

LEISURE AS CONTESTED TERRAIN  
IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY HALIFAX  
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BY

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## Abstract

Leisure as Contested Terrain in Late Nineteenth Century Halifax contends that during this era the birth, development, and shaping of various leisure pursuits involved power struggles between loosely defined groups at all levels on the social scale. Wealth and social prominence did not assure control. Reformers intent upon improving the morals of slum dwellers often failed in their attempts to "civilize" the masses through the regulation of leisure activities.

This thesis is comprised of three chapters. Chapter one, "Theatre", depicts how over the course of five decades theatre proved to be enduring culture, even though beneath its roof class battles raged. The bourgeois sought to use it as a form of social control and instruction while the working class ardently fought to shape this aspect of their cultural life. Chapter two, "Sport", clarifies how certain sports were shaped in class ways according to the needs of different groups, but also argues that sport as a unifying enthusiasm often transcended class, ethnic, and gender boundaries. Chapter three, "Recreational Spaces", examines divisions along class, gender, ethnic, and racial lines on grounds like gardens and parks, in events like fairs and exhibitions, and in institutions like libraries and museums.

Just as Halifax was never classless, nor was any class powerless in the production of leisure culture in the life of 19th century Halifax.

## Introduction

By the middle of the nineteenth century Halifax was a town of approximately 30,000 residents. Although it was not until 1867 that a serious movement would arise to close businesses at seven o'clock rather than nine or ten, thus increasing the leisure hours available to many working people, citizens from all levels of society found time to participate in numerous forms of popular entertainment. To reveal what constituted leisure activities from 1850 to 1900 and who controlled and shaped them will unveil a terrain hotly contested on many fronts. This analysis of the making of leisure activity in Halifax in the last half of the nineteenth century concentrates on three aspects of popular entertainment: theatre, sport, and the development of recreational spaces.

In Victorian Halifax no social class controlled the city's social life without opposition. To assume such control, in fact, would be to envision a society in which power emanated from one direction only - either from the top down or the bottom up. Instead, although nineteenth century Halifaxians lived in a highly stratified society, everyone was to some extent involved in producing his or her own culture. At the same time, frequent battles along class lines significantly altered the cultural fabric of the city. The objectives of a reform-minded bourgeoisie, for example, often met with resistance from those they wished to reform. For instance, when bourgeois fears of large public gatherings led to legislation outlawing horseracing on the Common, racing enthusiasts established new race sites on city streets and on the ice of Bedford Basin. In addition, working people fashioned new pastimes, such as the picnic, which had the effect not only of broadening the cultural life of the city, but of undermining the idea that the working class was powerless in control-

ling its own leisure.

Although class divisions involving settlement patterns, the workplace, and leisure can be discerned, class boundaries constantly shifted and fluctuated. It is not easy, therefore, to identify any particular activity as being class specific. What was the fashionable pursuit of working people at one moment, might be that of the elite the next, or vice versa. For instance, when the Horticultural Society succumbed to financial pressures in 1874 and sold its Gardens to City Council for \$15,000<sup>1</sup>, the area - open earlier only to the relatively prosperous pay patrons - was now open daily to the public at large. Previously the non-paying public had been admitted only one afternoon per week. At the same time, as the century wore on, the picnic became fashionable with wealthier Haligonians, although its origin had been working class. This sharing of a cultural form - or sometimes its abandonment by one group and adoption by another - defies any easy attempt to draw sharp delineation between the classes. People cannot be neatly sorted into class categories. Such a simplistic process denies the complexities of personal or private life, and the ability of individuals to shape their own experiences.

However, in a very broad fashion history is shaped in class ways. The following three chapters contend that during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Halifax, the birth, development and shaping of various leisure pursuits involved power struggles between loosely defined groups at all levels on the social scale. What is more, wealth and social prominence did not necessarily mean control. Reformers intent upon improving the morals of slum dwellers might attempt to shape the leisure activities of the poor in order to "civilize" them, yet they often found they could not inaugurate the changes they desired to make.

## Chapter I

### Theatre

The theatre was one area in which the competing interests of members of various social classes can easily be discerned. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Halifax's social elite looked upon the theatre with a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, it could be the vehicle to promote seemingly appropriate social values to members of the working class; but on the other it lent itself to apparent debauchery and licentiousness. Prior to mid-century, when Queen Victoria's interest in the theatre made it fashionable among members of the colonial elite, the theatre had been associated with immorality - especially drink, poverty, and wastefulness - and was believed to be linked to the criminal element and the disreputable poor. These concerns about respectability extended into the second half of the century as well, although support for the theatre waxed and waned in relation to economic circumstances and the emergence of alternative forms of leisure. The question of respectability, which had obvious class connotations, moreover, was often raised by members of reform minded religious denominations.

According to F.M.L. Thompson, "[r]eligion was at the centre of middle-class lifestyles" in the Victorian period. It was considered scandalous not to attend church, often as many as three times on Sunday, and social life revolved around bazaars, socials, church teas, Sunday school, charity works.<sup>2</sup> By the 1860's Halifax's twenty-five churches<sup>3</sup> proved a formidable opponent for any theatre owner. E.A. Sothorn was to bear the brunt of this wrath.

Sothorn, a New York stage star who brought a talented professional company to Halifax, opened his Lyceum on June 22, 1857<sup>4</sup> after a lengthy battle with some of the religious sector, most particularly represented by the voice of the weekly Presbyterian Witness. Initially, Sothorn had sought to use Temperance Hall, which had opened in 1849 in Poplar Grove in the North End, to present his productions. This building with its one-thousand-seat auditorium was one of the two entertainment buildings that marked the theatrical revival of mid-century, the other being the Spring Garden Theatre that had been converted from a barn on Queen Street by the 23rd Royal Welsh-Fusiliers in 1847. It had then been used for their amateur dramatics until being sold to a Michael Power who eventually leased it to Sothorn.<sup>5</sup>

Temperance Hall had been built largely as a clubhouse for the Sons of Temperance Society, one of many Victorian societies founded to encourage class collaboration and to overcome the moral deficiencies of the urban masses. Like many later societies, it offered alternatives to degenerate pastimes, like drinking, by providing a library and reading room. (One wonders about the success of this pious intention given that seventeen percent of the populace was still illiterate as late as 1871,<sup>6</sup> and that many for whom this was intended probably could not have afforded the fifteen shilling admission fee.) There were also clear limits to the extent of class interaction. The Acadian Recorder on June 16, 1874 advertised the opening night for the theatrical season by discussing segregated seating, while stressing that "all classes" might attend:

Owing to the large and heavy expenses of the Star Company and the expense of fitting up the Hall - cane seat chairs in the Orchestra and the seats in the balcony newly cushioned so as to render it comfortable for all classes...Parquette 25 cents; Balcony 50 cents; Reserved Seats, Dress Circle, and Orchestra Chairs first

floor 75 cents. Reserved Seats, Front Row Balcony 1 dollar.<sup>7</sup>

Still, rather than the working class being absent from the theatre, it was the elite that usually chose not to attend. Phyllis Blakeley contends that Temperance Hall in its North End location was "too far from the south end, where most of those with money and leisure to patronize the theatre lived."<sup>8</sup> And, likewise, the Recorder on August 16, 1869 announced that one of the dramatic phases of the Hall known by the pseudonym, Howard's Olympic, "has gone 'where the woodbine twineth', and the season is at an end. Owing to the comparatively poor patronage extended to the proprietor, he has been compelled to suspend payment."<sup>9</sup>

In spite of pecuniary considerations, the early directors of the Hall, many of whom were Presbyterian, rejected Sothorn's bid for rental. The sense of the theatre as wicked and debauched was evident in the lengthy ravings in the press. In 1857 the Presbyterian Witness declared the theatre full of lies, attended by the lowest mortals, and a waste of money that should go to the church.<sup>10</sup> Its position changed little in subsequent decades. In 1874 it roared: "There are people who sit this day before me, trembling in the agitated memory of the fact that the theatre has sent its consuming fires through their own houses. O, it is a monster...plays ... none more iniquitous, and dances...none more obscene."<sup>11</sup>

Small wonder that Sothorn was forced to expend a sizeable sum remodeling the Theatre Royal before opening it in 1857 as his Lyceum. His struggle against the religious faction actually located his troupe in the south, rather than the north, end of the city, thereby giving him closer proximity to the wealthy residents. Further, his necessary remodeling of the old theatre designated Sothorn as an agent of cultural advancement.

The Lyceum featured a large stage, gas footlights, a prompter's box in front of the stage, a deep well for the orchestra, several stoves at the back for heat, benches to seat nine hundred, and the first introduction of the prestigious reserved seats at the rate of four pounds per season. Until 1868 most amateur performances and all professional ones were held here.<sup>12</sup>

Sothorn may have lost the battle with the Temperance Hall board, but the contest between advocates of theatre and the church had resulted in an improvement in theatrical facilities.

The theatre season was finally vaulted into respectability when the Lieutenant-Governor reserved nine seats for the 1858 season. The Acadian Recorder on March 20, 1858 reported as follows:

Garrison Amateur Theatricals - the first of these performances took place at Sothorn's Lyceum on Monday last. The building was crowded and showed a very fine display of the beauty and fashion of Halifax. Conspicuous among the assemblage appeared His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor and the Countess of Mulgrave ...Major General Trollope and Staff also honored the entertainment.<sup>13</sup>

Upper class patronage had returned to the theatre during this decade largely in emanation of Queen Victoria's having taken a permanent box at the Princess' Theatre in 1851 and having hired Charles Kean to supervise Windsor Theatricals.<sup>14</sup> The colonials, still very strongly identified with Britain, relied upon the arrival of British officers to relay the latest social trends "at home", and this information largely shaped "the genteel tone of the urban elite".<sup>15</sup> Since the officer corps of the military was in part composed of the members of the best British families, not only their assessment of the status of theatre, but also their money and leisure time to patronize it did much to shape Halifax's social fabric.

In this sense, the city's elite culture was more derivative than indigenous. However, the fact that the theatre audience during this period incorporated a broad cross-section of social classes testifies that cultural production was influenced by all levels of society, not just by the elite.

Managers like Sothern found themselves in a tenuous position at best. Their success was never assured, and they were highly affected by factors over which they had little control, everything from economic fluctuations to weather conditions. Nevertheless, the 1850's were ripe for theatre growth since the population had doubled from 14,500 in 1841 to more than 30,000 a decade later. Peace had returned when 1848 had marked the end to revolutionary threats in Europe, and the Americans with their recently acquired colonial prizes from the Mexican War were not so aggressive. The time for luxuries and entertainment had arrived. The astute manager who could provide a production which would attract all socio-economic groups and thereby fill his house, would achieve financial stability. The strategy varied little from Shakespeare's day when the script included ribald jokes and comic sketches for the groundlings who stood immediately in front of the stage, and intensely dramatic scenes for the gentry sitting in the gallery far beyond.

David Grimsted's description of early American dramatic productions calls theatre "the most democratic institution of public entertainment," dependent on the responses of people from all parts of the community. As the most social of art forms, moreover, it was immediately influenced by the will of the audience.<sup>16</sup> Janet Maybee accepts this concept of shared involvement, but suggests that the power of those social figures who

graced the theatre with their presence may have been less important than that of the general patron. "The company managers...were at the mercy of a strongly middle-class audience's whims, for patronage...At bottom, the fault lay with that rabble who required vigorous action, unsubtle emotions, pathos and a happy ending - the audience."<sup>17</sup>

There can be no doubt that Mr. Sothern's Lyceum endeavored to please the entire audience. A notice in the Acadian Recorder on February 13, 1858 advertised that:

An efficient Orchestra has been engaged from Burton's Theatre, New York, for Monday, February 15th. This will be followed by a drama, "Black Doctor", or "The Fated Lovers of Bourbon", and then an "Irish Comic Song by Mr. Wallace", after which will appear "the laughable Comedy of 'Book Third, Chapter First'. Reserved Stalls, secured the Entire Evening, 3s. 9d.; Parquette 2.6 d.; Gallery 1s.3d.<sup>18</sup>

A typical theatre evening like this would last three to four hours. There would be a main drama followed by one or two farces, with music before, between, and after the productions. A professional company would normally provide its own orchestra, while amateurs used a regimental band, which could be their own or a borrowed one. Drama, comedy, orchestral music and bawdy songs - the theatre provided something for everyone in a shared communal culture under one roof. In the early decades, then, theatre defied all attempts to divide culture into "high", "low", "folk", or any such specific categories.<sup>19</sup> This would change as the end of the century approached and theatrical bills began to produce "serious" drama aimed at a more exclusive and sophisticated audience.

Six days after their opening for the summer season in June, 1858, Sothern's troupe was reviewed as "the most talented and best Company we have yet seen in Halifax."<sup>20</sup> Yet his four-year stay in the city often

faced difficulties, despite his Lyceum's convenient south-end location and his connections with members of the city's upper faction. One of Sothern's acquaintances was Major Frederick Harris Dawes Veith whose chatty memoirs<sup>21</sup> paint a personalized, warm picture of the times. A member of the 63rd Regiment, Veith was the last surviving Canadian to hold a commission in the British army during the Russian war in the Crimea, as well as one of the last surviving descendants of General Sir Isaac Brock. During these years Veith led the theatricals at Government House and participated in the Amateur Theatricals at the Garrison. Common interests established his close relationship with Sothern. In the spring of 1858 Veith wrote that the "Garrison amateur theatricals under distinguished patronage came off with great eclat."<sup>22</sup> The proceeds from these went to his good friend, Sothern, whose winter season had not been as profitable as his previous summer's. "The old Theatre Royal, originally a barn, which Sothern had converted into what he called his 'Lyceum' could not in severe weather during the winter be kept comfortable, no matter how much fuel was expended, and people would not pay, as they said, 'to be frozen'".<sup>23</sup> A professional company, a large, newly-renovated theatre in an ideal area, social connections to figures of power, and even the praise of the press would not guarantee success if the support of a large population base was not there. The bourgeois reformers' desire to influence the leisure activities of working people was difficult to realize since the latter wouldn't pay for anything that didn't suit them. As Chad Evans has remarked, "[p]rofessional theatre during this period was a product, if not a parasite of culture, as much as a producer of it."<sup>24</sup>

Audience fickleness seems to have transcended class lines and caused

Sothorn to leave Halifax. Sothorn departed for England in 1859 and his Lyceum, which had become the "Theatre Royal" on nights when royalty extended its patronage, assumed that name permanently. By 1868 the building had fallen into such a dilapidated state that both dramatic troupes and audiences were shunning it. On August 9, 1869, the Recorder, while reviewing a benefit held there, noted that "the audience was slim - as even under favorable circumstances, it is difficult to induce respectable people to patronize the Theatre Royal."<sup>25</sup> Respectability and self-worth were principles highly cherished by the Victorians. These values were inherent, for example, in the self-help institutes and friendly societies which the middle class created and which gave them strength as a group.<sup>26</sup> If the theatre represented the vehicle through which the Victorians hoped to instruct the common man in virtues that would save him from vice and depravity, their impatience with theatrical companies which failed to meet high standards of appearance and quality of production is understandable.

Sothorn's Lyceum was not the only operation to suffer financial distress. Another was Temperance Hall which in 1857 refused Sothorn access and opened its doors to a stream of jugglers, vaudeville troupes, trapeze artists, lecturers, minstrel shows, and other acts that appealed to the credulousness of the Victorians and their taste for sensationalism. At first, however, a cramped stage, poor heating and ventilation, and faulty acoustics discouraged public patronage. It wasn't until the end of the American Civil War when American companies flooded into the City, that the Hall finally opened as a theatre.<sup>27</sup> Big-name managers like Americans M.W. Fiske, J.B. Fuller, and T. Charles Howard, were beginning

to seek success north of the border in the 1860's, but their timing proved less than favorable. A slump in the economy restricted money available for luxuries and the sense of well-being that would encourage theatre-going. Loss of the American market after the end of the war and abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1866 meant a slight depression that led to large numbers of unemployed by mid-summer 1867. Merchants in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Bermuda took advantage of improved railway and shipping services to buy directly from Europe, instead of using Halifax mercantile houses, thereby decreasing the city's importance as an importing centre.<sup>28</sup> As well, the Intercolonial Railway to Halifax, when completed in 1876, forced farmers in the Maritimes to compete in a market dominated by foodstuffs produced in the fertile west, and inevitably compelled them to resort to specialized crops.<sup>29</sup> The fact that efficient rail travel now facilitated the arrival of entertainment troupes from the south meant little to financially strapped Halifaxians during the 1870's.

Between 1868 and 1870 T. Charles Howard's Olympic Theatre played several weeks each summer at Temperance Hall. At first the perpetual heat and ventilation problems and a poor selection of plays kept the audiences small.<sup>30</sup> The plays were well enough publicized. A notice in the Recorder on June 10, 1869, for example, announced "Miss Rachel Noah...will appear in her beautiful impersonation of Margot, the Little Poultry Dealer." There would follow "A Cornet Duett by Messrs. Quigley and Leitch. To conclude with the Comical Drama, in 2 Acts, The Crown Prince; or, The Buckle F. Brilliants."<sup>31</sup> But no amount of complimentary publicity would attract people to the theatre if their needs weren't being met. The

commercialization of entertainment relied upon the favourable response of the people who comprised the audience. In addition to the advertisement, the Recorder published its review on June 12th, concluding that "the play itself was indelicate in plot and in many allusions for the taste of a Halifax audience, and we wish that the managers would show more deference to the feelings of the better classes of theatre-goers in their selection of plays."<sup>32</sup>

Besides the fact that the Recorder was written and controlled by powerful members of urban society, and adopted a tone aimed at a bourgeois reading public, there is a hint in this review that theatre was becoming directed to a more refined and exclusive audience. Following a trend beginning around mid-century in the United States, Halifax's theatres were offering more specialized productions and were less inclined to aim for amusing a wider audience. For example, the new Academy of Music, which will be discussed in more detail later, opened in 1877 and boasted the latest in elaborate decor, including one of the earliest uses of electricity in the city for its massive chandelier. Equally significant was the extensive segregation of seating that the hall provided.

Lawrence Levine in his discussion of American culture during the late 1800's points out that theatres became increasingly "legitimate" or "high-brow", providing only serious fare for "polite" audiences. Their advertisements often revealed the new seriousness. For example, "[t]he American Theatre in San Francisco advised those attending its May 29, 1855, production of A Midsummer Night's Dream that, 'owing to the length of the play there will be no farce.'" Similarly, "in 1869 the Vaulties Theatre in New Orleans announced in its playbill advertising As You Like

It, '[i]n consequent of the length of this comedy, it will constitute the Evening's Entertainment.'"<sup>33</sup>

A similar trend was evident in Halifax. On June 14, 1867 the Acadian Recorder announced Theatre Royal's production of Dion Pouracoult's latest Irish Drama, "Arrah-Na-logue" or "The Viclow Wedding" and added that there would be no farce, since the drama was too long.<sup>34</sup> Ten days later, the Recorder advertised, "Bersecault's new sensation Drama, the 'Long Strike' or the 'Manchester Workman'. Introducing the telegraph on the stage, the apparatus having been kindly furnished by the American Telegraph Company."<sup>35</sup> This seemingly incongruous exhibit signified the public's hunger both for sensationalism and for scientific knowledge. Far less frequently did the newspapers report that choruses of the latest frolicsome tune from last night's farce could be heard in the streets.

As mentioned previously, dramatic productions in Halifax had been significantly influenced by the role of the military garrison. "The highly cultivated classes of the Mother Country which military and naval services threw amongst them" instructed Halifaxians in "the polished conventionalities of society."<sup>36</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to overestimate the influence exerted by Halifax's military and civilian elite. In a population of slightly more than 30,000, members of the military totalled 2,000 to 4,000.<sup>37</sup> Of the remaining 26,000-28,000 a sizeable proportion would have been the middle and working classes whose presence would have determined the success or failure of any production company.

F.M.L. Thompson in his recent study of Victorian Britain entitled The Rise of Respectable Society stresses that the leisure industry's success hinged on the ability of the working classes to pay, as well as the

capitalist's skill in providing what the people liked and were willing to pay for.<sup>38</sup> Times were hard in the immediate post-Confederation period in Halifax, and theatre suffered as a result.<sup>39</sup> The editor of the Recorder on August 19, 1869 used the collapse of the Star Opera Theatrical season at Temperance Hall to discuss "the whole question of amusements and hall accommodation in Halifax" where the aristocracy seldom attended "unless a live Admiral, Governor, or Colonel, is to grace the gathering, and then, in their eyes, the lowliest structure would be transmogrified into a glittering palace." The only others who attended were the "'outside circle' who have few social ties to bind them...supplemented by the lovers of the drama itself..." Missing was the middle class for whom "in summer weather interchange of visits and parties fill the evenings...for the more sedate open churches and associations are on every hand."<sup>40</sup> Halifax, without a "floating population", was a small town with a choice of many amusements.

