not until late in the 1880s, after the railway had brought a new prosperity to the region, that sailing became firmly established in the region.

Interest in canoeing was generated by the Indians, whose colourful canoes were a welcome addition to the festivities of such major celebrations as the Queen's Birthday. Most regattas held in New Westminster and Victoria on this occasion, included Indian canoe races, but had little competition for whites. However, the citizens of Nanaimo, accustomed to the hard work in the coal mines, took up the vigorous sport as early as 1862.

Despite the beautiful coastal areas of British Columbia, swimming was not popular during the period. Undoubtedly, the social inhibitions of the nineteenth century were a major obstacle to the development of the sport, but most likely, so too was the water. The waters of the Pacific North West not being noted for their warmth, even in summer.

Table IIAquatic SportsCanoeingSailingSwimming59-RN Regatta<sup>91</sup>

1860

62-Nanaimo Q.B.  
first formal  
event for whites<sup>1</sup>  
- Q.B. at Vic.  
& N.W.<sup>3,5</sup>  
Indian events

61-N.W. Q.B.<sup>93</sup>62-Nanaimo<sup>95</sup>  
Queen's Cup62-Frenchman<sup>117</sup>

65-N.W. Q.B.  
10,000 Indians<sup>6</sup>

69-\$20 match<sup>118</sup>

1870

76-Dufferin visit<sup>10</sup>72-Lachapelle  
builds 16' yawl<sup>99</sup>75-Nanaimo  
Dominion Day<sup>119</sup>79-Scud<sup>100</sup>

1880

90s-regularized  
sport as  
division of  
rowing clubs

87-Vancouver  
first regatta<sup>108</sup>  
- Burrard Club88-Victoria Q.B.  
- Roycroft Cup<sup>105</sup>88-Victoria Q.B.<sup>120</sup>89-first Van. vs Vic.<sup>109</sup>92-Victoria Yacht  
Club<sup>107</sup>1903-Vancouver Yacht  
Club<sup>110</sup>06-Royal Van. Y.C.<sup>110</sup>

08-Royal Vic. Y.C.

Table IIAquatic Sports (Continued)ROWING

59-RN Regattas - first news report<sup>14</sup>

-First city regatta Victoria<sup>21</sup>

1860

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60-U.S. boats at Victoria regatta<sup>16</sup>

61-Collegiate School race<sup>23</sup>

62-'Grand Regatta' at Victoria - sailing, rowing, canoeing<sup>25</sup>

64-Coyle's gig<sup>37</sup>

65-Vancouver (Victoria) Rowing Club formed<sup>35</sup>

67-O.B. Regatta at Victoria draws 300 Americans<sup>43</sup>

69-Tub race at Victoria regatta

-New Westminster club formed<sup>56</sup>

1870

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70-5,000 spectators watch 10 ships of RN<sup>20</sup>

-New Westminster vs. Burrard<sup>57</sup>

72-Chinese race at Victoria<sup>53</sup>

75-Dufferin provides medals for VRC<sup>63</sup>

76-Hastings Mills Regatta<sup>64</sup>

-Cotsford wins \$500<sup>74</sup>

78-Michael Law prominent to 1885<sup>80</sup>

-Port Moody club formed<sup>67</sup>

-Cotsford wins in Seattle<sup>75</sup>

Table IIAquatic Sports (Continued)ROWING (continued)

79-Cotsford loses in San Francisco<sup>77</sup>

-Paine champion of B.C. to 1888<sup>83</sup>

-New Westminster's Annie Fraser dominant<sup>68</sup>

1880

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82-James Bay Athletic Association formed<sup>69</sup>

83-Sliding seats

84-Hanlan exhibition<sup>79</sup>

86-Vancouver Rowing Club formed

90-Vancouver and Burrard merge<sup>71</sup>

-VRC defeats Seattle<sup>86</sup>

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CHAPTER VIBASEBALL

Baseball, or rounders, was predominantly a children's game, played by the west coast settlers as a pastime during the early 1850s. With the influx of the mining community, interest in the game rose so that by 1862, it was included as part of the Queen's Birthday festivities at New Westminster.<sup>1</sup> In the following year, interest in Victoria caused the British Colonist to write:

BASE BALL - The first match of the season of this game, was played on Beacon Hill on Saturday last, chiefly by Canadians. It is essentially an American game, but was introduced into Canada, and has been practiced there in various parts of the country for many years. It is somewhat allied in its nature to Cricket, with the exception that there are no wickets used, and instead of the ball being thrown on the ground, it is directed towards the batter, who strikes it in the air. The runs are made by the person striking the ball and running round a circle, there being several stopping places, each of which counts. If the batter strikes at the ball and misses it, he is 'out', but he may let the ball pass him as often as he pleases without striking at it. Among those practicing on Saturday, there were very few adepts, and consequently not so much interest excited among spectators as would otherwise have been the case. To those engaged in the game there is always sufficient interest kept up to keep them vigilant to get an opponent out. No doubt there will be many trials at this new sport here on future occasions.<sup>2</sup>

A week later, two teams had been organized, the Fashion and Roebucks, who played to a 33-39 score in favour of the latter. The British Colonist reported:

The first match of the season [the previous report was of a practice session] of this popular American game came off yesterday at noon on Beacon Hill. The players were at best rather 'rusty', but the work improved during the game owing to the instruction afforded to the less skillful by Mr. J.C. Keenan.

Base ball is not an original American game, being only a slight variation from the old English 'rounders'.<sup>3</sup>

During the early years of the sport, baseball players often had cricketers as opponents. In one of the first such games, the Fashion club won a keg of lager beer by defeating the "Victoria Cricketeers" by a score of 42-23.<sup>4</sup> However, the cricketers quickly caught on to the game, a few days later defeating a group of baseball players 40-34<sup>5</sup> and proceeding to win most of the contests of the ensuing years.

The sport became a little more systematic in British Columbia when the Olympic Base Ball Club was formed in Victoria, on Wednesday, September 12, 1866. The executive consisted of Mr. Gillon (president); Mr. E. McQuade (secretary-treasurer); Messrs. T. Fowler, J. Davies, and R.H. Adams, Jr. (directors). Membership was limited to thirty, with twenty-four members signed at the time. The rules of the National Base Ball Association of New York were adopted,<sup>6</sup> but the increased organization did not appear to enhance the prowess of the players. A month after the club was formed, they were beaten 29-17 by the Victoria Cricket Club<sup>7</sup> and, in a later contest, were defeated by thirty runs.<sup>8</sup> However, with the formation of a second team in Victoria, the City Base Ball Club, the Olympics were able to score an easy victory that year.<sup>9</sup>

In an effort to improve the quality of play, the 'Olympics' began practicing on Saturday afternoons in the spring of 1867.<sup>10</sup> Much improvement may not have been evident that year as the team was again easily defeated by the cricketers in the fall.<sup>11</sup>

However, during the next few years, the team was able to win its games against other baseball teams. In 1869, they scored 81 runs to 45 (also reported as 81 to 34), to defeat the Collegiate School, which had recently taken up the sport. Participants in the game were: Olympics - A.F. Keyser, R. Lowenberg, Joseph Davies, E.A. McQuade, C. Lombard, S. Dorman, Joshua Davies, Fred Morrison, and W.G. Morrison; Collegiates - H. Bustow, E. Nagle, W. Tolmie, McAdair, A. Wright, C. Pearse, J. Tolmie, D. Davies, and R. Johns; Umpire - E.V. Thorne; Scorers - W.B. Bueil and George Cohen.<sup>12</sup>

Around this time, American influence was particularly strong to promote the game. The Anglo-American Baseball Club had met for a practice at two o'clock on a Wednesday, in the spring of 1867<sup>13</sup> and, at least as early as that year, Victoria's youth were engaged in competitive play. An interschool match, in the British tradition of 'rounders', saw the boys of the Collegiate School defeat St. Louis College by eight runs, with one inning to spare, on Beacon Hill.<sup>14</sup> Later that year, the British Colonist carried the following remark, emphasizing the influence of the miners and merchants from south of the border.

An enthusiastic base ball player declares that our 'national game' [?] was known in Bible times; in proof of which he refers to the question in the parable of the leper - 'But where are the nine'?<sup>15</sup>

In the following year, the Victoria Club (probably a combined team) defeated members of the crew from the U.S. frigate Pensacola.<sup>16</sup> Then, in 1869, a few weeks after its victory over the Collegiate School, the Olympics played a visiting American team as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations at

Beacon Hill. The Victoria Olympics, "wearing white flannel shirts and pants and white caps, with blue trimmings, and the initial letter 'O' on the breast",<sup>17</sup> were defeated by a score of 45-23, by the Rainier Club of Olympia, Washington, who wore white shirts and dark pants.

A new club, the Dominion, was formed in 1869<sup>18</sup> and, in its first game in mid-July, it was defeated 71-40, by the Olympics.<sup>19</sup> Two other clubs appeared in the following spring, the Juveniles defeating the Union Club, 97-51<sup>20</sup> and playing again in the fall, on the Prince of Wales' Day.<sup>21</sup> By 1872, the Star Club had also been formed, beating the Union Club on a Friday afternoon at the end of March.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the Dominion Club had apparently become a prominent baseball team in British Columbia, losing by only one run to the touring San Francisco Eagles, who were then treated to a dinner at the Dominions' expense.<sup>23</sup> That summer, the Eagles Mr. Fraser helped refine local play by providing the Olympic Club with instruction in the new rules.<sup>24</sup> However, such help does not appear to have rubbed off on the Victoria representative team, who were defeated 58-28, by the Olympia Club of Washington, as part of the American fourth of July celebrations.<sup>25</sup> In a return contest, a similar score of 57-32 was produced in a game played at Victoria.<sup>26</sup>

By 1873, club practices were being held every evening in Victoria, at the corner of Yates and Quadra Streets.<sup>27</sup> Undoubtedly, these regular practice sessions enhanced the opportunity for participation so that within a few years, at least two new

clubs were formed. In 1877, the Independent Base Ball Club was announced<sup>28</sup> and the Maple Leaf Club was also formed, the latter defeating the Victoria Club, 56-43.<sup>29</sup> Two years later, these three teams were competing 'round-robin' style, each team winning one of a series of weekly games in April.<sup>30,31,32</sup> In 1882, the Independents and re-named Mayflowers were still competing (with a score of 14-13 in favour of the former),<sup>33</sup> but the Victoria Club appears to have become more concerned with inter-city play.

The continuing competition with American cities saw the Seattle Club journey to Victoria as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations of 1877. Considerable betting was made on the game, in which Victoria lost, 15-7,<sup>34</sup> but a return match was arranged in Seattle.<sup>35</sup> Thus, in conjunction with the city's Rifle Volunteers, who were also travelling to Seattle to take part in the July 4 celebrations, the City Club journeyed south for a second defeat.<sup>36</sup> However, in the next year, Victoria was able to represent itself better.

Under the team name, Amity, the Victoria Club played the visiting Seattle Alki Club to a 27 all draw<sup>37</sup> and later, during the Seattle celebrations, was able to win 26-19.<sup>38</sup> In later competition with Seattle, Victoria was not able to do as well, losing in that city in 1882<sup>39</sup> and then, being beaten by the Seattle University Nine, 27-24, in the Queen's Birthday Celebrations of 1883.<sup>40</sup> In the next two years, the Amity chose other American competition, defeating the Puget Sound Baseball Club of Port Townsend, 17-16,<sup>41</sup> and the Portland Club, 16-12.<sup>42</sup> It was not until the mid-eighties, that the Victoria

Club was able to find reasonable competition with other teams within the province.

Elsewhere on the Island, the town of Wellington had two clubs in 1875; the Birdcatcher Club (possibly named after a local race horse), with J. Brennan as captain, and the Quickstep Club, captained by J. Bell.<sup>43</sup> In the following year, the Wellington Quicksteps defeated a Nanaimo club by a score of 16 to 9,<sup>44</sup> but no other significant competitions seem to have taken place.

Meanwhile, in New Westminster, two clubs competed in early 1872. The Ki-hies defeated the New Westminster Club, 81-40, in their first meeting;<sup>45</sup> then lost by 23 runs a week later;<sup>46</sup> and by the following month were relatively even, Ki-hies scoring 22 to New Westminster's 19.<sup>47</sup> Then, in 1876, the Royal City Base Ball Club was formed to play against the men of the army camp,<sup>48</sup> but no regular competition seems to have come of it. The boys of the New Westminster public school formed the Arita Club, in 1883,<sup>49</sup> and later that year, the town gained a more stable baseball organization with the formation of the Alpha Club. The membership was listed as: Peter Grant (president), D.S. Curtis (vice-president), T.R. Pearson (secretary), W.J. Corbett, W.A. Greaves, O. Wilkie, Chris. Maker, William Codd, and Robert Wintements.<sup>50</sup> In its first game, the club was beaten, 45-27, by the Amity in Victoria.<sup>51</sup>

Baseball had become popular in Kamloops by 1885. In May of that year, at least two clubs had been formed, with the Knickerbocker Club defeating the Kamloops Blues.<sup>52</sup> American

railway workers were leading promoters of the game in the Interior, comprising a large part of the inland teams. Thus, in 1884, the town of Kamloops was host to the first well-represented tournament in the province, involving teams from Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Donald, and Kamloops.<sup>53</sup>

By this time, the Victoria Amity had become professional and were playing regular challenge matches with United States and British Columbia teams. In 1889, Vancouver also formed a professional team, enticing top players from Eastern Canada with offers of well paid jobs.<sup>54</sup> This promotion of the professional game raised the ire of the editor of the Daily Colonist, who chastised that,

In almost every city of the east, the public take sufficient interest in amateur baseball to offer pennants or trophies for season competition among local clubs. Why don't they here? It is not too late yet.<sup>55</sup>

### SUMMARY

During the period under discussion, Victoria was the centre of baseball in British Columbia. Other smaller towns had attempted to form clubs, but none of these prospered to regular competition. Within Victoria, it appears that various clubs played from time to time throughout the period, but the quantity of good calibre players was limited. Thus, city representative teams, formed for special competition during such events as the Queen's Birthday or fourth of July, were undoubtedly composites of the best local talent. These players performed on behalf of the Victoria Base Ball Club, under the early nickname of

Olympics and later, the 'Amity'. The popularity of the 'Amity' group combined with the rivalry between Victoria and American cities, eventually led the players to turn professional, joining many of the clubs in North America which similarly, strove to capitalize on their talent.

Table IIIBaseball

1850's - 'rounders' played as a pastime

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- 62-New Westminster Queen's Birthday<sup>1</sup>
- 63-Victoria Fashion (33) - Roebucks (39)<sup>3</sup>
- 66-Olympic Base Ball Club formed with N.Y.B.B.C. rules<sup>6</sup>  
 Olympics (17) - Victoria Cricket Club (29)<sup>7</sup>  
 Olympics lose to V.C.C. by 30 runs<sup>8</sup>  
 City Base Ball Club formed and loses to Olympics<sup>9</sup>
- 67-St. Louis College loses to Collegiate School by 8 runs<sup>14</sup>  
 Anglo-American Base Ball Club practicing<sup>13</sup>
- 68-Victoria Club (71) - U.S.A. 'Pensacola' (46)<sup>16</sup>
- 69-Olympic Club (81) - Collegiate School (45) (34?)<sup>12</sup>  
 Olympics (23) - Rainier Club, Washington (45)<sup>17</sup>  
 Olympics (71) - New Dominion Club (40)<sup>19</sup>
- 
- 70-Juveniles (97) - Union Club (51)<sup>20</sup>
- 72-Union Club defeated by New Star Club<sup>22</sup>  
 Dominion Club loses to S.F. Eagles by one run<sup>23</sup>  
 Victoria team (28) at Olympia, Washington (58)<sup>25</sup>  
 Victoria (32) - Olympia (57) in return match<sup>26</sup>
- Ki-hies (81) - New Westminster (40)<sup>45</sup>  
 Ki-hies lose by 23 to New Westminster<sup>46</sup>  
 Ki-hies (22) - New Westminster (19)<sup>47</sup>
- 75-Birdcatcher and Quicksteps in Wellington<sup>43</sup>
- 76-Quicksteps (16) - Nanaimo (9)<sup>44</sup>  
 Royal City Club formed in New Westminster<sup>48</sup>
- 77-Independent Club formed<sup>28</sup>  
 Maple Leafs (56) - Victoria Club (43)<sup>29</sup>  
 Seattle Club (15) at Victoria (7)<sup>34</sup>  
 Victoria loses in Seattle<sup>35</sup>
- 78-Victoria Amity (27) - Seattle Alki (27)<sup>37</sup>  
 -Victoria Amity (26) - Seattle Alki (19)<sup>38</sup>
- 79-Independents (19) - Victoria Club (16)<sup>30</sup>  
 Maple Leafs (33) - Independents (16)<sup>31</sup>  
 Victoria Club (31) - Maple Leafs (21)<sup>32</sup>
-

Table IV (Continued)Baseball

1882 - Independents (14) - Mayflowers (13)<sup>33</sup>  
 Victoria loses in Seattle<sup>34</sup>

83-Seattle University Nine (27) - Victoria (24)<sup>40</sup>  
 Arita Club formed by New Westminster school boys<sup>49</sup>  
 Alpha Club formed in New Westminster<sup>50</sup>  
 Alpha (27) at Victoria Amity (45)<sup>51</sup>

84-Victoria Amity (17) - Puget Sound, Port Townsend, (16)<sup>41</sup>

85-Victoria Amity (16) - Portland (12)<sup>42</sup>  
 Knickerbockers (19) - Kamloops Blues (11)<sup>52</sup>

88-Kamloops Tournament<sup>53</sup>

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CHAPTER VIICRICKET

Cricket was apparently first introduced to the Pacific North West in 1849, when Captain W. Colquhoun Grant arrived at Fort Victoria from England. He brought with him a full set of equipment and offered his services as teacher.<sup>1</sup> A few years later, the Victoria Pioneer Cricket Club was formed, becoming the first sports organization in the region.<sup>2</sup> Competitions between the Royal Navy and the colonists were common, the earliest newspaper reference being in 1858, when the Victoria Gazette reported that the Victoria Club and vanquished the representatives of H.B.M. Satellite, by a score of 86-56.<sup>3</sup> In a return match, Victoria won again, 107-101, and was to arrange matches with another of H.B.M. vessels, the Plumper.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the next year, the British Colonist reported:

A return match between the Fleet and Victoria Pioneer Cricket Clubs was played at Colwood yesterday. It resulted in favour of the VPC Club, with 17 runs and one innings to spare.<sup>5</sup>

Over the years, the fleet did not do well against the townsfolk. In 1860, the officers from Esquimalt were beaten by the Victoria Cricket Club with ease.<sup>6</sup> During the next season, the British Colonist printed a detailed score card on the front page to announce the town's 97-51 victory over the Navy.<sup>7</sup> In 1863, the band of H.M.S. Topaze provided music while the ship's team played a Victoria eleven consisting of Messrs. W.A.G. Young; Wallace; Captain Luard; R.E. Edwards; Wakeman; Kulpe; Richardon; Good; Penfold; and Tighe.<sup>8</sup> In

a return match Victoria beat the Topaze by 72 runs as part of a competition which also involved teams from H.M.S. Sutlej and New Westminster. However, results of these matches were not printed in the British Colonist as the paper explained, "We regret that owing to the arrival of the mail steamer we have not space for the scores".<sup>9</sup> (see also 46,48)

Other matches between Victoria and the fleet during the 1860s included the following:

1863 - Victoria won with the help of outstanding players such as Hawlett, Hemsley, and Yardsley.<sup>10</sup>

1866 - Fleet (102) - Victoria (101) on Peatt's ground at Colwood. The city club travelled to the game by omnibus.<sup>11</sup>

1867 - Victoria won the first match by seven<sup>12</sup> but in a return match, the fleet won. The band from H.M.S. Malacca and several 'fair ladies' were in attendance.<sup>13</sup> In a third match, the fleet again won.<sup>14</sup>

1868 - Victorians won two games, 111-108<sup>15</sup> and 103-59.<sup>16</sup>

The fleet not only played against the townsfolk, but competed amongst itself. The arrival of new ships in port would eventually lead to a match, or sometimes a ship's officers would play against its ordinary hands, as in the first match of the 1867 season at Victoria, when the officers of H.M.S. Malacca played against the ship's company.<sup>17</sup> The Navy made a further contribution to cricket in the area when, in 1871, it levelled and drained land owned by the Puget Sound Company, and prepared the ground for play.<sup>18</sup>

Once again, following the initiative and enthusiasm of the Navy, the colonists of Victoria developed a keen interest

in cricket. In 1859, "some rare sport"<sup>19</sup> was anticipated in a friendly intra-club match and, by 1861, spectator interest and organization was sufficient to necessitate the serving of refreshments at the cricket grounds.<sup>20</sup> In the fall of 1862, a group of new arrivals bolstered the ranks of the Victoria Club. In a series of Saturday afternoon matches, the newcomers, those who had been in Victoria less than three months, defeated the Victoria Club with scores of 119-118,<sup>21</sup> 161-155,<sup>22</sup> and 132-130.<sup>23</sup>

Weekly matches continued throughout October that year, with novel efforts to create different teams. One method saw teams made up according to the alphabet and, in that game, the last half of the alphabet won, 154-152.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, recent emigrants who had arrived on board the Tynemouth were easily beaten by a Victoria eleven.<sup>25</sup> A week later, a 'scrub match' was played<sup>26</sup> and, on the following weekend, 'England' defeated the 'Colonies' by a score of 95-89.<sup>27</sup> A particularly novel match was a challenge in which J.H. Howard offered one thousand dollars for competition between himself (with the assistance of two fielders, a bat, and eleven wickets) and Captain Layton's Eleven, who were to use only broomsticks.<sup>28</sup> The challenge was accepted a week later, but the stakes were reduced to simply a champagne supper.<sup>29</sup>

The activity of late 1862 caused considerable anticipation of a busy season in the next year. Promoters of the game looked forward to the formation of a regular team to replace the haphazard roster of previous seasons. Thus, the British Colonist wrote in the spring of 1863:

The first cricket match of the season will be played tomorrow at Beacon Hill. Lovers of this our distinctive national sport are requested to attend as, after the conclusion of the game, a meeting with a view to the formation of a permanent Cricket Club will be held upon the ground. Details will afterwards be discussed at the John Bull Hotel, Government Street.<sup>30</sup>

A week later, a second match was played between the old and new residents. A Mr. Wallace was a particularly outstanding batsman for the oldsters and, along with other prominent members (F. Hawlett, C. Weaver, and A. Hansley), scored 218 runs to 105 against the newcomers, who were led by J. Arnoup.<sup>31</sup> In the next match, the clubs expectations of forming a permanent team were proven premature when an insufficient number of players turned up to play before the large crowd gathered on Beacon Hill. The British Colonist remarked,

We are surprised that a greater number of the young men of the city do not join in this manly and noble recreation. We are sorry to see that the full number required on each side could not be mustered on the ground.<sup>32</sup>

The explanation of the incongruence between the activity in the fall of 1862 and that of the spring of 1863 probably lies in the occupations of those new arrivals. Most likely they were miners, wintering in Victoria, but leaving for the gold fields in early spring. In late October of 1863, a challenge was accepted to match Cariboo vs non-Cariboo players.<sup>33</sup> The "hardy miners" won easily, 83-80, with 10 wickets to spare.<sup>34</sup>

By the following spring, in 1864, Victoria was able to muster a more regular team under the official title of the (United) Victoria Cricket Club.<sup>35</sup> That fall, Victoria sent its team to play against the Nanaimo Club, a general holiday being given for the occasion to all the employees of the coal

companies in that town.<sup>36</sup> Victoria won that game 137-135.<sup>37</sup> When the Caribooites returned to Victoria for the winter, they undoubtedly found a stronger match, but still were able to beat Victoria, 64-63.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, New Westminster had had a cricket club since 1860. The British Colonist announced its formation in April:

CRICKET CLUB - We hear from W. Jeffray, Esq., of Jeffray and Co's Express, that the Westminster folk have established a Cricket Club. The Cricket ground is on McLean's Farm, Pitt-River.<sup>39</sup>

Mather and McDonald have stated that the Pioneer Cricket Club was formed in early 1861,<sup>40</sup> but the following excerpt from the British Columbian would seem to verify that it was really the same club which had been formed a year earlier.

The first monthly meeting of the New Westminster Cricket Club for the year 1861, took place on Monday 4th March, in the Pioneer Theatre.<sup>41</sup>

The officers of the club at that time were: C.L. Wylde, chairman; C. Weaver, vice-chairman; J.T. Scott, treasurer; and R. Dickinson, secretary.

According to Mather and McDonald, on February 23, the grounds (situated on the present side of Woodland's School, east of McBride Boulevard) were prepared by a great "clearing bee", involving 100 Engineers, their band, and a similar number of citizens. Subscriptions were collected to a sum of five hundred and fifty dollars, including fifty dollars donated by Governor Douglas. Mather and McDonald continue to state that,

The first cricket ground was only 50 by 30 yards but the Government gave a grant of 60, and a Chinese, Koo-Loo, was hired to clear and grade an area 462 by 100. The next year, the chain-gang rolled the ground.<sup>42</sup>

In the spring of 1862, a match was announced between the single and married members of the Royal Engineers. The British Columbian took the opportunity to chastise the New Westminster Club for its inactivity.<sup>43</sup> A year later, the Royal Engineers defeated the town during the Queen's Birthday celebrations<sup>44</sup> but, in a return match, were defeated by the New Westminster Pioneer Cricket Club.<sup>45</sup>

In June of 1863, "eleven of the New Westminster champions of the willow"<sup>46</sup> sailed to Victoria, for the first inter-colonial cricket match, which Victoria won by thirty-three runs. In reference to the match, the British Columbian commented that the New Westminster team "do not entertain a very high opinion of Victorian hospitality, and promise to show a different example should a fitting opportunity offer".<sup>47</sup> The inter-colonial match of 1865 saw the Victoria club travel to New Westminster aboard the Hudson Bay Company steamer Sir James Douglas. Dressed in their black and yellow colours, the Victorians were again the winners, by 59 runs.<sup>48</sup> In the following year, the competition was held in Victoria in conjunction with a rifle match and again, Victoria won, 133-81.<sup>49</sup>

During the mid-sixties, the two clubs had other local competitors. In 1865, New Westminster had success against a Naval Eleven<sup>50</sup> and the crew of H.M.S. Sutlej.<sup>51</sup> Then, in 1866, they defeated a Civil Service team<sup>52</sup> and, on two occasions, beat a combined team from the Royal Engineers camp and H.M.S.