One institution that perpetually sought to influence the choice of popular amusement was the church. Just as the Presbyterians had raged against Sothern's Lyceum and the Baptists had held public meetings to discuss evils like drinking and vice that they saw linked to the theatre,<sup>41</sup> so did the Presbyterian press during the hard times of the 1870's lecture against wasting money on frivolous entertainment.<sup>42</sup> Thompson's emphasis on the importance of religion to Victorians<sup>43</sup> certainly has relevance here. In Halifax the church not only provided the guidelines for a moral, rational existence, but it also offered a very replete social life. According to Blakeley, "[a]t the time of Confederation much of the entertainment consisted of small gatherings among families and friends.

Religion...the social life of the church, seemed to occupy a far more important place than in the twentieth century."<sup>44</sup> If one accepted the church's view that theatricals were morally bankrupting, there were bazaars, concerts, charity organizations, picnics, outdoor band performances, teas, socials, and many other activities that were much more affordable than the theatre, and saved one from ever feeling recklessly extravagant. At various times The Recorder announced refreshment and fancy tables at the Masonic Hall,<sup>45</sup> church sales "of useful articles"<sup>46</sup>, strawberry festivals and fancy sales in aid of the church building funds,<sup>47</sup> the annual church picnic at McNab's Island with transportation by the steamer Mic-Mac,<sup>48</sup> and in order to pay off a debt for the purchase of an organ

[t]he young ladies of the "Rosebud Band of Hope" had quite a pleasant time at their little Bazaar in the Athenaeum Reading Room, on Wednesday afternoon. The table containing pretty articles of dress and ornament were carefully arranged by nimble hands and the little misses presiding looked their prettiest.<sup>49</sup>

In these ways and many others which will be discussed later, people of various classes shaped and controlled their own leisure activities, providing for themselves alternatives to cultural forms which they, for whatever reason, may not have found viable. Their lack of support could, moreover, and often did at times mean dire consequences for the theatre. In 1869 when the Star Opera theatrical season at Temperance Hall came to a premature end due to small audiences, an editorial pondered how repetitive performances quickly lost their appeal to even quality entertainments. "Something nice and a little will do for the citizens of Halifax."<sup>50</sup>

Despite occasional set-backs - whether they were caused by economic circumstances, inferior productions, the poor location of theatres, religious prejudices, or competition from other leisure activities - the theatre in Halifax did steadily grow, change, and develop into a more sophisticated institution. By 1869 the dilapidated Lyceum and the inferior facilities and poor location provided by the Temperance Hall gave rise to the cry that a city of more than 30,000 should construct a respectable theatre.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Temperance Hall was experimenting with reserved seats on the first floor, a worrisome development in that it drew the classes close together. Earlier the classes had been separated in specific sections like the parquette, dress circle, and orchestra chairs. The early theatres allowed a shared culture under one roof, thereby exposing the masses to the uplifting lessons in virtue to be offered by the performances, but there was also evidence of a perceptible desire to separate the discreet audience from the general rabble. The intention of the elite to maintain decorum, or at least to separate themselves from the area of disruptive behaviour, confirms Eileen and Stephen Yeo's idea that "assemblies of working people, large or small, indoors or outdoors...have always constituted a threat to authority and to moral reformers alike."<sup>52</sup> In 1858 police had been kept at Sothern's Lyceum in case a row broke out during the performance. Sixteen years later evidence of this fear was still voiced by the Recorder, which urged management to remember that "there is likely to be whatever disorderly or mischievous element there is in the Hall, back of those reserved seats, and that efficient police supervision will be requisite to preserve a comfortable degree of order."<sup>53</sup>

In 1875 William Nannery, an industrious manager who already had an Academy of Music in Saint John, proposed that a theatre be built on the corner of Lockman Street and Poplar Grove in Halifax. This scheme fell through, however, largely because of its poor design, its close proximity to Temperance Hall, and its considerable distance from the South End.<sup>54</sup> Even though the post-Confederation years had seen an exclusive district of residences for merchants, professional men, and government officials develop in the Brunswick Street area north of Cogswell, in the last decades of the century the wealthy moved further and further south until by 1896 Young Avenue had become a restricted residential area. This resulted from considerable money having been spent in building and grading the avenue from Inglis Street to the Park Gates.<sup>55</sup> Considering that the intention was to construct the largest, most elaborate hall Halifax had yet seen, and that wealthy backers were being sought, the elite would have exerted significant control over factors like location and design.

By 1875 financial supporters had established plans for the Academy of Music, under the chairmanship of one John Doull.<sup>56</sup> Designed by the English architect, A.M. Jackson, it was constructed of brick with stucco facing and opened on the corner of Barrington and Salter Streets on January 18, 1877, after months of outraged sermons in the city's churches. The total cost of the building site and furnishings ranged around one hundred thousand dollars.<sup>57</sup> A group of prominent citizens had now established a very fine hall for lectures, plays, and entertainments, and the elaborate interior design, complete to the last twinkle of its massive electric chandelier, at once reflected their status and improving economic conditions. The end of the decade marked an expansion of the economy as

industrialization brought significant growth represented by developments like a sugar refinery in 1879 and the Halifax Cotton Company in 1881.<sup>58</sup> "Between 1881 and 1891 the industrial growth rate of Nova Scotia outstripped all other provinces in eastern Canada."<sup>59</sup> Middle class entrepreneurs now had more money for luxuries and entertainments, money that would support dramatic companies in nightly appearances. Even those who didn't own carriages could afford horse-cars which were routed to pass the theatre and a late night ferry to Dartmouth was added to the schedule.<sup>60</sup>

The Academy of Music had been designed to serve all classes. In the case of the wealthier patrons, their one dollar and fifty cents reserved seating in the horseshoe - shaped parquette, which later was replaced by seats and boxes.<sup>61</sup> This arrangement served a dual purpose; it afforded them close proximity to the stage while distancing them from the rabble. According to Maybee "there was still space for the less affluent members of Halifax Society, the uninhibited breed who filled the cheap seats of the upper balconies and who were known throughout the period as 'the gods'."<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, the papers throughout the second half of the century complained of trouble with the rabble. Back in 1857 the Morning Journal had bemoaned the fact that latecomers to Temperance Hall, buying tickets at the door and going upstairs to the gallery, were far too noisy.<sup>63</sup> Major Veith in his memoirs related how fifty or sixty sailors, "blue jackets of the Flag Ship 'Indus'", roamed the town, "getting very wet, both out sid [sic] and in" before filling the theatre gallery. They hung their wet shirts over the rail to dry and proceeded to deride some friends below who arrived so late as to be forced to sit in the reserved seats:

One called out to his friend below:

"I say Bill - Bill Jenkins."

"Hulloa!" impatiently replied his friend, turning round.

"...what are you doin' down among the swells, eh? You're a h'epicure - you are..."

"And you're a ---- fool you are."

Veith added that a policeman intervened, but the shenanigans continued as those in the gallery lowered bottles on cords to their friends below. "It was a night long to be remembered by habitués of Sothern's Lyceum."<sup>64</sup>

Such a consciousness of class distinction existed in the Academy of Music in 1877 that a reporter for The Morning Herald<sup>65</sup> described his experiment of sitting in the gallery. "We determined (willingly, of course, money being no object!)," he wrote, "to take our place in the upper gallery." His witty account played heavily on the irony of the term "gods" beneath their frescoed ceiling, and the fact that the elite "saw the light" as the massive chandelier was lit, and only then did they "glance up for the first time and see the gods grinning down upon them."

This rather disparaging portrayal, riddled with condescending asides like, "they are more desirous of seeing than [sic] being seen, and we wish we could add of hearing then being heard," is particularly valuable in establishing the way in which the "gods" of the upper balcony asserted their right to determine their own leisure. The sarcasm of their remarks about the wealthy patrons below far exceeded anything the reporter directed at them. "A particularly dignified old gentleman was spoken of as the 'old boy'. A young man handsomely 'got up'...pronounced to look as drawn through a knot hole...An aristocratic old lady who sailed majestically in was declared to have a "whole flower garden" on her head." For twenty-five cents a workingman could occupy a seat in his own section and socialize. "The gallery was rapidly filling up, each new comer ...

entering into conversation with his neighbour with the freedom of the old friend."<sup>66</sup> The sailors with their liquor bottles and the policemen hovering at the door still testified that bourgeois control of the working class was tenuous at best.

Both the possibilities and the difficulties inherent in using the theatre as a vehicle for social uplift were particularly evident in the popularity of melodramatic theatre. Melodrama hinged on the principle of the elevation of the common man, giving everyone a belief in his ability to make his own choices, to exert his own power. "There was one common factor demanded by Halifax audiences: it must have a moral...so long as the good were rewarded and the wicked chastised."<sup>67</sup> What better vehicle of social instruction than melodrama with its ability to "inculcate values, to express ideas and attitudes"?<sup>68</sup> Not only could the better classes use it as a tool to raise the moral consciousness of the masses, but it represented something with which the masses could identify and from which they could draw inspiration. The individual was encouraged to shoulder his moral responsibility and, through the doing of good, to achieve success and status.

With the social dislocation that accompanied industrialization, people needed a renewed faith in an underlying moral order that would show them truth in the face of rapid technological change. The corruption of the rich and the sufferings of the poor became prominent themes in theatrical productions. So did the idea that anyone of any class could succeed if only he would trust his heart to show him truth. The heroine in distress would always be rescued, just as the evil villain would endure his just punishment. Melodrama in its appeal to all classes allowed theatre in the

late nineteenth century to attract a broad audience. Being under one roof, however, did not eliminate class boundaries any more than it prevented their fluctuation over time.

Indeed, theatre in the late 19th century operated to distinguish one class's entertainment from another's. Levine in his description of what he calls "The Sacralization of Culture" relates how Shakespeare developed from being "the property of those who flocked to see them [his dramas], into a sacred author who had to be protected from ignorant audiences."<sup>68</sup> Similarly, in opera foreign rather than American productions became the prestigious terrain of "'the better class, the most refined and intelligent'...the high minded, the pure and virtuous."<sup>70</sup> This underlying assumption that the Victorian leaders had intrinsic knowledge of what was "good" manifested itself in Halifax on a smaller scale with segregation of seating in more and more elaborately decorated theatres. Yet, the pretentiousness of the elite did not escape occasional scathing remarks in the press. In one review the musical conductor was advised

to spend a year or two in Italy, live on macaroni or olives, allow your hair to grow to your shoulders, and your eye to roll in 'fine frenzy', and return as Senor Porto Rico, or Senor somebody else, when we will take you to our hearts. So long as you remain plain Mr. Porter...the Gods would be more likely to show their true feelings than their aristocratic or purse-proud neighbours, many of whom take their cue whether to praise or condemn, from the shining lights at the head of their set.<sup>71</sup>

What had begun as a natural effort on the part of Victorian authorities to protect the public by maintaining the standard of plays, had developed into an ostentatiousness that, far from overwhelming the lower classes, was actually ridiculed by factions like the "gods" and the press.

The promotion of respectability manifested itself in middle class activities in other areas well removed from the theatres discussed so

far. Between the harbor and Citadel Hill there existed two adjoining sections commonly known as "Sailortown" and "Soldiertown". Comprised of slum tenements, brothels, grog shops, and boarding houses, this area not only housed the city's poorest residents, including prostitutes, bootleggers, and all manner of petty criminals, but also served as a recreational area for thousands of transient military and naval personnel. Given that the Citadel encompassed fifty acres with hundreds of British enlisted men, and at any one time there could be a dozen ships in port, each carrying about seven hundred sailors,<sup>72</sup> the demand for food, liquor, lodging, and prostitutes must have been endless. Until the founding of the Halifax City Mission in 1852 to deal with social ills like poverty, abuse, and prostitution, an institution which marked the beginning of middle class intervention, there existed a symbiotic relationship between the residents and the transients, an entertainment industry provided for the lower class by its own members. However, a changing ideology around mid-century destroyed the existing class boundaries and obliterated forever the "city within a city" identity of this area.

Halifax's first city missionary, G.N. Gordon,<sup>73</sup> launched the Halifax City Mission and a vanguard of "do-gooders" who subsequently patrolled what Judith Fingard has called the "upper" and "lower" streets - the area beneath the Citadel, mainly Barrack (Brunswick) Street with its intersecting Sackville, Prince, George, Duke, and Buckingham Streets, down to the harbour to include Upper and Lower Water Streets.<sup>74</sup> Highly motivated to eliminate the rowdiness and lewd boisterousness that so offended the Victorian definition of acceptable behaviour, and to encourage that which was rational and not morally corrupting, these reformers focused largely

on liquor as the seed from which grew most of the social ills. As one newspaper voiced it, "the drinking customs of Halifax are a disgrace ... demoralization...And is not every man in the community interested in endeavoring to mitigate this evil...which threatens to sap the foundations of public morality...?"<sup>75</sup> Naturally, to attack alcohol consumption meant invasion of, among other places, lower class taverns and brothels, the entertainment outlets of the poor.

The escapism provided by alcohol consumption is readily understandable among the residents of overcrowded, slum tenements where abuse, drunkenness, and destitution constituted the daily norm. The tavern and brothel became social anchorages, places of food, drink, song, and camaraderie. As Fingard stresses, "[t]hose semi-public places were central to the recreation, leisure and sociability of lower-class life."<sup>76</sup> An example of the sense of identity which a sailor felt with the area, as well as his sense of alienation from the "better" classes, is evident in this line from the Reminiscences of Harris H. Barnes, a sailor born in Minas Basin. "I had wealthy connections in the city of Halifax but I was only a poor sailor boy, so I went directly to...Water Street."<sup>77</sup>

When bourgeois reformers assumed that lower class customs had to be eradicated, they gave themselves licence to attack a sub-culture which appeared at odds with their belief in a "rational" use of leisure time. Loud, raucous music and dancing that often spilled out into the streets intimated disorderly behaviour which could no longer be tolerated. F.M.L. Thompson in his portrayal of the pub during the Victorian era maintains that any politician's defence of it would have appeared as a vote for inebriation. Yet the pub was of much longer standing and possessed much

deeper roots in the community as a general meeting place than reformers ever appreciated. "The local was an informal workingmen's club, not the mere shop retailing oblivion to solitary drunks and mindless morons which disapproving middle-class observers often pictured."<sup>78</sup>

There were several forms of control instigated in the area below the Citadel, none of which went uncontested. In the 1830's gambling was made illegal, in 1865 all pub games, music and dancing were prohibited, and in the summer of 1883 all dance halls in Grafton Street closed by common agreement with the city.<sup>79</sup> However, all of these measures proved temporary. Then an 1886 liquor law closed the taverns, but this only led to bootleggers and drinking in the street. Similarly, the raiding of brothels only meant that prostitutes found alternative housing. As well, when the military authorities declared certain outlets, or even whole streets, out-of-bounds for the enlisted men, the proprietors simply re-located, causing grave concern that the "better" areas were being infiltrated by undesirables.

Thus, not only is it readily apparent that the tavern served a vital role in the leisure pursuit of the lower classes, but also that Victorian moralists in their sweeping campaign to reform the "upper" and "lower" streets had failed to understand this area's function. The chasm which the pious middle class sought to bridge in order to save the residents and patrons of Soldiertown and Sailortown from their depravity had opened as a result of the area's long term isolation. Functioning autonomously, the taverns had provided drink, song, dance, and social space exclusively for the lower class, and in this regard had been distinct from other theatrical forms.

Throughout the latter half of the century there was one other dramatic form - like melodrama - that elicited mass support. This was the spectacular. Based on the pursuit of pleasure, on the audiences' thirst for the grandiose and the awe-inspiring, were the acts that subjugated theme and scientific truth to visual affect. The advent of commercialism in entertainment meant the psychology of "bigger and better" applied to performances. And the larger the spectacle, the larger the audience it required.

At odds with legitimate theatre and its atmosphere of permanence and respectability, sensationalism was proffered by transients who sought multi-cultural appeal on a temporary basis and offered something for everyone. The need for the maximum audience gave power to the masses. People paid for what they liked and if the leisure industry did not provide it, or if advertising was unattractive, it did not prosper. Advance agents wrote exorbitant ads and plastered the city with posters that sought to create a fever of expectation before the performers arrived days or weeks later. Throughout these decades a steady stream of panoramas, circuses, magicians, minstrels, human freaks, astrologists, ventriloquists, variety troupes, scientific wonders and carnivals poured into Halifax to amaze and entertain.

In the early years before the railroad, entertainers had access only to the large urban areas, but the rail links from Halifax to Windsor, Truro and Pictou in 1858, and then the coming of the Intercolonial Railway in 1876, greatly altered this. Not only were smaller towns providing a market for travelling troupes, but also big road shows like circuses became common. On circus morning excitement ran high as wagons were

unloaded from seventy-two foot rail cars and pulled to the circus lot by elephants and horses. At noon a massive street parade heightened expectations for the afternoon and evening shows. The Ticket Office Wagon sold reserved seats and general admission tickets, but all visitors were allowed to pass through the Menagerie top to view the cages of wild animals, elephants, llamas, and other exotic creatures.<sup>80</sup>

Spectaculars strove to attract all classes by playing on their curiosity and credulity. For example, when Stone and Murray's Circus arrived in 1869, its one-column ad proclaimed it as "The Best in the World" with "a reputation for excellence enjoyed by no other Circus in America!" While offering "intensely fascinating performances by Artists of Masterly Skill and Exalted Excellence, whose astonishing feats are of a character entirely new in this country," it would also provide "The Paraphernalia...unexampled for splendor, and the most costly ever manufactured," along with "The Premier Equestrienne of the World!" and "The Champion Rider of the Universe!"<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, when MacInley and Company's Royal Circus arrived in June, 1874, it not only advertised the largest elephants in the world, but also the smallest one ever, and took care to emphasize that this company with its eight hundred men was certainly no small railroad circus.<sup>82</sup> This company must have worked extraordinarily hard to enthrall a Halifax audience that just a week earlier had witnessed "The Great and Only New York Circus," billed as "The Only First Class Circus in America" with "the smallest and prettiest rider in the world," "the great Brazilian wild horse Tamer," and "the five best riders in America."<sup>83</sup>

marketplace. In 1850 eight-year-old Tom Thumb, weighing fifteen pounds and standing twenty-eight inches high, sang and danced in various costumes at Temperance Hall after having received "the highest marks of Royal favor by all the principal crowned heads of Europe."<sup>84</sup> Eighteen years later he was back with his wife, Commodore Nutt, and various other dwarfs wearing twenty thousand dollars worth of diamonds.<sup>85</sup> Along the same line came: Angus MacAskill, the Nova Scotia Giant, in 1850;<sup>86</sup> the "Novel and Brilliant.... Professor Baldwin" who in May, 1854 sought to "...develop fully the mysteries of all those beautiful illusions in Magic";<sup>87</sup> the wizard, Jerome Blitz, who on June 28, 1858 would perform all of his feats without apparatus;<sup>88</sup> and many others claiming novelty and distinction.

The "never before seen" advertisements were an effort to overcome the fickleness of a mass audience that possessed influence in its refusal to attend performances that lacked originality and intrigue. But promoters also played on the gullibility of their audience, victimizing them in poor quality shows that didn't meet the standard of advance ads, or by advertising performers who didn't even materialize. Travelling troupes like Carl and Hubbard's Varieties whose members included a ventriloquist, soloist, balancer, vocalist, Danseuse, and Marionettes<sup>89</sup> could easily carry a weak act in the midst of more polished ones. In another case people bought tickets and waited in Temperance Hall for the Lloyd Christy Minstrels, only to discover that the show existed only in the minds of the promoters.<sup>90</sup> Given the transiency of these companies, the public had virtually no control over such exploitation.

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promoters.<sup>90</sup> Given the transiency of these companies, the public had virtually no control over such exploitation.

Apart from entertainment as pure extravaganza, there existed also a sensationalism that endeavoured to root itself in the mysteries of science, thereby selling leisure pursuits as a form of education. With a focus on immensity, "Lewis's Great Panorama of the Mississippi" claimed to be a "Mammoth work of art, the largest in the world," and "twice as long as Burr's seven mile mirror...four times the length of Banvard's celebrated painting." Shown in two sections, it would reveal such highlights as Indian scenes, sunrise in the Gulf of Mexico, and the Great Fire in St. Louis. While admitting anyone for 1s., 3d., the managers noted their "liberal arrangements made with schools."<sup>91</sup> This was but one of a series of panoramas that hit the city in the early 1850's, all claiming to out-do the rest. In November, 1851 one could view "the Gorgeous and Astounding French Representation of the Emperor Napoleon's Funeral."<sup>92</sup> Then in April, 1853 arrived "[a] magnificent series of Dissolving Views of the Gold Regions of Australia... Principal Cities, Penal Stations, Pastoral Districts...gold fields,"<sup>93</sup> followed in April, 1854 by a "Panorama of the St. Lawrence River and Falls of Niagara."<sup>94</sup> Although all classes could attend these showings, with gallery seats at slightly more than a shilling and house seats at slightly less, the type of entertainment booked lay entirely in the hands of the Temperance Hall board with its strong Presbyterian contingent. During the 1850's and early 1860's these directors outlawed dramas as unrealistic and immoral, thus exerting a very real control over popular theatrical culture.

from vulgarity. Patronized by the better classes."<sup>95</sup> Eight years later the authenticity of "Sheppard Jubilee Singers" was underscored. "They are GENUINE COLORED PEOPLE under the leadership of Andrew Sheppard thirty years a slave... All having been slaves, they give the truest and best representation of Slave Life on the Old Plantation."<sup>96</sup> With general admission only twenty-five cents and reserved seats fifty, this example of negroes perpetuating their own stereotype would have afforded all classes a novel entertainment as well as a sense of superiority.

Not all educational presentations originated outside the area, as local entrepreneurs also actively catered to the public's inquisitiveness. In 1874 a ten cent charge would admit one to Mason Hall where a fifteen-inch mermaid was exhibited in a preserve of wine. A Mr. Lynch had caught this creature which, with a coiffure on top of its head, hair streaming behind, and a woman's face, had lived a week after capture. He had taken three pictures. "When first taken the body projected out of a horn-like shell as far as the elbows...showing the bust...As the mermaid gradually died it shrunk into the shell, and when dead, only the head remained out."<sup>97</sup>

Other local entrepreneurs also used spectacle to attract customers. Mr. Henry Moss in 1869 sought patrons to his saloon on Barrington Street by exhibiting "a complete set of accoutrements, such as is worn by the warriors of some Asiatic and African savage tribes" and "a figure constructed, and dressed...in these curiosities. This figure he has had placed in his dining saloon." Although Moss was an astute businessman profiting from the current appetite for visual culture, he also offered "a small and select library of old and rare works attached to his saloon

warriors of some Asiatic and African savage tribes" and "a figure constructed, and dressed...in these curiosities. This figure he has had placed in his dining saloon." Although Moss was an astute businessman profiting from the current appetite for visual culture, he also offered "a small and select library of old and rare works attached to his saloon for all who wish to read in evenings."<sup>98</sup> This not only added credibility to Moss's exhibit, but testified as well to the opportunity for self-education for all who aspired to push against their class boundaries.

This was an era ripe with the combination of spectacle and education for anyone who sought it. In September, 1865 nearly one thousand persons gathered on Hollis Street to see a magnesium light from Eagar's drug store that "for five minutes illuminated the whole square - It's [sic] beautiful appearance was much admired."<sup>99</sup> For twenty-five cents' admission Halifax book-seller George Morton joined the curious crowd in the Masonic Hall on Granville Street in August, 1878 to examine the phonograph on display<sup>100</sup> and on July 15, 1880 he walked to the Citadel glacis "for display of electric light exhibited on H.M.S. Northampton - like Aurora Borealis."<sup>101</sup> Then on August 9<sup>th</sup> he witnessed "a grand exhibition of 'electric light'" shown at Georges Island, an experiment which he said was made with a view to adopting the new power for the lighthouse.<sup>102</sup>

One of Morton's journal entries reveals how the public's somewhat insatiable appetite for the new and different did not impede their scepticism or their ability to reject the culture coming in on them. On February 13th and 14th, 1878 a cartoon artist, I.W. Burgoughs, gave a lecture and demonstration at the Masonic building. His illustrations included Darwin's Theory of Creation and figures of Sir John A. MacDonald

and Premier MacKenzie. Morton wrote of

his delineations of local celebrities which were developed from the "canvas" or rather the kind of drawing paper used in a manner to please as well as to astonish the beholder some of whom did not believe he was sketching from "Life" but from lines drawn beneath the paper on which he chalked the outlines.<sup>103</sup>

Again, the exhibition reveals a common truth: producers of culture needed an audience, which in turn could exert influence by rejecting what it was offered.

### Conclusion

Theatre became popular in Halifax in the 1850's after Queen Victoria's patronage made it fashionable in the Mother Country. Although by the end of the century this leisure pursuit had proven itself to be an enduring component of local culture, its growth over those five decades was fraught with difficulties. Economic difficulty, inferior productions, poor location, and religious prejudices all threatened the tenuous hold of the theatre in Halifax. Ultimately, however, its survival depended upon the support of the people. In a city of barely 30,000 by mid-century, this meant that audiences had to be drawn not just from the elite and the military, but also from the general populace. Fledgling theatres sought to incorporate drama, farce, and music into their productions - something for everyone. Thus, the will of the common man was a significant aspect of the production of culture. Indeed, beneath the single roof of the theatre sat a society in microcosm.

Whenever the general public, for whatever reasons, withdrew its patronage, theatres suffered. In the late 1850's and early 1860's two buildings struggled to meet the needs of the people. Perpetual heat and

ventilation problems, combined with a cramped stage and an inconvenient north-end location, led to shrinking audiences at Temperance Hall. Even a central location, a newly renovated theatre, and social connections to figures of power could not sustain Sothern's Lyceum. Heating problems kept the people away. At the same time, churches still associated theatrical productions with immorality and drink. As an alternative, religious leaders offered a broad range of social activities of which the general public, in a city of twenty-five churches, eagerly availed itself. Families flocked to socials, teas, bazaars, fairs, picnics and the like, thereby reducing the door receipts of the local theatres. In the depression of the early to mid 1870's people struggling against hard times saw these free communal activities as ideal leisure pursuits.

Industrialization meant more money for luxuries, and in the 1880's theatricals again flourished. The splendid Academy of Music opened in 1877, complete with Halifax's first electric chandelier. But even a trend towards more sophisticated productions for "polite" society could not overcome the need of theatre owners to cater to all levels of society. Within the theatre itself the city's social classes confronted each other. Segregated seating separated the wealthier patrons from the "gods" in the balconies, but the latter noisily expressed their opinions of the productions and policemen patrolled the theatre in order to ensure a modicum of order.

The popularity of melodrama in the late nineteenth century also ensured broadly-based audiences. Its prominent themes of the corruption of the rich and the sufferings of the poor, combined with its emphasis on "The American Dream" - anyone's ability to succeed if only he'd follow his

heart to find truth - appealed to rich and poor alike. In addition, the bourgeois reformer saw melodrama as the best possible vehicle of social and moral instruction, and required the attendance of those who were to be uplifted.

Beyond the realm of Halifax's highly visible theatrical stages existed the tavern which provided a social anchor to the lower class - and to the slum dwellers in the lower streets beneath the Citadel. As a source of music, liquor and entertainment, these establishments refused to be snuffed out by legislation prohibiting their activities, and after their closure simply surfaced elsewhere - much to the chagrin of Victorian reformers. No matter what their class circumstances, people possessed a very real voice in shaping leisure activity, and in various ways contributed to the cultural development of the city as a whole.

Theatre in Halifax was made collectively, with the input from all classes, never through the dictates of one. Shaped by the interaction of various groups, with class boundaries constantly fluctuating, theatre developed as many levels of society interpreted and used it at will, and to meet their particular needs. While the bourgeois sought to use the theatre as a form of social control and instruction, the working class remained very active agents in the shaping of this aspect of cultural life.

## Chapter 2

Sport

In Halifax during the mid to late 1800's dozens of sports occupied the calendar year. What follows is not a history of the rise and fall of everything that passed as play during this era. Rather, the aim is to highlight some of the main sports, to determine the degree of popular participation, and to clarify how certain sports were shaped in class ways. Sport is often a unifying enthusiasm, transcending class, ethnic and gender divisions, but just as often different groups bring their own needs to the sporting field.

Since every season offered a wide range of largely climate-determined activities, this analysis has been roughly divided into winter and summer sporting activities. The winter sports will illustrate how various classes could share one sport, albeit different versions of it. For instance, working people played hockey with their own equipment, style, and rules in an outdoor setting, while the more prosperous middle class devised more formalized competitions on indoor rinks. Both developed leisure activities according to their own values, and derived from their sports a certain self-realization.

The latter section of the chapter, necessarily longer because of the greater abundance of warm weather sports, will illustrate two main points: first, that most sports allowed for broad public participation, although not without some instances of class exclusiveness; and second, that a smaller group of sports was fiercely defended as the exclusive terrain of the gentry. Furthermore, Victorian reformers sought to elevate the masses

by teaching them the values inherent in healthy recreation, but remained suspicious of those whom they intended to reform. Such things as private grounds, admission charges, and closed memberships suggest that sport, despite its value as a force for respectability, was never intended to be society's great equalizer.

As Phyllis Blakeley has written of the latter half of the nineteenth century, "there was no lack of sports in Halifax, with sleigh drives, coasting, snowshoeing, skating, hockey, curling, football, baseball, cricket, tennis, archery, horseracing, swimming, rowing, sailing, yacht racing..."<sup>104</sup> One need only add to these riflery, quoits, polo, track and field, boxing, fencing, cycling, and croquet, to illustrate that Halifax vibrated with athletic activity, the sheer abundance and diversity of which involved all classes, whether as spectators, participants, or patrons. The following examines some of the largest, most representative events of this era, and the class conflict that accompanied the organization and control of, and participation in, sporting activity.

In the interest of social and moral discipline, Victorian reformers viewed sport as healthy recreation that would teach the masses such respectable values as fairness of play, good sportsmanship, and teamwork. A civilized use of leisure time would effectively counteract debauched activities like drinking, and keep the people off the streets during their idle hours. Thus, energy and time that might result in criminal activity would be re-directed into athletic pursuits which would, in turn, provide a foundation for a purer, more genteel lifestyle. Orderly control of leisure time would help create a moral order that would be reflected in society as a whole. This belief in the virtue of social control,

dependent as it was on the passivity of the people below, would inevitably lead to resistance from this faction.

As was the case with the development of theatre, changing economic circumstances exerted an influence on the growth of athletics in mid-to-late nineteenth century Halifax. The arrival of industrialization meant more money for play and a shorter work day that created more leisure time. But for factory workers and office and store clerks, leisure time remained limited. In February of 1867 The Young Men's Early Closing Association was formed to persuade merchants to close their shops earlier than nine or ten o'clock at night in order that their employees might derive some leisure time at the end of their workday. Although this society succeeded in August of 1872 in persuading store owners to agree to close at eight p.m. for a six-week trial period, the reform was temporary and had no long-term effect on business hours in the city.<sup>105</sup>

Even if this group's attempt to legislate change had succeeded, there is no reason to assume that the skilled artisans or clerks would have availed themselves of the opportunity for cultural enhancement found in the association's reading room, gymnasium, and billiard room, or in similar facilities elsewhere. Indeed, a letter to the editor of the Recorder on January 16, 1868 reflects the frustration of trying to impose what was perceived as morally uplifting culture on those who exerted their freedom of choice by rejecting it. An exasperated citizen tells of attending "an informative evening lecture" by Mr. Hugo Reid at Dalhousie College and seeing few young men present. Given that merchants had responded to a plea to close their businesses early "so that young men in their employ can have time to improve themselves," he urged this next

generation to help themselves.<sup>106</sup> But "leisure", defined denotatively as "time free from employment and at one's own disposal,"<sup>107</sup> demands choice and self-motivation, and what one class regards as edifying may have little appeal to another.

Sport is perhaps the most open and accessible leisure pursuit of all, given that each level of society can adapt it to meet its needs and to reflect its values. This is particularly the case with sporting activities such as outdoor skating that can be engaged in without excessive formalities or rules. Halifax's peninsular location and its close proximity to numerous lakes and ponds made skating one of the most natural, readily available activities for everyone, and improved equipment added to its popularity. During the 1850's long, wooden-framed skates remained the only choice of equipment. This changed in the early years of the next decade when John Forbes, an enterprising hardware clerk, capitalized upon the public's cry for more flexible, smaller skates.

At the age of eight John arrived in Halifax with his family from Birmingham, England. A few years later he began to work in a hardware store. Often hearing people deploring the absence of something simpler than the old-fashioned wooden skates, John worked in his spare time to design the first metal skates and eventually produced them in a small Halifax factory in 1861. By 1864 his skates were so popular that the growing business moved across the harbour to a larger site and became the Starr Manufacturing Company whose complete spring skate achieved world renown. In 1877 100,000 pairs were marketed,<sup>108</sup> and eventually over 3,000,000 pairs were shipped overseas to northern countries alone. Forbes' readily-available, less cumbersome skates made skating possible

for anyone.

While open-air exercise on the various lakes, ponds, and bodies of salt water was available to anyone so inclined, proponents of organized recreation began to turn skating into a more controlled and formalized activity. At 3 p.m. on January 3, 1863 the first covered ice rink in Canada was formally opened at the Horticultural Gardens (now part of the Public Gardens). This 180' x 160' wooden edifice sported an arched roof and was illuminated by coal gas. Near the main entrance a reception room contained the stove, while a raised platform at the other end of the building accommodated the band. The inaugural speech was delivered by the Lieutenant Governor, Earl of Mulgrave, after which sixty ladies in costume performed on the ice.<sup>109</sup> The elegance of the event strongly hints of a leisure setting specifically catering to society's wealthier element. A glimpse of the financing confirms it. Privately funded, the rink was controlled by a company of limited membership. Individuals or families bought stocks which sold so quickly that membership closed only three weeks after its opening.<sup>110</sup> Such exclusiveness did not escape the scorn of the press. Shortly after the rink's opening, the Recorder derisively called it "the greatest favorite of those who could afford...it."<sup>111</sup>

Two historians have commented that "the public generally was barred,"<sup>112</sup> and that this middle class leisure terrain was "not ordinarily available to the public."<sup>113</sup> A limited number of exceptions did occur, however. A newspaper on February 2, 1871, for example, announced that the "Halifax Skating Rink is open every Wednesday during the season to non-subscribers 7-10 p.m." Admission was twenty-five cents at the door and a band played for the last two hours.<sup>114</sup> This minor concession to non-

subscribers, whether derived from pecuniary, benevolent or other motivation, provided little access to indoor skating for most working people. Rather, Canada's first indoor skating rink catered to the interest of, and was very much in the power of, wealthier Halifaxians.

Working people were not without their own opportunities to engage in skating, both outdoors and indoors. Blakeley tells us, at the other extreme, that endless locations - Chocolate Lake, the Dartmouth lakes, the Arm, Bedford Basin, Steele's Pond and the Quarry Ponds at Point Pleasant, the Egg Pond at the Common, two ponds at Fort Needham on the Rockhead Prison property, and Bone Mill at Three Mile House<sup>115</sup> - awaited anyone for open-air skating. Murray's Pond on the Studley property just a bit inside the Morris Street entrance to Dalhousie campus was very popular for skating. Unprotected from north winds, it was also called one of the coldest skating spots in the city, but it was "always crowded by hundreds of skaters."<sup>116</sup>

In addition to outdoor skating, working people may have had access to what John Quinpool described as an "opposition rink,"<sup>117</sup> probably Halifax's second indoor rink, built as part of the Exhibition Building and opened on Tower Road on September 30, 1879. One account refers to this as "an ice surface for public skating,"<sup>118</sup> and there are numerous references to huge skating carnivals and masquerades held here. On January 27, 1880 George Morton, the bookseller, reported that 300 skaters in costume and over 3,000 spectators "attended to admire the Carnival and contributed to the financial success."<sup>119</sup> Carnivals of this sort were particularly popular. On February 9th of the same year 2,000 spectators watched 300 skaters in a masquerade scene described as

captivating and dream-like. Some costumes worn being exceedingly rich and others grotesque to absurdity. Courtiers and clowns, princes and peasants, fishermen and hunters, pedlars and minstrels, Indians, Negro's [sic], Jews, Greeks, Moors, etc. wearing every variety of masks, mingled with Ladies of high degree, elaborately dressed and others representing plebeian occupations, arrayed in garments more noted for oddity and incongruity than for grace and attractiveness.<sup>120</sup>

There is every likelihood that the costumes reflected to some extent the composition of the audience, since this was a "public" rink, open to all citizens. With square towers on each corner, a mansard roof of red slate color, an octagonal roofed tower in front, and ceiling-to-floor windows, it was lighted with gas burners and considered very handsome indeed. Seventy carpenters had created this "stupendous structure" in just three months before its ceremonial opening by the Lieutenant-Governor, Hon. Adams G. Archibald.<sup>121</sup> Hence, the number of spectators, the elaborate costumes, the grandeur of the premises, and the accessibility of the location speak for a less elitist skating rink than the one at the Horticultural Gardens.

It must also be remembered that by the time of the opening of the Exhibition Building in 1879 the original skating rink in the Gardens was already sixteen years old. In the interim both the novelty and the exclusivity of the skating rink had dissipated, and the popularity of indoor skating seems to have waned. As early as 1871 the Recorder was reporting that the ice was only "in tolerable condition", so that when the Union Engine Company's Band arrived it found there weren't enough skaters to warrant a performance, and it left to play the evening away in front of its own Engine House.<sup>122</sup> Then, an even more revealing passage by Dr. J.P. Morgan, commenting on hockey, which didn't become popular until the 1880's, depicts how all classes were represented by an average Saturday's

schedule at the Rink:

at the old rink...On a Saturday, the ice would often be booked for schoolboy league games in the mornings, for fancy skating to the tunes of an orchestra in the afternoon; and for match games among the various business firms of Halifax and Dartmouth in the evening. Every team had its enthusiastic supporters and rooters who sometimes marched in procession up from the ferry waving their flags and banners.<sup>123</sup>

These were but working class schoolboys; as Morgan explains, "the youths of Halifax had only a few small ponds on which to practice, so their skill was far less than that of the Dartmouth boys who had fine, large lakes right at their doorsteps."<sup>124</sup> Even more importantly, he goes on to quote an unidentified source on the equipment often used. "'For years past, the lakes have been the scenes of thousands of games of shinney (an alternate name for hockey) played with a stone for a puck, and hurleys rudely fashioned from the roots of trees.'<sup>125</sup> Obviously, the rink, which in 1863 had been almost exclusively middle class terrain, became less and less so with the passing of years, the burden of financial problems, and construction of several alternative facilities. By 1879 when the Exhibition Rink opened, its predecessor was accommodating all classes, and its existence steadily became more and more precarious until in 1889 it "was torn down because its dilapidated condition detracted from the beauty of the grounds (the Gardens)."<sup>126</sup>

Fred "Cyclone" Taylor, a famous hockey player of the late 1800's, once said that "the whole community took part in sport, either in playing or in support. There's just no truth in the picture of our towns as dreary places with everybody working long, long hours."<sup>127</sup> In the case of hockey, this was particularly true during the last two decades of the century as teams associated with regiments, business firms, clubs, or particular

social groups played together locally or utilized growing rail service for out-of-town games in Saint John and Montreal. In its most structured form hockey was played in 1897 for the championship of the Halifax-Dartmouth area and possession of the newly created trophy donated by the Starr Manufacturing Company. The prestige of this cup was noted in The Halifax Herald's assertion that "the general understanding is that the trophy will be in keeping with the Starr Company's reputation of being the manufacturers of some of the best goods in the world."<sup>128</sup> Twenty-five hundred fans watched the Wanderers claim this prize.<sup>129</sup>

On the other hand, casual games were in evidence on all of the area's frozen surfaces. Men and boys reportedly amused themselves in spontaneous matches, using their own style, rules, and language. A leader of each team would pick players from the large crowd that often gathered on the shore. The score in such impromptu games could go to whatever was agreed on - ten, fifteen, or twenty.<sup>130</sup> This shaping of culture to derive the maximum benefits of play might have differed greatly from the formal hockey games between well-known teams on indoor rinks where admission was charged, but didn't represent less intrinsic value. It simply indicated each level of society's ability to adapt the sport to meet its needs.