Sparrowhawk.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, in Victoria, the Volunteer Rifles challenged the townsmen in the spring of 1865, but the Victoria Cricket Club won easily.<sup>54</sup> Later that year, another club was formed - the City Eleven, with Mr. W.R. Gibbons as honorary secretary.<sup>55</sup> Within six weeks of its formation, this new club beat the Victoria Cricket Club, 85-84, with 10 wickets to go.<sup>56</sup> In the following year, the Victoria Club endeavoured to improve its play, advertising its practice sessions on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, at three o'clock on Beacon Hill.<sup>57</sup>

Towards the end of the decade, the clubs were more stable and better organized. New Westminster opened its 1868 season with a match between 'Bachelors' and 'Benedicts'.<sup>58</sup> Later in the summer, they travelled to Esquimalt, where they suffered a loss to the Fleet on Thursday, July 31.<sup>59</sup> The next day, the Hudson Bay Company's steamer, the Otter, delayed its scheduled sailing to New Westminster, allowing the 'Mainlanders' to play against Victoria. Again, the New Westminster side lost,<sup>60</sup> but their weekend trials were not over. On the following Monday, the Fleet team travelled to New Westminster to win an easy victory.<sup>61</sup> That fall, the Victorians played more singles versus marrieds matches<sup>62</sup> and spent three hundred dollars to complete a new cricket ground at Beacon Hill.<sup>63</sup> However, the biggest cricket news of the period was the proposal for an international match between San Francisco and Victoria. Apparently, a number of people living in San Francisco had also lived and played in Victoria and were eager to re-new acquaintances. The British Colonist noted that "amongst the Victoria players

residing below, we see the name of Mr. Powell, of the Bank of British Columbia, honorably mentioned in some of the late matches".<sup>64</sup>

In March of 1869, the proposal was formalized with a challenge from the California Cricket Club for a match of "our national game" to take place in San Francisco in May, with a return engagement in Victoria in August. Mr. Halloday, owner of the steamship line, was prepared to carry the Victoria players free of charge and the Cosmopolitan Hotel in San Francisco offered liberal terms for their stay.<sup>65</sup> In regards to the funding of the trip, the British Colonist remarked;

Of course those gentlemen who are in a position to do so, will pay their own expenses; but there are others who are not prepared to meet an extraordinary demand upon their funds, and for these we must provide.<sup>66</sup>

Whatever financial arrangements were eventually made is unclear, but in early April, the following Eleven departed for San Francisco - Messrs. Pooley, Richardson, Drake, Guerra, J. Wilson, Barnett, Hemmingway, J. Ball, Wallace, Tye, and Howard, with J.L. Fisher as umpire.<sup>67</sup>

Reports of the matches were relayed to Victoria by telegraph. In the first match, the California Club won by 11 runs in a match which caused considerable sums of money to change hands in bets.<sup>68</sup> However, the Victoria Club won the remaining three matches, defeating the St. George's Club by 15 the Pioneer Club by 13, and the California Club by 15 in a re-match. To round out the festivities, they played a friendly game of baseball with the San Francisco Eagles Baseball Club, losing heavily to the "Champions of the Pacific Coast".<sup>69</sup>

On their return to Victoria, the team played the new 'Indignant' Club, formed by local enthusiasts as a result of the Victoria Cricket Club's loss to the Californian's. The match was played in good humour, the Victoria Club winning, 188-85.<sup>70</sup>

The intended return match with California does not appear to have come off until 1872 but, in the interim, Victoria's cricketers were busy. In 1869, a Junior Eleven was formed and defeated the Collegiate School<sup>71</sup> but proved no match for the crew of H.M.S. Boxer, in the following year.<sup>72</sup> In 1871, the Victoria Cricket Club published its book of rules, listing the following executive: president - His Honour, Lieutenant Governor Trutch; vice-president - Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie; treasurer - A. Maxwell; honorary secretary - J.E. Curtis; committee - Captain Layton, C.E. Dawson, A.B. Ritchie, A. Rome, and E.C. Baker.<sup>73</sup>

The British Columbia Cricket Club was organized in 1872, with M.W.T. Drake, chairman; J.E. Curtis, secretary; C.E. Pooley, treasurer.<sup>74</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Trutch was particularly active in cricket that year, observing a match between single and married players and eventually playing in a match for the marrieds.<sup>75</sup> Later that spring, the Victorians began to raise the necessary money to bring the San Francisco team to town<sup>76</sup> and a month later, the visitors won two of the three games played. San Francisco defeated the British Columbia Club 118-117, was beaten by the Victoria Club, 178-177, and won its third match 137-137.<sup>77</sup> The local press made much of the series and the British Colonist even printed sophisticated

charts to provide an analysis of batting and bowling averages.<sup>78</sup> However, with the interchanging reference to Victoria players, it is difficult to distinguish what the relationship was between the two local clubs.

In other events during 1872, a Mr. Stephenson and Captain Kennedy easily won a single wicket match against Colonel Singleton and a Mr. Smith, the umpire of the California team.<sup>79</sup> About this time, a Juvenile Club was formed in Victoria, with Richard Hall, president; William Cameron, secretary; and E. Nagle, treasurer.<sup>80</sup> In New Westminster, efforts were being made to form a new Cricket Club,<sup>81</sup> while competitions continued between married and single players on Friday and Monday afternoons.<sup>82</sup>

During the remainder of the period, interest in cricket continued to grow and numerous organizations would play against each other. By 1875, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows were playing a series against the Masons<sup>83</sup> and, in the following year, some of the city's most respected citizens got together for a match, forming two teams, the 'Jolly Corks' and the 'West of the Rockies'. A luncheon during the affair seated about one hundred people, including Lieutenant-Governor, the Honorable A.N. Richards, Judge Begbie, the American Consul, and the French Vice-Consul.<sup>84</sup>

In 1878, the Victoria Cricket Club published another rule book, listing a new executive of: Sir M.B. Begbie, president; M.W.T. Drake, Vice-president; A.W. Jones, honorary secretary-treasurer;... Captain Layton, W. Bennet, Jos. Wilson, A. Rome, and

C.E. Pooley, committee.<sup>85</sup> International matches in Portland were arranged that year and Victoria won two easy victories,<sup>86</sup> repeating the successes at home in 1879.<sup>87</sup> By the turn of the decade, inter-school matches saw the Victoria High School overpower the Collegiate School by scores of 102-54<sup>88</sup> and 139-64.<sup>89</sup>

With the advent of the trans-continental railway, mainland teams were able to develop within a growing population. Players arriving from the east enabled the formation of the Vancouver Cricket Club in 1888 (with John Boulton as president)<sup>90</sup> and that spring, the New Westminster Club was able to boast a membership of thirty-five players.<sup>91</sup> Thus, by 1890, there were sufficient outstanding players in each of the three major cities to ensure strong inter-city competition.

#### SUMMARY

Once again, the enthusiasm and organization of the Royal Navy was instrumental in the establishment of a sport within the region. Beginning with captain Grant's provision of cricket equipment and instruction in 1849, Victorians took up the game as a pastime, enjoying the activity during picnics and festivities. Within a few years, the Victoria Pioneer Cricket Club was formed as a loose organization of enthusiasts, becoming the first sports organization in the Pacific Northwest. However, due to the fluctuating social and economic conditions brought about by the gold rush, its membership was unstable in the early years.

Various novel methods were used to make up teams for internal competition, while representative teams were selected to play against the Fleet or against the miners who wintered in Victoria. The first inter-colonial match took place in 1863, when a group representing the New Westminster Cricket Club (formed in 1860 and assisted by the Royal Army Engineers), travelled to Victoria. In the following year, the (United) Victoria Cricket Club became more formally organized and sent representatives to play against the Nanaimo Club.

By 1870, the Victoria Cricket Club had become well established. Several of the Cariboo miners now made the city their permanent home and contributed to the strength of the Club. The citizens of Victoria had invested some three hundred dollars in the development of new grounds at Beacon Hill and the Club had recently returned from a very successful tour of California. The publication of the Club Rules in 1871 listed a prestigious executive, including Lieutenant-Governor Trutch as president and Sir Matthew Begbie as vice-president. In the following year, the British Columbia Cricket Club was organized and the San Francisco team played a return series in Victoria.

Throughout the period, local games were organized within the club and between various special interest groups who enjoyed responding to a challenge. Victoria's youth were playing formal matches as early as 1869, when the Junior Eleven competed with the Collegiate School and, in 1872, a Juvenile Club was formed. The organization of the city's youth undoubtedly enhanced the calibre of cricket in the city as the youngsters matured to participate as members of the Victoria Cricket Club.

By 1880, inter-city competition had been established with Portland and, a few years later, good competition could be found in other British Columbian cities. With the arrival of new settlers on the mainland, as a result of the completion of the C.P.R., the New Westminster Cricket Club was bolstered by new talent and, in 1888, the Vancouver Cricket Club was formed. Thus, as the turn of the century approached, the three major cities of British Columbia were able to engage in strong cricket competition.

Table IVCricket

- 1849 - Captain Grant brings equipment to Victoria<sup>1</sup>  
 - Victoria Pioneer Cricket Club formed<sup>2</sup>  
 - competitions between V.P.C.C. and Royal Navy
- 1858 - V.P.C.C. (86) - H.B.M. Satellite (56)<sup>3</sup>  
 - V.P.C.C. (107) - H.B.M. Satellite (101)<sup>4</sup>  
 - V.P.C.C. defeats Fleet by 17 runs
- 59 - intra-club matches<sup>19</sup>
- 
- 1860 - V.C.C. easily defeats RN officers<sup>6</sup>  
 - V.C.C. (97) - RN (51)<sup>7</sup>  
 - New Westminster Cricket Club formed<sup>39</sup>
- 61 - refreshments available at Victoria grounds<sup>20</sup>  
 - New Westminster grounds cleared<sup>42</sup>
- 62 - newcomers defeat old V.C.C. (119-118),<sup>21</sup>  
 (161-155),<sup>22</sup> (132-130)<sup>23</sup>  
 - first half alphabet (154) - last half (152)<sup>24</sup>  
 - emigrants of 'Tynemouth' beaten by V.C.C. by 11  
 runs<sup>25</sup>  
 - 'England' (95) - 'Colonies' (89)<sup>27</sup>  
 - \$1,000 offered for novel match<sup>28</sup>
- 63 - V.C.C. vs H.M.S. Topaze;<sup>8</sup> win next match by 72 runs<sup>9</sup>  
 - newcomers (218) - oldster (105)<sup>31</sup>  
 - Cariboo (83) - Non-Cariboo (80)<sup>34</sup>  
 - N.W.P.C.C. vs Royal Engineers split games<sup>44,45</sup>  
 - V.C.C. defeats N.W.C.C. by 33 runs - first inter-  
 colonial match<sup>46</sup>
- 64 - (United) V.C.C. official title<sup>35</sup>  
 - V.C.C. (137) - Nanaimo (135)<sup>37</sup>  
 - Cariboo (64) - Non-Cariboo (63)<sup>38</sup>
- 65 - V.C.C. over N.W.C.C. by 59<sup>48</sup>  
 - N.W.C.C. defeats Navy<sup>50</sup> and H.M.S. Sutlej<sup>51</sup>
- 66 - V.C.C. (101) - Fleet (102)<sup>11</sup>  
 - V.C.C. (133) - N.W.C.C. (81)<sup>49</sup>  
 - N.W.C.C. over Civil Service<sup>52</sup>

Table IV (Continued)

Cricket

- 1966 - (Continued)
- N.W.C.C. beats Royal Engineers and H.M.S. Sparrowhawk<sup>53</sup>
  - V.C. over Volunteer Rifles<sup>54</sup>
  - City Eleven formed in Victoria<sup>48</sup>
  - City Eleven (85) - V.C.C. (84)<sup>56</sup>
- 67 - officers of H.M.S. Malacca play ship's company<sup>17</sup>
- V.C.C. wins 1 of 3 games with Fleet<sup>12,13,14</sup>
- 68 - V.C.C. defeats Fleet (111-108)<sup>15</sup> and (103-59)<sup>16</sup>
- N.W.C.C. loses to Fleet<sup>59,61</sup>
  - V.C.C. defeats N.W.C.C.
  - \$300 spent on new grounds at Beacon Hill<sup>63</sup>
  - proposal for match with California<sup>64</sup>
- 69 - V.C.C. wins 3 of 4 games in San Francisco<sup>69</sup> - first international match
- V.C.C. (188) - Indignants (85)<sup>70</sup>
  - Junior Eleven formed and defeat Collegiate School<sup>71</sup>
- 
- 1871 - Navy prepares grounds of Puget Sound Company<sup>18</sup>
- Junior Eleven loses to H.M.S. Boxer<sup>72</sup>
  - V.C.C. publishes book of rules<sup>73</sup>
- 72 - British Columbia Cricket Club organized<sup>74</sup>
- San Francisco wins 2 of 3 games in Victoria (118-117), (177-178), (137-136)<sup>77</sup>
  - single wicket match<sup>79</sup>
  - Juvenile Club formed<sup>80</sup>
- 75 - 100F vs Masons<sup>83</sup>
- 76 - Jolly Corks vs West of the Rockies<sup>84</sup>
- 78 - V.C.C. publishes another rule book<sup>85</sup>
- V.C.C. wins two games in Portland<sup>86</sup>
- 79 - V.C.C. wins two games with Portland<sup>87</sup>
- Victoria High School (102) - Collegiates (54)<sup>88</sup>
- 
- 1880 - Victoria High (139) - Collegiates (64)<sup>89</sup>
- 88 - Vancouver Cricket Club formed<sup>90</sup>
- N.W.C.C. boasts 35 members<sup>91</sup>
-

CHAPTER VIIICYCLING

Victoria received its first consignment of bicycles or velocipedes, as the early machines were known, in February of 1869. The British Colonist carried this announcement:

VELOCIPEDES - Messrs. Grelly and Fiterre are advised of their shipment of an invoice of velocipedes from Paris to their care. Among the lot are ladies' velocipedes, formed like an English pony phaeton. The occupant seats herself, the floor of the velocipede is also the treadle, the slightest pressure on which with the foot propels the vehicle at a locomotive rate of speed over any ordinary road.<sup>1</sup>

This new product of the Industrial Revolution caused quite a stir in the local press. Schools were reported to have been opened in San Francisco, offering instruction in the use of the velocipedes from teachers called velocipedagogues.<sup>2</sup> One of the first of the machines was purchased by Dr. Carrall, the M.L.A. for the Cariboo.<sup>3</sup> The ladies vehicle was equipped with three wheels, instead of the two for the men, and one of the consignment was raffled, with one hundred tickets being offered at \$2.50 each.<sup>4</sup>

Within two weeks of their announced arrival in Victoria, the velocipedes were being "exercised" on Beacon Hill, where they were reported to have been making "very good time around the course".<sup>5</sup> The British Colonist continued to say that "the greatest speed at which this class of velocipede has been driven is a mile in three minutes", although a French velocipede had supposedly kept up for a short distance, with a locomotive running at full speed, near Versailles. However, the early

cycle was not noted for its speed as an 1869 match race, in Brampton, saw a runner finish well ahead of a velocipede in a half-mile race.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the British Colonist was sufficiently impressed to order six of the two-wheelers for the use of its carriers, concluding that "besides, Velocipedes never require to be fed".<sup>7</sup>

The velocipede caused considerable excitement on the streets of Victoria, as the British Columbian reported that,

Quite a display of these two wheeled vehicles was made last evening by the experts in their management who had a lively time in cruising over the sidewalks with lamps attached in front, which, as passing through some of the darker passages of the city gave the appearance of flying balls of fire.<sup>8</sup>

However, not all the citizens were pleased with the use of the vehicle, as it caused some complaints.

The danger of a collision with pedestrians would be less likely to occur with a skillful driver than a novice on a highway two-wheeler. If people want to practice or use them let them go to Beacon Hill, and not among foot passengers.<sup>9</sup>

Velocipedes having become "the rage here as well as elsewhere",<sup>10</sup> British Columbians were soon to race them. In one Victoria report, a record of forty-three seconds was set in crossing James Bay Bridge, beating the former record by seven seconds. However, it was Barkerville that established a velocipede race as part of the Dominion Day celebrations, whereby A.C. Campbell beat J. Richie.<sup>11</sup> The Victoria press reported that "the velocipede disease seems to have been communicated to the lieges of Barkerville by a 'celebrated velocipedist'".<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the Cariboo Sentinel reported:

Barkerville may be behind the rest of the world in a geographical sense, but in none other. Mr. Ritchie, who had never seen a velocipede, has succeeded in manufacturing one, which with slight exception, is a complete success. It only wants a little Doctoring. A celebrated velocipedist from Victoria gave it a practical test the other day, and afforded some amusement to the uninitiated. The natives, especially, were astonished.<sup>13</sup>

Another race, held on July 4, resulted in this report:

One out of the only two velocipedes in Barkerville had been broken, and contestants were obliged to use the same vehicle, alternately. John Puetz and J.D. Ritchie entered. Ritchie made the distance 250 yards, in 46½ seconds, and Puetz in 59 seconds.<sup>14</sup>

A month later, Barkerville's Mr. Ritchie participated in another event, riding from the town of Vanwinkle to Quesnelmouth in a day.<sup>15</sup>

Despite all this initial excitement, a year after its arrival in British Columbia, the new machine was denounced and rejected as a thing of the past. It had originally sold for one hundred and fifty dollars but, by 1870, could be had for as little as ten dollars. In obituary, the British Colonist noted;

EXIT VELOCIPEDES - The bicycle has been snuffed out like a tallow candle...Riding a velocipede is hard work. When you ride a horse, the animal does the work and you enjoy yourself. Mounted on a bicycle the toil and exercise is all the rider's; the machine takes it easy. Good-bye bicycle.<sup>16</sup>

It was not until some twenty years had passed, with a great influx of population and further technological change, that the community developed a sustained enthusiasm for bicycling.

As was common with most innovations, there was considerable debate over the merits of the bicycle. In 1884, the Mainland Guardian waged one such argument.

CYCLING - In our leader of last week on this question we drew attention to some of the more salient features of the controversy that has lately been carried on in these columns, and attempted to show what in our opinion were the possible and probable drawbacks and advantages of cycling as regards its influence on the maintenance of health in those who availed themselves of this mode of travelling. A letter dated October 27, from Dr. Strachan, who strenuously opposes the practice, or rather excessive indulgence in it, deals with some of the facts bearing upon the occurrence and extent of 'perineal pressure' and concussion of the spine. We have little to add to what has already been set forth. There can be no doubt that evil consequences may ensue from indiscretion in this as in other pursuits of business and pleasure. Nevertheless, we maintain that it is quite within the reach of mechanical skill to fashion an instrument that shall minimize the danger arising from pressure on the urethra and jolting of the body. Moreover, it behoves us to consider the collective gain of the many while discussing the misfortunes of the few; and we hold that were cycling even with its present attendant disadvantages, to be altogether discontinued, the public would be robbed of a means of usefulness and enjoyment that it would be difficult to replace.<sup>17</sup>

The first cycling organization in British Columbia appeared with the formation of the Island Wanderers Club, in 1889.<sup>18</sup> The club was affiliated with the Canadian Wheelmen's Association,<sup>19</sup> but its activities were limited by the lack of a suitable track and the very rough roads. With the establishment of a cinder track at Brockton Point, in 1891, Vancouver became the main centre of cycling. This was the site of the province's first well organized and attended meet, involving competitors from Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster, and Seattle. Two cyclists dominated the competitions. One was John Lawrence of Vancouver (recently from Australia), who claimed to be one of British Columbia's top sportsmen in boxing, wrestling, cricket, and swimming. The second was C.J. Piper of Victoria, who preferred to ride on pneumatic tyres, instead of the 'cushions' or

'solids' popular with other cyclists. In compliance with CWA rules, Piper was to be handicapped by three hundred yards behind 'cushions' and six hundred yards behind 'solids', in a three mile race. Instead, he put away his pneumatics and rode 'solids' to victory. Another dominant cyclist of the 1890s was E.H. Potter.<sup>20</sup>

CHAPTER IXFIGHTSBOXING

As may be expected in a frontier community where a small population was quickly informed of a ruckus between its citizens, the early British Columbians were interested in the proceedings of a bout of fisticuffs. However, their interest was not generated merely by the excitement of the scrap but also by the prowess and skill of the combatants. The British Colonist was quick to describe the sophistication evidenced in a street brawl.

FISTICUFFS - Last evening quite a spirited bout came off on Johnson Street, between two Indians, who fought for nearly half an hour and exhibited considerable science throughout. The fight attracted a large crowd and afforded much amusement to lookers on, who seemed to appreciate the Sunday amusement kindly provided for their edification with a keen interest.<sup>1</sup>

Prize fights were an excellent opportunity for the colonials to engage in vicarious sporting competition. They did not need to fight themselves to participate in the contests because they could readily enjoy bantering with each other over the merits of their favourites. As with other contests of the times, the sporting community was always ready to put money on the outcome of an event and were even prepared to back champions in matches as distant as England. Often news of such events would arrive in the community considerably out of date or inaccurate, posing problems for those who had placed money on the match.

THE GREAT PRIZE FIGHT - Considerable doubt is thrown on the genuiness of the report of the prize fight between Sayers and Heenan in England, and many think that the fight never came off at all. In olden times,

before telegrams and railroads were introduced, it was quite a common occurrence for the wags of a sea-port town to procure the publication of a bogus 'extra', and start it off before the mail-hours, on purpose to sell the folks in the interior of the country, with late and important news of various topics. It may be that the same trick has been played on the Californians. The next steamer will decide the match, however; and we advise those who have money staked on the result of the contest, to wait for further intelligence from below.<sup>2</sup>

There were times, however, when involvement in the competitions was more direct. An 1866 bout between George Wilson and George Baker, in Barkerville, caused so much excitement in the town that the Cariboo Sentinel noted:

EFFECTS OF THE FIGHT - Within the past couple of days we have noticed more damaged faces, and eyes dressed in deep mourning, than it has been our lot to observe all the season; these gifts can only be accounted for by the deep interest which the votaries of the noble science have taken in the result of the late milling match.<sup>3</sup>

While other parts of the continent were attempting to censure the prize fights, the Victorians were interested in maintaining the contests according to strict rules of 'scientific' boxing. With some alarm, the British Colonist reported in late December of 1860, that the legislature of Vermont was deliberating over a bill to prevent the fights<sup>4</sup> and, by mid-summer, the paper reflected the citizens appreciation of well administered local bouts.

A fight for \$25 aside to settle a long existing dispute between a couple of mechanics of this city, came off on Saturday evening at the Springs. Three rounds were fought when one of the principles failed to come to time, and the other was declared the winner and the stakes handed over to him. The fight was conducted in strict accordance with the latest rules of the ring, and no great damage was inflicted by either of the fighters.<sup>5</sup>

Not all the fights in these early days were for such low stakes. A bout in Whatcom, Washington Territory, was reported for five hundred dollars. The fight lasted through forty-six rounds, one hour and thirty-five minutes, during which both combatants were badly cut up. The victor, William Pomford, was an English deserter from the Royal Navy. His opponent was Tom Sheldon, a Scot.<sup>6</sup>

Sparring contests which demonstrated the boxers' skills, rather than their determination to win, were particularly popular in Victoria. The Vancouver Times noted one such event.

Ned Allen and Billy Williams will have a set-to this evening at the Royal Hotel Tap. Several of the sporting community will be present, and some excellent sparring may be anticipated.<sup>7</sup>

These sparring exhibitions were often performed as a 'benefit' for a local fighter in an attempt to defray his expenses for training and preparation for upcoming prize bouts. In the spring of 1867, the friends of George Baker sponsored one such benefit to assist him prepare for "an unknown gladiator from San Francisco".<sup>8</sup> Apart from Baker's own demonstration, a number of musclemen, presumably gymnasts, were also to perform. The audience was small, but well entertained by several friendly bouts, and the young man who sang a ballad during the evening was enthusiastically encored.<sup>9</sup>

George Baker had recently returned from the Cariboo, where prize fighting was particularly popular among the speculators and miners. The simple aggressiveness of the sport blended well with the tough physical and social environment of the northern mining communities and lent itself more to frontier enthusiasm than to the comparatively sophisticated interests of

Victorians. As early as 1865, the Cariboo Sentinel reported a prize fight, "according to the rules of the English prize ring", which took place on a Wednesday, in Chancellor and Company's Lager Beer Saloon, before an audience which even included a few women. Two Welshmen fought to a draw, after twenty-nine rounds, in a bout which lasted forty-two minutes. The Cariboo Sentinel summed up the spirit and enthusiasm for these events:

The men shook hands and drank to each other's health after the event with as much cordiality as if they had never been foes. Verily Cariboo is getting lively, and Barkerville especially. Three fights on Tuesday and one on Wednesday.<sup>10</sup>

During the next two years, Barkerville was host to several major boxing events. Johnny Knott and Ned Stein fought forty-nine rounds in front of three hundred spectators, in a bout for forty dollars a side, which lasted one hour and twelve minutes.<sup>11</sup> Three weeks later, the self-styled 'Cariboo Champion', George Wilson, performed a sparring exhibition at Ross and Bardick's Saloon,<sup>12</sup> which "was well patronized by the lovers of the manly art".<sup>13</sup> However, the biggest fight of the year came off between Wilson and Baker, generating not only the intense interest previously mentioned in Barkerville,<sup>3</sup> but also a keen awareness in Victoria. In mid-October, the British Colonist relayed the following report:

PRIZE FIGHT - A match has been arranged between George Wilson and George Baker for \$500 aside, with power to increase to \$2,000 before the fight comes off. Articles were signed last Saturday and a deposit made of \$50 a side, the balance to be deposited as follows: \$200 on Saturday next and \$250 on the following Saturday (20th). The fight to take place on Tuesday, the 24th instant. The men will go into training to-day: Baker will be under the able tuition of his old trainer John Tracy, while Wilson will be handled by Fred. Littler.  
Cariboo Sentinel.<sup>14</sup>

In preparation for the fight, the combatants were said to have been "undergoing a daily course of exercise".<sup>15</sup> Some one thousand to twelve hundred spectators were drawn to the event to watch the 156 pound Baker (dressed in yellow) battle the considerably larger, 185 pound Wilson (dressed in blue). The fight lasted for an hour and a quarter, during which the men sparred, feinted, and dodged for nearly half an hour before a blow was struck. After fourteen rounds had been completed, Baker was knocked out. Wilson immediately went to Baker's corner to sympathize with him and afterwards, took up a collection for the losing man.<sup>16</sup> Within a few days, sparring exhibitions were held at Barry and Cunio's Saloon, as benefits for both fighters. No doubt Baker was particularly appreciative of the benefit on his behalf because he was reported to have broken his ankle in the fight and was making preparations to depart for Victoria.<sup>17</sup>

These fighters were not merely local toughs attempting to make extra money through their physical strength. Rather, they were often serious and well seasoned boxers who had experienced considerable competition. According to the British Colonist, the stout, broad-shouldered Englishman, Wilson, had previously "fought and won in Australia years ago".<sup>18</sup> However, the temptation afforded by the considerable prize money led to an interesting agreement between Wilson and an opponent.

In September of 1866, a Victoria saloonkeeper named Joe Eden, proposed his final prize fight as a challenge to George Wilson.<sup>19</sup> Within a week, hustlers were promoting the match

and laying large bets on the outcome. For example, a Quesnelmouth correspondent to the Cariboo Sentinel announced the following bets:

1st I will bet George Wilson or any of his friends \$100 that he will make some excuse for backing out, and will not fight Eden. 2nd, I will bet George Wilson, the self-styled champion, or any of his bombastic friends, \$500 that if he does fight the 'novice' will win the fight.<sup>20</sup>

Wilson responded by tendering fifty dollar deposit on that bet at the Fashion Saloon.<sup>21</sup> However, his formal agreement with Eden was delayed until the following spring when weather conditions would make travel more reasonable. That agreement provided Eden with two hundred dollars travelling expenses for a two thousand dollar a side bout, to take place in Barkerville on May 1, 1867.<sup>22</sup> For some reason, the fight was delayed until the fall, re-scheduled for September 24 as a match for one thousand dollars with power to increase to two thousand dollars.<sup>23</sup> The match was soon touted as the Championship of British Columbia and the contestants finalized the agreement by placing a three hundred dollar deposit and paying the remainder at one hundred dollars per week.<sup>24</sup> In preparation for the event, Wilson announced that he was going into training for three weeks at Elmore's Ranch, near Fort Alexander.<sup>25</sup>

On the day of the fight, the purse was set at twelve hundred dollars a side. Wilson (aged 33) weighed in at 175 pounds and Eden (27 years) weighed 165 pounds. During the year since the challenge was first issued, interest had grown so intense that some fifteen hundred people were on hand for the match and twelve thousand dollars was estimated

to have been placed in bets. After only twenty rounds, Wilson was disqualified. He had grown impatient and, when he lost his temper, he hit Eden while his opponent was down. As the editor of the Cariboo Sentinel explained,

Wilson, over-confident of himself and under-estimating his adversary, fought, we think, to win the glory, while Eden, on the contrary, fully appreciating the prowess of his antagonist, fought to win the money; hence his system of falling in every round to avoid the punishment, whether he was struck or not.<sup>26</sup>

However, in a later article, the paper exposed a fraud. Rumours that Wilson had sold the fight were confirmed by him as he justified his conduct by the fact that "his supporters had not treated him right".<sup>27</sup> In return for a share of Eden's takes, Wilson had induced supporters to back him, ensuring a larger sum available to Eden. Although such cheating and double dealing were common in other parts of the world, the Cariboo Sentinel was shocked that such an outrage could have occurred in Barkerville. The editor continued:

If, we repeat, this is correct, a more barefaced piece of swindling could never have been perpetrated, and although the law cannot perhaps reach the culprit, still the execration of an outraged community cannot fail to be meted out to such an unprincipled wretch. We never admired pugilistic exhibitions, and we are glad to know, from the feeling that now exists on this creek, that such exhibitions are not likely to receive the same countenance and support on any future occasion, as they have heretofore.

The editor was quite correct. During the late 1860s, prize fights and sparring exhibitions seem to have swiftly fallen from public favour and interest was not revived until the early 1880s.

On Eden's return to Victoria, a sparring exhibition for his benefit matched him against Don McCook for a "friendly bout with the gloves".<sup>28</sup> Later, Eden advertised his acceptance of a re-match with Wilson, to come off within one hundred miles of Victoria, for a sum not less than \$2,000,<sup>29</sup> but the match does not appear to have been made. Less than two years later, Joe Eden, "champion pugilist",<sup>30</sup> became a sailor and departed Victoria for London.