On the simplest scale there was night-hockey played with an improvised stick and a battered tin-can for audible assistance in the darkness.<sup>131</sup> Construction of the proper hockey stick, known as a "hurley", allowed for significant cross-class relations as one of the lower social groups employed talent and resources to exert an influence on society. As was the case with the invention of the spring skate, human creativity instituted change completely uninitiated and uncontrolled by members of

the more prosperous classes. Specifically, the Micmac Indians living at Tufts' Cove and on local lakes built a prosperous business shaping hundreds of hurleys annually and shipping them all over the Maritimes, even to Montreal. One of the biggest buyers locally was the Starr Manufacturing Company.<sup>132</sup> On October 27, 1934 seventy-six year old W.N. Forbes, the eldest son of the original owner, John Forbes, wrote, "[r]e the Indians, they used and preferred a wood-top skate, fastened to the boot with a screw in the heel and with straps. Some made their own skates, which would not be hard, as they could readily obtain strip-steel for blades."<sup>133</sup>

On May 2, 1943, another son, E.P. Forbes, who was manager of the Starr Company machine shop for a quarter century, wrote an even stronger testimonial to the influence of Indians on hockey. "They were wonderful players...Indians made and sold sticks or 'hurleys' in quantities...I think you will find hockey or hurley was developed in this Continent by the Micmac Indians who had played the game for a long time..."<sup>134</sup>

In 1943 Timothy Graham, a well-known Dartmouth athlete, visited from Boston and in the course of an interview with The Patriot regarding his reminiscences of the 1870's in his native town, recalled that "the Indians were expert skaters and were very tough in hockey, but were proficient players as if they had practiced the game for generations."<sup>135</sup> In the same year Isaac Cope, an elderly Micmac living out his last years at the Truro Reservation, told of being born in a birch-bark wigwam at Graham's Corner in the 1860s. In 1863 his brother, Joe, at age four, had learned to skate by pushing a chair over smooth ice at Red Bridge Road. Isaac joined his father in the making and selling of hurleys in later years.<sup>136</sup>

For his part, Joe's early memories included how the Micmac tribe possessed a ball game handed down from antiquity, somewhat like soccer, requiring the ball to be carried and placed between goals. This sport didn't work well on ice, and led to sticks being used, with a wooden block as a ball. Joe believed, from family information, that Micmac Indians were skaters as far back as 1700, having received their first European skates in 1604.<sup>137</sup>

Interestingly, Dr. J.P. Martin, who interviewed Isaac Cope, reflected that by 1900 the whole tribe at Red Bridge Pond had disappeared, largely because the area's stands of ash, maple, and birch trees used in the shaping of hurleys, had been exhausted.<sup>138</sup> Micmac involvement in hockey demonstrates how cultural development originating from below or in another culture can filter up through the classes.

The broad involvement of all classes in skating evidenced itself elsewhere as well. The British Colonist in 1859 claimed that "any man with a vigorous constitution can spend a whole winter in Nova Scotia as much to his satisfaction as in any part of the world," and mentioned one excellent skater who could cut his name in German text or write the Lord's Prayer.<sup>139</sup> From 1860 to 1890, B.A. Weston of Halifax was a prominent figure skater. A recognized leader in intricate scrolls and ice dances, Weston became president of the Chebucto Amateur Athletic Club, mayor of Dartmouth in 1886, and a member of the first Dartmouth-related Halifax Ferry Commission. In a 1943 interview he related how the local lakes of both Halifax and Dartmouth and the North West Arm were often crowded by "hockeyists and hundreds of 'fancy skaters.'"<sup>140</sup> Indeed, hockey around the time of Confederation not only rode the wave of popularity with local

young men, but was also enjoyed by officers of the garrison and the fleet. The 1870's were a time of "top public interest...taken up with speed skating, both amateur and professional."<sup>141</sup> Robert Laidlaw, Walter Faulkner, Charles Patterson, and George Misener were frequent winners of local races, some in the Dartmouth rink, but mostly in Sarre's Rink, Halifax, where large audiences were attracted. Hugh McCormick, the Saint John champion, skated Laidlaw at Halifax for the five mile championship "of the world" and was defeated. The latter also skated to victory in a fifteen miler against Frank Dowd of Montreal, who had been Canadian amateur champion before turning professional.

A second winter sport which involved cultural borrowing and the broad participation of all classes, (albeit in separate settings), was coasting or tobogganing. The word "toboggan" was an adaptation of the Canadian Indian word for "sleigh",<sup>142</sup> a long, narrow, flat sled without runners, made of thin boards curved back at the front end and often having side rails. It is not known when white settlers borrowed the concept of this device which Indians used for the work of transporting belongings over the snow, or how they transformed it into a vehicle of play, but in the early decades of the century it had become controversial in the city. On December 23, 1826 the Recorder printed a piece of legislation designed to eliminate, or at least control, what was perceived as a disorderly, troublesome use of urban property:

Whereas many accidents have happened by boys and other persons sliding and coasting down the hills in the streets of Halifax... Be it enacted by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council and Assembly ...it shall be lawful for the Justices of the Peace...from time to time, to make regulations for preventing boys and other persons, sliding or coasting on the snow or ice, in sleds or sleys, down the hills upon the streets of the town of Halifax, and suburbs thereof, to enforce the said regulations by imposing a fine not exceeding the sum of twenty shillings...the parent or

parents...shall be subject and liable to the fine or penalty...<sup>143</sup>

Declaring coasting illegal on city streets proved largely ineffective, however, since there were too few police to stop it,<sup>144</sup> and city urchins throughout the century amused themselves quite freely with anything that would slide down the steep streets to the harbour. In 1867 the Recorder noted that "coasting downhill is a very pleasing recreation in the eyes of the juvenile community...(but) there have been several instances...in which life has been endangered." The writer went on to relate how a horse coming down Cunard, startled by a lad on a sleigh, vaulted onto a wharf at the foot of the street and damaged a lot of window frames. And the very next night a woman was thrown violently to the ground by a sleigh on Duke Street. Police were instructed to be extra vigilant and sleighs of all description were piled in the police station. The paper reflected that "it may seem a small thing to take a sleigh away from an urchin ... (but) it is better that punishment be thus inflicted than to have life and property endangered."<sup>145</sup>

But confiscating the sleighs didn't significantly curb the problem either, since in 1882 - fifty-six years after the original legislation - this rather humorous account appeared:

...last evening a semi-intoxicated individual...was oscillating up Cogswell Street as a sleigh with two elderly urchins was coming down at a rate which would distance an I.C. express train in three minutes...an elderly lady escaped...just in time to let the sharpshooter remove the props from the...Temperance Society of one, who fell, and...the aroma of Islay Blend...escaped from the broken bottle in the Starboard coat-pocket.

This tale ends with the notation that the delinquents fled and two young men passing by amused themselves with the sleigh for some time. Since the owners didn't return, the men found themselves trying to sell the sleigh

cheap.<sup>146</sup>

The problem, then, amounted to one class's reckless pursuit of the sport in a forbidden area. On another level, coasting was adopted by the better classes and enjoyed fashionably in a stipulated location, often the steep slopes of the Citadel. "With the gentleman seated in front guiding the craft, the lady sits behind, holding on by the gentleman's waist. If your feet cut in the crust dry snow flew on your face, and there was a shriek from the fair companion. These mishaps were not always the result of accident ...the course of coasting, like true love, does not always run smooth."<sup>147</sup>

At coasting's most fashionable level, leaders of Halifax society could be found at gaily decorated sleigh gatherings. For example, one fine evening Sir John Ross, the Commander of the army, gave a toboggan party for over 400 guests on part of the estate of the Hon. Enos Collins on South Street. As well as serving refreshments, he also had the area brightly illuminated by Chinese lanterns.<sup>148</sup>

Much the same festive atmosphere accompanied the most "proper" sleigh rides. This pastime equalled a parade of the wealth and splendour of Halifax, often under the patronage of royalty or dignitaries, and amounted to a whole day's excursion, complete with luncheon, dinner, formal speeches, and much toasting. The British military, renowned for its splendid horses and sleighs, prominently organized and participated in these outings. In fact, one 1859 source explains that "[i]n Halifax a Tandem Club is formed every winter, chiefly among the officers of the garrison. No person can belong to the club unless he can sport a tandem team." This club, which averaged twenty or thirty teams, met two or three

times per week for drives round the city and out of town to dinner at Butler's Nine Mile House, always with "one of the fair daughters of Halifax" in each sleigh.<sup>149</sup>

In 1866 another review of the Tandem Club focused on the grandiose scene of "over 30 sleighs, the line comprising tandems, unicorns, single sleighs, gaily decorated...headed by the Governor's team, in which his Excellence was seated." Over the course of seven years the restriction on the kind of teams participating seems to have yielded, but this report is most interesting for its description of "the occupants composed of the aristocracy and other grades of society."<sup>150</sup> Metaphorically, the gentry in their finery led the lesser classes in a partaking of the healthy outdoors, ennobling and elevating their cultural taste, perhaps even encouraging them to work harder in order to attain similar manners and belongings.

However, not all excursions were on such a large scale; nor were they necessarily led by the upper class. Considering the prominence of horses in this society, it is to be expected that sleigh drives were popular with almost everyone and often occurred within a small group of any one class. As one writer maintained, wealth had no bearing on a person's penchant for enjoying sleighing.

Every one, however limited his means, contrived to establish some vehicle on runners, whether it was an ordinary truck for wood, to which dogs were yoked, casks sawn in two, the bodies of old gigs - indeed anything on which a man could sit, or to which an animal could be attached.<sup>151</sup>

Somewhere between the eloquence of His Excellency the Mayor leading a parade of gaily decorated tandem teams, and the roughly-hewn rig drawn by an old work horse, fell the club drives. Victorian culture with its

focus on associations and societies gave rise to self-help groups like the Mechanics Institutes, fire companies, and sporting clubs. Although some of these were led by the upper class, the members were often of the working class, drawn together for the camaraderie and sense of fraternity that offered reassurance in the uncertainty of an age when machines seemed a major threat. The correlation between work-mates and playmates would have loosely defined groups, and to some extent reinforced class boundaries. In this instance, sleigh drives were regularly held by groups like the Union Engine Company, the Halifax Rifles, church clubs, various businesses, and The Fire Brigade and Engine Company.<sup>152</sup>

On February 13, 1878 the Red Cap Snowshoe Club held a sleigh ride throughout the town and country in two large vehicles. A modest excursion, it peaked with dinner at Shatford's on the St. Margaret's Bay Road, accompanied by music from Clancy's Brass Band which had gone along in a third sled. Toasts were made to the Queen, the Governor General, and the Lieutenant-Governor before the group returned to the city around midnight. George Morton, an active member of the club, was in attendance,<sup>153</sup> and dignitaries were noticeably absent.

The Red Cap Snowshoe Club, officially established in 1874, was open to any man over twenty who was an amateur under the definition of the Maritime Provinces Amateur Athletic Association. All candidates for membership were balloted, and a one-fifth negative vote rejected them. Any man under twenty could be accepted if the vote was unanimous. The entrance fee was two dollars and fifty cents, with dues of twenty-five cents monthly. The annual membership had a limit of fifty, plus life members and honorary ones. Offices existed for Captain, Second Captain,

Secretary-Treasurer, and two other unspecified ones. The guidelines were very simple: no females; uniforms for official functions; an annual meeting on the second Tuesday of every December; a sleigh ride the first Saturday of each new year; weekly long and short races on Saturdays; recreational walks on various weekdays.

Although this "second oldest athletic club in Canada...initially consisted of many prominent male Haligonians,"<sup>154</sup> and maintained regulations like entrance balloting and regular dues, it was not exclusive to the prosperous. A light-hearted club, it initiated a new member during a sleigh ride by placing him in a blanket, covering him with snow, and tossing him high into the air, with fellow members USUALLY holding onto the blanket corners. Races of 50 yards, 100 yards, 200 yards, and 400 yards were held on Inglis Street, Spring Garden Road, Tower Road, and areas in Point Pleasant Park. The longest races, 7 2/5 miles, later changed to 7 1/16 miles, started on the Dartmouth Common and circled Bedford Basin. Winners received gold medals and post-race dinners were held at the Halifax Hotel, Hollis Street, or the Coston Hotel, Bedford.

One of the most successful racers was a man who moved to Halifax in 1899 after having been born in Port Dufferin in 1888. Tales of Sam Balcom's success on snowshoes constituted one of only two small marks he left on Halifax. The second is Balcom Park, a small area on the corner of Spring Garden Road and Robie Street, named in honor of an average citizen who kept it clean and free of rubbish for many years while living in an apartment building across the road.<sup>155</sup>

The foregoing description of the Red Cap Snow Shoe club, founded strictly for enjoyment rather than intellectual pursuit, illustrates the

availability of culture for the average citizen. Open and easily accessible, such sporting groups, with or without middle class participation, allowed the working class to maintain effective use of leisure time within an urban setting.

General sporting enthusiasm spanned the seasons; perhaps the only significant change accompanying the end of winter was the greater diversity of athletic activities available. What follows is an analysis of some of the main warm weather sports, in order to illustrate that they can be loosely divided into two groups: a large group which involved all classes, yet in specific roles; and a smaller, restricted group of "gentlemanly" sports. At the same time, we shall see that middle class reformers continued to "uplift" the masses by involving them in sport, but fiercely protected a terrain of their own in order to safeguard their own identity.

For Haligonians one of the principal components of their natural heritage has always been the sea. With major areas like the North West Arm, Bedford Basin, and Halifax Harbour within walking distance, it is understandable that aquatics in some form occupied large blocks of leisure time for everyone.

Nearly every family had a boat of some kind which they rowed or sailed in the harbour. The arrival of the ships of the North American fleet each spring signalled the beginning of the summer season of gaieties...Although few of the citizens had the pleasure of enjoying the cosy little teas and other entertainments on board, all could row in the vicinity of the British warships where they lingered listening to the band of flagships or the chantries of the sailors.<sup>156</sup>

Besides using their crafts for the pleasures of early evening rowing, citizens frequently engaged in casual races, accounts of which appear regularly in the papers of the time. On June 12, 1869 a whaler race was

reported to have been held successfully "a few nights ago". Entrance fee was one dollar and the winner took all. This was followed by a rowing race.<sup>157</sup> The scanty, unspecific details testify to the informality and unscheduled nature of these events. On September 20, 1869 the Recorder covered a whaler race with four of the bum-boat men of the North-end slip opposing four fishermen for a sixty dollar prize. This 11 a.m. start was from a boat moored off Horgan's Wharf, round George's Island and back, with the first team winning by one minute, thirty seconds.<sup>158</sup> And also, in 1874 the Belle Air College Crew in the "Bluenose" competed against a crew from the North End in the "Lady Dufferin", from Cunard's Wharf around George's Island and back, with the former winning by six lengths.

Although casual competitions persisted throughout these decades, on a much larger scale there were boat clubs, the Royal Halifax Yacht Squadron, the annual Championship of Halifax Harbour Race, frequent aquatic carnivals, formidable rowing crews, and several individual oarsmen who reached international fame. Close examination of these reveals that, just as members of all classes enjoyed casual rowing matches, so could they be found in these more structured developments, although the moneyed classes tended to be pre-dominant and the roles were often class-specific.

Perhaps one of the most vivid illustrations of the Victorian attitude that people of the highest status should set the norms and standards which the lower classes could emulate, and by which they would improve themselves, is to be found in the 1837 forming of the Halifax Yacht Club, which later became the Royal Nova Scotian Yacht Squadron. Made up of representatives of the town, garrison, and navy to arrange and manage regattas, as well as stimulate other aquatic sports, this club sought

ultimately "to encourage the fisherman and mechanic and the improvement of boat-building and navigation."<sup>159</sup> This idea of developing the culture of the higher class in order to raise the level of taste of their social inferiors was clearly emphasized by a correspondent of the Novascotian. He commented that the cost of regattas was borne by the wealthy and ultimately came into the hands of the mechanic. Regattas would help to improve the models and increase the number of sailing boats; and, above all, such scenes of manly competition were "necessary substitutes for the stirring events and ennobling associations of older countries in developing local patriotism."<sup>160</sup>

By 1857 the Halifax Yacht Club had grown to nearly ninety members whose elegant club-room over the Merchants Exchange Buildings sported a large painting by John O'Brien showing the harbour and the twenty-one yachts comprising the club. A typical festivity was the August 20th picnic on McNab's Island with forty sea-faring craft under the patronage of Sir Houston and Lady Stewart. Dancing was followed by dinner at a table fifty yards long "and bountifully furnished - none of your trash, mind you - under a magnificent shade of hardwood trees in the long avenue leading from the wharf to the residence of the late Peter McNab, Esq."<sup>161</sup>

In spite of this elitism, the fact remains that this club and others like the Halifax Boating Club did promote recreation and a healthy use of leisure time without the tavern atmosphere. Under patronage of the wealthy, all classes could man the boats which participated in a variety of races held frequently on Halifax harbour. On August 15, 1869 the Recorder gave a detailed account of a series of fourteen races held under the auspices of the Halifax Boating Club. Six-oared gigs, four-oared

gigs, wherries, whalers, flats with two pairs of paddles, sculls, Rob Roy canoes, and ships' boats lined up for the various events which were open to all, to amateurs specifically, or to members of the club only. Prize money ranged from five to thirty dollars. One category even allowed for "canoes for Indians and squaws", but the writer explained that "[t]here were no entries for this race, the aborigines apparently not hankering for \$5."<sup>162</sup>

Besides competing themselves, all classes of society could act as spectators, cheering on their favorite boats. In fact, during the summer months the prevalent attitude, perhaps from a wealth of civic pride, seems to have been that everyone had a right to attend the races. A brief newspaper reference on July 17, 1865 suggests that the forthcoming scull race for the Championship of Halifax Harbour be held at seven or eight in the morning when the people haven't yet started work, so they can be there.<sup>163</sup> And a report on the 1869 regatta says "nearly every office and shop throughout the city was closed, and the inhabitants of the town poured onto the wharves to witness the races."<sup>164</sup>

However, civic pride in local oarsmen and a desire to uplift the common townspeople with lessons in good sportsmanship did not exclude some minor resentment of the public's apparently unappreciative acceptance of free entertainment. By February, 1871 the newspaper began to carry criticism directed at the Halifax Yacht Club for its difficulties in establishing firm plans for the Aquatic Carnival slated for the time period of August 29th to September 1st. After a particularly disparaging column in The Chronicle, a member of the Yacht Club leaped to that body's defence, saying the problem was to be found

in the public's unwillingness to subscribe as liberally as they ought, or, in proportion to their means...If our citizens do not know enough to invest a few hundred dollars in an object which will certainly put over half a million in circulation, and benefit all classes in the community...it's a mistake and unfair to expect the Club to do the work and find the means also, when the real and only advantage will be derived by the public outside the club.<sup>165</sup>

This obviously overlooked the original purpose of the club's founding, as well as the prestige involved in helping organize a successful event.

Eventually, the sponsorship which led to the massive spectacle of the Aquatic Carnival of 1871, a four-day gala affair that involved all citizens, as well as brought in thousands of tourists to pack local hotels and boarding houses, came from newspapers, businessmen, sporting enthusiasts, and clubs, besides the Halifax Yacht Club. The Recorder valued the festival to attract strangers to Halifax for business and "to increase the interest in water sports and to encourage the youth of Nova Scotia to take part in them."<sup>166</sup>

And participate they did! The races, which started and ended at the north of the harbor off the Dockyard and the Yacht Clubhouse, accommodated every conceivable kind of craft: fishing whalers, wherries, square-sterned boats, fishing-sail boats, provincial coasting and fishing vessels of different tonnages, four-oared gigs, racing whalers, man-of-war cutters, yachts over twelve tons, over and under six tons, tub-races, man-of-war launches, and fishing squids pulled by fishermen for prizes varying from one dollar to two hundred dollars, and from a spy glass to a silver cup.<sup>167</sup> Those who didn't compete watched from "the banks, stands, wharves, and every available spot" for hours.<sup>168</sup> Thus, whether as organizers, racers, or spectators, all classes of Haligonians got involved in the carnival.

Inevitably, sports must provide heroes - those who because of talent shine above the rest - and rowing in nineteenth century Halifax was no exception. Because talent is classless, working class people could be incorporated into middle class sports, although not always on an equal basis. For instance, George Brown, an oarsman from the tiny fishing village of Herring Cove, became, with the backing of wealthy patrons, a local hero, and eventually went on to achieve international recognition as an athlete. Two levels of society worked together to attain this prominence, but from entirely different motives. The oarsman rowed because his natural ability allowed him a sense of physical pleasure and self-realization. He was supported by all Halifaxians but, most remarkably, by those in positions of power whose urban pride and awareness of the prestige the athlete would bring to his home city overcame their usual class snobbery.

George Brown was born in 1839 in a small fishing settlement within a few miles of the city. The Morning Herald in 1889 romanticized it. "Reared within sight of the fishing boats of their sturdy fathers, they (master scullers) heard the ceaseless rattle of the rowlocks from morn till night. George Brown and Warren Smith, two of the best known scullers in their time...were fishermen and the sons of fishermen, who received their early training in their father's crafts."<sup>169</sup> Years of practice were largely responsible for the development of talent which would make Brown a star. In his early years he worked as a harbor pilot, rowing out in all weather to be the first to reach a vessel spotted moving into the harbour. Almost constantly, this meant unofficial competitions with fellow pilots.

In 1858 Dr. Charles Cogswell, a prominent Haligonian, offered a belt, "a glittering band of ornately worked silver, about three inches wide, on a blue velvet ground,"<sup>170</sup> for the annual scull race known as the Championship of Halifax Harbour. The first man to win it five times was to take permanent possession. In 1863 George Brown lost his first bid for the belt, not due to lack of physical prowess, but because "he rowed in a boat which was improperly made, and being one-sided, sprained his wrist."<sup>171</sup> Alone, the humble fisherman lacked the resources to excel at his sport. With the subsequent aid of Mr. James Pryor who was "in mercantile pursuits (and) identified himself with George in the early years, trained him for nearly all his matches, and backed him with money," he never again lost the race for the Championship of Halifax Harbour and took permanent possession of the belt in 1868.

Nowhere is there evidence of Brown's desire to use his athletic victories for his own social advancement. Press reports time after time focused on his humility and genuine attachment to his roots in the small fishing community. On August 8, 1868 the gathering at the Legislative Council Chamber of the Province House for the presentation of the championship belt was attended by such dignitaries as John Tobin, the Commodore of the Royal Halifax Yacht Club; His Excellency, Lieutenant-Governor Sir Hastings Doyle; Chief Justice William Young; Sir John A. MacDonald and other members of the Dominion Cabinet; members of the Legislature and City Council. Yet, the press reported "the tanned young man with brown eyes, brown hair and a brown beard...made a favorable impression on all by his grace and modesty in accepting flattering comments and in submitting to the careful examination of the curious."<sup>172</sup>

A similar character reference appears in Harry Piers' 1926 notes for a speech about this oarsman, "a true British sportsman - a clean, true one - honest, generous, unassuming, exerting his utmost to win...Herring Cove, N.S., in fact whole of Canada may well feel proud of this great oarsman and this good, honest, sturdy man. He did honour to his country."<sup>173</sup>

Brown's rise to fame bestowed upon him the powers of an agent of cultural change. "It was not till after George Brown's appearance, when the wonders of his swiftness on the water began to be noticed beyond the confines of the province, that single sculling here assumed any prominence in sporting circles. Every race in which Brown was a contestant attracted immense throngs of people, who crowded into Halifax by thousands, and the events were the occasion here for wild and universal excitement."<sup>174</sup> It was undoubtedly a pursuit of tourist dollars as well as prestige that inspired "some leading citizens, who worked it (the idea for an 1871 Quoddy Carnival) up vigorously and carried it out in a manner to their everlasting credit."<sup>175</sup> Reported to have been "one of the grandest and most successful events of the kind that ever stirred the sporting world,"<sup>176</sup> this carnival attracted the very best oarsmen, including two Englishmen.

Brown went on to win many races and eventually was declared Champion Sculler of America, but on July 8, 1875 at age thirty-six, he died in Saint John after contracting a cold. The impact of this humble fisherman of Herring Cove who witnessed thousands travel "by foot, by carriage and by horseback and by special trains which ran from Richmond to Four Mile House beginning at 6:15 a.m., to see him defeat John Biglin, the American champion, over a five mile course in 1873,"<sup>177</sup> lasted one hundred years.

On July 13, 1975 a celebration for "the Centennial of our World Champion Oarsman" was held at St. James' Anglican Church, Herring Cove. The Honourable A. Garnet Brown, Minister of Recreation, unveiled a plaque in honor of the oarsman, which was followed by an address by Dr. C. Bruce Ferguson, Provincial Archivist, and an expression of gratitude by Captain C.K. Darrach. The pulpit inside the church had been donated by friends of Brown's fifty years earlier.<sup>178</sup> A century beyond his death he still exacted respect and attention from dignitaries of the city to which he brought glory.

Just as every family had a boat of some description, one would assume that in a peninsular city virtually everyone would swim, or at least capitalize on the close proximity of the ocean for bathing. Such, however, was not the case. One must remember that the North West Arm was unrecognized and remote until the end of the century, except to the few who lived there, so the harbour side of the city was the only area easily within reach of water enthusiasts. Around mid-century and through the years immediately following Confederation, people from all walks of life were swimming. Boys used empty spots among the docks, and the areas beyond North St. at one end of the town and South St. at the other were undeveloped and accessible to all. The fashionable crowd sported straw hats and linen jackets as they went down to the shore.<sup>179</sup>

A need to maintain public decency and decorum, and to exert control over people randomly swimming where and when they chose, soon led to legislation to regulate the sport as well as its commercialization. The Recorder reported in June of 1869 that a man named Reid attained City Council's approval to lease "two water lots North and South for the

purpose of mooring floating baths, for a term of not more than ten years." Council would donate two hundred fifty dollars per annum for their upkeep. Reid's company had to agree to keep them open to the public, neat and clean, in good repair, "and shall open the swimming portion of the baths to the poor on Saturday afternoons from two o'clock until eight."<sup>180</sup> At all other times there was a nominal charge. Legislation, restricted facilities, and entrance fees automatically operate to separate the classes. The phrase, "open to the public", was not as magnanimous as first glance might imply, a fact that is supported by the reflection that such a facility would attract tourists, and by Blakeley's reference to the city baths which "a large number of ladies patronized...between 10 a.m. and four in the afternoon, when the gentlemen were busy at their stores and offices."<sup>181</sup>

With industrialization, factories and plants that developed on the waterfront gradually eliminated places for swimming. In addition, commercial organizations, needing security for their property, restricted public access. In this conflict between capital and popular leisure, there was no doubt of the victor. By 1882 city ordinances were passed against bathing in public places. The press lamented that "each year it gets harder to find a spot to bathe. Sandy Cove Bathing establishment has opened in Dartmouth and has helped to supply the want, but getting there is inconvenient. And there is a considerable class of the population in want of washing to whom the small sum needful for a dip in Sandy Cove is a pretty effectual bar." By this time the two private baths built earlier had been destroyed in a gale and the cry was for the city to install two bathing machines, one at the north end of the city and one at the south,

and charge five cents entrance. "Any small deficit would be promptly repaid in the increased comfort, cleanliness, health, and facility for learning to swim afforded our citizens and citizenesses."<sup>182</sup> However, those in positions of control did not come to the aid of the general public until 1898 when a grant of eight thousand dollars from the city finally built two public baths, one in the north end below Wellington Barracks and one in the south at Green Bank.<sup>183</sup>

But not everyone had to wait until the city finally provided these facilities. Those citizens whose wealth and position afforded them membership in private clubs were never deprived of the ocean. For instance, in 1885 the Lorne Club acquired permission from Dr. Charles Cogswell to use the old Royal Halifax Yacht Club property which they renovated and painted for the use of their rowing club. Among the prominent citizens who founded this group were George A. MacKenzie, manager of the Halifax Sugar Refinery, and his brother, Stanley MacKenzie, later President of Dalhousie University. In addition to a fine wharf, the club also sported a bathing beach, spread with sand taken from a ship that had used it as ballast.<sup>184</sup>

Another sport in which class conflict is discernible in the 19th century was horseracing. To trace the development of this sport, and to examine the crusade to restrict it that led to its decline, reveals a clear instance of the working class fighting for its own terrain.

Horseracing on the Halifax Common provides an example of one class condoning - even grooming - an aspect of culture, only to abandon and eventually condemn it at a later time. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the elite of Halifax encouraged horseracing, founding

the Halifax Turf Club in 1825 and holding races until 1846 "to relieve the monotony and tedium of Halifax society."<sup>105</sup> These gala racing events included military bands, footraces, booths selling food and alcohol, tents for dancing and card playing. Sometimes visiting circuses set up on the Common to stretch the festivities out over several days. A description in the July 22, 1826 Recorder paints a colourful picture which at once portrays class segregation but verifies the presence of all levels of society.

The races commenced on Thursday at 3 o'clock...The citadel hill presented, from the course, a very interesting sight, being crowded by the fair of Halifax and gentlemen in every variety of summer costume. The scene below was rather a more motley, disorderly appearance - ladies in their carriages - gentlemen on horseback - carts - waggons - hunters - gingerbread women with their baskets - booths filled with the drinking and the drunken; and the cheers of the multitude as the horses that went swiftly round formed altogether a scene of confusion which can better be seen than described.<sup>106</sup>

This jovial description of such confusion gradually gave way to a growing middle class condemnation of these potentially uncontrollable gatherings on urban property. The informal atmosphere of people milling around, or indulging in gambling, drinking, and wild, frolicsome dancing defied the authorities' need for control and order. Add to this the 1831 founding of the first Temperance Society in Halifax, of whose members many were clergymen who preached temperance and opposed horseracing, and the battle lines were drawn.

Middle class businessmen, merchants, master tradesmen, and lawyers set out to improve the values of the lower class by abolishing a sport which not only encompassed immoral pursuits associated with drink, but also attracted pickpockets and prostitutes. Many of these reformers reflected the growing concern for cruelty to animals which eventually would lead to

the establishment of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). In 1834 a grand jury of these upstanding Haligonians passed a resolution urging the legislature to prohibit horseracing within ten miles of the town, since it was "injurious to the morals of the lower class."<sup>187</sup> Although there is no further record of this petition, Temperance advocates continued their protest through local newspapers and public gatherings, and in 1846, when sanctioned horseracing came to an end, the reformers seemingly had won the day. Not without resistance, however. Although middle class reformers were responsible for the decline of the sport, the battle was waged until 1864. The intervening eighteen years, though, had witnessed concessions made on both sides.

Prohibiting the races on the Common increased their frequency elsewhere. It also led to the construction of new sites. Small-scale racing was popular across the classes. Indeed, it had not been racing itself but the debauchery associated with rowdy public gatherings that reformers feared. Racing for racing's sake was readily accepted. Even gambling between gentlemen was condoned, as witnessed by this 1854 advertisement for a race on the eastern road announcing that "a sulky trotting match will come off tomorrow (Nov. 21st), Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock between a mare...owned by Thomas Ryan Esq. and Mr. John Hunter's horse...distance, 5 miles....The stakes are \$100 a side."<sup>188</sup>

Although small-scale races were generally condoned, the debate over the re-establishment of large events on the Common was periodically waged in the legislature in response to petitions and public protests. The issue just would not die. In June, 1857 Mr. James King, who owned a stagecoach line, unsuccessfully petitioned Halifax City Council for

permission to use part of the Common as a race course. On January 15, 1859 a letter to the Recorder argued that the elite had the theatre as amusement, so the citizens of Halifax should have their horseracing on their land, the Common.<sup>189</sup> When the authorities failed to yield to this and other submissions, trotting races were held on the ice of Bedford Basin beginning in 1859. The estimated two thousand spectators returning from the races were in such a state of revelry that the Presbyterian Witness with true Temperance scorn declared that "our own decided opinion is that they be put down by the strong arm of the law."<sup>190</sup> In 1860 a petition to Halifax City Council suggested horseracing as entertainment during that year's visit by the Prince of Wales. Supported by Alderman Leahy, the petitioners were motivated by a desire to entertain royalty as grandly as possible. The press, however, felt racing had to be an established, annual event if it were to be managed respectably. Otherwise, it would be "just nothing better than to furnish the evilly disposed with an excuse to perpetrate, en masse, all sorts of immoralities."<sup>191</sup>

Council was unwilling to re-instate the annual competition, however. Nor did the program for the Prince of Wales' visit include horseracing, largely because of the resistance from temperance people.<sup>192</sup>

Three years later in the fall of 1863 an exceptional circumstance arose where a new Lieutenant-Governor, Major General Doyle, gave permission for racing on the Common, on the military portion where exercises were regularly held. Highly policed and controlled against any degree of rowdiness or drinking, this undertaking should not be construed as bending under the pressure of working class petitions. A year later a new

Lieutenant-Governor who opposed horseracing arrived,<sup>193</sup> and the sport was once again abolished.

During this time Tower Road emerged as another popular spot, where all quiet and respectable spectators were welcome to attend. The Halifax Reporter on October 8, 1868 described a trotting match held there between Dr. MacKay's "Eureka" and J.A. Grant's "Spot". With stakes at \$500 a side, there can be no doubt as to which class was actively gambling. A concern for the proprieties of such events led the writer to add that "[a]lthough a large number of people were present at the race yesterday, everything passed off quietly, and the best of order was preserved."<sup>194</sup> Similarly, an August 19, 1869 advertisement invited "the sporting public of this city" to visit the Tower Road any morning or evening to see trotting and galloping matches between horses in harness and under saddle. But "trucks and carts are cautioned to keep off the road, as the sidewalks are sufficiently spacious for their purpose. Old and feeble pedestrians and children use other streets."<sup>195</sup>

State regulation of the public horseracing whose large crowds portended class conflict signified an application of political power to promote one form of leisure activity over others. It also served to segregate leisure along class lines. Fashionable citizens utilized the Halifax Riding Grounds in the field between Quinpool Road, Oxford Street, Chebucto Road, Chebucto Lane, and what is now Monastery Lane.<sup>196</sup> Writing of the refinement of this setting, the Halifax Carnival Echo explained

[t]here is no city of its size on this continent where can be seen such an assemblage of beauty, fashion, and wealth as at the Riding Club's grounds on race days. The programmes always include seven or eight events, with numerous entries. The rich and brilliant suits of the gentlemen jockeys, whose respective colors are seen at the throat or wrists of many an elegant and fashionably attired lady. The immense throng of people, and the fine military band

music...complete a picture that once seen is never forgotten.<sup>197</sup>

In 1880 as part of the Halifax Exhibition the six best horses in Nova Scotia, ridden by professional jockeys, competed here for the Citizens' Cup. "The ladies could amuse themselves by shopping in stores where fall merchandise was temptingly arranged and by visiting friends and relatives while the gentlemen were at the races where there was much betting."<sup>198</sup> As well, in 1891 during the celebration of Queen Victoria's birthday those attending the trotting races at the Riding Grounds "were disappointed ... because there was no band to enliven the opening of the racing season."<sup>199</sup>

A more subtle regulation of racing accompanied the founding of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in 1876. This agency grew out of a middle class concern for kindness and the belief that if the working class would show respect to their animals they would also extend it to their social superiors. Concerned with answering complaints such as the one contained in a letter to a newspaper editor in 1882 lamenting "the wanton cruelty to which some of the horses were subjected" during races at the Polo Grounds,<sup>200</sup> and also routinely attending races elsewhere, such as one from Nine Mile House to the Willow Tree in which the time was very fast, but there was no ill usage,<sup>201</sup> this society also undertook the care of neglected animals - neglect often borne more from indifference or ignorance than a lack of resources. For instance, a casebook entry for February 20, 1895 reads, "J.W.F. reports that the street railway horses, 130, 'went without their dinner today.' Went up and found over 10 tons of hay and a large quantity of chopped food."<sup>202</sup>

Given the importance of horses to this society, whether in work or play, and what Thompson has termed "the working-class obsession with

horses,"<sup>203</sup> their vehement defence of their leisure terrain is understandable. In other sports, such as riflery and cycling, the struggle for control over leisure never existed, since working class participation was limited.

The Nova Scotia Rifle Association, organized in 1864, held matches at the Bedford Range. An examination of the prizes donated, their presenters, and the recipients mentioned by the press, reveals this to have been a prestigious, middle class sport strongly supported by the military. The extent of patronage attached to the sport reveals its elitist character. The association's 1865 prize list, for example, mentions these and other awards: the Cogswell Challenge Cup (value 80 guineas) presented by Major James C. Cogswell to Major D. MacDonald; the Ladies Cup (50 pounds sterling) presented by Lady MacDonald and the ladies of N.S. to Sergeant George A. Sanford; a silver-plated tea service by Charlie Laurie to Major W.H. Creighton. It is also noted with gratitude that His Excellency, Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, extended his patronage for the day.<sup>204</sup>

Founded by wealthy benefactors and supported by government donations, the Rifle Association initially appears as "gentlemen's terrain", except for occasional unheralded winners and spectators of more common social origins. There were members of the general public who were not only active participants, but claimed prizes over the more noticeable social figures. One attempt to explain this notes that "the arm that guides the plough and otherwise tills the earth must necessarily possess the nerve and muscle against which dry goods men, who seldom handle a heavier implement than a yard-stick, and professional men, who, like ourselves,

wield only the pen, can hardly expect to make a good appearance."<sup>205</sup>

Although the reports vary, it seems that the number of registered competitors decreased drastically from 1865 to 1869. The Secretary of the Association reported in a letter to Sir William Young that the usual number present was around 260, but after the political agitation associated with Confederation in 1867, the numbers dropped sharply.<sup>206</sup> On August 25, 1869 the Recorder explained that only 140 registered for the first event in the annual competition, down from 240 the year before. It blamed the decline on public spectators who lost interest in the sport or were too busy with their businesses. In addition, fewer and smaller prizes were being donated, so fewer competitors were interested.<sup>207</sup>

Cycling was another sport that had limited involvement by working people in the initial stages. Typically high "new fad" prices put the velocipede - nicknamed "bone-shaker" because its airless large front tire and much smaller rear one couldn't cushion the bump - out of reach of the general public. In 1869 only the more financially comfortable citizens were able to take advantage of the indoor rinks where young men could take lessons in mounting and driving the new machines. The only solution for enthusiasts unable to afford their own velocipedes was to use the free ones provided in the gymnasium of the Sons of Temperance.<sup>208</sup>

It wasn't until the 1890's, the decade of the Great Bicycle Boom, that prices lowered sufficiently to bring the bicycle within reach of the average person. Once the indulgence of the wealthy, riding now became a pleasurable pursuit for almost everyone. Bicycle clubs, race meets, riding displays, tours, and outings were the norm. The Halifax Herald on May 7, 1893 reminded everyone that the Ramblers Cycle Club would hold its first Saturday run to the park that day.

As there are about seventy-five members in the club now, and among them a number of pneumatic types, the parade should be a pretty sight. Seventy-five wheels placed three abreast and in close order would occupy a space of about 250 yards or in single file nearly half a mile. This would make a sight worth seeing. Every wheelman in the city who can possibly do so should be out. Cyclists meet at the Public Garden gate at 2:45 p.m.<sup>208</sup>

At a bicycle auction in Halifax in 1896 a used machine sold for twelve to fourteen dollars and a new, top-of-the-line machine went for one hundred or one hundred twenty-five. "Agents and dealers were appointed by all the major manufacturers in small towns across the province and fierce advertising campaigns between competing dealers began."<sup>210</sup>

An effort to maintain class distinctions saw an intense focus on riding fashion and decorum. In this last decade of the century when cycling became popular for women, a couple went out "upon a wheeling spin". The gentleman carried a length of cord to fasten to her lamp bracket or brake rod by a spring swivel in order to tow her up a hill. At the crest he dropped back to ride by her side.<sup>211</sup> But as the decade progressed and cheaper machines flooded the market, the more fashionable crowd gradually yielded this cultural pursuit to the general public. In April, 1897 when a four-day cycle show was held at the Masonic Hall, people from outside came on excursion railway tickets. Everything concerned with the wheel was on display with an admission fee of only ten cents and an Italian string orchestra playing in the background.<sup>212</sup> As hordes of people finally gained access to the sport of cycling, "fashionable people abandoned the bicycle to take up a newer toy, the electric runabout car."<sup>213</sup>

Another activity which persisted in various forms throughout these decades and whose lack of necessary equipment and facilities made it more

accessible than rifling or cycling, was track and field. Before any sports grounds were built, the area of sidewalk on Spring Garden Road beside the Public Gardens was used for foot races on warm summer evenings "after the city had obligingly coated it with ashes and undertook to keep it in good condition."<sup>214</sup> The physical appearance of the street was improved further when the city planted the row of trees that presently skirt the walk. Sports-minded people would gather to cheer their favorites who often competed for prizes offered by city merchants. The inducement of prizes, an environment where men from all backgrounds could display their talent, a central urban location maintained by the authorities, and a ready audience of promenaders, made this one of the most democratic sports.

So easily organized were track and field events that they were frequently featured at festive gatherings of all classes. Annual picnics of societies like St. George's always included athletic events. "Wheelbarrow races, sack races, climbing a greased pole, rolls and treacle, greased-pig races, and blindfold races...were seriously contested, with the inevitable wagers on the side...running high leap, the running long legs, and vaulting"<sup>215</sup> were the common joy of every man. And, at the more sophisticated level, dignitaries and royalty were often entertained by displays of physical prowess. When the Prince of Wales visited Halifax in 1860, nineteen separate competitions in which anyone could participate were staged for his amusement. Some of the highlights were: 500 yard races open to Nova Scotians only, to all comers, and to boys 16 to 18 only; a 200 yard hurdle race; high jump; wide jump; vaulting; throwing sledge; Indian games; bows and arrows; and a greased pig race.<sup>216</sup>

The military also avidly pursued track and field. George Morton reports how on August 1, 1878 the 20th Regiment in Garrison celebrated "Minden" day by: throwing the cricket ball; putting shot; a hundred yard race; wide jump; high step and jump; high jump; half mile race; three-legged race; Veteran's race; 300 yard hurdle race; mile race; marching order race; water pail race; tug of war, and so forth.<sup>217</sup>

As well as the larger gatherings there were also individual feats. In July, 1867 urban pride was much bolstered when large crowds gathered at Thornfield, near the North Commons at the west end of Cunard Street. Alfred Elson, who walked 1000 miles in 1000 hours, so amazed the spectators that they purchased a gold medal which was given to the star athlete by Miss Leahy, daughter of Thomas Leahy, Thornfield's owner.<sup>218</sup>

Equally important were the one-on-one challenge races for prize purses. For instance, in 1882 a mile race at the Polo Ground on Quinpool Road between William Inglis of the Acadia Club and Joseph Smith of the Social Club was run for twenty-five dollars a side, but the crowd reached such a height of excitement that they bet five hundred dollars on the outcome.<sup>219</sup> A sense of the importance attached to one-on-one challenges can be seen in press announcements like the following. "I challenge J. Cheshire, of Y. and L. Regiment, to run me a 100 yard race for \$5 a side. Challenge to remain open two weeks. W. Thomas, Quinpool Rd."<sup>220</sup> Hints of the historic, honour-bound tradition of duelling can be discerned here, and in the forty-three line letter to the Sporting Editor of the Recorder, dated August 3, 1888. In that letter I.J. Maguire complained that he challenged E. Condon to a foot race after Condon expressed an interest in such a competition, a fact that he has now denied in "a very evasive and

unsatisfactory letter." Maguire alleges that Condon came to him a few weeks ago and suggested the former join him in his division of the Union Engine Co. so they could train together and "'clear out New Brunswick!'" He says Condon now has flimsy excuses for not running and hopes not to ever hear of him again unless it is to accept the challenge.<sup>221</sup> Casual challenges and individual races obviously warranted serious attention by both the general public and the press.