By 1884, British Columbians interest in the fights had been revived and Victoria was host to touring professional boxers, including John L. Sullivan, the champion of the world. In a card at the Philharmonic Hall, Mike Gillespie, a light-weight of Boston, was matched against Steve Taylor, a heavy-weight from New York and, in another bout, Pete McCoy, light-weight, was pitted against Herbert Slade, 'the Maori giant'. Local boxers Jas. S. O'Brien and McCoy fought, while Dan Reynolds was to fight Sullivan, Marquis of Queensbury Rules. Reynolds, a local coal miner, had intended to stand four-three minute rounds, but after viewing the performance of Sullivan, discretion proved the better part of valor, and he withdrew.<sup>31</sup> By the late 1880s, professional boxing matches were regular features at the Philharmonic Hall, with such contests as the \$100 a side match between Clem Austin, champion lightweight of British Columbia and North-West Territories, and Jim Gorman, a middleweight from Toronto.<sup>32</sup>

WRESTLING

Formal wrestling competition does not appear to have become popular in British Columbia until the mid-eighties. Undoubtedly, some competitions did occur in earlier times but were limited. One such example, in 1864 was described in the Vancouver Times.

During the last two days great interest has been manifested in some wrestling matches which have taken place at the Royal Hotel Tap, in Johnson Street. In the course of last evening Mr. Allen distributed the following prizes: Jess Pierce (Cornish), 1st prize, \$15 with \$5 added; John Bryant (Cornish), 2nd prize, \$10; William Manwell, (Cornish), 3rd prize, \$5; 4th prize, \$10, Elie Quick, (Lancashire). There was a numerous attendance, and the proceedings were characterized with good humor and decorum.<sup>33</sup>

Another report of the same year was of a \$200 a side match in Camerontown, in which Putman was reported to have tossed Big George Wilson, the boxer, two of three times.<sup>34</sup>

During the remainder of the period, there appears to have been little wrestling activity until 1883, when wrestling matches were included in the Athletic Tournament of the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society. Contests were held in three categories - Scotch backhold, Collar and Elbow, and Graeco-Roman events.<sup>35</sup> In 1884, the Nanaimo Daily Free Press reported a match in that town in which Hanson took two of three falls over Lynch.<sup>36</sup>

During the fall and winter months around 1888, professional wrestling attracted large crowds to the Opera houses of Vancouver, New Westminster, and Victoria. Entrance prices were high for those days, with a charge of \$1 for ringside seats

and 50¢ for others.<sup>37</sup> All along the West Coast of North America, particularly in San Francisco, professional wrestling had become very popular and appears to have been very lucrative, attracting a large number of Japanese and Australian wrestlers. However, it is not clear whether these people moved to the West Coast primarily to engage in wrestling, or if they had turned to performing after failing to find gold.<sup>38</sup>

One of the local wrestlers, J. Smith (alias W. Quinn, of Nanaimo), was an active promoter as well as a wrestler. In the spring of 1889, he wrote to the British Colonist, proposing a \$100 per man sweepstakes tournament between six or seven local wrestlers, to decide the championship of British Columbia. Although he suggested that five styles of wrestling be employed to suit all the wrestlers,<sup>39</sup> most matches during the period were carried out with either Graeco-Roman or catch-as-catch-can rules.

The public seemed to be well aware that most matches were not genuine contests and were often rigged so that the best man did not win. Regarding a Victoria match between W. Quinn and J. Richardson, the British Colonist wrote,

The general public unite in expressing the one opinion that all wrestling matches are fakes, or at least the great majority, and a square wrestle would be as great a surprise to the fraternity as to the outside world.<sup>40</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The term pugilism is derived from the Latin 'pugil', the description of one who fights with his fists.<sup>41</sup> Although this type of sporting activity mixed particularly well with the rough and ready life style of frontier communities, enthusiasts

throughout British Columbia were not only concerned with brawn, but with the demonstration of 'scientific' skill, in accordance with the current rules of the ring. However, it was the belief of many contemporary legislators in Britain and North America that the London Prize Ring Rules were excessively brutal because they called for bare-fisted duels.

In an effort to refine pugilism, modern boxing was created and was governed by the Marquis of Queensbury Rules, which called for gloved hands and rounds of three minutes duration. However, it is interesting to note that rather than reducing the harm done to contestants, the new rules actually made boxing more brutal and devastating than the sport had been with bare-knuckle rules. As Menke explains,

In the old days if a fighter had to take more beating than he could absorb, he merely slipped to the ground and that ended the round. His seconds hauled him to his corner and ministered to him, while he enjoyed 30 seconds of respite. If he still happened to be too woozy to stand up under a new onslaught, he needed only to totter to midring for the next round and fall down again, without being hit. That ended the round, and he was permitted another 30 seconds of rest ... A fighter could continue this procedure without having to suffer a blow for any period of time.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the adoption of the new rules forced contestants to endure a full three minute round of pummeling, often resulting in terrible beatings and sometimes even death.

The Marquis of Queensbury Rules were not adopted in British Columbia until near the end of the period. Thus, most fights of concern were according to London Prize Ring

Rules. The hey-days of these bare-fisted prize fights in the Pacific North-West were in the years 1865-67 and the major centre of the sport was in the Cariboo. As with other sporting events, the colonials were willing to wager on the outcome of any prize fight. The social environment of the gold mines, with its numerous gamblers and entrepreneurs, encouraged speculation and promoted interest in the matches. However, the scandal surrounding the Wilson-Eden fight of 1867, in which some \$12,000 changed hands as the result of a rigged match, quickly destroyed interest in boxing. It was not until near the end of the period, when the new rules were being implemented, that British Columbians again developed an enthusiasm for the ring.

In wrestling, early matches appear to have been very limited and the sport did not gain much popularity until the end of the period. In the early 1880's, wrestling events were included as part of the games of the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society and, within a few years, professional bouts were regularly held, but the matches were seldom genuine contests. By 1888, professionals in both boxing and wrestling were touring the cities of Vancouver, New Westminster, and Victoria.

Table VFights

- 1860 - betting on major boxing matches abroad<sup>2</sup>  
 - local fisticuffs becoming more sophisticated<sup>1</sup>
- 61 - \$500 purse in Whatcom, Washington Territory<sup>6</sup>
- 64 - wrestling matches in Victoria<sup>33</sup>  
 - Putman outwrestles Wilson in Barkerville<sup>34</sup>
- 65 - sparring contests<sup>7</sup>  
 - prize fight in Barkerville<sup>10</sup>
- 66 - Johnny Knott vs Ned Stein in Barkerville<sup>11</sup>  
 - 'Cariboo Champion', George Wilson<sup>12,13</sup>  
 - George Wilson beats George Baker<sup>16</sup>
- 67 - Eden beats Wilson<sup>26</sup>
- 
- 1883 - wrestling in the Athletic Tournament of the  
 St. Andrews and Caledonian Society<sup>35</sup>
- 84 - professional boxers in Victoria  
 - John L. Sullivan, World Champion<sup>31</sup>  
 - Hanson takes two of three falls over Lynch in  
 Nanaimo<sup>36</sup>
- 88 - professional boxing and wrestling events become  
 regular features in Vancouver, New Westminster,  
 and Victoria<sup>32</sup>

CHAPTER XFOOTBALL

The origins of ball games of football style can be traced back through several centuries and across numerous cultures. However, the leading proponents of the modern sport were from Great Britain. Until the early nineteenth century, the rules were quite open, being negotiated by team captains before the game commenced and disputed as the game progressed. Generally, the objective was to kick the ball. In the early days, a score was achieved simply by kicking the ball across the opponents goal line, but the students of Rugby School, who were particularly enthused by the game, required the ball to be kicked between two upright posts to score a goal. Legend records a further adaptation in 1823, when a Rugby schoolboy, William Webb Ellis, disregarded the rules of the day by picking up the ball and running with it. From that time, two distinct forms of football emerged with their own specific rules - rugby football, which allowed the ball to be carried, and association football, or soccer, which required the ball to be kicked. Rugby rules were most popular with English schoolboys and so, as the children matured to adulthood, rugby became the more prevalent of the two games. Thus, it is most probable that the football of early British Columbia was played according to some version of rugby rules.

The first written rules appeared in 1846, when a committee of players at Rugby School drew up a set of laws.<sup>1</sup> By 1871, a Rugby Football Union had appeared in London and had accepted the existing school rules. At the time, each team consisted of twenty players and only goals could decide a match. A 'try', by which the ball was carried over the goal line, did not count unless it was converted into a goal.<sup>2</sup> By 1877, most teams were playing with fifteen players on each side and if an equal number of goals had been scored, the results of the matches were determined by the number of tries obtained. Also around this time, the size and shape of the ball became a little more standardized as the old pig's bladder was replaced by rubber, which was inflated by a pump. However, these changes did not appear in a code of rules until 1892, when the first systematic revision of the laws was made.<sup>3</sup>

Football was probably introduced to British Columbia by the Royal Navy, stationed at Esquimalt, and by the Royal Engineers, camped at New Westminster. These soldiers and sailors may have acquired knowledge of the game either as part of their physical training or through their education in Britain.<sup>4</sup> According to other authors, the first Rugby games in British Columbia

... can be traced back to the year 1876, when records show that sides from the Royal Navy played matches against land force and civilian teams from Vancouver Island on the historic fourteen grounds at Esquimalt.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, only two or three games were played in October of that year, but plans were made to meet annually.

However, in 1872, the Daily Standard reported what it claimed to be the first football match in the province. Lieutenant-Governor Trutch was present on Beacon Hill to observe the contest between the officers of H.M. Fleet and the Victoria Club. It is interesting to note that the list of players in the report indicated that British Columbian matches had already been restricted to fifteen players per team. According to the newspaper description, a game was concluded each time a goal was scored, but a match could contain any number of such games, until time was called. In this contest, both Fleet and Victoria sides scored one goal, or one game each, to leave the match tied.<sup>6</sup> The return match two weeks later was also a draw,<sup>7</sup> but a letter to the editor of the Daily Standard explained that since the Navy had scored six 'rouges', they had held the advantage. There is no indication as to what constituted a 'rouge', perhaps a 'try'. However, contemporary rules counted six 'rouges' as one goal.<sup>8</sup>

The newspaper's reference to the first match in the province does not necessarily imply that the editor considered the game to be the first in the region. Rather, the reference may well have been to the fact that the colony of British Columbia had recently become a province in the Dominion of Canada. An earlier report of football had

appeared in the spring of 1868. The British Colonist had reported a match between the Town and Fleet Clubs, which had resulted in a victory for the Fleet, 6-2.<sup>9</sup> The announcements were very brief and provide no indication of the nature of the football game or the current rules. However, the reference to 'clubs' suggests some form of organization in Victoria, at least as early as 1868, although play appears to have been sporadic.

It is probable that the first football games played in Victoria were part of the picnics which were prominent social features during the early period. For example, as early as 1865, the Caledonian Benevolent Society of Victoria was reported to have included football in its annual picnic activities.<sup>10</sup>

The earliest reference to football in the region was in 1862, when the game was listed as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations at New Westminster.<sup>11</sup> No elaboration was provided but it is probable that interest in the game was initiated by the Royal Engineers, who were recently headquartered in the town.

During the mid-1870s, play between the Fleet and the city of Victoria was irregular but becoming more frequent. The following notice appeared in the British Colonist in the fall of 1877 and is typical of the announcements of that time.

A football match will be played this afternoon at Beacon Hill between fifteen from H.M. Fleet at Esquimalt and fifteen from Victoria. Rugby Union rules. One hour's play, commencing at 3 o'clock sharp. The following are the names of the respective teams:

Navy - Henderson, Abbott, Burrows, Steele, Chapple, Patey, Sibald, Ward, Corry, Bailey, Ross, Messum, Farewell, Hegan, Gray.

Victoria - J.J. Alexander, A. Maxwell, R. McKenzie, J.C. Keith, J.W. Finlayson, W. Tolmie, Rev. H.H. Mogg, C.R. Brodie, J.L. Raymur, S. Wooton, R. Wood, W.B. McKenzie, Jas. Tolmie, John Tolmie, A.W. Jones.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the fact that the Navy had scored two tries, they were not converted into goals and the game was declared a draw.<sup>13</sup> The most recent system of scoring was apparently not in use in Victoria at that time. Before 1875, a try did not score any points and kicking a goal was the only way to win a match. In order to score a goal, a player had to ground the ball behind the opponents goal-line for a try and then kick the ball over the cross bar. In 1875, the Rugby Union in England assigned a value of one point for a try. From that time, a match could be won on tries, but a single goal would win the match against any number of tries. It was not until 1886 that three tries were considered to be the equivalent of one goal kicked.<sup>14</sup>

Near the end of October, 1877, the Victoria Football Club was officially formed. Its newly elected captain, J.C. Keith, requested a return match with the Navy, whose captain, A.C. Corry, led his team to victory by kicking a drop goal. Victoria's Mayor Drake acted as referee.<sup>15</sup> A year later, the city team kicked a goal to defeat a combined fleet and country side. The British Colonist reported that "The 'scrimmages' were remarkable for some pleasant and friendly hacking, which showed up well before B.C. boot leather".<sup>16</sup>

The city and fleet teams continued to oppose each other annually over the next ten years, but football games were few in number. A major reason for this was the fact that the number of warships in port did not remain constant. From one to seven ships were anchored at any given time and some of these vessels stayed for only one or two weeks.<sup>17</sup> However, the formation of the Victoria Football Club included a sufficient number of enthusiasts to hold occasional intra-club matches. In one such contest in 1878, a side captained by R.C. Cridge defeated the team of J.C. Keith. No goals were scored, but the victory was achieved by a single 'touch-down',<sup>18</sup> indicating that the new rules regarding tries were now in force in Victoria, three years after their application in Britain.

During the next few years, an increasing number of people participated in the sport. In October of 1879, Justice Begbie was elected president of the Victoria Football Club.<sup>19</sup> Later that year, the youth of the city took up the game and the Collegiate School defeated the High School in both 1879<sup>20</sup> and 1880.<sup>21</sup> In 1882, the Vancouver (Victoria) Athletic Club formed two scrub teams for a match at Beacon Hill, which involved a Rev. Allen and also, Cotsford, the noted oarsman.<sup>22</sup> In other scrub matches, composite teams formed to match such groups as Professionals and Bankers vs Commerce and Schools or Great Britain vs Colonies.<sup>23</sup>

By September of 1885, the Victoria Football Club numbered some twenty-five members who planned two meetings and two practices in order to prepare for a series of matches with the Navy. The Cathedral Institute on Blanshard Street was the venue for the meetings and H. Jones was elected as captain. In the following five matches, the Club was successful, defeating H.M.S. Triumph, White Swan, Swiftsure, Pelican, and a combined Fleet fifteen. Beacon Hill Park was the site of all the contests and, during one of them, "the band of H.M.S. Triumph was on the hill and played many delightful airs during the progress of the game, adding much to the enjoyment".<sup>24</sup>

The cities of Vancouver and New Westminster formed rugby football teams for challenge matches, in the spring of 1887. On Easter Monday, the two sides met on a cleared but sloped and muddy ground on Cambie Street. Playing conditions for the match were far from ideal, with stumps, roots, pot holes, and rocks throughout the field.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the match was enthusiastically contested and resulted in a 3-0 victory for Vancouver.<sup>26</sup> The members of that first Vancouver team were: A. St. G. Hammersley, C.G. Johnson, D. Graves, R.G. Tatlow, F.W. Boulton, F. Holt, Rev. H.G.F. Clinton, Rev. M. Edwards, R.G. Harvey, A.J. Mowatt, T.F. Watson, S. Black, G. McL. Brown, and F. Johnson.<sup>27</sup>

In the following year, New Westminster challenged Vancouver for a return match to take place at the cricket

field on Royal Avenue. The Daily News-Advertiser carried the following notice:

A football match between Vancouver and N.W., under Rugby Union rules, will take place at the latter city tomorrow afternoon. A special rate of fare (\$1.35 return) has been given by the C.P.R. to the club and those citizens of Vancouver who wish to witness the match. They will leave by the 11:46 train for N.W. and a special train will leave the latter place for Vancouver in the evening. A splendid chance is thus afforded of seeing the Royal City in all its beauty, as the gardens there are all in bloom just now with spring flowers.<sup>28</sup>

The Vancouver side were again the victors and were composed of: T.F. Watson (captain), Rev. H.F. Clinton, Rev. M. Edwards, S. Black, C.G. Johnson, F. Johnson, R.G. Harvey, R.G. Tatlow, F. Boulton, G. McL. Brown, A.B. Williams, A.J. Mowatt, F. Holt, and D. Graves. For New Westminster: R.B. Lister (captain), W.J. Walker, Wilson, Hamber, Lewis, Parker, Turner, Cunningham, J.M. Clute, Clapcott, Black, Jones, Corbett, and Pickles. The referee was A. St. G. Hamersley.<sup>29</sup>

By the fall of 1889, interest in rugby football had grown to such an extent that a provincial organization was formed. On October 4, members of Vancouver, New Westminster, Nanaimo, and Victoria clubs elected A. St. George Hamersley as president of the British Columbia Rugby Union, an organization whose main objective was the promotion of inter-city matches.<sup>30</sup> Provincial championships were then held in the following year, 1890.<sup>31</sup>

Association football, or soccer, also became popular about this time. In 1888, the schools of Victoria were playing the game<sup>32</sup> and city matches began a year later,

with the formation of the Victoria Association Football Club in November, 1889.<sup>33</sup> By the next year, seven more clubs were playing - the United Scots, Thistles, Y.M.C.A., Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria College, James Bay Athletic Association, and Corrig School. The sport was further stimulated that year when the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society donated medals for a provincial championship.<sup>34</sup>

#### SUMMARY

It is most probable that rugby football was first introduced to the Pacific North West by the officers and men of the Royal Navy and the Royal Engineers, who had experienced the sport in Britain. The roughness of the sport undoubtedly restricted local participation and the inconsistent sailings of the Fleet made competition sporadic over the years. However, the great influx of settlers in the late 1880s brought several football enthusiasts of both rugby and association styles so that, by 1890, provincial championships were held in both games.

Table VIFootball

- 1862 - part of New Westminster Queen's Birthday activities<sup>11</sup>  
 65 - part of Caledonian Benevolent Society picnic<sup>10</sup>  
 68 - Fleet (6) - Victoria (2)<sup>9</sup>
- 
- 1872 - 'first football match in the province', Fleet vs  
 Victoria<sup>6</sup>  
 76 - Fleet vs Victoria<sup>5</sup>  
 77 - Fleet vs Victoria<sup>12</sup>  
 - Victoria Football Club officially formed<sup>15</sup>  
 78 - Victoria defeats combined Fleet and Country<sup>16</sup>  
 79 - Justice Begbie president of Victoria Football  
 Club<sup>19</sup>  
 - Collegiate School over High School<sup>21</sup>
- 
- 1880 - Collegiate School over High School<sup>21</sup>  
 82 - Vancouver (Victoria) Athletic Club formed<sup>22</sup>  
 - scrub matches<sup>23</sup>  
 85 - Victoria Football Club wins five matches over  
 Fleet<sup>24</sup>  
 87 - Vancouver (3) - New Westminster (0)<sup>26</sup>  
 88 - Vancouver again defeats New Westminster<sup>28</sup>  
 - Victoria schools play association football<sup>32</sup>  
 89 - British Columbia Rugby Union formed<sup>30</sup>  
 - Victoria Association Football Club formed<sup>33</sup>
- 
- 90 - Eight association football clubs in Victoria<sup>34</sup>  
 - Provincial championships in both rugby<sup>31</sup> and  
 association football<sup>34</sup>

CHAPTER XIGYMNASTICS

Early gymnastics type activities were often displays of strength, performed either by travelling tricksters or by colonials responding to a bet. Two such examples were described in the British Colonist.

The feats of strength performed by Mr. Endt, last evening, were really astonishing. This evening he appears in some wonderful slight of hand tricks, amongst which is the cutting off a man's head and placing it at his feet.<sup>1</sup>

FEAT OF STRENGTH - Quite a crowd collected in Yates street yesterday, to witness Mr. Brown, a powerful Cariboo miner, perform a feat of strength in carrying a bag of shot weighing twenty-two pounds in each hand, from the Albion Saloon, corner of Waddington Alley, to the Adelphi Saloon, corner of Government street. There was a bet depending on the issue, and the result was in favor of Mr. Brown who manfully succeeded in the performance of the undertaking.<sup>2</sup>

However, interest in more refined gymnastic work was actually begun quite early in Victoria's history. Around 1860, the Dashaway Association, a group of teetotallers, "with a forethought and public spirit which does them great credit",<sup>3</sup> built a gymnasium next to their reading room. Within a short time, so many people were frequenting the hall that a second gymnasium was opened by a group of forty enthusiasts, calling themselves the Excelsior Club. Both of these institutions were equipped with a cross-bar, parallel bars, swing, clubs, and dumb-bells and were open to the public.

In April of 1860, the Excelsiors elected the following executive: John F. Damon, president; John P. Couch, vice-president; Francis P. Geary, secretary; and J.L. Smith, treasurer.<sup>4</sup> By September, the club had seventy listed members, with plans for the construction of a building of about thirty feet by seventy feet. Each member had paid a joining fee of \$2.50, plus a monthly subscription of \$1, making the club the most expensive gymnasium in North America.<sup>5</sup> Its aspiration was to provide the finest private institution on the coast, equipped not only with gymnastic apparatus, but also a spacious reading room and library.<sup>6</sup> By the following spring, the membership approached one hundred and a bath room had been attached to the hall.<sup>7</sup>

Later that year, the Excelsiors put on a "Gymnastic Exhibition" which drew great acclaim from the press.

The progress of these athletic amusements is as great an evidence of enlightenment in a community, as even Literary and Scientific Institutions, and they should obtain an equal amount of public support.<sup>8</sup>

Never has an entertainment of any kind been given in this city which has merited or received so many flattering encomiums .... Several of the feats were of the most daring description and consisted of swinging in the rings, exercises with Indian clubs and dumb-bells, trapeze, slack wire, parallel bars, pyramids, horizontal bars, boxing, fencing, tumbling, and c. With the exception of Mr. Devine [the instructor<sup>9</sup>], the members are all amateurs, and we therefore do not feel at liberty to mention names.<sup>10</sup>

The club continued to function for another couple of years, advertising the use of its lighted facility for every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.<sup>11</sup> However,

by late 1863, something had gone wrong. Perhaps the club had deluded itself with the prospect of huge financial successes as a private institution, but whatever, the hall was sold for \$3,250<sup>12</sup> and the club seems to have disappeared.

Around this time, the Dashaway Association seems to have disappeared as well. If this association is the same temperance society to which Matthew MacFie refers in his contemporary book on Vancouver Island, the Dashaways broke up as a result of a racial dispute. MacFie states,

A white member of a temperance society, which was eminently useful in the community, proposed the name of a coloured man for admission, intentionally avoiding to disclose at that time any information as to his race, and when it was discovered that the society had been beguiled, ignorantly into accepting a negro as a brother teetotaller, it broke up.<sup>13</sup>

By 1864, the Victoria Turnverein had filled the void by opening a new hall on View Street.<sup>14</sup> However, the Turnverein did not prosper for long. In 1886, the society presented a gold watch and chain, valued at \$200, to Mr. Charles Dechant, in appreciation of his services as teacher.<sup>15</sup> From that time, the society seems to have floundered and Victoria did not appear to have been very interested in the activity. By September of that year, the city's 'Gymnasium Hall' (whether the reference intends the Turnverein is unclear) was announced as refitted - lighted with gas and furnished with seats, but to be used by a Mr. Sommerville's congregation of the St. Andrew's Church.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, the Gymnastic Society was again

on the move, changing locations to the corner of Yates and Broad streets where, in an effort to raise needed funds, it sold life memberships at a price of \$20.<sup>17</sup> Just a few months later, it was off to yet another facility, the Alhambra Hall and was reported as prosperous.<sup>18</sup> Then, in 1870, Lewis Stemmler advertised his 'Boys' Gymnasium', for youths ten to sixteen years of age, located on View Street, between Douglas and Blanchard Streets.<sup>19</sup>

The Victorian's disinterest in gymnastics was deplored by the British Colonist in 1873. Making reference to an old and little used gymnasium, the paper scolded the population for its sad physical condition and suggested a subscription to reinstate the Turnverein.

And here we are shrivelled, cramped, and enfeebled, our shoulders drooping and weeping willows over tombstones, our manly chests contracting into the shape of spoons, our backs hunching up like a dromedary's, and our knees bending and knocking together like an automaton, our youth and manhood prematurely decaying and presenting a sight melancholy enough to draw tears from out the heart of any drill-sargeant. It is especially the case with our boys in school, where nothing is done to shapen the limbs nor straighten the back. How much the seed of future disease in the man is sown in the misshapen body of the boy, hygiene (which should be right in our schools) will show. Gymnastics, if not a panacea for disease, is most certainly a strong preventative. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the body, the easy manly stride, the well-developed limbs, the head erect, the steady hand, the fix of the eye, attest to the athlete .... We, therefore, can not too strongly urge of our fellow citizens the necessity of encouraging athletic sports and more particularly of reviving the Turn Verein or Gymnasium.<sup>20</sup>

A few months later, the Daily Standard echoed this growing concern for health and physical activity.

There are few institutions which ought to meet with as hearty support during the approaching winter months as a gymnasium - a place of resort for young Victoria to indulge in health and necessary exercise. In this city there is a lack of vitality amongst the class which elsewhere and in England especially, devote a certain portion of their time to manly games, sports and development, but we are sure that a committee composed of active, working members making arrangements for the establishment of a gymnasium would meet with the support the institution should justly merit.<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere in the province, New Westminster gained a gymnastics school in 1864, causing the Scorpion to note,

We are glad to see that two of our most enterprising young townsmen, with a spirit deserving commendation have opened a school of Gymnastics in the rear of their premises. The institution is opened more especially with the view of affording exercise and amusement to the City Fathers, and we understand that Councillors Cross, Sharkson and Hamstrung have entered the lists to compete in ground and lofty tumbling.<sup>22</sup>

The instructors were: J. Aberdeen, self-defence according to the rules of the London Prize Ring; Mr. Seth, ground and lofty tumbling; and Sharkson, Jr., pole exercises. The only other apparent reference during the period is in 1877, regarding a horizontal bar, erected on a square near Douglas Street.<sup>23</sup>

Gymnastics did not become a formal sport in North America until around the turn of the century, when competitive meets were arranged. However, as early as 1868, Barkerville hosted competitions in gymnastic feats on the parallel bars and "la Perch", during its July 4 celebrations.<sup>24</sup>

SUMMARY

Early gymnastic activities were often displays of strength, performed either by travelling tricksters or by colonials responding to a bet. However, more refined exercises were performed in Victoria as early as 1860, under the auspices of the Dashaway Association and the private Excelsior Club, the latter soon to become the most expensive of such clubs in North America. By the mid-sixties both institutions had floundered, but the Turnverein was able to establish itself in 1864, succumbing itself to insufficient interest some two years later. A school of gymnastics was opened in New Westminster in 1864 and, in 1868, Barkerville held gymnastic type competitions as part of its July 4 festivities. In summary, gymnastics was not a prominent sport during the period and was used only by a very few people as a means of enhancing their physical condition.

Table VIIGymnastics

- 'feats of strength' performed by early colonials<sup>1,2</sup>
  - 1860 - Dashaway Society<sup>3</sup>
  - Excelsior Club<sup>3</sup>
  - 63 - Excelsior Club sells hall<sup>12</sup>
  - 64 - Turnverein Society opens new hall<sup>14</sup>
  - New Westminster gets school of gymnastics<sup>22</sup>
  - 66 - demise of Turnverein<sup>15</sup>
  - 'Gymnasium Hall' converted to a church<sup>16</sup>
  - 68 - Barkerville July 4th competitions on parallel bars  
and 'La Perch'<sup>24</sup>
- 
- 1870 - Boys' gymnasium opened
  - 73 - newspaper criticism of physical condition and need  
for gymnastic exercises.<sup>20,21</sup>

CHAPTER XIIHORSE RACING

The 'sport of kings' was enjoyed by enthusiasts in Victoria as early as 1855, when horse races were held on Beacon Hill as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations.<sup>1</sup> Since newspapers were not published in the area until later in the decade, there is little description of the annual events. However, by 1859, local presses had been established and the British Colonist carried this report of the festivities:

The Queen's Birthday - The Races. - Yesterday was the Queen's Birthday and it was generally observed as a holiday. The races came off on Beacon Hill in the presence of a large concourse of spectators; there not being less than 2,000 persons present ... Joseph D. Pemberton, Esq., and Capt. Cooper acted as judges, and J.W. McKay, and G.I. Wright as stewards. The first was a hurdle-race, 1 mile heats, best 2 in 3 for \$100, with \$10 entrance to be added; open to all horses without restriction. This race was won by Mr. Harris' horse. The next race was for the Queen's Plate, value \$200, 1 mile heats, best 2 in 3, \$15 entrance, to be added; open to all horses reduced to weight not less than 8 stone.

Several scrub races took place and were smartly contested ... A large number of ladies were present. A dinner took place in the evening at the Royal Hotel.<sup>2</sup>

The large assembly was undoubtedly due to the flood of miners who had recently arrived in Victoria. However, the Victoria Gazette identified another group of spectators. The paper announced that nearly three thousand people had attended the races, and

... aboriginal tribes, who were out on this occasion in full force and attired in all the hues of the rain-

bow, were seated mostly on the brow of the hill where they formed a gay and pleasing framework to the picture.<sup>3</sup>

The report continued that the Queen's Plate had been won by a horse named 'Moustache'. This local award is not to be confused with the prestigious prize of the same name, held in Lower Canada and restricted at that time, to horses from that region. However, the Queen's Plate in Victoria was the major local horse racing prize and was offered again in the autumn of 1859. At the end of October, by which time many of the miners would probably have returned to Victoria for the winter, a series of races was held. Included on the programme were the Queen's Plate, Victoria Sweepstakes, Hurdle Race, a \$150 match between Mr. Harris' 'George' and Parker's 'Moustache', and other scrub races.<sup>4</sup>

Events of a lighter nature were also held on the Beacon Hill course in conjunction with the races. For example, in April of 1859, draught horses were put into training for a novel event<sup>5</sup> and lots of other fun was planned - catching pigs by the tail, climbing a greased pole, and running in sacks.<sup>6</sup> Despite the gaiety of the event, the horse race was still taken quite seriously and the Victoria Gazette reported that it "did not result to anybody's satisfaction, as during a portion of it, one of the horses was without a rider".<sup>7</sup>

During these early years, horses for the regular competitions were probably common saddle ponies. However, it was not long before horses became more noted for their racing prowess than for their daily utility. In May of 1860, the vessel Hyack was reported to have brought two "fast horses" from Honolulu.<sup>8</sup> Neither the names of the horses or their owners are apparent, but the fact that their arrival was drawn to the public's attention indicates that they must have been considered significant to the local racing scene. There is no indication as to their participation in the Queen's Birthday races that year, which were held under the patronage of Chief Justice Cameron. The major winners of these races were horses belonging to J. Parker and T. Harris.<sup>9</sup> It is particularly interesting to note that Harris' horse, 'George', was advertised in a later race as belonging to G. Richardson,<sup>10</sup> indicating that the horse may have been bought in anticipation of his racing potential.

Despite the fact that the Queen's Plate was postponed twice that spring due to lack of entries, by the summer, the Victoria racing fraternity began to show signs of organization. An advertisement appeared in the British Colonist under the signature of T. Harris, Clerk of the Course, and announced a two day schedule of races. On July 3, a sweepstake race plus the Queen's Plate were to be run. Previous winners of the Plate were to carry ten

pounds extra. On July 4, a hurdle race and two match races were scheduled.<sup>11</sup> In subsequent announcements, the following officials were listed: Stewards - G.H. Cary, John Coles, and Captain Cooper; Judges - Captain Gordon, Major Foster, and D.B. Ring. All riders were to wear colours.<sup>12</sup>

Further organization was demonstrated in late November, when a programme of 'Amateur' races was announced. Once again, riders were to wear colours and the officials were: Judge - Major Foster; Stewards - John Coles, M.P., Major de Coucy, J. D'Ewes, and Captain Torrens; Clerks - A. Skinner and Dr. James; Starter - Mr. Harris.<sup>13</sup> The participation of this upper class of professionals, military officers, and politicians undoubtedly promoted some degree of sophistication in the proceedings. By this time, a judges stand had been erected and the band of H.M.S. Topaze was on hand to add to the entertainment of the three hundred spectators.<sup>14</sup>

Within a few weeks, large wager match races were being promoted and were probably organized in response to the large number of people from the gold field who were wintering in Victoria. The first of these was on Boxing Day, 1860, when a race for \$800 between "two well known fast nags"<sup>15</sup> resulted in 'Grey Billy' defeating 'Black Prince'.<sup>16</sup> A similar result was obtained in March when the two horses were re-matched for \$2,000.<sup>17</sup>

In other races, horses belonging to Messrs. Bowman and Harris were to be matched for \$1,000,<sup>18</sup> but the race

actually came off with different horses. This contest between Mr. Fuller's 'Butcher Boy' and Mr. J.A. Rice's 'Jim',<sup>19</sup> was particularly significant because 'Butcher Boy' was disqualified in the race, raising considerable ill-will and controversy over the lack of consistent rules. When a Mr. Roberts' challenge for \$2,000, open to all horses except 'Butcher Boy',<sup>20</sup> was accepted by Parker, with his horse 'Moustache', the editor of the British Colonist stated:

We recommend the adoption of rules to govern this race, as well as all others that may in future occur, to prevent the recurrence of such scenes as took place at the last over the same course.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever rules were established are not clear, but Roberts' 'cream coloured horse' won easily and the editor reported that:

It is computed that some \$15,000 changed hands on the occasion. Both horses are American bred, and 'Moustache' has heretofore been a great favourite with our sporting men ... There could not have been less than 1,500 persons<sup>22</sup> present, and great interest was evinced by all.

Racing enthusiasts became more formally related in mid-March, 1861, when a Jockey Club was organized. Subscriptions amounting to \$400 were to be spent on the course and the following founding members of the club were to collect the funds: Messrs. Thos. Harris, A. Stenhouse, J.D. Carroll, Dr. James, C.C. Pendergast, L. Lowenberg, Bowman, and Halsey.<sup>23</sup> Within a few days, the new association met at the Brown Jug Hotel to adopt a code of rules<sup>24</sup> which was later printed

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at the office of the British Colonist.<sup>25</sup> When the club placed an advertisement in the paper to announce its Spring Meeting for Friday and Saturday of May 24 and 25, the following rules were announced to the public.

1. The Stewards' decision to be final on all details connected with the Races.
2. All entries to be made by sealed letters addressed to the 'Honorary Secretary of the Jockey Club, Post Office, Victoria', with the entrance money to be enclosed, on or before six o'clock in the evening of the 21st May.
3. Colors must be declared to the Honorary Secretary at the same time, or a fine of \$3 will be levied to go to the Race Fund. Any Jockey riding without colors will be fined \$10.
4. Five per cent will be deducted from all stakes for the expense of the Race Course.<sup>26</sup>

The advertisement also introduced the officials of the club: Patron - His Excellency, Governor Douglas; Stewards - G.T. Gordon, Major D'Ewes, C.R. Robson, R.N., T.J. Skinner, and Captain Venables. Mr. H.B. Campbell was the secretary of the club.

It is interesting to note that the proposed racing card included a "Selling Stakes" race, in which all the horses entered were to be for sale. In order to control the asking prices and to make the competition more fair, a system of handicapping was introduced by which horses with higher prices were to carry more weight. The winner of this race was then to be sold by auction.

As the date of the races approached, numerous preparations were made. The British Colonist reported that

A large number of fine animals are in training, and the Beacon Hill course has been surveyed, enlarged and cleared of obstructions. Among the prizes to be contested for is an elegant gold cup, presented to the Jockey Club by citizens of Victoria through Mr. A. Stenhouse.<sup>27</sup>

Sites for refreshment booths were to be let by tender<sup>28</sup> and other construction on the course included an enclosure, a grandstand reported by different newspapers to seat two hundred and four hundred people, and a weighing room. General admission to the enclosure was by ticket, with a charge of fifty cents, although ladies were admitted free. All admission to the grandstand cost an extra one dollar.<sup>29</sup>

The major events were held on the first day of racing and over two thousand spectators were in attendance. Winners were: Trial Stakes - 'Punch'; Queen's Plate - 'Silvertail'; Selling Stakes - 'Black Prince'; Naval Purse - 'Grey Arrow', ridden by Commander Robson.<sup>30</sup> The Saturday races drew a crowd of only six or seven hundred people to the Hurdles, Jockey Club Stakes, and the Ladies Purse races, which were won by 'Jim', 'Silvertail', and 'Pet', respectively. The British Colonist summed up the success of the two days and recognized the social value of the races by stating that

... it is pleasant to witness a scene in which all classes unite to present a picture of enjoyment ... It is superfluous to enlarge upon the advantages that the town and colony will ultimately derive from the annual establishment of these races. The greater inducement for improving our breed of horses; the attractions it presents to our neighbours; and the money that is caused to be circulated.<sup>31</sup>

So successful were the races that a second series was proposed in the autumn. The Victoria October Race Meeting was advertised with races to include a Trial Stakes, match race, Victoria Handicap, Inn-Keepers' Plate, Beacon Hill

Sweepstakes, Stewards' Plate, Naval Stakes, and a scramble. Admission to both the enclosure and the grandstand was set at \$1, while entrance to the newly constructed Stewards' Stand was \$5.32.<sup>32</sup> Although this was the last official race of the season for the Jockey Club, match races continued. In one such event, 'Black John' defeated 'Lady Franklin' for \$1,000 a side.<sup>33</sup>

About this time, Victoria lost one of its most prominent horse enthusiasts. Captain Robson, R.N., had not only been a promoter of the Jockey Club as one of its founding members, but he had also been an avid rider and horse owner. In the spring of 1861, he had accepted a \$500 wager in which he was to ride any horse in the colony over a distance of three miles, in a time of seven minutes. He chose Bowman and Halsey's 'Butcher Boy' and completed the run in six minutes and thirty-five seconds. Robson then put his \$500 winnings to good use by purchasing the horse for that sum.<sup>34</sup>

The degree of Robson's involvement with racing is further evidenced by the caliber of his horse 'Grey Arrow', which was raffled at the Star and Garter Hotel following his death. 'Grey Arrow' had won \$1,750 in a July 4 victory over 'Jim'<sup>35</sup> and was recognized as being very fast. Furthermore, it was said to be "well known on this and the Oregon turf",<sup>36</sup> indicating that the top horses in Victoria were not mere saddle ponies but were experienced race horses.

By early 1862, it was evident that the fortunes of the Victoria Jockey Club were to be short lived. According to a letter to the editor of The Press, the Club had initiated the construction of various facilities at the Beacon Hill course and had made several expense commitments on the strength of promised subscriptions. When the Club subsequently attempted to collect the promised funds, a number of the subscribers refused to pay and many had left the colony. Thus, the Club was unable to make its payments and one of its creditors was even incarcerated for his inability to pay his bills.<sup>37</sup>

A few months later, a Mr. Dillon brought a suit against several members of the club in an attempt to gain the money owed him. Since the Chief Justice was also a member of the club, it was thought that he might not be able to pass appropriate judgement, so the settlement was postponed. It is not clear how the matter was finally decided, but the editor of the British Colonist seemed pleased with the action as he wrote:

So there appears to be some show for honest men to get their dues from that late select association of 'gentlemen' jockeys, who obtained unlimited credit on the strength of their 'reputations' and broke up without settling their bills.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Jockey Club had become a defunct institution, racing continued in Victoria. The Queen's Birthday races of 1862 were held under the sponsorship of a "number of patriotic tradesmen" headed by Thos. Harris,<sup>39</sup> a racing

enthusiast who had promoted the early Victoria races and had been a founding member of the Jockey Club. Winners that year were: Flat Race for \$5 per entry with \$50 added, Richardson's 'Punch'; Tradesmen's Plate for \$25 per entry with \$150 added, 'Silvertail'; Ladies Purse for \$100, Shannon's 'Tom'; Post Handicap, Howard's 'Pet'.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note that by November, Thomas Harris had become Mayor of Victoria. It was again under his direction that the Autumn Races were held that year.<sup>41</sup>

In other significant events that year, the local horse 'Volunteer' was defeated by an unnamed horse which had recently arrived from California.<sup>42</sup> In late November, the reknowned 'Silvertail' was beaten by Mr. Shannon's 'Pilgrim' and, although the match was only for \$250, some one thousand people turned out on a Monday afternoon to watch the race.<sup>43</sup> At the end of the year, the British Colonist announced the following special plans:

A NOVELTY IN RACING - Mr. Fred Bell, late manager of the Victoria Theatre, and Max Irwin, will run a chariot race on the Beacon Hill course to-day, at 2 o'clock p.m. ... The chariots were brought from Portland, by Mr. Bell, and are intended to resemble the old Roman chariot, and the race will doubtless give some idea of the mode of conducting such sports among the ancients.<sup>44</sup>

In the Queen's Birthday races of 1863, an attempt was made to increase the participation of local stock by reducing the dominance of favoured horses. The Queen's Plate was restricted to horses which had been on the Island for at least sixty days and previous winners were not allowed to enter. Similarly, Queen's Plate winners were excluded

from the Beacon Hill Sweepstakes and winners of either of these races were banned from the Inn Keeper's Plate. In all events except the Queen's Plate, races were to be run in heats and the best two of three was to be declared the winner. A new event to Victoria, a trotting match in harness, was to be conducted according to the San Francisco Track Rules. Despite these arrangements, attendance at the races was poor, and two of the races, the hurdles and trotting events, were the subject of some dispute. Furthermore, problems with the track arose as

... it has been found necessary to make a slight deviation in the course, in consequence of the fence recently erected by Mr. <sup>45</sup>Patton, encroaching on the line of the old track.

In preparation for the Fall Races, on Thursday and Friday, November 19 and 20, a slate of officers was again established. Acting Stewards were the Hon. R.D. Laschelles, R.N., J.C. Ridge, and Chas. W. Wallace. Colonel Foster served as Judge, Edward R. Thomas as Honorary Treasurer, and Robert Bishop and A. Skinner, Jr. were Clerks of the Course. The racing card was predominantly one mile heats in a programme which the British Colonist considered to be "certainly the most promising and attractive yet offered to the sporting public".<sup>46</sup> Winners were: Thursday - Pony Race, \$10 per entry and \$100 added, Turgeon's 'Mousey'; Victoria Purse, \$125 per entry and \$250 added, Wittaker's 'Attila'; Ladies Purse, \$10 per entry and \$100 added,

Quarles' 'Joe Bowers'; Friday - Beacon Hill Stakes, \$150 purse, Mooney's 'Wake-Up-Jake; Pony Sweepstakes, \$10 per entry plus \$50 added, Richardson's 'Punch'; Livery Stable Keepers' Purse, \$20 per entry plus \$100 added, Harris' 'Jim', later reversed in favour of Keenan's 'Sir James Douglas'.<sup>47</sup>

In 1863, Colonel Foster, M.P., received what was probably the first thoroughbred horse to be imported to the region from England. The horse arrived aboard the vessel Excelsior and, according to the British Colonist, was "in splendid order, and speaks well for the care and attention which he must have received during his five months incarceration".<sup>48</sup> Since the horse would require substantial training after such a voyage, it would not be expected to become prominent in the news for some time. Its later success or failure is not apparent.

Throughout the 1860s, important match races were generally contested for stakes of \$1,000. An example is the 1864 race at Peatt's Farm, in which W. Snyder's 'Lizzie' defeated Jas. Copland's 'Emigrant Dick'.<sup>49</sup> Such a prize was sufficient to entice competition from south of the border as, in 1867, "three island horses and a fast mare from the American side"<sup>50</sup> competed for \$1,000 in Victoria. The interest and participation of Americans was even sufficient to cause the Victorians to postpone the Prince of Wales races of 1867. The date was changed to a more convenient

day "so as to enable our friends from the other side to witness the sports".<sup>51</sup> In the feature race of that day, 'Greyhound' won \$1,000 by defeating 'Volreece' and 'Boston Colt',<sup>52</sup> Two years later, 'Greyhound' did not fare as well, and lost a \$500 race to 'Lucy', in one of the best contested races ever held on the Island.<sup>53</sup>

Races were often marred by disputes due to the lack of precise regulations. The following lengthy report from the Daily Standard outlined a controversy during the Prince of Wales races of 1871 and is typical of the problems of the day.

The third race was the Hurdle Race, heats of one mile, best two of three. The following horses ran: Grey Jim, Birdcatcher, and Butcher Boy. In the first heat, the horses got away well, and kept closely together till passing the first hurdle, when Butcher Boy began to draw ahead, at the second hurdle Grey Jim and Birdcatcher baulked, which gave Butcher Boy a long lead, however, at the third hurdle, Butcher Boy baulked, and it was sometime before his rider could get him over; Grey Jim came in first, Birdcatcher second, and Butcher Boy was nowhere. In the second heat, Butcher Boy came in first, Grey Jim a capital second, and Birdcatcher third. An objection was made by the rider of Grey Jim to Butcher Boy being declared winner of the heat, on account of his not having jumped over the centre of the third hurdle, but over what is called the wing, which is lower than the hurdle. The owner of Butcher Boy contended that there being no flags (as is usual) at each wing of the hurdles, that if the horse jumped any portion of it, it was sufficient. After wasting considerable time discussing the question, and there being no Stewards at the meeting to give a decision, it was decided to leave it to the Judge, who thought that the best way to settle the disputed point would be to call it no heat and run it over again. Mr. Reynold objected to this, claiming that he had won the race and withdrew Grey Jim. Birdcatcher and Butcher Boy then went out and ran the heat, which was a very good one, they keeping close together around

the course; Birdcatcher winning by about half a length. At the conclusion of this heat, further disputes arose, the owner of Butcher Boy maintained that Birdcatcher had no right to have run again, as he was disqualified by not having run first in either of the first two heats, and contended that the previous heat had been won by his horse and the first one by Grey Jim. As the latter horse withdrew he claimed the race. How it will be settled we are unable to say ...<sup>54</sup>

For some reason, contemporary horsemen did not abide by such racing codes as could be found in England, or even San Francisco, and had not written a code of rules to incorporate racing decisions.

Among the prominent horses in Victoria during the late 1860s and early 1870s was a Mr. Davies' racer, 'Wake-Up-Jake'. Considered one of the fastest animals on the Island,<sup>55</sup> the horse was so well thought of that his name was taken to Barkerville where the 'Wake-Up-Jake Saloon' still stands today. Another celebrated racer was 'Cafe-au-lait', the winner of the 1869 Navy Plate. In 1870, his owner, Mr. Howard of the Union Hotel, Esquimalt, sold him by raffle, offering 150 tickets at \$2 each.<sup>56</sup>

Until the early 1870s, the major horse racing events of the region were the annual Queen's Birthday races in May and the Fall or Prince of Wales Birthday races in November. Both events had received considerable support, as evidenced by the report that at least twenty-five hundred spectators had attended the Queen's Birthday races of 1870<sup>57</sup> and, in 1871, the Prince of Wales races had been run under the dual sponsorship of Lieutenant Governor Trutch and Admiral Farquhar.<sup>58</sup> However, by 1872 it had become apparent

that the growing settlements in the interior of the mainland had begun to detract from Victoria's prominence as the region's racing centre. In September of that year, the British Colonist announced the inception of races at Kamloops and voiced the concern that the mainland was gaining on the Island in terms of interest and racing stock.<sup>59</sup>

In an attempt to stimulate the raising of thoroughbreds by local farmers, the Victoria racing fraternity decided to schedule the Fall races of 1872 in conjunction with the First Annual Provincial Exhibition of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society.<sup>60</sup> Mr. Howard's horses won three of the four races as 'Harkaway' won the Hurdles and 'Champagne Charlie' won the Innkeepers' Plate and 440 yard race. In the Agricultural Purse, F. Saunders' 'Birdcatcher' was the victor.<sup>61</sup> The editor of the Daily Standard voiced his displeasure that there had not been any entries for a trotting race. The need for new and better racing stock was further emphasized when he stated that "the same old nags"<sup>62</sup> were part of every local racing card. Although annual races were continually held in Victoria through the remainder of the period, the major centre of horse racing was soon to shift to the Interior.

Probably the first day of formal racing in the Interior was at Yale, during the fourth of July celebrations of 1861. Here a Mr. Oppenheimer was the starter for the Town Plate, Douglas Street Stakes, and the Ladies Purse races, which were

to be run in heats. The organization of the event included a judge and stewards, while riders were expected to wear colours. Even a grandstand had been built and several ladies were reported to have sat there.<sup>63</sup>

In the following year, 1862, Yale was the site of several racing cards. In early May, Mr. Willoughby's 'Blue Bonnet' defeated Mr. Kearney's 'Pegs',<sup>64</sup> and, later that month, a spring meeting was held as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations.<sup>65</sup> Then, in September, an advertisement appeared in New Westminster's British Columbian to announce the Yale October Meeting on the eighth and ninth of the month, in which the feature races were the Town Plate for \$200 and the Douglas Street Stakes for \$100. Pigeon shooting and "other sport" were to follow.<sup>66</sup>

As the pursuit of gold took the mining community further inland, the centre of horse racing moved with the population. In 1862, the town of Lilloet held a day of races on the Queen's Birthday and offered a Queen's Purse of \$100, People's Purse of \$50, and a Club Purse of \$10.<sup>67</sup> In the next year, the event was reported in a letter to the British Colonist in Victoria. The correspondent stated that Lilloet was "not really a sporting community, although possessing the finest horses in the Province".<sup>68</sup> The People's Purse was won by "one of 'Uncle Sam's' condemned artillery horses driven up here in a buggy, and owned by a gentleman of Esquimalt". Similarly, the Queen's Purse, in which five

horses were entered, was won by a man from Vancouver Island, while the Lilloet Stakes was won by a local. Other events included a "primitive heathen" race (for natives), helter-skelter fancy nag race, and a Siwash race in which white riders were to compete on Cayoosh ponies. The correspondent continued to tease the Island capital by commenting that:

Quite a number of Victorians were here, and entries unusually large. It was determined on our part to give these 'foreigners' as much amusement as possible ... the 'Lilloet Stakes' was won by a horse owned in this town, who somehow came ahead of the V.I. foreigners. This, of course, was an error of the horse. It was very ungentlemanly of the rider to win, if he did it intentionally, when people venture so far from home to a strange country for sport.

The annual races at Ashcroft began in 1865 and became the major racing venue for several years. The second yearly race was held on October 12 and 13, 1866, and included the following events: Friday - 1/2 mile Cayoosh Sweepstakes, Ashcroft Derby, Match race, Chinook Stakes, 300 yard Sweepstakes, and the Lytton Steeplechase; Saturday - Grand Pigeon Race, Thompson River Stakes, Match race, and the Yale Steeplechase.<sup>69</sup> In 1870, the Cariboo Sentinel provided this report of racing action:

Ashcroft Races - Mr. James Ward's sorrel horse won the Thompson river stakes in competition with Doc. English's Oregon horse, T. Buie's mare, and Poole's grey horse Kingbald - mile heats, best two out of three. Kingbald, which was the winner of the President's purse at the races held here on the 4th July last, gave the sorrel horse a close run.<sup>70</sup>

During the two day event, some nine races were held. Cash prizes were the total of entry fees for the race, generally \$10-\$20 per horse, plus an 'added' sum of \$40 or \$100.<sup>71</sup>

In 1872, the British Colonist announced the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Ashcroft Races, which appears at variance with the previous report of the second yearly race occurring in 1866. The discrepancy may be due to a newspaper error and does not appear to be particularly significant. However, the 1872 meeting was important because the Lieutenant-Governor was reported to have been present and horses had been brought from over three hundred miles to enter the races.<sup>72</sup> Such news was certainly of interest to the Victorians who were concerned about their dwindling racing prowess in the face of growing competition from the Interior. Their concern was undoubtedly increased as the people of Ashcroft strove to improve local stock by proposing to hold annual Nursery Stakes for two year old colts and fillies which were bred in the province. The first such race was to take place in October, 1874.<sup>73</sup>

By this time, the interior communities had indeed become very active in horse racing. In 1870, the town of Lytton held races on the fourth of July and the results were as follows: Confederate Purse of \$150, won by Kirkpatrick's 'Lady Kilutin', followed by 'Nell Gynne'; Responsible Purse of \$100, won by Captain Thompson's 'Barney', followed by Coultbel's 'Bolter'; Railroad Purse of \$75, won by Seward's

'John Bull'. An Indian race for \$25 was also included, as was a foot race for the same amount. Apparently betting on the races was restricted as the Cariboo Sentinel reported:

Booking was strictly prohibited by the police on the authority of a recent Act of the Imperial Parliament, greatly to the mortification of the numerous 'sports' who had congregated from all parts of the district.<sup>74</sup>

In 1872, the Pavilion Mountain Races were held on the farm of Mr. Robert Carson, near Clinton. About \$1,000 was offered in prizes and between twenty and thirty of the district's horses were in training for the event. During this training, Carson was reported to be providing room and board for the men and feed for the horses at a price of \$2.50 per day.<sup>75</sup> Two years later, the Clinton Races were a two day event incorporating a total of ten races. Prominent horses at these races were 'Oregon Dick' and 'Bolger Dick'.<sup>76</sup>

As implied by the name 'Oregon Dick', interior horsemen were importing horses during the early 1870s. Further evidence is provided by the following report in the Daily Standard, during the spring of 1873.

'Grey Eagle' - This very fine grey stallion recently imported from the other side of the line, leaves this morning per Enterprise for Cache Creek and the upper country, where he will stand for the season.<sup>77</sup>

That spring, Lake La Hache began holding races on the Queen's Birthday. The purses for each race ranged as high as \$700, attracting a number of horses to the track.

Among those in training were 'Dexter', 'Cariboo Charlie', 'Oregon Dick', 'Blaze', and 'Shoo Fly'.<sup>78</sup> In the fall, the Kamloops horsemen claimed to have the best track in the province. Their racing card of October 20 and 21 drew a larger crowd than in the previous year and even outdrew the attendance at the Ashcroft Races. A judges stand had been built at the track, along with stables to accommodate twenty horses and their trainers.<sup>79</sup> Two weeks later, on November 3 and 4, Keremeos held a race meeting and its promoters also claimed the best track in the province. Such imported horses as Vandervelt's 'Arkansas' and A. McConnell's 'Dick Cheatem' were prominent.<sup>80</sup> Here, races were specifically run according to English Jockey Club Rules, the first apparent reference to formal rules for horse racing in British Columbia.<sup>81</sup>

By 1874, the Bridge Creek Jockey Club was holding its second annual meeting in mid-October.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the fall racing circuit in the Interior would follow the rough pattern of the Bridge Creek, Ashcroft,<sup>83</sup> Kamloops, and Clinton or Keremeos races. In 1879, the first annual meeting at 150 Mile House was held on October 20 and 21<sup>84</sup> and, three years later, another two days of races were held at Spence's Bridge.<sup>85</sup>

The development of horse racing in the Interior not only reduced the prominence of Victoria's racing circle, but led to more widespread competition. While horses from Vancouver Island had been lured to compete on the mainland,

Interior horses likewise journeyed to the larger centres of population. For example, at Victoria's Coronation Day Races of June, 1874, a horse named 'Cariboo Charlie' was the major winner in a meet reminiscent of early racing days in the capital.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, in 1876, J.T. Howard's 'Reindeer' was defeated in a \$2,000 race by a horse named 'Trifle'. 'Trifle' was owned by a man named Dixon,<sup>87</sup> who was probably the owner of 'Oregon Dick' and 'Bolger Dick'. The Cariboo Sentinel had previously reported that he had intentions of going from the Cariboo to Victoria.<sup>88</sup>

While horsemen sought competition throughout the province, American horses also appeared in British Columbia races. One horse of particular interest was Coggan's 'Osceola', which easily won the 1874 Prince of Wales race in Victoria.<sup>89</sup> In a Seattle race on the following New Year's Day, 'Osceola's' trainer was reported to have been bribed by a "Ring" to poison his horse. Instead, he fed the horse a harmless piece of dough so that in the ensuing race, the "Ring" was effectively cleaned out by 'Osceola's' victory over 'Tom Merry'.<sup>90</sup>

In the fall of 1875, Nanaimo was host to a match race between a local horse and a visitor from Victoria. The competitors were W. Akenhead's 'Brown Bread' and F. Saunder's 'Jack Cabe'. Which horse was the local and which the visitor is not clear, but the Victoria horse was declared

the winner by Nanaimo's Mayor Bute, who acted as judge. The race was a single dash of one mile along Comox Road, for a prize of \$100.<sup>91</sup>

The city of New Westminster was not noted as a racing centre. Generally, its horse competition was limited to a Dominion Day meeting on the main street and was comprised of such events as these listed in 1878: a five hundred yard race, best two of three trials; a five hundred yard race, single dash; a scrub race; and an Indian Pony race, for ponies owned and ridden by Indians.<sup>92</sup> In September of that year, a second meet was held, but was poorly attended.<sup>93</sup> A major winner during that event was a Mr. Townsend, another touring Cariboo enthusiast who was from Ashcroft.<sup>94</sup>

The earliest race in the Vancouver area was reported to have occurred in 1883. At that time, the community was only a tiny saw-mill camp, but a race apparently took place on Howe Street.<sup>95</sup> In 1885, a joint race course was proposed to serve both the townsite of Granville and New Westminster. However, the proposal was rejected because the site was considered to have been too far from Granville.<sup>96</sup> A few years later, the rapid growth in population following the completion of the C.P.R. provided a large and enthusiastic audience for horse racing. Thus, in 1890, special trains carried between 15,000 - 20,000 spectators from Vancouver to the Queen's Park races at New Westminster.<sup>97</sup>

In other equestrian competition, trotting races failed to gain support during the period. As late as 1884, trotting and harness races at the Victoria Driving Park were reported

to have been poorly attended.<sup>98</sup> Polo matches seem to have gained popularity only after the period. In 1889, matches were reported to have been played almost weekly during the fall and winter, between teams of garrison officers and visiting English naval officers.<sup>99</sup> The Victoria Polo Club was organized in 1892<sup>100</sup> and, in August of that year, hosted the Calgary Polo Club in the only inter-provincial polo match of the nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Horse racing was probably the first formal sporting activity to take place in British Columbia. Known as the sport of kings, its popularity amongst the English aristocracy made it a most desirable activity through which military officers, colonial officials, and businessmen could emulate the high society of the mother country. The eventual requirement of a considerable financial commitment for the purchase and maintenance of a horse which was kept specifically for racing, lent an air of exclusivity to the sport and made the ownership of a race horse a prestigious luxury.