In due course restrictions symbolized by club houses, regulation tracks, fenced-in grounds, admission charges, and grandstands shaped the face of track and field, thereby automatically segregating classes. The informal atmosphere of people standing around yielded to specific seating arrangements within an enclosed area in order to establish middle class order and control.

Called "the most important of the amateur sporting organizations in Halifax in the late nineteenth century,"<sup>222</sup> the Wanderers Amateur Athletic Association was organized in 1882 and encouraged many outstanding athletes in track, cricket, hockey, football, baseball, bowles, lacrosse, tennis, quoits, rowing, fencing, and boxing. Its property fronting on Sackville Street was part of the original area designated in 1763 as the Common, "common land for the public good"; specifically, the intent had been to provide firewood and pasturage for the inhabitants of the town. However, as the city authorities developed sections of this area over time, less and less was available for public use, until the original 235 acres was reduced to the present 70.<sup>223</sup> The Wanderers' facility became yet one more encroachment on this land, and so successful were its athletes that in 1886 city council granted the club a long lease of the property at a

nominal rental.<sup>224</sup> This arrangement lasted until the city took over the grounds and buildings in 1958.

A vivid depiction of the ninth annual games of the Wanderers A.A. Club is found in the scrapbook of W.A. Henry, a Halifax barrister who excelled in football, baseball, hockey, track, and cricket. The report extols the events which

were held on the club's beautiful grounds on Saturday afternoon, and were a great success...About 1200 spectators were present. The grand and free stands were full, and those who were not lucky enough to secure seats lined the wire fence, which encloses the track...A very large proportion of the spectators were ladies, and the strong sprinkling of light and pretty colored costumes among the spectators made a striking effect. St. Patrick's band were stationed at the southern end of the grand stand and performed a nice programme of music.<sup>225</sup>

The high percentage of women in the audience, together with the patronage of Lieutenant-Governor Daly who presented the awards, was seen by the Victorians to add an element of respectability. Sport reformers hoped to elevate the tastes of the masses by establishing a cross-class, two gender setting such as this. However, the idea of a shared culture, by all for all, failed, a fact represented by the obvious segregation and precise roles at these Wanderers' games. There can be no doubt of who occupied the best seats in the grandstand and who stood outside the fence. One need also remember that commercialization of sport, while streamlining the people coming through the gate, was also influential in determining who was most eager to play for the awards. And playing for monetary reasons defied the reformers' dream of providing the sporting environment in which the working class would be morally instructed in character-building values such as cooperative teamwork and fair play.

Such was the urban pride in the success of the Wanderers' Club that civic authorities in 1896 approved construction of an elaborate new clubhouse to front on Sackville Street opposite the Public Gardens. The Morning Chronicle declared that the front would be as artistic as possible, with a plot for flowers. The facility would include a large, well-equipped gym, an assembly room, baths, dressing rooms, members' boxes, and bicycle racks. Commercially prosperous, the club had a surplus of over three thousand dollars in its treasury and was heralded as having done "such an immense amount of good for clean amateur sports in Halifax since its organization."<sup>226</sup>

Just as some sports like track and field sought to involve the working class, (albeit on an unequal basis), so did other leisure pursuits actively safeguard against cross-class participation. Private facilities catering to the middle class and the elite avidly sought to reserve gentlemen's sports for gentlemen and, in some instances, eventually their ladies. The 1872 view of Britain's Sporting Gazette maintained "[s]ports nominally open to gentlemen amateurs must be confined to those who have a real right to that title, and men of a class considerably lower must be given to understand that the facts of their being well conducted and civil and never having run for money are NOT sufficient to make a man a gentleman as well as an amateur."<sup>227</sup> And the Referee in 1878 declared "[t]he fact that a man is exceptionally brilliant as a player is in no way an excuse for the assumption of unwarranted social rank; quite the reverse."<sup>228</sup> Reflections of these attitudes can be found in the pursuance of archery, tennis, croquet, and quoits in nineteenth century Halifax, some of which were located in the Horticultural (later Public) Gardens.

These Gardens, the full history and use of which will be covered in chapter three, had originally been proposed in 1837 to afford the public a healthy outdoor space for strolling while appreciating the horticultural display. However, by the time the area was officially opened, its use was already restricted to members and guests of the private Horticultural Society. "The public at large could come in free only one day each week."<sup>229</sup> In 1874 the society's debt led it to sell the property to City Council for fifteen thousand dollars. It was then combined with the area lying immediately north of it in the shade of the Citadel, an open space along Sackville St. where the Common Committee in 1867 had begun to grow trees and shrubs. Thus, the city now had sixteen acres for its Gardens. Financing came in the form of a grant of two thousand dollars from City Council. Only then, in August of 1874, were the grounds truly opened to the public.<sup>230</sup> Finances and not a magnanimous gesture of sharing with other Halifaxians had led to this relinquishing of control.

By the 1890's the garden had been elaborately developed and "[a]lthough all were admitted free of charge, the audience usually consisted of nursemaids and their charges, young gentlemen fond of flirting and lawn tennis, and the fair ladies of Halifax who promenaded the outer walks to the music of Strauss and Sullivan."<sup>231</sup> The stigma of elitism would not have instantly evaporated with the elimination of admission charges and hours.

Thus, any sports undertaken on these grounds would have been the terrain of the middle class and far removed from any others who, at best, became spectators: "Girls and boys with pockets full of bread...to feed the ducks... Weary adults rested on benches beneath spreading trees ...

Others watched the pretty young ladies and officers playing croquet or lawn tennis or shooting their bows and arrows at the targets of the Archery Club."<sup>232</sup> This was very much in keeping with the aim of the leading townspeople who, during the formation of the Horticultural Society, had "promised to blend pleasure and profit in its (the Society's) progress to create and elevate taste."<sup>233</sup> However, the Victorian ideal of developing the elite culture in order that it might filter down for the benefit to the classes below, couldn't possibly work in a setting and atmosphere which prohibited access to the very people it sought to improve.

The Gardens were the location for two other genteel sports; archery and lawn tennis. "Archery was the great women's sport after the middle of the Victorian Age. It was not too strenuous and it gave a good figure a chance to show itself to best advantage in a dashing costume...in graceful and genteel attitudes."<sup>234</sup> In the 1860's and early 1870's this sport, under the auspices of the Halifax Archery and Croquet Club, could be witnessed on a special section of the Horticultural Gardens reserved for its gatherings. On October 13, 1869 the Recorder reported details of the "final prize meeting for the season held yesterday at the Horticultural Gardens." The list of successful competitors was provided "through the courtesy of the Hon. Secretary, Lieutenant Rule." As well, awards were presented by His Honor, Sir Hastings Doyle and Vice Admiral Wellesley.<sup>235</sup>

Similar elitist overtones are found in the depiction of the first Lawn Tennis Court in Canada which used the same area as the Halifax Archery and Croquet Club after 1874. Two military bands played at their games each

week.<sup>236</sup> The Halifax Carnival Echo in 1889 praised the Lawn Tennis Club's "delightful courts in the Public Gardens" for the five o'clock teas that were furnished to its members and its value in "affording as it does opportunity for the ladies to distinguish themselves."<sup>237</sup>

Other sports that became almost the private terrain of the genteel class sprung up elsewhere in the city. Ladies and gents played golf at Collins' field and later the Gorsebrook Golf Club. In the 1890's when archery gave way to tennis, matches were held on private lawns and at the South End Lawn Tennis Court. "Every fine afternoon fair maidens in their pretty tennis suits and gentlemen in jaunty light rigs could be seen wending their way to the courts swinging their rackets."<sup>238</sup> The Halifax Herald on Monday, August 15, 1892 devoted an entire column to coverage of the four day tennis tournament of the Maritime league, "the principal attraction of the week as well as in social circles." Held on four courts on the Wanderers' Grounds, it involved teams from Truro, Pictou, St. John, and Halifax. "Ladies and Gentlemen only" played in Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles. Festivities held in conjunction with the tournament included a concert in the Gardens, a moonlight excursion on the "Lunenburg", and a band night at the Yacht Squadron's Quarters.<sup>239</sup>

One of the most prestigious of the private clubs was built around the enthusiasm of a number of gentlemen who for several years prior to 1858 found recreation in the new game of quoits. Seeking a central city location, they were offered use of a portion of Mr. Matthew Richardson's property known as "Studley", now part of the campus of Dalhousie University. This large estate with its beautiful grounds could trace its aristocratic roots to the holdings of the family of Sir Alexander Croke

Oxfordshire, England. He had purchased and developed the land while a judge of the Vice-admiralty court at Halifax during the French war which ended in 1815.<sup>240</sup> The Studley Quoit Club was founded August 24, 1858, when "fourteen of the leading citizens began pitching quoits on the site."<sup>241</sup> Its membership was limited to fourteen until 1873, and reached a maximum of sixty playing members and forty non-playing in 1896. "Men of social standing from both the business and military life of the city took the places of those dropping out..From 1888 to 1891 the late King George V, then Prince George, Captain of H.M.S. Thrush, was a frequent visitor, as was also the Prince Louis of Battenburg."<sup>242</sup> Commenting on the elite guests at the club, The Standard raved: "So many earls, dukes, princes, admirals, generals, and other top flight dignitaries from many parts of the globe have been entertained...that the club register reads like a blue book of high international society."<sup>243</sup> Obviously, this private terrain came to be the ideal place for Halifax's elite to entertain distinguished visitors. While the rules stipulated that these "strangers" could be invited to any meeting, residents of the city were restricted to three times a year.<sup>244</sup>

The existence of these "gentlemanly" sports, moreover, illustrates that although the major goal of middle class reformers remained to elevate the masses by involving them in morally educative sports, some still fiercely protected their own terrain and, thus, their identity, from contamination by the lower classes.

### Conclusion

Just as the picture of late nineteenth century Halifax depicts a wide range of sports, so does it reveal several classes playing several roles: those of patron, spectator, player. Sports' reformers who perceived it as their duty to develop better culture for the general public used money, legislation, and organized facilities to shape the face of Halifax sport. Refusing always to accept the culture thrust upon them, the working class was equally involved in the making of leisure. When a closed membership excluded them from the first indoor skating rink, they built a second; when legislation prohibited horseracing on the Commons, they turned to the city streets or the ice of Bedford Basin; when the lavish entertainments on board the naval ships excluded them, they used their own small craft to row about, enjoying the music drifting across the harbour.

As agents of change, working people exerted a great impact on the world of sport. John Forbes with his spring skates founded a thriving company that shipped world-wide; hurleys from the local Micmacs reached Montreal and Boston; George Brown, a humble fisherman from Herring Cove, brought his province and then his country world renown as a champion oarsman. People like these, despite humble origins, shaped the leisure culture of the region, often out of a desire for self-realization, or out of the cultivation of their own natural ability.

The relatively accessible nature of sport made it a most difficult area for one group to impose its will on others, but setting up grounds and segregating seating went far in denying entry to those people the reformers sought to ennoble and elevate. This brought some order to sport and may have encouraged respectability, but at what cost?

The great contradiction lay in the desire of the elite to shield from the masses those pursuits which were perceived as the birth-right of the gentry. Set an example and encourage the average citizen to more refined tastes, demonstrate standards by which others could evaluate themselves, but there would always be retained that particular terrain, in this case certain sports and playing areas, which identified the elite. Halifax in the late nineteenth century was an arena in which everyone played, but it was at times a bitter contest in which the rules and the nature of participation varied from class to class. Just as not everyone could win, nor would sport ever be the great equalizer of the classes.

### Chapter 3

#### Recreational Spaces

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Halifax's cultural life matured, and leisure opportunities expanded. This chapter looks at "recreational space", which involved not only the development of specific grounds like the Commons, gardens, and parks, but also events like fairs, exhibitions, picnics, and excursions, and instructional spaces such as institutes, libraries, and museums. In all of these areas contests emerged for control of leisure space, which reveal divisions along class, gender, ethnic and racial lines.

Nineteenth century urban reformers sought to make the city more attractive to entrepreneurs and to elevate the tastes of the common citizen by developing the unsightly swampy areas of the Commons and establishing exquisitely groomed public gardens. They endeavoured to encourage moral discipline and cultural elevation in the working class by promoting museums, libraries, lectures, and societies that stimulated a desire for self-improvement. Employers who supported clubs for working men hoped that the discipline taught by these bodies would carry over into the workplace. Fairs, exhibitions, zoos, and nurseries offered knowledge and a productive, orderly use of leisure time. Left unchallenged, civic authorities would have sculpted the city and its culture according to their own objectives and termed the result class harmony. But working people did not passively capitulate to the wishes of bourgeois reformers, and in their own way contributed to the making of the cultural life of the city. Indeed, while urban reformers turned to the cultivation and taming

of nature both as a way of demonstrating their own gentility and edifying the masses, workers often were less interested in education than they were in entertainment and healthful recreation.

In 1763 the designation of 235 acres in central Halifax as the "Common" had as its underlying principle "common land for the common good". Originally intended as pasturage for the general public, this area, bounded by Robie and South Park Streets on one side and South and Cunard on the other, gradually shrunk from over 200 to barely seventy acres as civic authorities infringed upon it for developments like the Horticultural Gardens, the Wanderers' Grounds, and the Poor Asylum. Over time one can also discern a changing rationale for its existence. The practicality of providing accessible land where the public could gather firewood had yielded by the middle of the 19th century to the reformers' desire to civilize the masses and nature itself, by creating moral spaces of natural beauty where healthy exercise would be readily accessible. The ennobling experience of participating in the beautiful outdoors was expected to elevate taste and lead to a more sedate, well-mannered lifestyle. A green space set aside for the public's leisure pursuits was a symbol of the bourgeoisie's civilizing mission.

Attempts to develop a parkland, however, led to legislation, regulations, conflict between self-interested officials, and ornamentation that ultimately served only to remove the area further and further from broad public access. Consider, for example, the September 27, 1860 despatch from Dr. Charles Cogswell to British authorities in which he explained that he understood it was important to give the general public a place "to seek recreation out of doors instead of wasting their means

and health in drinking shops and like resorts."<sup>245</sup> Ironically, however, Cogswell went on to suggest that the undeveloped Common, just rocks and trees, was not suitable for that purpose. He asked instead for land to develop a cricket ground and gymnasium, both of which would limit access to common lands to a particular clientele, essentially young, upwardly mobile men of the emerging middle class. This was perhaps not a surprising request when one considers that Cogswell was both a member of City Council and an ardent cricket player as well.

Shortly after mid-century the desire for urban improvement and a nurturing of civic pride gave impetus to the development of the original Common. The 1863-64 Annual Report of City Council expressed the reformers' view that establishing "a park and pleasure grounds for promenading" would not only add "to the health and comfort of our citizens", but would also bring prosperity. Entrepreneurs attracted by the aesthetic beauty of a park might settle and develop businesses, which, in turn, would provide employment.<sup>246</sup> This argument rested on the assumption that increasing the wealth and prosperity of the upper classes would create benefits that would gradually seep down to the classes below, thereby benefitting everyone. One wonders, of course, how much significant employment could have been created by developing the park or how widespread would have been its use. The reality was that entrepreneurs would develop facilities like the Horticultural Gardens which restricted public access for decades.

The Nova Scotian Horticultural Society was established as early as 1836,<sup>247</sup> emanating out of a desire of leading townspeople to create a garden that would enhance urban beauty and elevate taste. A committee to

locate a suitable piece of ground was comprised of the following prominent citizens: Lieutenant Wentworth, James W. Nutting, J.R. Glover, George R. Young, John Leander Starr, Joseph Howe, Major Bazalgette, Charles J. Hill, Titus Smith, John McDonald, and Edward Allison. The initially approved site was a part of the Common and government grounds behind Fort Massey, between Spring Garden Road and the northern wall of the Gorsebrook property owned by the Hon. Enos Collins.<sup>248</sup> The original plans called for an expenditure of only 300-400 pounds until "favorable disposition of the community had been tested by partial success."<sup>249</sup> These funds would cultivate only two or three acres and provide a picket fence, roads, trees, and shrubs. Hopes ran high for a grant from the public coffers of the Legislature. Eventually, the Society rejected the Fort Massey Site and for the pleasure of its members, took a 999 year lease on a section of the Common bordering on Spring Garden Road where the Gardens now stand. Fountains, flowers, the archery range, croquet grounds, and the skating rink highlighted the beauty of this private space.

From the outset the distinguished committee members advocated a programme that was largely at odds with their stated desire for a PUBLIC Garden. In truth, "[t]he gardens of the Horticultural Society...were conducted for the pleasure of the members of the society and...the public could enter only after paying admission."<sup>250</sup> Following a trend that saw the city of Boston being petitioned for a Horticultural Garden, Society members spoke eloquently of founding an area "to create and extend a taste for Horticultural pursuits and to increase and improve the production of the Province."<sup>251</sup> By exchanging plants with celebrated horticultural societies in Europe and America they sought "to improve the cultivation

of fruit and vegetables...while they thus endeavoured to embellish the Capitol...to be instrumental in promoting those other objects which were the most affluent sources of national prosperity and happiness."<sup>252</sup>

While access to this part of the Common had been largely removed from the general public, in 1865 Alderman John McCulloch, after visiting a similar facility in Paris, moved to develop an area of the Common north of those of the Horticultural Society.<sup>253</sup> This wasteland of swamp, blueberries, garbage, and dead animals bordered Sackville Street under the shelter of Citadel Hill. Starting in 1867, the Committee of the Common, chaired initially by McCulloch, transformed this area into a splendid display of trees, shrubs, and gravelled walks for the use of all Haligonians.<sup>254</sup> This gradual conversion was interrupted once in 1868 when more practical-minded new committee members ordered the freshly-planted trees and flowers dug up and replaced by hayseed. The general public, however, was not to be denied its public gardens. Such was the extent of the protest from various factions that the flower beds and trees were re-planted, the whole incident having been of considerable expense.