Following a pattern which was identifiable throughout North America, horse racing soon became a popular spectator sport amongst all classes and provided an important opportunity for the greatest social mingling of the nineteenth century.<sup>102</sup> Such a trend was facilitated in British Columbia, where the gold mines often produced quick fortunes and gen-

erated prosperity within the community. Thus, rapid social mobility was possible in the frontier society and ownership of a race horse was undoubtedly a symbol of that success. However, despite the enthusiastic following of diverse turf fans, the organization of the early races was directed by such Victorian gentlemen as Thomas Harris, Colonel Foster, Governor Douglas, Captain Robson, Lieutenant Governor Trutch, and Admiral Farquhar.

Rules and regulations to govern the races were constantly a source of dispute. In 1861, the Victoria Jockey Club was formed in the hope of creating a more formal organization of horse racing, but its aspirations had been based on the continuing support of a transient population and proved far above the financial resources of its stable supporters. Thus, one year after its formation, the club floundered. The races continued and were generally run in heats, the best two of three heats being declared the winner. However, the races were often subject to dispute, especially the match races, where stakes were usually set at \$1,000. The earliest apparent record of standard rules was in 1873, when the English Jockey Club Rules were employed at Keremeos.

Early races had undoubtedly been contested by regular saddle ponies, but horses were soon recognized more for their speed than for their daily utility. By 1860, 'fast' horses were being imported to the colony, and three years later, Colonel Foster received what was probably the first thorough-

bred to arrive from England. In later years, more horses were imported from the United States while the Victoria horsemen tried to promote local breeding by holding races as part of the Provincial Exhibition of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society. Similarly, Cariboo horsemen strove to encourage improvement in local stock by holding Nursery Stakes for two year old colts and fillies born and bred in the province. Horses appear to have been ridden by their owners, and so there was no opportunity for outstanding riders to become recognized for their prowess as jockeys. Instead, credit was given to the horses. Prominent racers during the early years were: 'George', 'Moustache', 'Grey Billy', 'Black Prince', 'Silver-tail', 'Grey Arrow', 'Jim', 'Butcher Boy', 'Wake-Up-Jake', 'Cafe-au-Lait', 'Oregon Dick', 'Bolger Dick', and 'Cariboo Charlie'.

As early as 1862, citizens of Victoria were participant in races on the mainland. No doubt the purpose of their journeys was not just to race, but their participation served to enhance inter-community rivalry. By around 1870, the growing communities of the Interior were able to challenge the racing prominence of Victoria. The Queen's Birthday and Prince of Wales races in the capital were no longer the most prestigious races in the region and an Interior racing circuit, which included such centres as Bridge Creek, Ashcroft, Kamloops, and Keremeos, provided keen competition among local horsemen. The success of Interior horses caused

the Victoria owners great concern, especially when Cariboo horsemen began to compete in the capital. The participation of such American horses as 'Osceola' provided further stimulus to British Columbia horsemen and encouraged the breeding and upgrading of stock throughout the province.

The huge influx of population following the completion of the trans-continental railway brought many horse racing enthusiasts to the province. Thus, by 1890, crowds of up to twenty thousand were being carried by rail from the city of Vancouver to New Westminster's Queen's Park races. Similarly, increased numbers generated interest in another equestrian activity and, in 1892, the Victoria Polo Club was formed.

Table VIIIHorse Racing

- 1855 - Queen's Birthday races at Beacon Hill<sup>1</sup>
- 59 - First newspaper report of Queen's Birthday races at Victoria<sup>2</sup>
- Queen's Plate won by 'Moustache'<sup>3</sup>
- 
- 1860 - Two 'fast horses' arrived from Honolulu<sup>8</sup>
- Organization for July 3 and 4 races<sup>11,12</sup>
- 'Amateur' races with officials<sup>13</sup>
- 'Grey Billy' over 'Black Prince' for \$800<sup>16</sup>
- 61 - Fuller's 'Butcher Boy' disqualified in favour of J.A. Rice's 'Jim' for \$1,000<sup>17</sup>
- 'Grey Billy' over 'Black Prince' for \$2,000<sup>21</sup>
- Roberts' horse over Parker's 'Moustache' for \$2,000,<sup>21</sup> \$15,000 in bets<sup>22</sup>
- Victoria Jockey Club organized<sup>23</sup>
- Major winners 'Silvertail', 'Black Prince', 'Grey Arrow', 'Jim', and 'Pet'<sup>30,31</sup>
- 'Black John' over 'Lady Franklin' for \$1,000<sup>33</sup>
- 'Grey Arrow' over 'Jim' for \$1,750<sup>35</sup>
- Yale 4th of July races<sup>63</sup>
- 62 - Victoria Jockey Club defunct but races organized by Thomas Harris<sup>39</sup>
- Shannon's 'Pilgrim' over 'Silvertail' for \$250<sup>43</sup>
- Chariot Race<sup>44</sup>
- Willoughby's 'Blue Bonnet' over Kearney's 'Pegs'<sup>64</sup>
- Yale meetings in spring and fall<sup>65,66</sup>
- Lilloet Queen's Birthday races<sup>67</sup>
- 63 - New list of Victoria officials<sup>46</sup>
- Colonel Foster received thoroughbred from England<sup>48</sup>
- Victoria horses at Lilloet races<sup>68</sup>
- 64 - W. Snyder's 'Lizzie' over Jas. Copland's 'Emigrant Dick' for \$1,000<sup>49</sup>
- 65 - First Annual Ashcroft races<sup>69</sup>
- 67 - American competitors in Victoria<sup>50</sup>
- 'Greyhound' over 'Volreece' and 'Boston Colt' for \$1,000<sup>52</sup>
- 'Lucy' over 'Greyhound' for \$500<sup>53</sup>
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Table VIII (Continued)Horse Racing

- 1870 - Lytton 4th of July races<sup>74</sup>
- 71 - Victoria Prince of Wales races sponsored by Lieutenant Governor Trutch and Admiral Farquhar<sup>58</sup>
- 72 - Kamloops Races<sup>59</sup>
- First Annual Provincial Exhibition of Agricultural and Horticultural Society<sup>60</sup>
  - Howard's 'Harkaway' and 'Champagne Charlie' and F. Saunders' 'Birdcatcher' are major winners<sup>61</sup>
  - Lieutenant Governor at Ashcroft races<sup>72</sup>
  - Pavilion Mountain races at Clinton<sup>75</sup>
- 73 - 'Grey Eagle' imported to Cariboo from U.S.<sup>77</sup>
- Queen's Birthday races at Lake La Hache<sup>78</sup>
  - Stables built at Kamloops track<sup>79</sup>
  - Imported horses 'Arkansas' and 'Dick Cheatem'<sup>80</sup>
  - English Jockey Club Rules used at Keremeos<sup>81</sup>
  - Bridge Creek Jockey Club<sup>82</sup>
- 74 - 'Cariboo Charlie' at Victoria's Coronation Day races<sup>86</sup>
- American horse 'Osceola' at Victoria<sup>89</sup>
- 75 - Racing at Nanaimo<sup>91</sup>
- 76 - Dixon's 'Trifle' over Howard's 'Reindeer' for \$2,000<sup>87</sup>
- 78 - Races at New Westminster<sup>92</sup>
- Ashcroft horsemen, Townsend, at New Westminster<sup>93</sup>
- 79 - First annual meeting at 150 Mile House<sup>94</sup>
- 
- 1882 - Spence's Bridge meeting<sup>85</sup>
- 83 - Race on Howe Street<sup>95</sup>
- 85 - Proposed joint track for Granville and New Westminster<sup>96</sup>
- 
- 1890 - Crowds of 20,000 Vancouverites at New Westminster races<sup>97</sup>

CHAPTER XIIIRIFLE SHOOTING

Rifle drill was naturally a part of any military exercise and so, contemporary newspapers often carried such reports as:

TARGET PRACTICE - The crew of the gunboat Forward were out target-shooting yesterday back of Beacon Hill.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, civilians used rifles in their hunting expeditions and in various shooting matches. One such event was held on Christmas Day, 1861, at Beacon Hill, where contestants were to shoot rifles off-hand at a distance of one hundred yards. A charge of fifty cents per shot was levied and a Kanaka half-breed Indian won the prize of a turkey.<sup>2</sup>

Regular target shooting competitions did not take place until Volunteer Rifle or Militia companies were organized. The first such group of Rifle Volunteers was formed by Victoria's black community, who received the loan of muskets from the H.B.C.<sup>3</sup> By early August of 1861, some thirty to sixty members were mustered for each drill and J.T. Pidwell had been elected as honorary secretary.<sup>4</sup> A month later, the corps announced its intention to parade in full uniform before proceeding to Beacon Hill for target practice.<sup>5</sup> The British Colonist remarked:

The number who will drill today will not exceed 24 men. The whole strength of the company is 45. They will make their appearance in a drill uniform: blue

faced with orange. As it is the first volunteer rifle company ever formed here, and as it is composed wholly of colored men, it will doubtless attract considerable attention.<sup>6</sup>

However, the activities of the corps were short lived. Following their appearance as guard of honor, accompanied by their own band, for the installation of Governor Kennedy, they were forced to disband. The Governor capitulated to pressure from members of the white community and declared that the corps had no legal authority for its organization.<sup>7</sup>

About this time, the white citizens of Victoria appear to have been trying to form a rifle corps themselves. In June of 1861, The Press announced that some two hundred men had joined the Volunteers<sup>8</sup> but, interest and organization seem to have lagged far behind that of the coloured volunteers. In October, the British Colonist chastised the group for its non-attendance at drills<sup>9</sup> and announced that the Legislature intended to provide £250 in support of some forty-seven members of the Vancouver Island Rifle Volunteers.<sup>10</sup> However, in February of the following year, when Lieutenant J.R. Stewart was elected to captain of the corps, the Legislature's contribution was said to be only £200 for uniforms.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the promised support, it appears that the group soon disbanded since, in reference to the Prince of Wales celebrations in November, the British Colonist noted:

It is a matter of regret that no corps of Rifle Volunteers now exists, as a field day on this occasion

would add another and brilliant spectacle to the displays of loyalty on this occasion.<sup>12</sup>

By 1864, the corps was back together again and was constructing a rifle range at Clover Point.<sup>13</sup> The first annual contest within the corps was held in October that year. Prizes were presented by Mrs. Kennedy, the wife of the Governor, and Adjutant Vinter was awarded the silver cup donated by J.A. McCrea.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the New Westminster Rifle Company was formalized in December of 1863, when the Governor approved its election of officers.<sup>15</sup> A year later, the Company awarded a contract for the construction of a drill shed to Messrs. Bonsart and Richards, at a sum of \$1058.<sup>16</sup> In 1865, this shed was used to host a dinner for 110 people in honour of the visiting Victorians who had been badly beaten in the first intercolonial rifle match.<sup>17</sup> The British Colonist described the preparations for the contest:

Intercolonial Rifle Match - The chosen ten of the Victoria Rifle Corps went up to New Westminster by the steamer Enterprise on Thursday night ... After fortifying the inner man at the 'Colonial', the bugle sounded, and the Victorians fell in, and marched up to the ground headed by their band...<sup>18</sup>

Two weeks later, the New Westminster 'ten' travelled to Victoria at no charge, courtesy of the H.B.C.<sup>19</sup> and defeated the Victoria Volunteers by a score of 228-210.<sup>20</sup>

In 1866, the Volunteer Rifles of both towns proceeded with a new enthusiasm. Regular training sessions were announced in Victoria.

VICTORIA RIFLE CORPS - 1st class firing, Monday at 3:30 p.m.; 2nd class firing, Thursday at 3:30 p.m.; 3rd class firing Wednesday evening at 4 p.m.; squad drill, Tuesday and Friday at 7:30 p.m. By order, J. Gordon Vinter, Lieut. and Adjutant.<sup>21</sup>

In competition with the Navy, the Volunteers won by 20 points, largely on the marksmanship of Messrs. Newbury, Soar, and Wilson. The competition was over ranges of 100, 300, 400, and 600 yards, with a total of twenty rounds per person being fired, five rounds at each range.<sup>22</sup>

Internal competitions within Victoria's #2 Company in October, saw Sgt. John Woollacott score the highest total of five shots at each of 200, 400, and 600 yards. In previous competitions, winners had been Sgt. Widdowson (July); Sgt. Woollacott (August); Private Gerow (September).<sup>23</sup> According to company rules, a person winning three such competitions in a year was to be awarded a cup and, in November, Sgt. Woollacott won his third match to gain the trophy.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, the Volunteers of New Westminster were also active. The corps defeated a team from H.M.S. Sparrowhawk, 443-324, in July<sup>25</sup> and by October, had split into three groups for internal competition. Scores in that event were: Seymour Artillery Volunteers - 342; New Westminster Volunteer Rifle Corps - 404; New Westminster Home Guard - 399.<sup>26</sup> In the intercolonial competition, held that year on New Westminster's new range at Brunette Butts, Victoria won, 462-452.<sup>27</sup> The return match a week later, enabled the

New Westminster team to split the series, winning this match by a score of 443-440.<sup>28</sup>

Since this match was considered to be the last of the inter-colonial series, due to the impending union of the two colonies, the British Columbian reflected on the value of such competitions.

Their importance is not to be measured by the mere prestige of annual victory at the butts; but the healthy interest and emulation which they excite are the best guarantee for the vitality and efficiency of the Volunteer movement in this young Colony.<sup>29</sup>

The paper continued that more frequent competitions between local companies should be encouraged and assisted by the government. Such competition was considered to be essential to the formation of the nucleus of an "army of defence", which had become increasingly essential since the Imperial Government had refused to supply protection to the colony. However, despite their importance, the 2nd Company of the Victoria Volunteer Rifles was disbanded in early 1867, due to a lack of numbers.<sup>30</sup> A year later, while the Fenian raids were exciting British subjects across the continent, the British Colonist echoed the value of the Volunteers, stating that "'In time of peace prepare for war' is an axiom that just now strikes us as possessing a peculiar aptness".<sup>31</sup> Thus, the Volunteers were prepared for military service and, during the spring of 1868, deployed themselves as special constables and night watchmen.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from their military duties, the Volunteers also served ceremonial and social functions. For example, in celebration of St. Patrick's Day, "The Rifle Corps, under Capt. Pearse preceded by their band, marched out by moonlight on Saturday evening, in the direction of Cadboro Bay".<sup>33</sup> To complete the festivities, refreshments were then served at the end of the march. However, special days were not the only times that the volunteers marched and often an afternoon or evening of drill and marching would be reported in the press.<sup>34</sup>

Returning to rifle competition of 1867, a shooting match between two individuals was organized in early January. Mr. Gerow succeeded in out shooting a Mr. Wade, to win a \$100 wager in that contest.<sup>35</sup> The Volunteer Corps, on the other hand, declined to accept a challenge match involving a wager, stating their principles in a letter to the British Colonist.

We are always glad of the opportunity of having a shooting match against anyone, but, as Volunteers, we do not care to have any money stake involved, this not being customary among Volunteers, who are always supposed to shoot their best for the honor of their corps.<sup>36</sup>

However, monetary prizes for competitions within the company were acceptable and in one such competition, prizes of \$20, \$15, and \$10 were offered.<sup>37</sup>

In other competitions that year, the New Westminster Rifles defeated a team from the Sparrowhawk in May.<sup>38</sup> However, later that summer, they were unable to defeat the

visiting Victoria Volunteers.<sup>39</sup> The latter Company had at least two matches with the Navy that year, defeating a fleet team by 92 points<sup>40</sup> and, later, defeating a team of officers.<sup>41</sup> In the following year, 1868, a match was arranged between teams from England and British Columbia<sup>42</sup> and it appears that the teams shot on their home ranges, relaying the scores by telegraph. In this manner, the Victoria Volunteers were able to defeat the London Rifle Volunteers.<sup>43</sup>

Prizes for competition within each local volunteer corps were often rifles and, in Victoria, marksmen also competed for the J.T. Scott gold medal.<sup>44</sup> The major trophy for competition between the British Columbia groups was the Seymour Cup, won by Victoria's John Wilson in 1869<sup>45</sup> and Private Butler, in 1870<sup>46</sup> and 1873.<sup>47</sup> Lancaster rifles were used in the competitions until 1870, when the Volunteers switched to long Enfield rifles.<sup>48</sup> The only apparent description of the type of targets used was provided by an 1862 advertisement of Ely's Ammunition, offering targets which were twelve feet square, for shooting at five hundred yards.<sup>49</sup>

By the mid 1870s, provincial rifle competitions seem to have been open to other groups besides the Volunteer Rifle Corps. A Mr. Welch had opened a shooting gallery in Victoria in 1870<sup>50</sup> and, in 1877, Mr. Warren opened a gallery at the Star Saloon, where special saloon rifles were provided.<sup>51</sup> The British Columbia Rifle Association appears to have gained its start in 1873 when a group of parliamentary

representatives in Ottawa organized themselves into an association with a membership which included Amor de Cosmos and Senator Macdonald, the president.<sup>52</sup> In the following year, the first provincial meet of this association was held in New Westminster.<sup>53</sup> In 1876, Governor-General Dufferin presented medals to the winners of the third annual British Columbia Rifle Association's meet.<sup>54</sup> The fifth meeting was held at Victoria's Clover Point in 1878. A team of sharp-shooters from Nanaimo won three-quarters of the prizes here<sup>55</sup> and were to host the competition the next year.<sup>56</sup>

The citizens of Nanaimo were no mere novices at rifle meets. The town's first competition was at least as early as 1863, when shooting matches were listed as part of their Queen's Birthday celebrations.<sup>57</sup> The spring of 1875 saw an extension made to the Nanaimo Militia Shooting Range<sup>58</sup> and, in the fall of that year, a team was sent to compete in the provincial championships at Victoria.<sup>59</sup> In 1880, Captain James Hardy presented the Nanaimo Silver Cup for competition within that town.<sup>60</sup>

Beginning in 1874, competitions were held to determine a British Columbia representative to sail to England for the annual shooting matches at Wimbledon. Lieutenant Wolfendon was selected<sup>61</sup> and was able to win prizes in the event.<sup>62</sup> Two years later, in 1876, the province again had a representative on the National Team. The British Columbia Rifle

Association contributed to the expenses of Sargeant Butler (#1 Victoria Rifles) as he travelled to Quebec to join Canada's Wimbledon contingent.<sup>63</sup> The next year, A.P. Kennedy scored within the top twenty marksmen at Wimbledon and won a prize of £5.<sup>64</sup>

Competition with American cities was initiated in 1877, when Victoria sent both rifle and baseball teams to Seattle. Victoria won this match, 456-445,<sup>65</sup> and also the return match, 508-483, as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations at Victoria in 1878.<sup>66</sup> By 1883, New Westminster was also competing with cities across the border, being defeated in Port Townsend by a score of 314-418.<sup>67</sup> Two years later, the British Columbian announced a major shooting event in Seattle.

Sporting Tournament - The first annual shooting tournament of the Sportsman's Association of the North West will be held in Seattle, W.T., on the 21st, 22nd, 23rd inst. Shooting at pigeons, glass balls and clay pigeons will form a prominent feature of the proceedings. The aggregate prizes amount to \$1,000.<sup>68</sup>

A few days later, the British Columbian Rifle Association held its twelfth annual meet at the Clover Point Range, Victoria,<sup>69</sup>

#### SUMMARY

At least as early as 1861, some of the citizens of Victoria were participating in rifle competitions such as turkey shoots. However, the first regularized competition was an outgrowth of the military exercises of the Royal

Navy and the Rifle Volunteers. By early 1864, both the New Westminster Rifle Company and the Victoria Rifle Volunteers had become stable organizations and, in the following year, held their first annual inter-colonial shooting matches. Competitions were also held with the various crews of the Fleet and within each militia unit, where prizes of rifles, medals, and sometimes cash were offered. However, the most prized trophy was the Seymour Cup, which came to be emblematic of the top marksmen in the province.

By the mid-1870s, a provincial body, the British Columbia Rifle Association, had been formed and was holding annual championships. Competitors were primarily from Victoria, New Westminster, and Nanaimo, each striving for the honour of representing the province on Canada's National Team, which annually travelled to London for the prestigious shooting tournament at Wimbledon. Towards the end of the decade, Victoria marksmen were travelling to Seattle for competition and, within a few years, New Westminster riflemen were also shooting with United States competitors.

Table IXRifle Shooting

- 1860 - Royal Navy target drills<sup>1</sup>
- 61 - Victoria turkey shoot<sup>2</sup>  
 - Coloured Rifle Volunteers<sup>3</sup>  
 - Vancouver Island Rifle Volunteers<sup>10</sup>
- 62 - Volunteers disbanded<sup>12</sup>
- 63 - New Westminster Rifle Company formed<sup>12</sup>  
 - Shooting at Nanaimo Queen's Birthday<sup>57</sup>
- 64 - Victoria Volunteers reformed<sup>13</sup>  
 - First annual contest of Victoria Volunteers<sup>14</sup>
- 65 - First annual inter-colonial match, New Westminster  
 defeated Victoria<sup>17</sup>  
 - Second match, New Westminster (228) - Victoria (210)<sup>20</sup>
- 66 - Regular training for Victoria Volunteers<sup>21</sup>  
 - Navy defeated by Victoria by 20 points<sup>22</sup>  
 - New Westminster (443) - H.M.S. Sparrowhawk (324)<sup>25</sup>  
 - Victoria (464) - New Westminster (452)<sup>27</sup>  
 - Victoria (440) - New Westminster (443)<sup>28</sup>
- 67 - Gerow defeated Wade for \$100<sup>35</sup>  
 - Sparrowhawk defeated by New Westminster<sup>38</sup>  
 - New Westminster defeated by Victoria<sup>39</sup>  
 - Victoria defeats Fleet by 92 points<sup>40</sup>
- 68 - Victoria Volunteers defeat London Rifle Volunteers<sup>43</sup>
- 69 - Seymour Cup won by John Wilson<sup>45</sup>
- 
- 70 - Seymour Cup won by Private Butler<sup>46</sup>  
 - Long Enfield rifle replaces Lancasters<sup>46</sup>  
 - Shooting gallery opened in Victoria by Mr. Welch<sup>50</sup>
- 73 - Seymour Cup won by Private Butler<sup>47</sup>  
 - British Columbia Rifle Association formed<sup>52</sup>
- 74 - First provincial meet of B.C.R.A.<sup>53</sup>  
 - Lt. Wolfendon sent to Wimbledon<sup>62</sup>
- 76 - Lord Dufferin presents medals to B.C.R.A.<sup>54</sup>  
 - Sgt. Butler sent to Wimbledon<sup>63</sup>

Table IX (Continued)Rifle Shooting

- 1877 - Shooting gallery opened in Star Saloon<sup>51</sup>  
- A.P. Kennedy sent to Wimbledon<sup>64</sup>  
- Victoria (456) - Seattle (444)<sup>65</sup>
- 78 - Victoria (508) - Seattle (483)<sup>66</sup>  
- Nanaimo Sharpshooters<sup>55</sup>
- 
- 1883 - Port Townsend (418) - New Westminster (314)<sup>67</sup>
- 85 - First annual tournament in Seattle<sup>68</sup>

CHAPTER XIVTRACK AND FIELD

Competition in track and field events began with the early picnics or sports days of colonial times. The Queen's Birthday, held annually in late May, was the major community-wide festivity in the early period and enjoyed enthusiastic participation. The British Colonist described the activities at the 1859 celebrations at Queensborough (New Westminster).

The sports and games went off with eclat, amid the applause of a large concourse of people ... The following is the programme of sports and amusements ... Foot and hurdle-races, putting shot, throwing the hammer, high and long jumps, tossing the caber, bobbing for treacle rolls, bobbing for 'bobs' in water, wrestling and boxing, boat races, and c., and c., concluding with a sack race and greasy pole; a Blue Jacket [sailor], having succeeded in attaining the envied grease crowned crest with little less difficulty than the Argonauts of ancient lore, received a like reward.<sup>1</sup>

In Victoria, where horse racing was the major sporting event of the Queen's Birthday, a foot race over a distance of five hundred yards was included in the programme of 1860.<sup>2</sup> However, the event was cancelled because one of the contestants, C. Wallace, refused to race against J. Parker.<sup>3</sup> Later that summer, the British Colonist announced the following festivities:

Race - There will be lots of sport at Beacon Hill this morning, commencing at 10 o'clock. Horse-racing, foot races, running in sacks, greased poles, wheelbarrows, etc., will form the principal features. None should fail to attend as it is the last kind of the season.<sup>4</sup>

During the next few years foot races received considerable attention from the population as 'Pedestrianism' became the rage. In January of 1861, the British Colonist reported:

A NOVEL FEAT - We understand that a wager of \$1,000 has been made between parties in this town, that one Knox, a resident, will be able to walk 100 consecutive hours without cessation. The money has been deposited with Messrs. Wells, Fargo, and Co. The walking will commence on Tuesday next, at the American saloon, Yates street.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, Knox had been engaged in such competitions twice before in California, walking for ninety-one hours and twenty minutes on one occasion, and eighty-four hours on the other.<sup>6</sup> However, in Victoria, he was successful, and when he concluded the walk, he "seemed quite strong, and his limbs did not appear to be swollen".<sup>7</sup>

A few days later, Knox was in another competition. This time he was to race for \$300 a side on the Beacon Hill horse-racing course. The distance was set at eighty yards, but Knox was to give his competitor a five foot start.<sup>8</sup> A later report in the British Colonist indicated that he lost that race and was prepared for a rematch.

On Friday afternoon another foot race will come off between Knox the pedestrian and the 'Butcher Boy' [also the name of a favourite horse], for \$200 aside - even race. Knox does not consider that he had a fair show in the run on Tuesday.<sup>9</sup>

The result of this second match does not appear to have been reported.

The Excelsior Gymnasium Club was particularly active in foot races during the early 1860s. Led by their

teacher, Mr. P.E. Devine, they were said to be in "exceedingly good condition" as they readied themselves for a one mile race at 6:30 in the morning.<sup>10</sup> In one of their outings, Mr. Devine was reported to have had the best time, having completed three miles in twenty-two and a half minutes.<sup>11</sup>

Enthusiasm for foot contests even led to the involvement of very unlikely participants as the British Colonist reported:

NOVEL RACE - A match has been made between two well known fat men of this town, to run a foot-race on the Queen's Birthday, for \$30 aside. Beacon Hill will shake to its very base when these two great bodies are set in motion, and if the vibration of the earth does not seriously effect the foundation of some of our strongest buildings, it will be a wonder. Timid persons are requested to leave town for the day.<sup>12</sup>

Several years later, a similar race was reported in which Joe Lovett and Frank Richards, both of Falstaffian build, aroused public interest in their race on Government Street, for a purse of \$50.

RACE BETWEEN HEAVYWEIGHTS - ... The earth seemed to tremble beneath the elephantine tread of the men and the walls of the houses nodded a pleasant good morning to the buildings on the opposite side of the street. Several of the storekeepers, imagining that an earthquake was in progress, rushed into the street, which they reached just in time to see Lovett gain the winning-post some three feet in advance of Richards, who attributes his defeat to having stubbed his toe upon a projecting nail, which, like too many others, has escaped the eye and hammer of a Dewsnap.<sup>13</sup>

In other contests, Frank Hewlett, the 'Norfolk Hare', raced two hundred yards in twenty-four and a half seconds, to beat Cameron, the 'Highland Laddie', in a \$50 match race in 1863.<sup>14</sup> The Queen's Birthday celebrations at Nanaimo in that year included a footrace<sup>15</sup> and, in Victoria, a sack race with a \$10 prize and a footrace of two hundred yards were run. In the latter race, a Mr. Silver defeated four opponents to win a prize based on the \$1 entrance fee with \$22 added.<sup>16</sup> In the following year, Walter Knox was back in the news and was reported to have won \$20 in a fifty yard race with Allport. Both contestants intended to run again, increasing the distance to one hundred yards with a bet of \$50.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Daniel McBrown and Mr. Durcom, the 'Idaho Boy', announced their intention of racing for \$200 over sixty yards.<sup>18</sup>

A correspondent of the Daily Evening Express reported that the winter residents of the Cariboo held a series of race days at the end of 1863. On Christmas Day, private races were held by a Richfield group and, on New Year's, public races were promoted. An entrance fee of \$5 was charged for a seventy yard race and prizes of \$100, \$60, and \$40 were won by Frank Fulford, Stiger (alias Kentuck), and lawyer Courtney respectively. A similar set of races was held the next day at Camerontown, where some four or five hundred people were in attendance. The writer continued that over \$2,000 had been bet on a forthcoming race for \$200 a side, between Frank Fulford and Cook.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to Vancouver Island, one of the popular festivities during the 1860s was to join in the celebrations of the fourth of July. In 1864, an excursion was organized to the island of San Juan, where residents of Victoria enjoyed competition with the American garrison in foot races and various novel events.<sup>20</sup> At Nanaimo, summer picnics and games were also popular and, in 1865, upwards of ninety people joined the Wesleyan Sabbath-school outing. Here the ladies were particularly identified for their enthusiastic participation in the games.<sup>21</sup> Similar functions were held by private groups. In one case, two Victoria citizens took a few of their friends on an outing up the Arm, in order to engage in some "amateur" foot races and hurdle events.<sup>22</sup>

By far the most impressive of the sports days during the period was the Navy competition of 1868. On Tuesday, July 7, between fifteen hundred and two thousand spectators watched the Fleet perform on the Naval Cricket Ground, Esquimalt Road. The next day, the British Colonist wrote:

The public of Victoria and vicinity surely fall under much obligation to Admiral and Mrs. Hastings, the Captains and Officers of the squadron on this station, for the day's superlative amusement offered them yesterday ... The fete was much after the style that one witnessed now and then in the neighbourhood of large naval and military stations in the mother country, and yesterday shewed that distance takes aught from the success of similar entertainments in the colonies.<sup>23</sup>

Chief Justice Needham and his wife presented prizes to the following winners:

Throwing the Hammer (14 lbs.) - J. McCallum - 18 yds.

1 ft. 3 in.; B. Diamond - 17 yds. (both from  
H.M.S. Zealous).

Putting the Shot (32 lbs.) - J. Norris - 19 ft. 6 in.

(Scout); J. McCallum (Zealous).

Wide Jump Standing - J. McCallum - 9 ft.; S. Gill (Scout).

Wide Jump Running - J. Endicott - 14 ft. 3 in. (Zealous);

F. Bishop (Scout).

High Jump Standing - J. McCallum - 3 ft. 5 in;

J. Endicott.

High Jump Running - R. Jarman - 4 ft. 4 in. (Zealous);

H. Gowler (Scout).

Climbing Greasy Pole - Edwin Baker (Zealous), after  
two hours.

440 yards Officers - Mr. Croker (Zealous); Mr. Napier

(Zealous).

220 yards Seamen - F. Ault - 28 secs. (Zealous);

J. Sparks (Sparrowhawk).

Walking 1/2 mile - 4 min. 25 secs. - J. Hurley (Scout);

R. Graham (Sparrowhawk); J. Davis (Scout).

Running 1/2 mile - 2 min. 40 secs. - J. Roberts,

Dalrymple (Scout); J. Plunkett (Sparrowhawk).

440 Hurdles Officers - 1 min. 20 secs. - Mr. Pison,

Cecil, Napier (all from Zealous).

440 Hurdles - 1 min. 23 secs. - R. Burke (Zealous);

R. Isaacs and S. Gill (Scout).

440 Non-Com. - 1 min. 15 secs. - A. Payne (Scout;

C. Earwaker and W. Baker (Zealous).

220 Boys under 18 - J. Prentice (Sparrowhawk);

J. Murphy (Zealous); R. Kelland (Scout).

Race for Marines - 32 secs. - F. Bishop (Scout);

R. Stevens.

80 yard Hopping - W. Eustis (Zealous); J. Ross (Scout).

Pair race legs tied - 220 yards - 44 secs. - J. Johnson  
and S. Long (Zealous); C. Wood and C. Brock  
(Scout).

Hat Race - run backwards 50 yards - 12 secs. -

H. Gowler (Scout); W. Eustis (Zealous).

Throwing Cricket Ball - 95 yards - R. Ralph (Scout);

M. Sullivan (Sparrowhawk).

Sack Race - W. Eustis (Zealous).

Best Hornpipe - 36 different steps - S. Meddings

(Zealous).

While the Naval Sports Day was the highlight of the year, other groups throughout the colony were also drawing considerable attention with their sports days of 1868. In Barkerville, the July 1 Dominion Day sports events drew some one thousand people. Results of that contest were as follows:

Three Standing Jumps - \$20 - Sam Walker - 32 ft. 11 in.

Standing Long Jumps - \$20 - Sam Walker - 10 ft. 11½ in.

Standing High Jumps - \$20 - Edward Ward - 4 ft. 3 in.

Putting Heavy Stone (24 lbs.) - \$20 - J. Cameron -  
25 ft. 8 in.

Slinging Stone (15 lbs.) - \$20 - J. McKay - 36 ft.  
10 in.

Long Race (100 yards) - \$30 - Sam Walker - 11 secs.

Short Race (75 yards) - \$20 - A. Hartman - 8 3/4 secs.

Hurdle Race (75 yards - 4 hurdles) - \$20 - D. Shaw.

Throwing Hammer (10 lbs.) - \$20 - F. Hunter - 98 ft.

Throwing Heavy Stone (31 lbs.) - \$25 - J. Glynn

- 27 ft. 4 in.

An entrance fee of \$1 was charged for all events except the long race, which had a fee of \$2.50. Additional amusements included 'La Perch', in which Edward Ward performed several feats after ascending a pole.<sup>24</sup>

Three days later, on the fourth of July, another sports festival was held at Barkerville. Gymnastic feats and 'La Perch' complimented the following events:

Running High Jump - \$20 - E. Pooley - 4 ft. 6½ in.

Hop, Skip and Jump - \$20 - S. Walker - 37 ft. 8 in.

Foot Race (75 yards) - \$75 - A. Hartman - 8¼ secs.

Hurdle Race (100 yards - 4 hurdles) - \$30 - E. Pooley.<sup>25</sup>

Back in Victoria, the Firemen's Picnic of 1868 drew six hundred spectators to the Saturday event. The winners were:

Hammer (16 lbs.) - A. Foster; J. Lachapelle.

Shot (32 lbs.) - J. Madden; A. Foster.

Shot (16 lbs.) - W.J. MacDonald; G. Richardson

Wide Standing Jump - A. Foster; J. Madden.

Wide Running Jump - S. Duck; A. Foster.

High Standing Jump - M. Dodd; G. Maynard.

High Running Lead - J.M. Lammon; A. de Neuf.

300 yards - Joseph Davies.

Boys under 17 - 150 yards - B. Derham, Jr.

Hopping - Joseph Davies.

Walking - James Holmes.

To conclude the day, the National Anthem was played at a quarter to 12 p.m., "so as not to infringe upon the Sabbath".<sup>26</sup> This appears to have been the first of what became an annual festival, since the Victoria Daily Standard announced the third annual Victoria Firemen's Pic-Nic in 1870.<sup>27</sup>

May Day of 1871 was the date of another special competition fostered by the Navy. A half-holiday had been proclaimed and several civilians entered the athletic contests at Esquimalt. Chief Justice Begbie was the appointed judge for many of the events and the Governor's wife, Mrs. Musgrave, presented the awards. Winners were:

Flat Race - 100 yards - Lieut. Wright. 11 secs.

Flat Race - 200 yards - Gunner Wheeler.

High Jump - Lieut H.T. Wright, 4 ft. 6½ in.

Flat Race - 1/4 mile - Lieut. Wright. 1 min.

Putting 24 lb. shot - W. Allmen, 28 ft. 3 in.

Hurdle Race - 200 yards - Lieut. Wright and \_\_\_\_\_ Tolmie,  
23 secs.

Throwing Hammer - A.B. Gray, 67 ft. 7 in.

Flat Race - 1/2 mile - Ball and Britten.

Flat Race - 1 mile - Lieut. Wright, 5 min. 29 secs.

Sac Race - struck out.

Three Legged Race - C.E. Pooley and W. Gibbon.

Flat Race - 200 yards - Lieut. Wright, 22 secs.

Hurdle Race - 200 yards - Wheeler and Blackmore.

Flat Race - 1/2 mile - Mr. Bryant.<sup>28</sup>

Competition in these sports days was seldom on what might currently be considered an 'amateur' basis. If cash prizes were not offered, then an array of relatively expensive articles were provided. For example, in the May Day of 1871, Lieutenant Wright won six of the following prizes: Pewter, Money, Fishing Rod, Pipe and Knife, Fly Book, Governor's Cup and Ring, Whip, \$5 and a Keg of Beer, Fancy Mug, Two Pewters, \$7, and a Pewter.<sup>29</sup> To pay for these prizes, most contests had an entrance fee. Even the games fostered by the Caledonian Benevolent Society had an entrance charge which, in 1869, was a twenty-five cent levy, while the prizes ranged from \$2.50 to \$5.00.<sup>30</sup>

The St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society appears to have been the first group to hold annual athletic competitions in the region. In 1871, the Daily Standard reported that the society was preparing for its eighth meeting on the fourth of July.<sup>31</sup> Thus, it appears that this group had held its first annual competition back in 1864. The society was very dynamic and did not confine its activities merely to Victoria. Other centres of population developed chapters and they too held athletic competitions. For example, the small settlement at Langley hosted a day of Caledonian

Games in the autumn of 1877.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the period, most of the Games held to a traditional programme of events, such as these listed in the New Westminster Highland Games of 1884:

Throwing Heavy Stone 21 lbs; Throwing Light Stone 1b lbs; The Cabre; Pole Vaulting; Running Long Jump; Running High Jump; Hurdle Race; Wheelbarrow Race; Sack Race; Throwing Heavy Hammer - 22 lbs; Throwing Light Hammer 17 lbs; Boys' Race; Quoits; Old Man's Race; Highland Fling; Ladies' Reel; Sword Dance.<sup>33</sup>

In many of the various celebrations throughout the province, local Indians were also competitors in some of the events. A more detailed discussion of their participation is included later, under a separate heading, but it seems appropriate to make a brief reference at this point. The Indians' athletic prowess was often considerably superior to their white opponents, causing the organizers of the games to make special arrangements for Indian participation. For example, during a sports day at New Westminster, in 1872, separate events were identified for Indians, "in order to give the paler competitors a better chance to win a prize".<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the Indians were also participant in match races, such as that reported by the Cariboo Sentinel in the summer of 1875.

A foot race for \$100 a side, between the Ontario Boy and an Indian named Deerfoot, distance 100 yards, came off yesterday. Deerfoot won by six inches after a very exciting and excellent race.<sup>35</sup>

Several other match contests were held during the period. In mid-February, 1875, five hundred people gathered

on Victoria's Beacon Hill to watch a local resident, Tod, race against Wright of the Cariboo.<sup>36</sup> Another event was a Hop, Step, and Jump competition which took place at the rear of Clay's Store on Johnson Street. Here, Ned Irving covered 37 feet 5 inches to better J. Morley's 36 feet for a \$25 bet.<sup>37</sup>

During the late 1870s, British Columbians became involved with American competitors in match events. During an 1877, July 4 competition in Seattle, a visiting Victorian was defeated by a local Mr. Rudge, who then defeated a Portland contestant, Mann, for \$100. Spectators placed some \$2,000 on the outcome of this match.<sup>38</sup> In the following year, an American runner named Carr drew great acclaim as a result of his performances on Vancouver Island. Following his defeat of Tod, at Beacon Hill, and Beaven at Nanaimo, he was touted as one of the fastest runners in the world. One newspaper reported the rumour that his real name was John Werly Cozad. The story continued that the New York Clipper had stated that this man had run 125 yards in 12 1/2 secs.<sup>39</sup> However, one week later, Carr was defeated by Gagon, a crew member of H.M.S. Turquoise. In a one hundred yard race at \$50 a side, Gagon was given a fifteen foot start and maintained that distance to the end of the race.<sup>40</sup>

In 1879, Nanaimo was again the site of a major race. The hometown runner, Beaven, who had been beaten by Tod in the previous year, was to race against Rudge, of Seattle

fame. The latter had apparently taken up residence in Victoria.<sup>41</sup> The outcome of this match does not appear to have been reported, but it is significant that some Nanaimo residents were active in a high level of track and field competition. Beaven was not the first local success. A previous report in the local press had announced in 1874, that "At the sports at Burrard Inlet, Mr. Wm. McGregor of this town, won the Running High Jump and Running Long Jump".<sup>42</sup> The neighbouring townsite of Wellington was also active. Its sports programme on Dominion Day, 1880, included the following events: Boy's Race - 75 yards; 50 yards; Girls Race; 120 yard Race; Old Man's Race; Married Women's Race; Potatoe Race; 500 yard Race; Race Around the Lake; Three Legged Race; Swimming; Running Long Jump; Standing Jump; Three Standing Jumps; Hop, Skip, and Jump; Quoits - 21, 18, and 14 yards.<sup>43</sup>

Pedestrianism, so popular in the early 1860s, continued to enjoy public support around 1880. Victoria's Pavilion Hall was the venue for a ten mile walking match in September of 1878. The winner, Prodmore, took 1 hour, 26 minutes and 45 seconds to complete the distance, and defeated his opponent, Gordon, by one round after having given him an eight round start.<sup>44</sup> In early November of the following year, A. McDowell was touted as the Champion Amateur Walker of the Province<sup>45</sup> and, a few weeks later, proved his prowess at the Pavilion Rink. In a six day walking race which

included a Mr. Munsell from Portland, McDowell completed 197 miles and four laps to win the Champion of British Columbia belt. His nearest competitor was McCarthy, who completed 170 miles in the allotted time.<sup>46</sup>

The newspaper report of the last event suggested that a match between female pedestrians from Portland would soon take place in Victoria. Whether or not that match came off is not clear, but by 1884, Nanaimo was hosting match foot races with female contestants. Several bets were placed as a Miss Straube of Nanaimo and Miss Cook of Wellington, "both very fleet of foot", competed for \$100 a side on Haliburton Street, opposite the Dew Drop Hotel. Miss Cook was the victor.<sup>47</sup>

Numerous sports days were held throughout the remainder of the period in the major centres of population. Even the smaller communities became participant in athletic endeavours. As construction on the C.P.R. drew an increasing number of workers into the remote parts of the province, the construction communities held athletic contests in conjunction with their celebrations. In one such case of 1883, the fourth of July was celebrated at Yale. Here, the sports events even included a 'high jump with pole', in which a J. McKinnon and J. MacDonald tied for first place.<sup>48</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Various athletic competitions were held throughout the region during most days of celebration, beginning at least as early as 1859, when the Queen's Birthday festivities

at New Westminster included sporting events. Such other festivals as May Day, Dominion Day, and the fourth of July usually incorporated track and field competitions as part of the programme. During the summer months, several social groups organized outings and picnics where the participants would often engage in running, jumping and throwing competitions. The most prominent of these groups was the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society, which began holding annual sports days in the Victoria area in 1864. As the society grew, several chapters throughout the province also held annual highland games. Another prominent group was the Victoria Firemen's Association, which held its first annual picnic and games in 1868. In that year, athletic contests were particularly popular, perhaps largely due to the promotion of the Naval Sports Day, a major spectacle held at Esquimalt.

As in other parts of North America, 'pedestrian' events were popular in British Columbia during the period. As early as 1861, a recent resident of Victoria, named Knox, was engaged in a walking contest for \$1,000. By 1879, a provincial championship belt was offered for amateur walkers and was won by McDowell in that year. Other events included numerous match races in walking and running over varying distances, and wagers of \$25 to \$200 were common. In fact, throughout all contests from races to 'novel' events, participants were seldom strictly amateur, but

competed for prizes of money or reasonably expensive articles. Sometimes even the women competed for such prizes and, in one case at Nanaimo, a match race for \$100 was held between two local women.

Table XTrack and Field

- 1859 - Part of Queen's Birthday at New Westminster<sup>1</sup>
- 
- 1860 - Events held in Victoria<sup>2,4</sup>
- 61 - Knox in \$1,000 walking race<sup>5</sup>
  - Excelsior Gymnasium Club active<sup>10</sup>
  - 63 - Frank Howlett wins 200 yards in 24 1/2 secs<sup>14</sup>
  - Part of Queen's Birthday at Nanaimo<sup>15</sup>
  - Winter races in the Cariboo<sup>19</sup>
  - 64 - Daniel McBrown vs Mr. Durcom over 60 yards<sup>18</sup>
  - First Annual Meeting of St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society
  - 68 - Naval Sports Day<sup>23</sup>
  - Barkerville Dominion Day<sup>24</sup>
  - Barkerville July 4<sup>25</sup>
  - First Annual Victoria Firemen's Picnic and Games<sup>27</sup>
- 
- 1871 - Naval competition<sup>28</sup>
- Eighth Annual St. Andrew's and Caledonian Games<sup>31</sup>
  - 74 - Sports day at Burrard Inlet<sup>42</sup>
  - Deerfoot defeats 'Ontario Boy'<sup>35</sup>
  - 77 - St. Andrew's and Caledonian Games at Langley<sup>32</sup>
  - 78 - American, Carr defeats Tod and Beaven<sup>39</sup>
  - Gagon defeats Carr<sup>40</sup>
  - Ten mile walking match won by Pridmore<sup>44</sup>
  - 79 - McDowell becomes champion walker of British Columbia<sup>46</sup>
- 
- 1880 - Wellington Dominion Day<sup>43</sup>
- 83 - 'High jump with pole' at Yale<sup>48</sup>
  - 84 - New Westminster St. Andrew's and Caledonian Games<sup>33</sup>
  - Nanaimo host to female match runners<sup>47</sup>

CHAPTER XVWINTER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIESCURLING

The West Coast climate being too mild to ensure regular opportunity for participation in ice sports, it is little surprise that there was scant organization of curling during the period. The citizens of Nanaimo claimed to have established the first curling club on the Pacific Coast in 1873, when cold weather permitted them to play on the frozen swamp just outside the city.<sup>1</sup> Prominent skips during the mid-seventies were Jas. Harvey and Jas. Hamilton.<sup>2</sup> However, the opportunity for the development of curling was very limited until artificial ice was introduced to the coast after the turn of the century.

Inland, where the weather was suitable for ice sports, curling developed in the 1890s as the railway brought new settlers to the region. For example, a club was formed in Kaslo in 1895. In the following year, Nelson, Sandon, and Golden had clubs and in 1898, the Kootenay Curling Association was formed. The growth of curling in Canada was such that "by 1900, curling clubs were established from Halifax to Rossland, B.C."<sup>3</sup>

SLEIGHING

The inconsistency of cold winter weather made the adapt-

ation of transport to snow conditions more of an inconvenience on the West Coast than in other parts of North America. However, the appearance of snow was enjoyed by the early colonists and the newspapers hastened to comment on the changed conditions.

OUT SLEIGHING - As we go to press - 12 o'clock P.M. - we hear the jingling of bells, and there are several parties riding through the streets in sleighs.<sup>4</sup>

The sleigh bells rung out a merry peal yesterday, forcibly recalling happy days in other distant regions.<sup>5</sup>

FIRST SNOW - THE WEATHER - On Saturday morning last, a few flakes of snow came down from above, and awakened fond recollections of sleigh-rides and snowballing parties.<sup>6</sup>

SLEIGHING - The first sleigh passed up Yates street yesterday afternoon, drawn by two horses without bells. The vehicle contained half-a-dozen melancholy looking men, who seemed half-frozen to death. The occupants, as they were drawn swiftly and silently up the street were ever and anon saluted with a snowball thrown into their midst by graceless urchins who seemed to consider them legitimate marks for their unerring aims.<sup>7</sup>

During the early years of settlement, before the children were equipped with sleighs and toboggans, they enjoyed running and sliding across the ice and snow. Thus, the advent of milder weather, bringing rain to dissipate the snow, was often "very much to the disgust of sundry urchins who had taken advantage of the opportunity afforded to convert several of the sidewalks into sliding-ponds".<sup>8</sup>

When toboggans and sleds were used by the youngsters, their indiscretion was likely to incur the wrath of the

older generation, who had periodically banned the frivolity in other parts of the continent. Thus, in 1883, the Mainland Guardian chastised the youth of New Westminster for their recklessness.

Hints - The boys in this city require some good advice ... As soon as the snow comes the boys take out the sleds and use the side walks descending to Columbia Street as chutes. Mounted on their infernal machines they descend with great rapidity, endangering the lives of persons who are travelling. On last Saturday evening two ladies narrowly escaped the descending imps. The ladies were about forty yards from Columbia Street, ascending when suddenly five sleighs carrying five boys and no brains, descended like flashes ... After this notice of the nuisance, which is called amusement, if any citizen is injured by the sleds he will have the law on his side and we are informed by a lawyer that in an action against the city fathers he or she will secure damages and costs.<sup>9</sup>

### SNOWBALLING

One of the most popular winter pastimes, which youth of every era seem to have compulsively enjoyed, was snowballing. In 1862, the British Colonist responded to the complaints of local businessmen who were concerned about the snowballing escapades of parties of boys and men.

A good bout of snowballs, where the sport is not all one side, is health-giving and spirit-raising, and is the best remedy for the 'blues', dyspepsia and ill temper that we know of ... In future, boys, make soft balls, keep snow out of stores, and don't pelt anybody except he has a fair show to pay you back with interest.<sup>10</sup>

The next year, the paper described a major snow-battle in the city streets.

The 'boys' were collected in full force yesterday on Government and Yates streets, for the purpose of enjoying themselves in snow-balling each other; as well as paying marked attention to the passerby. There were two brigades marshalled along the sidewalk, one at the Adelphi corner and the other on the opposite side. When some poor teamster was not in the way, mutual exchanges followed each other in rapid succession with boisterous cheering from both parties. When a sleighing party came along the fun and excitement rose to the highest pitch, when volley after volley was discharged from both sides at the unfortunate occupants. There was no respect of persons observed by the crowd, as everyone who chanced to cross their path had to run the gauntlet and take his share - and sometimes it was a large share - of the showers of balls which were levelled at his head. Neither civic dignitary, member of the legislature, nor even known to belong to the press, was any shield from the combined attack of the rival parties, - all were served in the same style and had to endure the same treatment. There was the greatest good humor manifested generally, and with one or two exceptions, we did not see anyone with a frown upon his face. The crowd quietly dispersed about an hour before night-fall.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, the British Columbian reported of New Westminster that "'ripe age' and the fair sex alone enjoyed immunity from volleys of snow-balls, which were flying thick and fast on Columbia street".<sup>12</sup> However, not all was fun and merriment. On the serious side, in 1862, the British Colonist carried the report of an old man of Steilacoom, who was killed by ice concealed in a snowball.<sup>13</sup> Then, several years later, a young man was reported to have been summoned for pelting a citizen with snowballs.<sup>14</sup>

### SKATING

In the mild climate of British Columbia, frost and snow were a wintery treat for the energetic, who took quick

advantage of the formation of ice. However, sometimes they were a little too quick to test the local ponds, as the British Colonist of November, 1859, reported.

Skating - The invigorating and exhilarating exercise of skating has been indulged in by many during the last few days, about two miles out of town. While a party of gentlemen were enjoying themselves in this way on Saturday, Mr. A.F. Main had the misfortune to break through the ice, and escaped only by swimming. The ice was very thin, being little more than an inch thick.<sup>15</sup>

The first record of skates being used in North America is de Mont's expedition to Acadia in 1604, when skates and snowshoes were used as a means of travel.<sup>16</sup> The activity only became popular as a pastime in the mid-nineteenth century and, by 1862, some eighty to one hundred of Victoria's citizens were enjoying the activity on Swan Lake, just two miles out of town.<sup>17</sup> In the following year, the British Colonist carried this report of the activities:

SPORTS OF THE SEASON - A number of persons availed themselves yesterday of the beautiful frosty weather, to enjoy the favorite pastimes of sliding and skating. Parties bent upon indulging their taste for this recreation visited nearly every suitable place of water in the vicinity of Victoria; but Swan Lake, the swamp at the upper part of View street, and the eastern extremity of James Bay, obtained the most patronage. The swamp on View street was, however, most highly favored, as two young German ladies, who doubtless acquired the art in their native land, honored the spot with their presence, and excited the admiration of the beholders by their graceful evolutions upon the ice in anything but convenient and appropriate skates.<sup>18</sup>

Commercial ventures soon strove to cash in on the popularity of skating. The most popular natural spots around Victoria were Langford's Lake, Skinner's Bottom, Harris'

Pond, and Swan Lake. By 1864, a refreshment house had been established at Swan Lake, to which the stages of the Cosmopolitan Livery Stable ran all day.<sup>19</sup> Four years later, Edward Thomas, of the Bee Hive Saloon, advertised the flooding of an ice surface as part of his business promotion. In description of the endeavour, the British Colonist stated:

Should the frost continue a force pump will be taken to Harris' pond and the ice flooded with two or three inches of water, and if this water freeze over-night there will be a smooth surface for skaters to-day. This plan is adopted on the skating rinks in Canada. As soon as the last skater has left the rink at night, about two inches of water is let in, and in the morning the ice is as smooth as glass.<sup>20</sup>

In another attempt to preserve the ice surface for skaters, a party of men would sweep Harris' pond clear of snow, then pass the hat around to skaters for a small contribution.<sup>21</sup> In later years, hotel owners would capitalize on a cold-spell by providing an ice surface in an attempt to attract business to their establishments. For example, as early as 1879, the Hastings Hotel on Burrard Inlet advertised, "A skating rink is attached to the hotel for the accommodation of guests".<sup>22</sup>

The citizens of New Westminster also enjoyed ice skating when the weather permitted. As early as 1862, Burnaby Lake was recognized as a popular, although considerably distant, spot.<sup>23</sup> In that year, the town even had a resident expert on skating, as the British Columbian announced that W.E. Cormack had written a treatise which was to be published

by Bailey Brothers of London.<sup>24</sup> In 1867, donations were made to build a rink within the city, but the lateness of the season forced the abandonment of the scheme and the subscriptions were refunded.<sup>25</sup> However, a long cold period in the following year allowed ample enjoyment of local surfaces. The press announced that during the last ten days, "almost every day and every night crowds of persons, of all ages and of both sexes, have been out upon the ice", including His Excellency the Governor, who "has been out almost every day, enjoying himself with the rest".<sup>26</sup> The condition of the ice was sometimes improved by the local fire company, the Hyacks, who would take their "machine" to the saw mill for the dual purpose of practice and to flood the ice for skaters.<sup>27</sup>

The skaters' problems with a short winter season were remedied in the early seventies by the arrival of roller skates. The Victoria Skating Association advertised its first term of assemblies in early July, 1871, at the St. Nicholas Rink, on Government Street. Music was supplied by a brass band and an admission of twenty-five cents was charged. 'Plimpton' roller skates could be rented for a similar additional fee.<sup>28</sup> Within three weeks, the rink was filled to capacity by both male and female enthusiasts, but it is impossible to distinguish if the interest was solely in the activity or in anticipation of gaining the favours of the opposite sex. As the Daily Standard noted:

It is curious that on one evening of this week, gentlemen had sole possession of the floor - it was full. On the preceeding evening ladies had the entire control - full to overflowing with the ladies.<sup>29</sup>

Apparently at that time, the rink could handle a crowd of about seventy-five people<sup>30</sup> and its popularity was so great that after less than three months of operation, it was temporarily closed to permit the laying of a new floor.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, in New Westminster, gentlemen connected with the Victoria rink were planning to open a similar facility on the mainland.<sup>32</sup> In August of that year, new skates were ordered from San Francisco<sup>33</sup> and, in the following month, the Mainland Guardian announced that skaters were meeting at the town's Drill Shed.

To us, who are not initiated, the skaters reminded us strongly of an agitated lobster on end, or the pilgrim whose boots contained the unboiled peas. It is highly probable that a great change will take place on the skaters after a little practice, and we have undoubted proof that the exercise is sufficient to cure the most stubborn fit of dyspepsia.<sup>34</sup>

Two days later, the paper continued:

The Skating Rink - This exciting amusement is now in full swing, and active young men are invited to take a turn. The drill shed is about as good a place for the purpose as could be found anywhere. The necessary implements may be had at the rink on hire, or may be purchased at Halbrosk, Fisher and Co's.<sup>35</sup>

It is interesting to note that this excerpt has been mistakenly interpreted by other authors as referring to ice skating.