By 1874 the privately-owned Horticultural Gardens was no longer a lucrative venture. Heavily in debt, the Society handed over its deed at the City Council meeting of September 24, 1874 for a price of fifteen thousand dollars.<sup>255</sup> Soon after, the Recorder gleefully reported how "a great concourse of people" was drawn to what used to be the property of the Horticultural Society. "Nothing was heard on every side but expressions of pleasure and gratification at the treat which it was felt had been afforded the citizens."<sup>256</sup> After 1875 when the picket fence - the last symbolic barrier between the private and public gardens - was

removed, a total of eighteen acres of greenery, terraces, ponds, shrubs and other delights earned Halifax's Public Garden acclaim as the finest on the North American continent.<sup>257</sup>

After the 1874 merger, city authorities granted two thousand dollars per annum to the support of the Gardens, a sum which increased by half in 1888<sup>258</sup> and was supplemented by admission charges to the regular concerts held there. The generosity and avid interest of civic fathers during the late 1880's reflected the philosophy of the North American public recreation movement which surrounded the Boston Sand Gardens of 1885, and the New York and Chicago Settlement Houses of the late 1880's and 1890's. "Recreation activities were considered to be an antidote to assist in alleviating social problems, primarily in urban settings where there were problems of crowding, poor supervision, and few recreation opportunities for children and youth."<sup>259</sup>

There can be no doubt that the horticultural movement, as well as the control and regulation of the Public Gardens, was a project fashioned by the Halifax elite. Six City Council members were among the ten commissioners who managed the Common and the Gardens. It is equally true that the presence of the "better" citizens was felt to add much to the elegance of the spacious grounds. A Boston visitor who claimed he had to bow down in admiration of the grounds also added that "the number of fair Haligonians who gathered in the Gardens did not lessen its attractions."<sup>260</sup> In theory, anyone could reap the benefits. George Morton on July 8, 1878 wrote of "a pleasant afternoon ramble" in which he "visited the Peoples [Public] Gardens, beautiful in their present wealth of flowers."<sup>261</sup> A decade later the Halifax Carnival Echo raved of the splendour of acres of

gravelled serpentine walks, artificial ponds, cedar, sumach, olive, ivy, spruce, pine, Dutch elm, that were maintained by taxes and "free to all alike."<sup>262</sup> Over time, in fact, the symbols of an exclusive, genteel culture had yielded to those more compatible with the needs of the average citizen. For instance, in 1876 the somewhat exclusive croquet and archery court was transformed into a public lawn tennis court. In the 1890's when tennis clubs became more numerous throughout the city, the tennis court at the Gardens became a children's playground.<sup>263</sup>

Considering the vast sums expended, including one hundred eighty-five dollars to import a horse lawn mower from England,<sup>264</sup> eight hundred dollars for a bandstand,<sup>265</sup> six hundred dollars for wrought-iron gates brought from Scotland,<sup>266</sup> as well as the cost of a conservatory, a rustic summer house, numerous other installations - not to mention annual maintenance and festivities - such a commitment to aesthetics in a city still highly plagued by slums and poverty reveals much. In the 1860's when this one section of the Common was being sculpted into a thing of wondrous beauty, elsewhere there were "many boys who had no homes and some who even slept on the Common or in dog kennels."<sup>267</sup> In the area known as Richmond, about four miles from the business district, where a settlement had grown up about the railway terminus north of the Dockyard there was a much less sculpted view of nature as "pigs, goats, cows and poultry roamed at will through its streets, in spite of petitions from residents to City Council to establish a pond."<sup>268</sup> Closer to the heart of the city, Market Street, then called Albermarle, was "known the world over as 'Knock-Him-Down Street', because of the number of affrays and even murders committed there."<sup>269</sup> On March 13, 1893 the SPC recorded the case of Mary Hines, 266

Upper Water Street, who "goes out drinking and dancing and leaves the infant alone...A crowd of young boys are...lying about her rooms all night."<sup>270</sup> And on February 24, 1894 William Pollard, a blacksmith living at 60 Atlantic Street, reported how his wife was always drunk and neglected him and her three children.<sup>271</sup>

Thus, the Public Gardens in its "free-to-all" state was by no means the embodiment of the city's culture; nor was it shared by all classes. A large segment of the populace did not aspire to leisure time spent strolling in the Gardens. Tax dollars were lavished on "public" gardens to elevate the cultural taste of some of its environs, while many citizens lived hand-to-mouth. This issue of priorities for civic spending arose in the introduction to the Halifax City Directory for 1877.

The Park and Public Gardens are still objects of attraction to the citizens or strangers who take their drives or walks...An observer remarked the other day that the gay and expensive appearance of these places very much reminds one of the servant girl who put all her wages upon a bonnet of the newest and most expensive fashion, while the other garments as well as the boots were of the most shabby description. A slight glance at Water Street and some of the other leading thoroughfares of the city will indicate what the condition of the city must be when we are told that there is so little money for the street service.<sup>272</sup>

Nevertheless, the Victorian elite's romance with greenery and wildlife was widespread and revealed itself in everything from the cultivation of specialized breeding animals to household flower gardens, to nurseries that imported from Europe and the United States, to large zoological displays, and to the grooming of the one hundred and eighty-six acres of Point Pleasant Park on the southern tip of the peninsula.

At mid-century a rising interest in poultry and cattle raising became a fad of a wealthy elite which dabbled in this latest distraction. Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia 1854-1858,

introduced to the city's fashionable class his passion for experimental breeding of these creatures. Not everyone was captivated by the fad, however, including Joseph Howe who wrote that

[a] good deal of money was spent. The old breeds of cows which wanted nothing but care and judicious crossing...were reduced in size that the cream might be made richer, which it never was, and the chickens were made twice the size, with the additional recommendation that they were twice as tough. Sir Gaspard brought his chickens direct from Court, for Prince Albert was a great agricultural breeder, and the Queen and everybody else went mad about poultry for a summer or two.<sup>273</sup>

Such a frivolous pastime, the pursuit of the gentlemanly husbandman, quickly lost its novelty and today Lieutenant-Governor Le Marchant is more remembered for the street that bears his name. Nevertheless, in February, 1867 a group of distinguished gentlemen formed a poultry club to improve the breeds,<sup>274</sup> and on October 31, 1867 hundreds attended a Dog and Poultry Show, the first of its kind ever held in Nova Scotia, which opened at the Market House.<sup>275</sup> Although this specialized interest represented a hobby that belonged exclusively to those who could afford it, exhibitions, often with a minimal or no admission charge, remained the terrain of hundreds or thousands of the curious drawn from the general public. As Martin Hewitt has noted in his study of Mechanics Institutes, science was often transformed into spectacle. On March 9, 1880, for example, a thirty-three pound "monster turkey" represented the major attraction to the fourth exhibition of the Nova Scotia Poultry Association at Masonic Hall. "Attended by a large number of fanciers, and others interested," this display included fancy birds and pigeons, three cases of mounted birds, and many breeds of poultry.<sup>276</sup>

The taxidermist responsible for the mounted birds in the show was Andrew Downs, a man whose working class parents had migrated to the

province from New Jersey in 1825 when Andrew was fourteen years old. By trade a plumber, Downs, with a natural love of wildlife and what John Quinpool termed an "inherited genius of high order,"<sup>277</sup> established a Zoological Gardens that gained world renown as the first North American zoo. These grounds, located on Dutch Village Road at the head of the North West Arm, grew from the initial five acres opened in 1847 to one hundred acres fifteen years later. Various buildings, ponds, and woods housed rare animals, the horticultural premises displayed plants from around the world, and a museum contained taxidermy specimens. Fowl, parrots, pigeons, pheasants, peacocks, ostriches, monkeys, beaver, seals, polar bear, mink, otter, deer, caribou, foxes, wolves, leopards, tigers, snakes, lizards, walrus, birds and fish had arrived via Maritime merchant ships trading on the Seven Seas. Such was Downs' fame that his grounds were visited by eminent travellers and learned men from many countries, and through two decades he shipped 800 mounted moose heads to European monarchs, country residences, and private collectors. His stuffed birds in 1867 won a silver medal at the Paris Exhibition.<sup>278</sup> In 1867 his fame led to a new position as superintendent of Central Park Zoo in New York and the necessary sale of his local property. Three months later a prolonged disagreement with the Park Commissioner saw his return to Halifax where in 1868 he opened a second zoo on new property at the Arm. In 1872 this closed for want of funding.<sup>279</sup>

In spite of his world fame and prestigious recognition as a zoologist, Andrew Downs by the time of his death in 1892 had established for Halifax a leisure activity available to a broad segment of the population. While foreign experts and dignitaries might witness his displays with an eye to

science and learning, groups and families from all levels of society often enjoyed an outing to the zoo as a form of entertainment or simple recreation. "Many societies such as the Union Protection Company and the Caledonia Club held picnics at the Zoological Gardens, arriving by coach or ferry."<sup>280</sup> On Natal Day, 1867 the Steamer Neptune sold over five hundred dollars worth of tickets for the trip to Downs' gardens, which was considered beneficial "for the pleasure and instruction of both the wealthy and the workingman."<sup>281</sup> Similarly accessible, with a season's ticket valued at one dollar and a single entry at twelve and one half cents,<sup>282</sup> was Thornfield's Nursery near the North Common. At the time of Confederation hundreds flocked there to watch the tame seal, monkeys, a wild bush hog from Trinidad, a pair of red deer that had been broken to harness in New Brunswick, and many other attractions.<sup>283</sup>

One of the most vibrant attractions of the city was the City Market, which had been built in 1851 at the corner of Bedford Row near George Street.<sup>284</sup> Allotted a specific building which quickly proved to be too small, country vendors soon spilled out onto the streets where they established their stalls. Busy housewives took pleasure in buying cheap produce, berries, flowers, and handicrafts from the farmers, Acadians, Indians, and blacks, but civic authorities were at a loss to control the street congestion, or to alleviate the conflict that arose when merchants in the area argued that they as taxpayers should not have their business district impeded by hay carts that blocked traffic, and outsiders who left litter. Such disorder was regarded as detracting greatly from the austere atmosphere achieved through the presence of the ornamental buildings erected by the wealthy businessmen. However, country vendors needed

downtown space, especially since their cumbersome carts could not climb the steep hills from the waterfront.

There were also other reasons why the city fathers hesitated to restrict and confine the gaiety of the market scene. Starting in 1858, the Green (or City) Market became an important part of the Christmas celebrations of prominent Haligonians.<sup>285</sup> Not only did they buy their trees and Christmas goodies there, but the fashionable class established a custom of family touring of the downtown area that included the market. They would likely have opposed legislation that would have drastically altered the "countrified" and relaxed atmosphere of the existing market.

Even more significantly, the City Market was promoted as a tourist attraction, and exploited in the interest of the silver jingle. The lower class vendors had stubbornly established their presence in a location most adaptable to their needs, and in one regard participated in a symbiotic relationship with civic authorities. Consider this excerpt from the tourist advertisement published in conjunction with the 1889 Summer Carnival.

The market is of no particular school of architecture, being chiefly composed of pavement. Its roof is the blue canopy of heaven, when the weather is agreeable, and otherwise when it is not, its walls are the Post Office, the town pump, and the imposing fronts of various business establishments.<sup>286</sup>

Or consider this out-of-province description from 1891, the slight condescension of which would have been tolerated in light of the publicity it generated.

The summer visitor to Halifax finds the cosmopolitan character of her market a source of amusement...the city boasts one market building, and around one of the principal squares the vendors of garden wares are ranged...The sturdy dame of English, Irish, or Scotch origin stands side by side with the Acadian French.... Here a woolly-headed son of Africa displays his grinning rows of ivory as he decants on the merits of his wares to the bustling house-

wives...a group of Micmac Indians busily fashioning baskets.<sup>287</sup>

Thus, the seeming cosmopolitanism and quaint character of the market at the city's core provided the wealthy and working classes with a wholesome opportunity for a leisurely stroll or shopping excursion. Ultimately, the value of this collection of country vendors as a tourist commodity and as a form of recreation assured the marketeers a permanent voice within the community.

Another area popular for leisurely walks and carriage drives was Point Pleasant Park, or Tower Woods as it was often called. This one hundred and eighty-six acres of trees on the southern peninsula had been leased at a nominal fee from Britain for 999 years, and as early as 1835 a carriage road had been built around its perimeter.<sup>288</sup> Although technically the property of all Halifaxians, the sedate, respectable environment of "footpaths straying through the wilderness, the ponds like Frog Pond, the bold rock faces and wooded glens of this charming playground"<sup>289</sup> ensconced in a south-end location far from city slums and factories remained the leisure terrain of well-to-do society. The park lay at an inconvenient distance from those without their own transportation or who were unable or unwilling to pay for a horsecab for the two mile drive from downtown. It offered no cleared spaces for sports activities and exhibited no commercial features like street vendors or wandering entertainers. Instead, on orders from Lieutenant-Governor Sir Hastings Doyle in 1873 soldiers cleared away dead underbrush and marked paths and drives<sup>290</sup> along which those of fashionable society who sought the aesthetic beauty of nature or the healthy, bracing sea air might meander.

Everything associated with Point Pleasant Park smacked of middle class propriety. In 1887 a five thousand dollar legacy bequeathed by William P. West was used to erect two iron summer houses or pavilions "which give shade and rest to those who frequent these delightful spots."<sup>291</sup> Besides its location in the "right end" of town, it was governed by a Board of Park Commissioners comprised of the Mayor, six Aldermen, and six citizens.<sup>292</sup> Chairman of this Commission in the 1870's was Chief Justice Sir William Young who in 1885, one year prior to his death, donated the iron gates, called the Golden Gates, at one entrance to the park. Commonly known as "Gates Young", he had loaned the city four thousand dollars for park work in 1873, and it was in gratitude to this benevolent patron that the citizens supported re-naming the southern end of South Park Street Young Avenue.<sup>293</sup> A strong military presence was also witnessed throughout the park as soldiers manned the various forts and batteries, or artillerymen tended the guns, lending a sense of decorum and orderliness to the area.

During this early development of the park in the 1870's and 1880's the pretence of classlessness was maintained, since technically the area was accessible to all Halifaxians who sought to avail themselves of its beauty. Not until the 1890's was any overt action taken in the form of legislation to stipulate class restrictions. At that point one of the main roads to the park literally became the private domain of the wealthy when an 1896 statute declared Young Avenue a restricted residential area. Because so much money had been spent on building this access street, civic authorities determined that its formal beauty should be protected. "No building could be erected within 180 feet of Young Avenue without

permission of the City Council and it was forbidden to use such buildings as a hotel, house of entertainment, boarding house, shop or for sale of liquor."<sup>294</sup> Minimum costs for new buildings were stipulated and no amount of protest from other urban areas could overturn the civic favouritism evidenced there.

On the whole, though, the streets of Halifax belonged to the people, and never more so than at holiday time. An active populace very aware of its British heritage seized on numerous dates throughout the calendar year to celebrate with a broad agenda that spanned a gamut of activities offering something for everyone, and often with events occurring simultaneously to meet numerous taste levels. From mid-century onwards the momentum of public celebrations increased, the agendas expanded as a result of public pressure, civic pride led to a greater expenditure of tax dollars to produce more and more grandiose displays, and businesses shortened workdays or closed entirely in order that employees be free to participate. As was the case in sports, that participation sometimes meant a spectator role, but freedom of choice devised for each group a day's itinerary that reflected its own intrinsic values.

In 1850 the Queen's birthday in May was marked by a magnificent military display by four regiments, each one thousand strong, on the Common. "The marching and counter-marching was that of well set-up soldiers, thoroughly drilled through long service in field manoeuvres."<sup>295</sup> In the next decade patriotism to the Mother Country was still very prominent and a day's celebrations offered both the informal and the formal. On April 25, 1864 a public holiday for Shakespeare's birthday was declared by City Council. Events included a parade, a military salute

from the Citadel, the planting of a ceremonial oak tree on the grounds of Province House, speeches, and a dramatic concert.<sup>296</sup>

By the time of Confederation there arose a cry for an orderly, democratic celebration of "the day the Brits came over" [Natal Day], marked on June 21st. A June 17th, 1867 editorial sarcastically emphasized the irony of calling this a "public holiday" and then failing to afford "legitimate recreation". "The best joke of the season is considered to be that City Council has voted four hundred dollars for celebrating the holiday and has appointed a committee of its members to determine how to spend it. The aldermen have proposed an excursion in The Neptune with 'a grand feed for themselves'". The writer suggested that City Council cancel its excursion and hand over half the money to be used for the Union Engine Company to decorate its engines and have a noon-day display followed by a torch-light procession.<sup>297</sup> No matter whether the self-indulgence of City Council was seriously exaggerated, or public pressure led to last minute changes, what evolved on June 21st ran from 6 a.m. until long past twilight and did justice to what "was the most important holiday of the year."<sup>298</sup> After the Voluntary Artillery fired a one-hundred gun salute on the Grand Parade there followed a day's program including a parade of the Bands of Hope from Temperance Hall to Government House and return; a review of the Volunteers on the Common; music by the band of the 47th; a cricket match between the Thistle Club and the Royal Artillery; a public tour of the flagship Royal Alfred; a concert in the Horticultural Gardens; and three plays at Theatre Royal.<sup>299</sup> The wide-ranging program of military displays, sports, music, educative touring, and theatrics allowed for broad public participation, providing as it did both spectacle and

intellectual culture.

The organization of such holidays was just in its infancy, however, and the Victorian penchant for clubs - specialized bodies of like individuals, regulated and structured to perform specialized tasks to meet specific needs - reared its head in the press two years later. Steeped in nationalism and urban pride, a column entitled "Nova Scotian Society"<sup>300</sup> called for formation of a young man's society to instill celebratory occasions or programs with a uniquely Nova Scotian flavour. A recent visit by Prince Arthur had been met with "national societies representing the three branches of the United Kingdom while the young men of Halifax - the natives - stood loungingly around." It was felt that such a society could organize Natal Day into a grand festival, since the absence of a governing body prevented this.

At any rate, the passing of the years saw a growth in both the range of activities provided on Natal Day and the numbers of citizens participating, the latter largely due to the eventual complete closing of businesses for the holiday. On Monday, June 23, 1873 "business was entirely suspended...[and] from all parts of the city people came out in holiday attire."<sup>301</sup> Thousands of spectators blackened rooftops and the shoreline to watch not only the prestigious scull race for the Championship of Halifax Harbour, but also other boat races, canoe races, and tub races. "Thousands of all ages and classes gathered around the course"<sup>302</sup> on the Common to watch soldiers, sailors, civilians, boys, and City Councillors compete in velocipede and sack races. A year later on June 22nd the itinerary also included "by the kind permission of Lieutenant-Governor O'Grady Holy," the opening of the Citadel to the public, and

also the naval yard and grounds provided free access to the public. Visitors were allowed on H.M.S. ships and the band of the flagship "Bellerophon" played in the Dockyard in the afternoon.<sup>303</sup>

Four years later on June 21st, 1878 George Morton noted a wide range in the activities which provided for a meeting of the members of the Nova Scotia Historical Society "and their friends" in the Council Chamber of Province Building for an address by Lieutenant Governor A.G. Archibald. Elsewhere thousands of people enjoyed music and dancing in the People's Gardens. Also, a half-price return steamboat ticket took celebrants to McNab's Island for refreshments and amusements.<sup>304</sup> Morton carefully observed how patriotism to the Mother Country crossed class lines. "It may be noted as a pleasing feature and mark of loyalty evinced by the populace and all classes of Halifax society that both at the close of the proceedings before the Historical Society yesterday and at the gardens in the evening 'God Save the Queen' was sung in good style by the assembled audiences."

Just as all citizens could choose to celebrate holidays in their own fashion, so could they choose not to. On July 1, 1868, the first Dominion Day, the general public exhibited a popular opposition to Confederation by refusing to acknowledge the festivities. As The Morning Chronicle and Acadian Recorder appeared as obituaries with board black lines between their columns, signifying the death of Nova Scotia, only about 600 of a population of 28,000 turned out for the agenda of parades, military displays, aquatics, fireworks, and so on.<sup>305</sup> The general public could negate as well as create a civic holiday.

George Morton affords an interesting glimpse of two smaller celebrations: the first surrounded by middle class splendour and which relegated others to a spectator role; the second a celebration shared by all citizens. In November, 1878 the arrival of Sir John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, Marquis of Lorne, who would subsequently assume the office of Governor-General to the Dominion, was marked by a 3:30 p.m. levee in the Chamber of the Legislative Council. That evening Lorne was driven to dine with General McDougall at Maplewood on the North West Arm. Firemen formed a torch-light procession as escort, and afterwards "the multitudes that thronged all the principal streets made the tour of the illuminations which were pronounced to be of so elaborate a character as not to be exceeded anywhere in the Dominion."<sup>306</sup> Next day when the honourable party left the city, "[t]housands of the populace from every quarter of the Province attended at the Depot to bid them Godspeed." Civic pride and nationalism united the classes in their general celebration, with the formal ceremonies restricted to dignitaries.

In the second instance, Morton the bookseller commented on the broad cross-section of society that appeared at his door, eager to celebrate Valentine's Day. "An unusual demand for 'Valentine' pictures is observed today their elegance of finish showing the progress of the 'art' illustrative induces their use among the juniors of families in every station of life, not omitting 'Betty the servant'".<sup>307</sup>

Some of the lesser holidays, which the elite saw as the territory of the superstitious and rowdier segment of society, met with disdain. The Recorder referred sarcastically on October 31, 1882 to those who persisted in celebrating Hallowe'en, "one of the few relics of barbarism which have

been handed down by the Saxons to their children, and...as far from dying out as a hundred years ago."<sup>308</sup> Described as a mindless evening of couples reading indications of fidelity into whether apple seeds on the hot stove pop and burn, of maidens with mouths full of water walking the streets to hear the name of their future partners, of boys pounding doors with sling shots and cabbage stumps, Hallowe'en was perceived as foolishness that should be outlawed. However, a certain faction would that night indulge in incantations "to pierce the dark vista of the future," and the best that could be hoped for in retaliation against the raucous was that quiet citizens would pour water from second stories onto the heads of the urchins below.