The popularity of roller skating continued to grow. In November of 1871, Victoria's second rink, the 'Cosmopolitan',

was opened on Store Street<sup>36</sup> and, in the following year, the press continued to remark on the novelty of the activity.

We visited the Rink last evening and found a large number present enjoying themselves and exhibiting every degree in the 'poetry in motion', while some glided along like swallows on the wing, others rolled like porpoises, or a vessel half seas over in a gale, and furnished much amusement to the lookers on.<sup>37</sup>

Another rink was opened in November, 1873, at Victoria's Philharmonic Hall, on Fort Street.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the most lavish facility in the province was also located on Fort Street, next to the Mechanic's Institute, where B. Pettinghill opened his rink in 1877. Measuring 113 feet by 53 feet and containing two change rooms, the rink had a handsome globe fountain in the centre of the floor and a band stand which was suspended 10 or 12 feet above the skaters.<sup>39</sup> The facility was so luxurious that it was also used for the city's major dances and balls.

Elsewhere in the province, a roller skating rink was opened in Nanaimo at the 'Institute Hall', in 1876<sup>40</sup> and in 1882, another rink was operated three or four nights per week by R. Whitfield, in a "large building on Victoria Crescent opposite the Provincial Hotel".<sup>41</sup> In New Westminster, another rink was opened in 1879 by Insley and Wintemute, at the Good Templar's Hall, Columbia Street. General admission was twenty-five cents, but ladies were admitted free of charge.<sup>42</sup>

SUMMARY

With the exception of intermittent curling competitions in Nanaimo, beginning around 1873, the winter sporting activities during the period were predominantly the pastimes of sleighing, snowballing, and ice skating. The mild weather on the west coast limited these activities to a very short, irregular season, until technology supplied equipment for year round skating. Thus, serious competition in winter sports did not occur until late in the century, after the railway opened the Interior to comparatively easy travel. For example, Cox refers to a winter carnival at Rossland, held in February of 1898, which provided competition in skating, skiing, snowshoeing, curling, and hockey.<sup>43</sup>

Table XIWinter Sports and Activities

- 1862 - some 80 to 100 Victorians skate on Swan Lake<sup>12</sup>  
 - New Westminster's Cormack publishes treatise on skating.<sup>24</sup>
- 64 - refreshments for skaters at Swan Lake<sup>19</sup>
- 68 - hotels flood ice in Victoria<sup>20</sup>  
 - New Westminster Hyacks flood ice<sup>27</sup>
- 
- 1871 - Victoria Skating Association - roller skates at the St. Nicholas Rink<sup>28</sup>  
 - Cosmopolitan Rink in Victoria<sup>36</sup>  
 - N.W. has roller skating in Drill Shed<sup>34,35</sup>
- 73 - Nanaimo has first curling club on Pacific Coast<sup>1</sup>  
 - roller rink at Victoria's Philharmonic Hall<sup>38</sup>
- 76 - roller rink at Nanaimo's Institute<sup>40</sup>
- 77 - lavish roller rink in Victoria<sup>39</sup>
- 79 - another roller rink in N.W.<sup>42</sup>
- 
- 1882 - another roller rink in Nanaimo<sup>41</sup>
- 
- 1890's - curling clubs in the Interior

CHAPTER XVISOCIAL FEATURESTHE SOCIAL MIX

A unique characteristic of the British Colony on the west coast of North America was the great racial diversity of its population during the early 1860s. The rapid transition of its economy from fur-trading to gold mining brought huge numbers of adventurers and entrepreneurs from around the world, each seeking a new and more prosperous life style. Matthew MacFie, a colonial official, circa 1860, wrote of Victoria that:

... one can not pass along the principal thoroughfares without meeting representatives of almost every tribe and nationality under heaven. Within a limited space may be seen - of Europeans, Russians, Austrians, Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Danes, Swedes, French, Germans, Spaniards, Swiss, Scotch, English, and Irish; of Africans, Negroes from the United States and the West Indies; of Asiatics, Lascars and Chinamen; of Americans, Indians, Mexicans, Chilanos and citizens of the North American Republic; and of Polynesians, Malays from Sandwich Islands.<sup>1</sup>

Although the organizers and active participants of early sporting endeavours were English speaking, the numerous activities and celebrations provided an excellent opportunity for people of different cultures and social positions to gather and mingle freely. In describing the Queen's Birthday regatta of 1868, at which one thousand spectators were in attendance, the British Colonist noted the social values of sporting events by stating that:

A more universal assemblage was never known; clergymen of every denomination, men of all qualities, people of all nations, the rich and poor, in fact mingled freely together, and forgetting the sectional and social differences that divide them, acted as became an occasion that of honoring a monarch whose virtues are an example to the world.<sup>2</sup>

A further example is provided by a comment in The Press, which described an earlier Queen's Birthday celebration in 1861.

The Indian population also turned out in number, and if we are right judge of their progress in habits of civilization by the habits with which they were clothed, we would say they are making rapid strides. The red-coated steward of the Jockey Club found many a rival in costume amongst the painted savages, and every article of dress and grace of carriage which characterized the lady portion of the concourse, was copied by the squaws with a power of imitation that would make the fortune of the most unrenowned artist ... Live marines and 'dead marines', sailors and shoe makers, lawyers and loafers - every description, in fact, of our population was there from the pompous politician to the peddler of peanuts.<sup>3</sup>

However, the article continued by deploring the state of universal drunkenness of the Indian population and chastized the "ruffians" who had sold them whiskey. Apparently, in the confusion of the festivities, an Indian woman and child had wandered onto the horse racing course and were run over by the race.

It is interesting to note that of the non-white population, only the Indians gained an identifiable prowess in athletic activities. Undoubtedly, their numbers made them a much more significant group than either the Chinese or the American Negroes, and so their involvement will be discussed under a separate heading.

Apart from a Chinaman's unfortunate experience with a quoit,<sup>4</sup> the only other apparent reference to Chinese participation in sport at Victoria was the rowing race between the Chung Lung and Kwong Sing crews. Despite the newspaper editors suggestion that the Chinese should be afforded the opportunity to participate in later races,<sup>5</sup> they were either discouraged from entering, or showed no further interest. Although discouragement may well have occurred, the white community may not have felt the need to exclude the Chinese because the Orientals generally kept very much to themselves as MacFie said, "they always kept at a respectful distance from the whites".<sup>6</sup> However, in some of the Interior towns, such as Barkerville, the Chinese were encouraged to participate in local festivities and special events. Prizes were offered for these competitions, but the value was generally less than that offered to whites.<sup>7</sup>

In regard to the Negroes, their participation in white activities was particularly opposed by American settlers. Their experience in the Victoria area is interesting. Before the Fraser River gold rush, the state of California passed laws which required blacks to wear a badge of distinction. In reaction to this legislation, the coloured community sent a delegation to Victoria, where they were hospitably received by Governor Douglas, who was no stranger to non-whites. He had been born in the West Indies and had been employed amongst the British Columbian Indians at the age of fifteen or

sixteen years. Encouraged by his reception, some eight hundred blacks moved from California to Victoria in 1858-59.

In their new home, the blacks found a level of social acceptance in marked contrast to that of California. For example, while they had been restricted to specified seats in the churches of California, in Victoria, they were permitted free range of the unoccupied pews of the only church in the colony. Their economic status was also markedly changed in their new home. Upon their arrival in the colony, many of them invested their meagre savings in land. The subsequent arrival of hordes of miners caused such an escalation in the value of real estate that many of the black citizens suddenly found themselves in possession of considerable assets. Thus freed of both social and economic oppression, they were not disposed to stoop to the prejudices of in-coming whites.

However, the blacks' ambitions of full and equal participation in community affairs were soon inhibited by the masses of white miners and settlers. One of the first confrontations was over the place of worship. When the parson championed the cause of the blacks, claiming that all people, regardless of colour, were equal in the eyes of the Lord, the whites departed his church in favour of other congregations, leaving the blacks virtually segregated in their own church. Since they wished to mingle with the whites, they deserted

their champion and tried to mix with other congregations. A further example of the degree of emotion attached to the racial situation is the case of the society of teetotallers, possibly the Dashaways, who disbanded when one of their members tried to arrange the membership of a black man.

To display their esteem for the colony, the coloured community formed the first Volunteer Militia, equipped with a band and uniforms. The H.B.C. supported their endeavours and supplied them with muskets. However, when the new Governor, Kennedy, arrived from England, he succumbed to pressure from the whites and forced the coloured militia to disband. Apart from the occasional picnic and festival, the blacks' participation in community activities became restricted and many of them later returned to the United States at the close of the Civil War.<sup>8</sup>

In regards to the white population, discrimination based on social standing was not as readily applicable in the colony as it had been in the mother country. The sudden prosperity generated by the gold rush created what MacFie termed an 'inverted social pyramid', in which traditional class distinction was inoperative. MacFie explained, "If the character of people is respectable, humble origin is felt to be much less a barrier to advancement in the colonies than in England".<sup>9</sup> Thus,

The immigrant accustomed to the distinction of class obtaining in settled populations of the old world, will be struck to observe how completely the social pyramid is inverted in the colonies. Many

persons of birth and education, but of reduced means, are compelled for a time after their arrival, to struggle with hardship, while the vulgar, who have but recently acquired wealth, are arrayed in soft clothing and fare sumptuously.<sup>10</sup>

Since the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia abounded with people of diverse backgrounds and fortunes, social standing could often be exaggerated by pretensions of class. Thus, it was "not uncommon for persons of plausible address coming into the colonies, to impose on the public, and insinuate themselves into respectable society".<sup>11</sup> Ladies were particularly prone to create embroidered narratives to contrast present hardships with former affluence but, "some one usually turns up who knows all about their antecedents; and then the truth comes out assigning them a very different place in society from what they pretended to".<sup>12</sup>

The net effect of the inverted social pyramid and the pretensions of position was probably to cause an exaggerated imitation of 'polite' society in England. Models of upper class behavior were undoubtedly provided by numerous visiting naval officers who would supply the colony with news of the latest society affectations and interests, by which Vancouver Island would acquire the social graces of mid-Victorian England. Thus, in striving to assume the manners of the upper class, the colonials of Victoria were probably very susceptible to the influence of the Royal Navy and became enthusiastic supporters of such British activities as cricket, football, horse racing, and rowing, which were the major sporting activities of the period.

As early as 1860, certain citizens of Victoria attempted to introduce a degree of exclusiveness in sporting activities, but the rapidity of change within the colony impeded their progress. The Excelsior Gymnastic Club had adopted the high ideal of becoming the finest private institution on the Pacific Coast,<sup>13</sup> but within three years, the club had disappeared. In 1861, the Victoria Jockey Club was formed to promote horse racing. However, like the Excelsior Club, its aspirations proved too great and the "select association of 'gentlemen' jockeys"<sup>14</sup> was disbanded in the following year.

Some degree of exclusiveness may have been attained by various special interest groups such as the Independent Order of Good Templars, the British Benevolent Society, the Odd Fellows, and the Free Masons. These groups held numerous picnics and sports days, but there is no apparent indication of class distinction. The only sporting event in which participation seems to have been deliberately determined by social standing was the paper hunt, which was open to restricted persons.<sup>15</sup> The paper hunt was the local version of the fox hunt, a sport which had become extremely popular amongst the British upper class and was a very prestigious pastime due to the expense of maintaining hunting stables and kennels. Since the paper hunt was relatively simple and only required the participant to have a horse at his disposal, the Vancouver Island hunt could not limit participation by its expense. Thus, it is probable

that the organizers of the paper hunts restricted participation by inviting only their social peers.

Participation in sporting activities was further restricted by the lack of leisure time for the ordinary citizen. Thus, those who had to work for a living were largely excluded from involvement, leaving the activities open only to those individuals who were independent and reasonably affluent. However, such a discrimination did not always exclude common workers because, during the winter months, Victoria was the temporary home of many miners who had time and often, the money, to afford participation in most activities.

#### INDIANS IN SPORT

At the risk of being repetitive, it is important to note that the Vancouver Island colony was established with the intent of forming a community of British land-holders who would maintain the social and ethical standards of mid-Victorian England.<sup>16</sup> The local native population played an important role in the development of this community because they provided an abundant source of cheap labour, essential to the establishment of a leisured society. Their role is exemplified by this reflection of Victoria during the 1860s:

Colonel Wolfendon says that when he first remembers James Bay he saw a gang of Indians - it may be one hundred - under 'Grizzly' Morris, a contractor, and superintended by H.O. Tedieman, with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow making Belleville Street along the water and in front of the Government

building. The beach then came up in front of the large trees on the Government grounds, about eighty or one hundred feet further inland. All this space was filled or reclaimed from the sea by Indians ... Indians performed all manual labour.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the occasional canoe race, the Indians' participation in sporting events at Victoria appears to have been limited to watching the festivities of the whites. Although they do not appear to have been encouraged to become actively involved, the Indians were generally acknowledged for their passive presence at white events and were appreciated for the colour which they added to the festivities.

In the towns of Nanaimo and New Westminster, canoe races were held as separate events for Indians. An explanation for this segregation may be found in the excerpt from the British Columbian, which described the Queen's Birthday celebrations at New Westminster, in 1861:

During the races our beautiful harbor presented a gay a lively appearance, with scores of canoes and other small craft gliding up and down on its smooth surface, some propelled by Anglo-Saxon muscle, and others by the red-skinned natives of the forest, who sometimes tested their ability with the paddle against their pale-faced neighbours, but generally with doubtful success, the red man being manifestly inferior to the white in muscular power and physical endurance.<sup>18</sup>

Generally, the prizes offered for Indian competitions were about one-half the value offered to whites. Nevertheless, festivities organizers in both these towns did encourage Indian involvement and, in one case, some eight thousand to ten thousand Indians attended the Queen's Birthday celebrations at New Westminster, in 1865.<sup>19</sup> (See

Aquatic Sports.) According to Mather and McDonald, flotillas of six and seven hundred canoes were organized by the Catholic priests at St. Mary's Mission to bring the thousands of Indians to the New Westminster festivities.<sup>20</sup>

For the Queen's Birthday celebrations of 1870, the New Westminster promoters established an entire committee to organize Indian participation. The natives competed in horse racing and track and field events in a separate division, which provided such prizes as \$5 and \$1.50 instead of the \$10 and \$2.50 offered to white competitors. Canoe races were organized according to the size of the vessels and races were also held, along with Indian versus white canoe and rowing races.<sup>21</sup> The Mainland Guardian announced that Indians had been practicing for the forthcoming athletic events and praised them for learning to row.<sup>22</sup> In a later announcement of the day's athletic results, the paper commented about the Indian participants, "We should have been glad to give the names of some of the most expert among them, but the philological difficulties in relation to their appellations forced us to give up in despair".<sup>23</sup> The paper continued to describe an 'Indian scramble', the method selected to wind up the festivities and to provide some reward to the participants:

The Celebration Committee had reserved a large sum for the purpose, which was judiciously laid out in articles of clothing, ornaments, knives and a variety of useful articles much appreciated by the Indians. The members of the sub-committee

assembled in the upper story of Webster's stone building, and an immense number of Indians were gathered in front. The articles were then thrown from the windows and a most extraordinary struggle followed. The crushing, crowding, tumbling and screaming that ensued baffles all description, but although some of them must have met with very rough handling, there did not appear to be a single instance of complaint or dissatisfaction. The idea, a most excellent one, is due to Hon. A.T. Bushby, and shows his intimate knowledge of the manners and habits of the Indians. It gave them much more pleasure than the mistaken notion of giving them a 'blow out' on roast beef and plum pudding, as was previously attempted. They don't seem to understand the white man's penchant for a good dinner; they prefer the 'ihtas' and their own fare.

It seems that the segregation of Indian events in athletic contests was drawn by a more practical consideration than racial prejudice. In 1872, the Mainland Guardian noted that separate events for Indians were held "in order to give the paler competitors a chance to win a prize",<sup>24</sup> indicating that the Indians' abilities surpassed that of the local whites. Such a statement is in marked contrast to the opinion expressed in 1861 and may be explained by the different biases of the writers. However, another explanation may well lie in the specificity of the skills and abilities required for athletic and paddling events. It is a well known principle of physical performance that prowess in one activity does not necessarily imply prowess in a different activity. A further explanation may be found in the varying nature of the New Westminster community over the span of eleven years. In 1861, the town was a newly established community which undoubtedly housed a more hardy populace than those shop-keepers and government officials

who were the main inhabitants of later years. However, such possible explanations are mere conjecture and it is safe to state only that the whites organized and provided prizes for separate events for Indian competition.

In the Interior, Indian events were noted as part of most major sporting festivities. Probably one of the most prominent Indian competitions was that held at Barkerville in conjunction with a day of horse racing on July 6, 1874. The Cariboo Sentinel carried an advertisement to promote the Indian sports which included a two hundred yard handicap race, a wheelbarrow race, a sack race, each with prizes of \$5 and \$2.50. A prize of \$7.50 was to be split between contestants in a children's race. In the same advertisement, Indian horse races were announced to include the Commissioner's Purse, Lilloet Purse, Shuswap Purse, and Consolation Purse, with prizes of \$10 to \$15.<sup>25</sup>

### CELEBRATIONS

The various holidays throughout the year usually included sporting activities as part of the festivities. On these days, whole communities were at liberty to participate and most of the towns throughout the region held combinations of horse and foot races, athletic games and contests, and picnics. Regattas, rifle shoots, and sometimes team contests were also held in the coastal cities of Nanaimo, Victoria,

and New Westminster. The most prominent occasion was the Queen's Birthday, celebrated in late May. The fourth of July was also an important day of festivities, serving not only to honour the many Americans in the region, but to provide a pleasant break during the hot summer months. Other special days included Accession Day, June 20, and the Prince of Wales Birthday, November 9. When British Columbia entered the Confederation of Canada in 1871, the first of July became an important date as Dominion Day was celebrated.

The Hyack Volunteer Fire Department deserves special recognition in the discussion of festivities because they established a tradition in New Westminster which is maintained in modern times. During the Queen's Birthday celebrations, the Hyacks were responsible for firing a salute, but by 1871, their cannon was no longer safe. At that time, Thomas Owens, the town blacksmith, remembered an old English custom of exploding gun powder between two anvils, and so the Ancient and Honourable Hyack Battery was born.<sup>26</sup> The Hyacks were also responsible for the first May Day celebration, when Helen McCall was crowned queen at the Cricket Grounds on May 4, 1870. This festivity has continued over the years until today, when the News Westminster May Day is the world's largest.<sup>27</sup>

#### THE SABBATH

In 1862, the editor of the British Columbian described

the lack of precise laws to enforce the Sabbath in British Columbia.

As it is notorious that Governor Douglas has treated the whole Sabbath question with the most supreme indifference, we need scarcely state that no Colonial law has been enacted upon this important subject, and consequently the Sabbath-law of England is to all intents and purposes in force.<sup>28</sup>

At that time, where Colonial laws were not written, the laws of England were to be enforced, but the editor was obviously not satisfied. While he was extremely critical of the state of affairs in New Westminster, where he believed that public sentiment called for civil intervention to enforce the Sunday observance, he continued that "it is a lamentable fact, and a disgrace to the Governor of a British Colony, that in the towns above there is virtually no Sabbath at all".

MacFie provided the following description of the situation in the Interior towns:

In Yale, Douglas, Lytton, Lilloet, Forks of Quesnelle, and the mining towns, little trace of Sunday is at present visible, except in the resort of miners on that day to market for provisions, washing of dirty cloths, repairing machinery, gambling, and dissipation.<sup>29</sup>

When two Victoria youths proposed to hold a match foot race for \$20 on a Sunday in 1863, they were questioned by the British Colonist. In a subsequent note, the paper reported:

The day upon which the pedestrian match is to take place on Beacon Hill has been changed to Saturday next, at 2 o'clock. The youths engaged to run are Josh. Davis and Chas. Starr, two smart boys in every sense of the word.<sup>30</sup>

The concern about sporting activities on the Sabbath seems to have been to oppose competition, while pastimes such as skating were acceptable. As the British Colonist noted:

Harris' pond was crowded with skaters yesterday ...  
and the participants seemed to enjoy themselves,  
not withstanding the sacred character of the day ...<sup>31</sup>

However, later that year, the Firemen's Picnic was concluded by the National Anthem at a quarter to twelve on a Saturday evening, "so as not to infringe upon the Sabbath".<sup>32</sup>

The only other apparent reference to a sporting infringement of the Sabbath was in the Nanaimo Free Press of 1874. In regards to the preparations for the Queen's Birthday celebrations, the paper asked, "Query - The 24th of May coming on Sunday, will the sports be held on Saturday or Monday?"<sup>33</sup> As it turned out, the festivities were postponed until Monday.

#### THE EARLY CLOSING MOVEMENT

Since the general observance of the Sabbath prohibited most active recreational pursuits, the working population of the region had little time to engage in sports. During the early years, most shops and businesses kept late hours, six days a week, and often closed at ten o'clock in the evening, long after dark. Thus, the only real opportunity for most of the population to participate in sports and games was during the community wide holidays and celebrations.

As noted in the previous chapter on gymnastics, the early editors had recognized the increasingly sedentary life style of the cities and often chastised the populace for their inactivity. As early as 1859, the British Colonist asked the people of Victoria, "Why don't the young men of this town organize a lyceum?"<sup>34</sup> Similarly, in 1863, the same paper condemned the lack of participation in the "manly and noble recreation" of cricket.<sup>35</sup> Five years later, the paper deplored the lack of fourth of July festivities and stated "We know of course that our Scotch residents will have their games, but that is hardly enough".<sup>36</sup> In New Westminster, the British Columbian had referred to the "healthy interest" and vitality of the Volunteer Rifle Corps<sup>37</sup> and, in 1869, printed this treatise on the merits of exercise:

EXERCISE - Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far. The Europeans value themselves as having subdued the horse to the use of man, but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained by the use of this animal. No one thing has ever occasioned so much degeneracy of the human body. An Indian goes on foot nearly as far in a day, for a long journey, as an enfeebled white does on his horse, and he will tire the best horses. A little walk of half an hour when you first rise is advisable. It shakes off sleep and produces other good effects in the animal economy.<sup>38</sup>

The newspapers not only challenged their readers to become more active, but they also criticized the employers for keeping business hours that denied their employees the opportunity of leisure pursuits. In the spring of 1860, the British Colonist commended certain businesses for their

attention to the problem.

EARLY CLOSING OF STORES - Twenty-four of our principal merchants have agreed to close their stores at the hour of eight o'clock in the evening, in order to give their employees opportunities for recreation, instruction, and amusement, which, under existing circumstances heretofore, they have been unable to obtain. The arrangement is one that commends itself to all our businessmen. Not only will the clerks be benefitted by the early closing, but the employers themselves will be enabled to pass at least two hours each evening much more profitably than if they stood the same length behind their counters waiting for the appearance of customers that (Saturday nights excepted) never come.<sup>39</sup>

A few days later, the paper commented that with one or two exceptions, the new arrangement was "succeeding admirably".<sup>40</sup> The point was further pressed in late December, when the paper reported on the Early Closing Movement in London, where a mob of about one thousand young men had been involved in a riot on High Street, "owing to the refusal of a draper named Floyd to close his store at seven o'clock".<sup>41</sup>

By the summer of 1863, advocates of early closing were pressing further for reduced hours on Saturday. The Daily Evening Express elaborated on the benefits when it reported:

One of the most eminent mercantile firms in town has taken the lead in the early closing movement on Saturdays. There can be no question that a concession of this kind is alike beneficial to all engaged in business - whether it be the employer or employed. Now that a beginning has been made, we hope the example will have a good effect upon the entire business community ... We should soon have Cricket Clubs, Boating Clubs, and other manly recreations following the general adoption of the early closing movement.<sup>42</sup>

However, according to a report in the following spring, working hours were far from standard throughout the city. Some stores were apparently open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. throughout the week. The article continued by urging that stores not be opened on Sunday and that they should be closed at 8 p.m. on weekdays and 10 p.m. on Saturday.<sup>43</sup> In early 1865, the Vancouver Times encouraged merchants to reach a consensus which would ensure an early closing on Saturdays.

A desirable movement is on foot which we sincerely hope will be successful, to ensure the unanimity of action in closing the drapery establishments in this city at an early hour on Saturday afternoon. If proprietors are only reasonable there can be no difficulty in effecting the arrangement; it must be very advantageous for purchasers to do their shopping in daylight rather than after dark. Both parties would gain considerably by the change.<sup>44</sup>

Certain New Westminster merchants had agreed in 1867 to close their stores at 7:30 every week day and at 9:00 on Saturdays. The British Columbian flatly rejected the agreement as inadequate and stated that "to keep open till 9 and, not unfrequently 10 o'clock is not only wasteful of coal oil but of health, and sadly interferes with mental improvement and home comfort".<sup>45</sup>

By 1869, some Victoria stores had agreed to close at 2:30 on Saturday afternoons, but others chose to close on Fridays at 2 o'clock and at 7 o'clock on other days. Working hours continued in this inconsistent manner throughout the period and many people were required to work a full day on Saturdays. For example, in 1882, the promoters of a sailing race at Nanaimo established a sweepstake competition so that contestants had an opportunity to recoup wages lost

by their absence from work during the Saturday event.<sup>46</sup>

As late as 1884, the British Columbian deplored the inappropriateness of New Westminster's business hours.

At that time, many businesses closed at 7:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and were open late on Tuesday and Friday, steamer nights. However, with improved service, the steamers no longer arrived from Victoria in the evening, and so the paper urged that all stores should close early. The paper continued that:

The public will very soon become accustomed to the usages of trade, employees will give a better service because it will be shorter, and time will be allowed for needed recreation and improvement.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE INFLUENCE OF BUSINESS

While many businesses impeded the growth of sports by their long working hours, other business interests found a comfortable, symbiotic relationship with sporting groups. The H.B.C. was by far the most prominent commercial concern during the period and made a significant contribution to the development of sport. For example the company provided the coloured Volunteers with muskets<sup>48</sup> and usually carried cricket and rifle teams at no charge between New Westminster and Victoria.<sup>49</sup> Undoubtedly, this arrangement proved beneficial to the company because of the increased number of passengers who travelled to watch the contests. In order to accommodate such trade, the H.B.C. vessels would sometimes

delay their regular sailings in order to permit the completion of the contests.<sup>50</sup>

Individuals found profit in sporting activities not only in gambling and in the prizes offered for competition, but in remuneration for instruction. For example, a Mrs. Nunn<sup>51</sup> and Mrs. Digby Palmer<sup>52</sup> offered dancing instruction in the early 1860s. During the same years, Miss Caroline Chapman earned money at 'benefits' by performing various dances<sup>53</sup> and the principles of Bartholomew's Great Western Circus offered a riding school and gymnasium, as well as instruction in sword, bayonet, and fencing exercises.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, a Mr. P.E. Devine found employment as the gymnastics instructor of the Excelsior Club.<sup>55</sup> Enterprising parties also earned money by providing the valuable service of removing snow from frozen ponds in order that skaters could enjoy themselves.<sup>56</sup>

Probably the most significant business affiliation with sporting activities during the period was the hotel industry. During Victoria's early years, the Royal, Union, and Colonial hotels were major dancing halls, while other hotels became noted for various activities such as billiards or the 'ratting' matches, held at the Round the Corner Saloon.<sup>57</sup> Among the noted hotels were the John Bull, for cricket;<sup>58</sup> the Royal, for boxing;<sup>59</sup> and the Brown Jug, for horse racing.<sup>60</sup> Victoria's Royal Oak Hotel<sup>61</sup> and the Cosmopolitan Hotel near Nanaimo<sup>62</sup> were noted for catering to hunting parties and numerous other hotels offered themselves as similar resorts.

In 1867, the following advertisement appeared in the British Colonist:

Australian Hotel and Water Cure Establishment -  
Mr. Seeley has furnished rooms with single and double beds and parlors, for the accommodation of Families and Invalids with or without board, who may enjoy the benefits of the Sea Water Baths connected with the establishment. Hot, Cold, or Tepid Sulphur baths.<sup>63</sup>

By 1873, Maximilian Michaud was offering the "refreshing delights of a salt water bath" at his Hastings Hotel on Burrard Inlet.<sup>64</sup> In attempting to attract business during the winter, the hotel followed the lead of Victoria businesses and attached a skating rink for the enjoyment of his guests.<sup>65</sup> This hotel was apparently also known as 'Maxie's' and was located near the present site of the Pacific National Exhibition.<sup>66</sup>

Another industry to prosper with sports activities was transportation. As mentioned above, the H.B.C. steamers carried sports teams and spectators between Victoria and New Westminster and, in 1869, a steamship line operating between San Francisco and Victoria offered to carry the touring Victoria Cricket Club free of charge.<sup>67</sup> On the local scene, numerous buses found employment by carrying participants and spectators to the sites of sporting competitions and, by 1890, inter-urban trains were carrying thousands of passengers from Vancouver to Queen's Park in New Westminster.<sup>68</sup>

INFLUENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT

Both the colonial and provincial governments were involved with sport during the period. Apart from the various balls hosted by government officials, perhaps the earliest direct government contribution to sport occurred in 1861, with the allotment of funds to buy uniforms for the Vancouver Island Rifle Volunteers.<sup>69</sup> Other direct assistance was primarily the use of the government steamship Leviathan. Sometimes the vessel transported teams but more often, it was used to carry passengers and to tow boat loads of spectators, so that many of Victoria's citizens could watch the Queen's Birthday regatta.<sup>70</sup>

The real influence of the government lay not so much in the direct financial contributions to sport, but in the patronage of sport by individual government officials. For example, Governor Douglas added \$50 to the subscription list collected at New Westminster as the town strove to build its cricket ground in 1861.<sup>71</sup> Other most prominent government officials involved with sport were: Governors Seymour, Kennedy, and Musgrave; Lieutenant Governors Trutch and Richards; Governor General Dufferin; the Honourable A.N. Birch; and Chief Justices Cameron and Begbie. The participation of these prestigious gentlemen lent credibility to the sporting organizations and undoubtedly assisted the sportsmen in their attempts to gain public support and subscriptions. However, this relationship sometimes produced interesting conflicts between public responsibility

and private interest, as in the case of the Chief Justice who had to make a decision regarding a legal action against the Victoria Jockey Club, of which he was a member.<sup>72</sup>

#### INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY

There can be no doubt that the British military garrisons played as major a role in the development of sport in British Columbia as they had done in other parts of Canada. The Royal Engineers, stationed at New Westminster, had been largely responsible for the establishment of rifle competitions, cricket, and football on the mainland and had also been active in the town's sports days and celebrations. The Royal Navy, stationed at Esquimalt, was most instrumental in the establishment of such sports as rowing and sailing, cricket, football, horse racing, rifle shooting, and track and field events.

The activities of the fleet were always of interest to the colonials. Serving the dual purposes of training and entertaining the crews of the fleet, the naval regattas and sports days were also a source of excitement for the town and often drew huge crowds of spectators. The most prominent of these events were the 1868 sports day, which drew nearly two thousand spectators,<sup>73</sup> and the 1870 regatta, which drew five thousand people to watch ten of Her Majesty's ships perform.<sup>74</sup> Apart from their own competitions, the navy crews were always eager to accept competition from

the community and so, an active and healthy rivalry grew between teams of the fleet and the town. Often, the ships' bands accompanied the teams to the competition sites and provided added colour and excitement. An extract from the San Francisco Bulletin, July 1, 1871, which the Daily Standard saw fit to reprint, gave further evidence of the popular appeal of visiting naval ships.

Whenever the British war steamer Zealous is in this port, there is a revived interest in the truly noble healthful game of cricket. It is infinitely more agreeable to have her send ashore a few cricket balls than it would be to receive any of her cannon balls.<sup>75</sup>

Many of the officers of the fleet were active, respected members of the Victoria community and contributed greatly to the organization of sporting activities. Admirals Hastings and Farquhar, the most senior and most prominent officers, often received particular praise from the press as a result of the navy's contribution to town life. That contribution is perhaps best summed up by Edgar Fawcett, in his recollections of those days:

The navy was the mainspring of Victoria in more ways than one. They took part in all public functions, furnishing music, help and flags, and by their presence in uniform brightened up and lent grace to the affair. Do we realize how great a loss their absence to the city is?<sup>76</sup>

### COMMUNITY GROUPS

The first sports group to be established in the region was the Victoria Pioneer Cricket Club, formed sometime during the early 1850s.<sup>77</sup> The first newspaper report of the club's activities was in 1858,<sup>78</sup> soon after the presses had been

set up in the colony. In 1860, the New Westminster Pioneer Cricket Club was formed.<sup>79</sup> Also in that year, the Dashaway and Excelsior gymnastic clubs were established in Victoria,<sup>80</sup> but neither of these two clubs lasted very long. Their place was temporarily filled by the Turnverein, formed in 1864,<sup>81</sup> but, like its predecessors, this group seems to have soon disappeared.

Although the Young Men's Christian Association does not appear to have been very active in sport during the period, it is worth noting that a branch of the association was established in Victoria by Colonel Moody, of the Royal Engineers, in 1859. The British Colonist reported that:

Pursuant to public notice the Supreme Court Room was filled on Saturday evening by a large and respectable audience for the purpose of organizing a Young Men's Christian Association.<sup>82</sup>

By 1876, the association was reported to have had its own hall on Yates Street.<sup>83</sup>

The Victoria Jockey Club made its appearance in 1861,<sup>84</sup> but due to overextended finances, its tenure was very brief. In 1863, Victoria's first baseball teams, the Fashion and Roebuck clubs, were formed.<sup>85</sup> However, it was not until 1872 that baseball teams were established in New Westminster<sup>86</sup> and, by that time, several such clubs had been started and disbanded in Victoria. The coloured Rifle Volunteers and the Vancouver Island Rifle Volunteers were both formed in Victoria in 1861,<sup>87</sup> but racial prejudice forced the former to disband. Two years later, a contingent was formed

by the New Westminster Rifle Volunteers.<sup>88</sup>

In 1865, the Vancouver (Victoria) Rowing Club was formed<sup>89</sup> and a New Westminster club was established in 1869.<sup>90</sup> Two clubs which are still very active today were formed in the 1880s. The James Bay Athletic Association of Victoria started in 1882 and the Vancouver Rowing Club got its start in 1886, later merging with the Burrard Club in 1890.<sup>91</sup> It was during this time that various sports groups began to develop in earnest. The huge influx in population following the completion of the C.P.R. brought many sporting enthusiasts to the region and numerous clubs were soon formed. For example, although the Victoria Football Club had been formed in 1877,<sup>92</sup> it was not until ten years later, but only one year after the arrival of the first trans-continental train, that clubs were formed on the mainland at both Vancouver and New Westminster,<sup>93</sup>.

The group which was probably the most outstanding for its consistent organization of sporting events during the period was the St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society. This Scottish group held its first annual sports day and picnic at Victoria in 1864<sup>94</sup> and its Highland Games became a highlight of the summer months throughout the remainder of the period. The society not only fostered sports in Victoria, but branch chapters were also active in other parts of the region.

Another interesting club to note is the curling club of Nanaimo. Established in 1873,<sup>95</sup> the club claimed to be the first of its kind on the Pacific Coast. The club was reported to have met whenever the ice was thick enough for play, but the extent of its activity is not apparent.

#### INTER-COMMUNITY RIVALRY

The pattern of growth for some of the sports began with a friendly rivalry between teams of the Royal Navy and the Royal Engineers, in competition with community representatives. As participation increased, novel means of arranging competition were employed, such as the first half of the alphabet versus the second, England versus Colonies, married versus single, etcetera. When the towns of Victoria and New Westminster had grown to support reasonably stable representative teams, the next step in competition was to challenge the neighbouring town. The first inter-community contests were probably the horse races at Lilloet, where individual horses from Victoria were entered in 1863,<sup>96</sup> and the Volunteer Rifle contests between teams from Victoria and New Westminster in 1865.<sup>97</sup> In 1864 cricket matches between Cariboo and non-Cariboo players were held in Victoria.<sup>98</sup> Cricket teams from the two coastal towns competed in 1868,<sup>99</sup> but competition in baseball and football was not established until 1883<sup>100</sup> and 1889<sup>101</sup> respectively. Some individuals competed in athletic contests

and aquatic events, but generally, these activities were not formalized until after the period.

Victoria and New Westminster had very strong political and economic disputes which became quite bitter, as both strove to gain commercial dominance and to win the establishment of the colonial, and then, provincial, capital. However, the editor of the Vancouver Times tried to put the rivalry into perspective.

It is pleasant to contemplate the renewal of a series of colonial amenities inaugurated by the friendly contests of our volunteers and cricketers. That it will ultimately lead to a far better feeling existing than has hitherto prevailed between Victoria and New Westminster there can be no doubt, as the freedom of personal intercourse tends to remove many misapprehensions. In all commercial transactions, there is necessarily a fair and honorable spirit of competition, and it is best for the interests of all that it should be so, as productive resources are increased, the scale of prices of the various commodities regulated and undue monopoly prevented, but there is no reason why a bitter spirit of partisanship should be imported into so legitimate a conflict of interests springing out of the natural order of things. In fact we do not believe that in reality any such absurd prejudice prevails either here, or in the city of the Fraser, the idea has only originated with a few designing men to serve private ends. However a cordial welcome has been extended on both sides, and the hand of warm friendship has freely tendered, and as freely accepted by the principal residents in both colonies.<sup>102</sup>

Strong feelings between communities were in no means restricted to the two coastal cities. The editor of the Cariboo Sentinel became so enraged by the descriptions of competitions between Rifle Volunteers that he wrote heated words about the 'intercolonial matches'.

... that is to say, between Victoria and New Westminster. New Westminster is the whole colony of British Columbia, because all the legislation is

done there, and that, and whatever else is done, is done as it ought to be - for the benefit of the capital city! that is why they are called intercolonial matches ...

The New Westminster, beg pardon, British Columbia volunteers were splended - brighter than the sun, resplendent in a terrific amount of gold lace, which it is supposed must have been derived from the clippings of the assay office, or the gold tax, or voted to them by Council, because the salaries of the officials there are too small to allow of such extravagant expenditure.<sup>103</sup>

The editor continued to comment on the fact that the New Westminster folk had treated their Victoria opponents to a lovely dinner, as he sarcastically commented, "Moral, if you want to fill up the ranks of the volunteers make being a member very expensive".

Two years later, in 1867, the Cariboo Sentinel was again moved to an impassioned statement. The editor responded to an article in the September 25 edition of the British Columbian, which had referred to the moral degradation of the Caribooites, who had enjoyed exhibitions of sparring and dancing as part of the entertainment given by George Wilson.

It is true fact that if we went to church we should find it closed, and it occurs to us that owing to all the religion being monopolized by the capital, we are without a clergyman; thus if we 'got religion', and wished to go to any of the three churches we have built, we should find that our Sabbath observing brethren in New Westminster had not found it possible to spare us a single expounder of the Gospel.<sup>104</sup>

The same paper took delight in boasting of the successes of Cariboo horsemen in 1872, and mocked the enthusiasts of Victoria who were becoming concerned about the growing prowess of Interior horses. When McKay's horse, 'Cariboo

Charlie', won the Pavilion Mountain Purse, the Ashcroft Derby, and the Thompson River Stakes, beating "the best horses in the lower country", the Cariboo Sentinel reported:

Cariboo now delights in the possession of the fastest piece of horse flesh in British Columbia ... When we can achieve such results with our stage horses, what will we not be able to do when we take to raising race animals. It is quite evident the breed of horses in the lower country will have to be improved ... where was the fast stock from the great agricultural districts and from Vancouver Island.<sup>105</sup>

The regional differences were further exemplified by a letter to the editor of the British Colonist. In providing a description of the Kamloops races of 1873, the correspondent complained that the local settlers had to make several repairs to the road in order to gain passable access to the race track. By way of complaint to the government, the writer continued:

I suppose ministers are too much occupied with the affairs of the Island to attend to our wants. The Commissioner of Lands and Works has to look after the grand drives about Victoria, our Minister of Finance is perhaps trying to force a balance sheet, the Provincial Secretary's little affairs at Deep Bay will require his attention and of course the Premier is doing the grand at Ottawa, while the outlying Districts must look after themselves and pay their four cents an acre road tax and be thankful it's no more.<sup>106</sup>

Similar regional debates continue today, but in the late nineteenth century, as the new city of Vancouver prospered to surpass its neighbours, inter-community jealousies and rivalries were heatedly expressed through the medium of sporting competition. Journalists were

able to give vent to their hostilities and biases with such comments as that in the British Colonist in description of an 1890 lacrosse game, "the Victoria team would have won the game had they been given fair play. But a fair, square play with Vancouver is seldom looked for".<sup>107</sup>

Rivalry with neighbouring American towns was less intense, no doubt because the relationship between communities of the different countries was less intimate than the internal affairs of the province. Possibly the earliest American participation in the sporting activities of the region was in 1860, when American vessels competed in a regatta at Victoria.<sup>108</sup> During these early years, excursions took picnickers from Victoria to compete in sports and games with the American garrison on San Juan Island.<sup>109</sup> Victoria teams began to compete with Americans in the game of baseball around 1868, when the crew of the U.S.S. Pensacola played the city team<sup>110</sup> and, in the following year, the Victoria side began to compete with the Rainier Club of Washington.<sup>111</sup> The first international cricket match took place in 1869, when the Victoria team travelled to San Francisco for a series of games<sup>112</sup> which were returned in 1872, by a touring California team.<sup>113</sup> Then, in 1878, the Victoria Cricket Club began competition with local American clubs when it played a Portland team.<sup>114</sup> In the previous year, competition between British Columbian and American riflemen was initiated as a group of marksmen travelled to Seattle, along with the Victoria baseball team.<sup>115</sup>

SCHOOL COMPETITIONS

A description of early school activities is provided by James Robert Anderson, who reflected on his school days in Fort Victoria where, in 1850, the only school in the region was located.

The school building like those of the others within the Fort yard, was constructed of squared logs not very carefully put together, as regards the exclusion of winter cold and of the rats which overran the school ... Our amusements consisted of marbles, cricket, rounders, shinny, horse riding, fighting Indian boys, worrying Indian dogs, some surreptitious shooting with our antiquated flintlock muskets, besides any occasional mischief as boys alone are capable of conceiving. Marbles we had to make of clay and bake in fire, and many were the expedients resorted to keep them from cracking while baking, to make them sufficiently hard to withstand wear and tear, such as the addition of soap or other equally useless ingredient ... Captain Grant, late of the Scots Greys, God Bless him, was our patron as regards cricket, having presented us with a full set, which enabled us to indulge in the game which was usually played on the ground just where the Burns Memorial now stands. Balls for rounders, the game now called baseball, and for shinny, we constructed of hair covered with dressed deer hide.

A favorite amusement was catching a dogfish and, after fastening a billet of wood with about a foot of line to the tail, letting him go. It afforded us great joy to witness his futile attempts to dive.<sup>116</sup>

Probably the earliest sports competition of the region's schools was in 1861, when the boys of the Collegiate School held a rowing race in Victoria.<sup>117</sup> By 1867, interschool competition had been initiated in baseball as the Collegiates played against the St. Louis College.<sup>118</sup> The first apparent New Westminster High School baseball team appeared in a match in 1883.<sup>119</sup> In cricket, the Collegiate School had an active team by 1869 when it contested a game with the

Victoria Junior Eleven.<sup>120</sup> By 1880, Victoria High had established a team and competed against the Collegiates.<sup>121</sup> In the preceeding year, the same two schools had competed in football.<sup>122</sup>

#### AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Although the modern definition of amateur and professional status is the subject of considerable debate, the concept held in British Columbia during the nineteenth century seems to have been quite simple. During the period, virtually all contests except the team sports, had prizes which consisted of sums of money, suggesting that monetary rewards were necessary to induce participation. The participants' status was not determined by their winnings, but rather, the distinction appears to have been based on experience in competition. The following excerpt from a letter to the editor of the British Colonist describes an event of the Queen's Birthday celebrations at Nanaimo, in 1863, and gives some idea of the concept held at the time.

The amusements commenced with an extraordinary foot-race by 'non-professionals'. The 'athletes' had arrived, and the preliminaries were speedily arranged, and the signal 'go' given. Away went your humble servant, followed by four others, one of whom (being about a fathom longer than myself) managed to get ahead, allowing me, however, to get to the winning post second. Several other fast and closely contested foot races were run by parties who were considered initiated in pedestrian matters, and also by juveniles.<sup>123</sup>

Thus, an individual who was competing for the first time was

considered an 'amateur', while those who had competed previously were deemed 'professionals'. Further evidence of this concept is provided by a note in the British Colonist in 1875, which drew attention to a cricket match between 'duffers' and experienced players, which was billed as a match between eleven professionals and twenty-two amateurs.<sup>124</sup>

Apart from those individuals who gave instruction, no one seems to have earned their living by their athletic prowess during the period. However, in later years, more truly professional sportsmen arrived in British Columbia and performed as wrestlers, boxers, lacrosse and baseball players.

#### WOMEN IN SPORT

Active female participation in sport was not a common occurrence during the period under discussion. Yet, judging by the numerous newspaper references to the numbers of ladies in attendance at sporting events, women seem to have been very welcome as spectators. Their activities seem to have been mostly confined to certain unlisted games during picnics and excursions.<sup>125</sup> However, horse-back riding and the associated paper hunt were apparently quite acceptable, since one of several ladies was said to have made the 'kill' during a hunt.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, riding on the ladies three-wheeled version of the velocipede was acceptable while the vehicle was in fashion.<sup>127</sup>

According to a note in the British Colonist, women were engaged in 'bathing' activities in the Gorge at Victoria in 1868.<sup>128</sup> Given the lack of suitable bathing attire, coupled with the prudience of the period, which seemed even to discourage male swimming, it is unlikely that many women enjoyed the water. The only physical activities in which women were encouraged to participate were dancing and skating.

The first apparent reference to women actually competing in a sports event was provided by the Nanaimo Free Press, in 1875. In describing the fourth of July festivities at Wellington, the paper listed the Married Women's Race as having been won by Mrs. S. Morgan, followed by Mrs. W. Wills. The Young Ladies Race was won by Miss Ferguson, followed by Miss Wall.<sup>129</sup> In 1879, the British Colonist made reference to female pedestrians who were expected to race in Victoria.<sup>130</sup> Whether that race came off is not clear, but in 1884, a match foot race was held in Nanaimo between a Miss Straube of that town, and a Miss Cook of Wellington.<sup>131</sup> However, it was not until after the turn of the century that large numbers of women became active in sport.

CHAPTER XVIICONCLUSION

The development of British Columbian society was extremely rapid during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The discovery of gold initiated the first great wave of settlement in the late fifties and early sixties. Some two and a half decades later, a second influx in population occurred as the completion of the transcontinental railway allowed the full impact of the Industrial Revolution to sweep across Canada to the west coast province. This paper has been concerned with the evolution of sport in the interim between these two surges in population growth. During this period, it is apparent that certain sports became well established. This early organization of sports facilitated a rapid expansion of activities when the railway brought thousands of new settlers to the province in the closing years of the century.

During the early years of settlement, the physical recreation activities of dances and balls, picnics and sports days, and other festivities provided the community with an opportunity to acquaint itself with new members and customs, while they relaxed in a common leisure pursuit. The addition of an element of competition into such day to day activities as hunting, fire-fighting, and occupational trade appear to have lent excitement and enthusiasm to frontier existence. The almost universal enthusiasm for betting or wagering provided an element of anticipation to add further zeal to life.

The following activities appear as minor sports during the period.

Archery - A single reference was found. It reported the results of men's and women's archery competitions during an 1879 Forester's Picnic on Vancouver Island.

Billiards - In 1858, billiard tables were advertised for sale in Victoria's newspapers and were available for play in many of the town's saloons. By 1862, tables had been installed at a saloon in the mining district of William's Creek in the Cariboo.

Bowling - Although not as prominent as billiards, bowling lanes were often incorporated within the saloons.

Boxing - The prize fight was particularly popular with the miners of the Cariboo who often placed considerable sums of money on the outcome of a match. However, following the Wilson-Eden swindle of 1867, interest in the contests waned. By 1884, professional boxers were performing in Victoria.

Canoeing - The first formal canoe race was apparently held in Nanaimo, in 1862. Separate events were held for whites and Indians. White participation in the sport became more organized as rowing clubs formed canoeing divisions near the turn of the century.

Croquet - The nature of the game is more of a pastime than a sport, but notification of the arrival of croquet equipment appeared in the Victoria press of 1867.

Curling - The citizens of Nanaimo claim to have organized the first curling club on the Pacific Coast in 1873.

However, the mild winter weather severely limited play.

Cycling - The first consignment of 'velocipedes' arrived in Victoria in 1869, but enthusiasm for the new vehicle waned after a year. The first cycling organization was the Island Wanderers Club of 1889.

Gymnastics - This activity achieved some degree of popularity in the early 1860s, The Dashaway and Excelsior clubs were formed in 1860 and a Turnverein was active by 1864. However, participation in the clubs was not sustained.

Handball - Little reference to the game was apparent but, as early as 1865, matches were played at Buckley's Ball Court in Victoria.

Lacrosse - The first mention of this sport appeared in the press of 1872, but clubs were not formed until the late 1880s.

Sailing - The first newspaper report of sailing competitions was a description of the Royal Navy regatta of 1859. The sport did not enjoy much participation until yachting clubs were formed near the end of the century.

Skating - The first newspaper reference to ice skating was in Victoria in 1859. The most popular spots around the town were Langford's Lake, Skinner's Bottom, Harris' Pond, and Swan Lake. On the mainland, Burnaby Lake was particularly popular. Roller skates were introduced to the province in 1871.

Tennis - Although a few private matches may have been played during the period, the first organization was in 1885, with the formation of the Victoria Lawn and Tennis Club.

Quoits - Quoits were primarily a pastime played in Victoria as early as 1860. However, later formal competitions involved contests at 21, 18, 14, and 10 yards.

Wrestling - The earliest apparent match was in Barkerville, in 1864. By 1883, wrestling was a part of the Caledonian Games at Victoria. In 1888, professional wrestlers were competing in New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria.

The following activities were the major sports of the period.

Baseball - The children's game of 'rounders' was played by the settlers during the early 1850s. However, with the arrival of Americans, the game took on a more formal nature. The first baseball game appears to have been played in New Westminster in 1862. Victorians formed two teams in the following year. The Victoria Baseball Club 'Olympics' were formed in 1866 and later became known as the 'Amity', turning professional in the mid-1880s. The highlight of baseball history during the period was the tour of the San Francisco 'Eagles' in 1872.

Cricket - The first cricket equipment arrived in Victoria in 1849, courtesy of Captain Colquhan Grant of the Royal Navy. The Victoria Pioneer Cricket Club was formed during the fifties and engaged in many matches with teams of the fleet. In 1869, the Victoria Club travelled to San Francisco and, in 1872,

received a return visit from the California players.

Football - The earliest football match in the region was probably a form of rugby and was played in New Westminster, in 1862. In 1889, the British Columbia Rugby Union was formed and, by 1890, eight association football clubs had become active in Victoria.

Horse Racing - The 'sport of kings' was probably the first sporting activity to be formalized in the region. Races were held on Victoria's Beacon Hill as early as 1855, as part of the Queen's Birthday celebrations. In 1861, the Victoria Jockey Club was formed, but it was soon forced to disband due to overextended finances. However, the races continued in Victoria on both formal race days and as match events. Horse racing was the most popular activity throughout the period and, by the early 1870s, Cariboo horsemen had become very competitive with their Victoria counterparts. By 1890, special trains carried some twenty thousand fans between Vancouver and New Westminster's Queen's Park race track.

Rifle Shooting - Apart from the occasional shooting match, the first real organization of shooting contests came with the establishment of the Volunteer Rifle Corps in Victoria, in 1861. Competitions were often held between Victoria, New Westminster, and fleet teams. In 1873, the British Columbia Riflemen's Association was formed and, in the following year, a provincial representative was sent to compete at Wimbledon as part of the Canadian contingent.

Rowing - The first newspaper report of a rowing competition was the Royal Navy regatta of 1859. The officers of the fleet were particularly instrumental in assisting the community to participate in the sport and Victoria held its first city regatta in that year. The major event of the period was the Navy Regatta of 1870, when five thousand people watched the crews of ten ships compete at Esquimalt. The Vancouver (Victoria) Rowing Club was formed in 1865, but rowing clubs did not become prominent until the late 1880s.

Track and Field - Numerous sports days were held throughout the period and offered competition in a variety of running, jumping, and throwing events. The Naval Sports Day of 1868 was the major competition of the period, with some two thousand spectators in attendance. The St. Andrew's and Caledonian Society was the most prominent organization fostering track and field events and held its first annual competition in 1864.

## DISCUSSION

The nucleus of British Columbian society during the period was the city of Victoria which, with the discovery of gold, was transformed from a frontier fur-trading post to a booming seaport and commercial centre. Its population became highly varied, comprised of diverse racial origins and socio-economic backgrounds. However, the presence of the Hudson's Bay Company and particularly, the Royal Navy provided a security and stability which assisted the community to endure the turmoil of transition through the gold rush years.

The intent of colonial development on the west coast was to establish a community of British landholders who would maintain the social and ethical standards of mid-Victorian England. The climate and terrain of Vancouver Island had been hospitable to this endeavour and, when combined with the abundant supply of fish and game, plus ample timber for housing, ensured that life in the Pacific North West was not the harsh struggle for survival that other North American settlements had endured. Furthermore, the sudden prosperity of the region generated an 'inverted social pyramid' by which adventurers were often able to gain a financial standing which surpassed the resources of those who had been born to a more favoured social position. This breakdown of traditional class distinctions not only enabled greater social mobility than that available in older, more settled regions of the world, but also appears to have fostered a social environment which was highly receptive to the customs and manners of 'polite' English society.

As the colonials strove to emulate the gentry of England, the officers of the Royal Navy had a marked influence on the emerging society by serving as models of upper class behaviour. Lindsay's comment regarding the officers of the British Army garrisons throughout Canada is equally appropriate to the Royal Navy on the west coast, as he stated:

Time, wealth, interest, and administrative experience enabled them to be leaders in the sporting scene, and ensured the continuance of the traditional games which were linked to their British heritage.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the Navy was instrumental in the establishment of such sporting activities as cricket, football, horse racing, rifle shooting, and rowing during the early 1860s.

While the cities of Victoria and New Westminster had the capacity for organized team competition, the towns of the Interior favoured individual competitions which were more compatible with their highly transient populations. Thus, horse racing and track and field events were the prominent activities of the numerous sporting competitions held on days of celebration. The prize fight also enjoyed an enthusiastic following amongst the rough and ready social environment of the adventurers and speculators of the Cariboo mining towns. Despite the remote locale of these frontier communities, the residents employed contemporary technology in their recreational activities, enjoying competition in billiards and even velocipede races. Many of the residents reduced their isolation from more sophisticated society by wintering in Victoria, where they often participated with the city's baseball and cricket clubs.

The social mobility afforded by the 'inverted pyramid' of Victoria's early years enabled people of diverse backgrounds to participate together in special sporting activities such as the races and regattas of the Queen's Birthday. In several cases, the contemporary newspapers applauded the opportunity for social mingling which was provided by the various sporting events held on festive occasions. However, it was not long before class lines became more traditional and parti-

cipation was restricted to the wealthy, leisured class. Since newspapers were concerned with the activities of this prominent class, the sports reports were largely records of the activities of a minority of the population. The participation of the majority of the community was limited by long hours of work, which were not significantly reduced until after the period under discussion. Thus, the number of people involved in regular competition was small and often the sportsmen were participants in more than one activity, as evidenced by the report in the Vancouver Daily Post of 1865:

We understand that on account of the rifle match having been fixed for Saturday next, the cricket match between the Victoria Club and the City players will be postponed, several of the latter being riflemen.<sup>2</sup>

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, marked a new era for British Columbia and for the history of sport in the province. A huge influx of settlers again caused a transformation of west coast society as new technology and ideas created a prosperous commercial and industrial economy on the mainland. The rapid growth of the city of Vancouver soon radically altered the population distribution of the province as the lower mainland became the major provincial centre. Here, the new, energetic population soon formed numerous sports clubs and teams, while thousands of spectators travelled on inter-urban trains to witness major competitions at New Westminster's Queen's Park.

In summary, perhaps the single most interesting feature of the early years of sport in British Columbia was the influence of the Royal Navy. The garrisons of the British Army have been recognized by other authors as having been a driving force in Canadian sport. However, it is evident that on the Pacific Coast, it was the Navy which supplied the leadership to help establish sport in the province.

NEED FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. As noted in this paper, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway initiated a new era in the history of British Columbia. Thus, a study is particularly needed to continue the history of sport in the province from 1885.
2. Further studies are needed in other time periods and may be bounded by such major historical events as the World Wars, which had a marked influence on the region.
3. Further studies are needed in specific municipalities or regions within the province, and in the history of particular sports.
4. Other areas for future study include the participation and activities of specific ethnic and racial groups. In particular, the sports and games of British Columbia's original settlers, the native Indians, should be more thoroughly explored than was possible in this paper.

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33. Mainland Guardian, Aug. 16, 1884.
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