One of the largest galas of the last half of the nineteenth century was the Summer Carnival of 1889, planned by the Halifax newspapers, the Board of Trade, and City Council to attract tourists. The City allotted three thousand dollars to the Carnival to which "public spirited citizens" added another four thousand. Although organization of the event remained in the hands of prominent Haligonians, there are many indications of broad participation by people of all classes. According to the Halifax Carnival Echo "[m]eetings were held of representative citizens of various classes, and committees formed to arrange programmes of events such as would attract people of all tastes."<sup>309</sup>

The events, which lasted from August 5th to 10th, included reviews, concerts, theatrical performances, the San Francisco Minstrels at the Academy of Music, a ball at Province House, regattas, horseracing, baseball games, parades, operatic concerts,<sup>310</sup> and much more. Everyone seemed to be involved at some level. "All the citizens tried to do their

share by decorating their houses and by helping to arrange special events. Stores, houses, and hotels were hung with bunting and strings of flags whipped in the air above the streets."<sup>311</sup> Tuesday, August 6th was declared a public holiday so that everyone could see the sham naval battle, the harbour illumination, and the torchlight parade. "All the men and their wives, mothers, sisters, country cousins and aunts seemed to be on the streets."<sup>312</sup> The naval bombardment was witnessed by throngs on the Citadel hillside, on the shores of Point Pleasant Park, and on the eastern side of the harbour. Scores of citizens crowded steamers and small pleasure boats or stood on housetops in the south end.<sup>313</sup> Civic pride united Haligonians in their endeavour to out-shine the recent carnival in Saint John, and at the week's end there were smug expressions in the press about the good behaviour of the citizens. "There has been no rowdyism or lawlessness, and no more drinking than would naturally be expected under the circumstances."<sup>314</sup>

Mass participation in civic events was not limited to the exceptional undertakings surrounding holidays, however. Exhibitions - whether of talent, inventions, or manufactured goods - were common-place. Nevertheless, at mid-century exhibitions or fairs remained small and catered to the tastes of specific groups. The middle class enjoyed its classical music and photographic displays, while the slightly more boisterous segment flocked to the fairs whose economic viability relied upon the patronage of a working class audience. Gradually, however, economic developments led to grander presentations that by 1879 were housed in a permanent Exhibition Building. The bigger the presentation, the more civic revenue and admission charges were needed. The result was a growing

involvement of the public at large in the cultural life of the city.

One can chart the transition from the highly specialized and often class specific presentations of mid-century Halifax to the establishment of larger exhibitions with audiences representative of all social levels, and ultimately to the opening of the Exhibition building. In the autumn of 1849 a popular entertainment centered on Mr. and Mrs. Macfarland who "apparently gave great satisfaction to numerous and respectable audiences," as she danced and he performed feats of strength at Masonic Hall.<sup>315</sup> Around the same time the fine arts available to those so inclined included a portrait of Andrew MacKinlay, "our esteemed townsman", hanging in the wardrooms of Messrs. Thompson and Esson, Barrington Street. "[t]he frame, a massive and elegant work of art, was made by Mr. Wetmore," and the likeness of the Mechanics Institute's eight-year president had been painted by Mr. Valentine.<sup>316</sup> A few years later in 1854 the city's first "Fair" - which would have appealed to a broader audience - opened in the Province Building.<sup>317</sup> The displays were well organized with manufactured goods in one tent and farm produce in another, and established a sedate atmosphere which eliminated any fears of rowdiness that might accompany a large, public gathering.

In 1857 the press informed its readers that "[t]he rooms of Messrs. Chase and Co. afford a fine exhibition of photographic pictures" on paper, and the photographer, Mr. Chase, was considered "eminently successful" in this art, and quite unique among Haligonians.<sup>318</sup> This presentation of Mr. Chase's work was only a beginning. A decade later his work was included in the Legislative Council Chambers' exhibition of articles from the province to be shown in the Paris Exhibition. Hundreds viewed "portraits

by Chase and Chambers, oil paintings by Forshaw Day, the cabinet work by Messrs. McEwan, fancy work, tools, mineral products, Andrew Downs' collection of birds, and a miniature railway locomotive construction of 5000 pieces by J.D. Ellis."<sup>319</sup>

The 1868 Exhibition of Agriculture and Industry received many columns of press coverage during its week-long run. The displays included produce, manufactured goods like furniture and footwear, toiletries, sweets, dairy products, fish, furs, industrial machinery, liquors, tobacco, sculpture, photography, oil portraits, stuffed birds, waxed flowers, carriage goods, as well as poultry and stock. Participation by the poor artisan was highlighted in the press's portrayal of Alfred Tennyson Barratt, a painter from King's County, who wanted to sell his twelve or thirteen paintings to buy artist's materials. The reporter sympathetically related how this "not yet fourteen-year-old" had to work at his father's trade and could give "to his paintings but the parings of his time." He bemoaned the fact that there was no public fund which could make available scholarships for painting; nor was there a School of Design. "Could not some of our city friends manage this?"<sup>320</sup> The writer concluded that "[t]his exhibition tells us that in Nova Scotia we have a mechanical class slowly but surely rising into importance, backed by an agricultural class ready to avail themselves of all means, foreign and domestic, to advance the agriculture of the country. It is upon these two classes that our life as a province principally depends."<sup>321</sup> Since all producers from the humblest farm labourer to the established industrialist displayed their goods, and the exhibition generally provided a leisure pursuit accessible to all classes, popular faith in the local economy was

re-confirmed.

Exhibitions grew in size and popularity with the passing years. The Provincial Agricultural Exhibition, held during the week of October 5th, 1874, was housed in the Drill Shed and General's and Governor's Fields and awarded a total of \$7,300 in prize money. General adult admission varied from twenty-five to fifty cents, depending upon the day's schedule.<sup>322</sup> But of far greater significance in terms of cultural growth was the September 30th, 1879 opening of the first permanent Exhibition Building, an oblong wooden building on Tower Road between Morris Street and Spring Garden Road. During the week thousands of citizens were attracted to the usual produce and handicraft arrangements, as well as the art gallery, a dog show, fireworks at the Public Gardens, scull racing, a torchlight display, and much more.<sup>323</sup> It was this building that on June 29th-July 1st, 1880 housed a multicultural fancy fair. Organized for the benefit of the S.P.C.A., this event drew huge crowds to its gaily decorated pavilions for a mere twenty-five cents admission. George Morton wended his way through a series of refreshment booths served by girls in costumes of different nationalities while the band of the 101st Regiment played on stage. A Chinese pagoda in three storeys displayed fans, umbrellas, and other Chinese work; a Swiss cottage covered by vines served strawberries; a winter scene with a snowhouse and icicles offered "frost-cake"; a French booth dispensed bon-bons; a German area displayed bric-a-brac; a Spanish booth had Iberian wares; an Icelandic Grotto offered cotton-ice; and an Arctic cave dished out ice cream. "In a central position a Maypole was erected where some twenty lads and lasses danced with ribbon-plaiting by all hands!"<sup>324</sup> Certainly, a festive time was enjoyed by everyone.

At the end of this decade, in the summer of 1897, an exhibition extravaganza opened on the property bordered by Young, Almon, and Windsor Streets. The City of Halifax and the provincial government jointly spent \$100,000 on an Implements Building, one Agricultural and Dairy Building, a Transportation Building, Horse and Cattle Barns, Sheep and Swine Pens, a Ladies' Building, a Press and Telephone Building, a Grand Stand for four thousand, a half mile racing track, an amusement platform, and two lagoons for high diving and aquatic sports. The annual exhibition held on this site until its destruction in the Explosion of 1917 was heralded as the best in the Dominion, with the possible exception of one in Toronto.<sup>325</sup>

However, Halifax's working class did not restrict itself to leisure pursuits dependant upon bourgeois funding and organization. Take, for example, the working class picnic. These large-scale gatherings arose as early as 1846 in response to the abolition of horseracing on the Common. Held by societies of all kinds, fishermen, youth groups, school children, temperance and total abstinence organizations - eventually by just about anyone - the picnic at first represented a public entertainment that "undermined the importance of the upper class in providing public amusements."<sup>326</sup> Church groups and others who relied upon bazaars as fund-raisers achieved the same end in large, informal picnics that often involved excursions by boat or train. On August 6, 1853 the Recorder served notice of the Sons of Temperance Picnic at Prince's Lodge via the steamer leaving Noble's Wharf for Marshall's Wharf, with tickets at 7 s., 6 d. or 6 s., 3 d. for two or more.<sup>327</sup> The Charitable Irish Society picnic was held at the Grounds of His Grace the Archbishop, Dutch Village, on August 4, 1869. The Steamer Mic-mac left Powers Wharf at nine thirty and

two o'clock, with the band of the Union Engine Company playing on board. Lunch and dinner, as well as regular refreshments, were served throughout the day. "Important members of the society ...(were) particularly reminded to wear their Badges."<sup>328</sup> The same boat and location were used a week later when two hundred firemen and their ladies followed their picnic with a grand ball and dinner at Mason Hall.<sup>329</sup> As well, the Enterprising Society held a "Colored People's Pic-Nic" at Preston in the same month,<sup>330</sup> while the Highland Society of N.S. picnicked on McNab's Island in September.<sup>331</sup>

Eventually, what had begun shortly before mid-century as an informal working class outing was adopted by the middle class as a fashionable pastime. By 1869 the press could characterize pic-nics as "a settled institution among Haligonians," or describe the "very successful though somewhat stately affair" of the Pic-Nic held at Prince's Lodge in honour of Prince Arthur.<sup>332</sup> Admission tickets for the latter sold for one dollar and banquet tickets for a gentleman and lady went for five dollars. Such was the splendour of the day's activities, complete with dance music by the 78th Highland Band and a torch-light procession from Grand Parade, that its description warranted an entire newspaper column. Even more significantly, in August of 1873 when the new Governor General and his wife, Lord and Lady Dufferin, visited the city, a picnic in their honor was given by the city on McNab's Island.<sup>333</sup> All levels of society were thus able to enjoy excursions and picnics, but they did not transcend class divisions to the extent that large scale public exhibitions had done.

Pleasure excursions to McNab's remained very popular, especially after Mr. Woolnough, who maintained facilities on the island, advertised in 1874 that he had improved his grounds for public use, having cleared ample areas for quoits, football, and other athletic games, as well as having erected "some dozen excellent swings...in the most shady part of the grounds."<sup>334</sup> By 1878 frequent trips were made to Bedford via the "Micmac", as well as to the beach at Cow Bay. George Morton reported that "[t]he steam trip took a party of the citizens on an excursion to Cow Bay this afternoon for the advantage of seaside bathing and a ramble on the beaches by the open sea,"<sup>335</sup> and noted how "[p]icnics and steamboat excursions are the order of the day."<sup>336</sup> Surprisingly, Cow Bay at this time enjoyed such extensive popularity among prominent citizens that one paper suggested that if a hotel were erected there "it would immediately become the favourite watering place of the Dominion, if not of the continent."<sup>337</sup> This conclusion was drawn from observation of the group waiting on the City Wharf for the ship called the Goliath. "The Company...a very select one; a number of the best known citizens with their ladies and families ... Our citizens should, by their patronage, make these Saturday afternoon excursions one of the 'institutions' of Halifax." At a cost of five cents each, the picnickers included five ladies, two boss printers, two schoolmasters, two civic officials, some lawyers, a doctor, and a rather scornfully acknowledged "half a dozen common people."

As long as excursion fares, whether by boat or by train, remained low, almost anyone could participate in a day's outing. This was especially true for public holidays when the celebrations almost inevitably included discount excursion fares, both to and from the city. George Morton

recorded in 1880 that among other festivities "the public devoted unusual attention to excursions for fishing and many went by the train cheap excursions to visit friends in the country."<sup>336</sup> And Blakeley asserts how on Natal Day in 1897 "the streets and hotels thronged with strangers who had taken advantage of the cheap excursion rates."<sup>339</sup> Rail travel not only boosted the economy through the influx of tourist dollars, but also brought day-trips within the reach of most local residents.

Music was another cultural pursuit which figured prominently in holiday celebrations. The strong military presence in Halifax not only meant that regimental bands were available for every celebration, but also provided frequent displays of the Military Review on March Past, such as the one that occurred on the North Common in 1899 in honor of The Queen's Birthday. "The battalion which attracted the most attention during the March Past to the stirring strains of the 'British Grenadier' was the British Veterans' Society, among them a veteran of Sebastopol, the members wearing black suits, white gloves, and red, white, and blue sashes."<sup>340</sup> As well, military parades often passed along the city streets, as did the 63rd Battalion of Rifles, headed by their band, on the evening of October 23, 1874, before maneuvering to the Grand Parade in honor of "the evening being beautiful moonlight."<sup>341</sup>

Even on the harbour there was music to be appreciated. Any citizens rowing in the vicinity of the naval ships could enjoy the notes drifting across the water on pleasant evenings. Prominent members of society luxuriated in invitations to socialize on board and frequently attended dances known as "Bonnet Hops", such as the one held on board H.M.S. Duncan on August 22, 1865.<sup>342</sup>

Another popular locale for concerts was the Horticultural Gardens which, although it maintained a private membership, admitted the public for twenty-five cents on special occasions. In addition, the Young Men's Early Closing Association, formed in 1867 to shorten workdays, succeeded in securing public use of these private gardens in order to perform concerts. Band concerts with open admission were also held to honour royal visitors, like that which attracted four thousand people to celebrate the arrival of Prince Arthur in 1869.<sup>343</sup> After the city's purchase of the Horticultural Gardens in 1874 this area and its concerts became public domain. In 1887 a Bandstand was constructed and its first grand concert was held in honor of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.<sup>344</sup>

Although large public events involving music were usually available to all classes, the various ranks of society were sharply defined by their personal instrumental preferences. F.M.L. Thompson in his examination of the British working class asserts that by the late Victorian period most towns in Britain had at least one band and "the bandsmen, whether playing with middle-class patronage or not, were all workingmen."<sup>345</sup> Moreover, he argues, the popularity of band music led to the quick in-roads made by the Salvation Army when in the 1890's it arrived behind its brass band to save the lower class.

There is evidence that this pattern was replicated in the colonies. In Halifax, volunteer fire departments prided themselves on their bands and the many flourishing societies often would be seen marching colorfully through the streets to the beat of band music. In 1856, during its celebration of the Festival of St. Patrick, the Charitable Irish Society paraded behind a band through the streets of Halifax to St. Patrick's

Church and back.<sup>346</sup> And in 1880 George Morton reported that "[a] juvenile band headed the boys" as the St. George's Society undertook its annual procession to St. Paul's Church.<sup>347</sup> The Salvation Army, which began its evangelical work in 1885 from a Brunswick Street building previously occupied by the Black Dog tavern, is felt to have appealed to the city's poor in large part due to its brass band. "Perhaps it was music which encouraged some residents of the rough neighbourhood to respond to the mission of the Salvation Army, with its loud brass band."<sup>348</sup> When one considers the attractions of marching bands and of the tavern with its fiddle and piano music, there can be no doubt that music occupied a prominent place in the social life of the city's poor.

Frequently, musical entertainments were provided by benevolently-minded citizens in aid of the less fortunate. The "Gentleman's Amateur String Band" in the fall of 1874, for example, offered to entertain the patients at Mount Hope Asylum. The press was invited to witness a rousing performance of quadrilles, lancers, and gallops in which hospital superintendent Dr. DeWolfe and his lady joined. Of course, time also was provided for the director to show the reporters through the building's new wing. During the afternoon "[t]he patients were extremely well behaved and orderly, and so were the guests, keepers, nurses, and patients mixed up in the dances, that it soon became a most trying question to determine which were sane and which otherwise."<sup>349</sup>

Also in 1874, philanthropically-minded citizens donated their time and talent in fund-raising for the construction of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum that opened two years later on the east side of Gottingen Street.<sup>350</sup> George Morton would later consider the asylum "among the most successful

of the humane institutions...Its inmates...appeal mutely yet strongly to benevolent sympathies of humanity - and the Directors claim for it a high position as a public charity."<sup>351</sup> It was projects such as the construction of this asylum which allowed socially prominent Haligonians to derive from their leisure pursuits not only their own intrinsic pleasure, but also the satisfaction implicit in the role of do-gooders. Hence, on October 10, 1874 the Recorder in a rave review emphasized the decorous literary and musical entertainment at Argyle Hall in which Miss Farrugia, "played well", "Miss Glennon and Miss Flinn each gave two standard songs in a most acceptable manner", "Mr. Crawford sang well and Miss Farrugia played all accompaniments most efficiently."<sup>352</sup> The event, held in this centrally located hall opposite St. Paul's Church, was reportedly "largely attended", and this, combined with the general support represented by the favourable press release, would have greatly benefited all classes.

Throughout this era too, there were certain musical performances which, by their tone and patronage, were obviously intended only for the wealthy. Consider the 1855 advertisement for "Miss Hill's Concert, At Temperance Hall, Under the Patronage of Lady LeMarchant."

Miss Hill, Professor of Music, begs to announce to her friends and the public, that a concert in her honor will take place...She will be assisted by a Lady Amateur, and several Gentlemen Amateurs, who have kindly undertaken to render their services...Senor Louis Casseres will conduct...Overtures, Solos, Songs, Duetts, Quartets.<sup>353</sup>

In 1858 at Mason's Hall during one of the regular Tuesday afternoon concerts Senor Casseres performed choice sections on the piano before a "large and fashionable assemblage." These concerts were regarded as "a delightful weekly treat to the ladies and gentlemen who can afford leisure to attend them."<sup>354</sup> Individual recitals continued in popularity over the

years. In 1891 when Miss Louise Laine sang, the audience members received a fifteen-page program, ornately designed and printed by John Bowes, 42 Bedford Row. It read in part:

Miss Louise Laine's Song Recitals  
 First Programme, January 22, 1891...  
 Under the Patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John  
 Russ. His Honor Governor M.B. Daly...In the presentation of this  
 programme Miss Laine will be ably assisted by Fran Marianne  
 DeBring-Brauer, Pianists, Herr Ernst DeBring, Violoncellist, and  
 Mr. C.H. Porter, Jr., Pianist.

The printed itinerary included the titles of all musical pieces, as well as the words of twenty-four songs to be performed.<sup>355</sup> Choir singing also grew in popularity amidst the "wealth, beauty, and taste of the city" who witnessed a concert by the choir of the St. Paul's Church, under the leadership of Mr. S. Porter at Argyle Hall in 1874.<sup>356</sup> Finally, in 1887 some music teachers formed the Halifax Conservatory of Music with an aim to "establish a music school where all branches of music from the lowest to the highest grades should be taught."<sup>357</sup> During the last decade of the 19th century it became "a matter of great pride to receive an invitation to one of the Conservatory recitals when the Coronation Hall...was filled with pretty girls in white gowns and ladies and gentlemen in evening dress."<sup>358</sup>

Music was hardly the preserve of any one social class, however. In a city that by 1867 boasted twenty-five churches, for example, choral music abounded. Various churches also offered free singing lessons. In November, 1851 an advertisement reminded citizens of the adult classes in singing being held in the vestry of the Reverend Mr. McGregor's church.<sup>359</sup> Later, in 1865 anyone interested in instruction on the flute and guitar and in singing could apply at the Tower Road residence of Mr. Edward A.R.

Khern, a professor of Music, who advertised his services "at a moderate rate".<sup>360</sup> A second, more widely known professor, Mr. J.B. Norton, arrived in Halifax in 1866 and spoke at Masonic Hall on April 23rd to explain how he would instruct music "to anyone interested". Advertised as "a master of the profession," this gentleman went on to achieve great success with children, arguing that "[t]here is no reason why every child should not be taught to sing as well as to read."<sup>361</sup> His pupils sometimes appeared as the sole attraction at Temperance Hall. Such was the case in April, 1867 when his 100 juveniles gave a Grand Concert. Admission was twenty-five cents for the gallery and half that price for the parquette. Occasionally the children performed as part of a holiday's celebrations; on Monday, June 23, 1873, for example, they sang patriotic songs as part of the itinerary for Halifax's celebration of its one hundred and twenty-fourth anniversary.<sup>362</sup>

Other children helped celebrate other special events. In January, 1871 the Festival of the Brunswick Street Wesleyan Colored School was held in the basement of the Brunswick Street Church. Approximately 100 children and as many guests sat down to tea at six o'clock. Then an evening of music and song included "singing in chorus, duett and sole, and recitations by boys and girls...rendered as only colored children can render them."<sup>363</sup> Obviously, music of all kinds by all kinds was clearly evident in Halifax during this era, ranging all the way from formal, classical recitals to church basement choruses, each with its own specialized audience, and none more culturally appropriate than any other.

Even though members of the city's working class were capable of fashioning their own leisure culture, a faction of Victorian reformers

remained bent on providing activities for the moral improvement of classes below. Much of this urge for social control can be seen in the rapid growth of self-improvement societies of various kinds. Distinct from charitable organizations like the Halifax Industrial School (1863), the North End City Mission (1868), the Infants Home (1875), and the Home of the Guardian Angel (1886), there existed a group of societies intent upon providing access to knowledge through mediums such as lectures, libraries, and museums. As Richard Jarrell has pointed out, organizations such as the 19th century scientific society might have been run by and for the elite, but they also included the working class due to the strong belief in "the linkage of science and progress."<sup>364</sup> Participation across class lines, of course, did not signify equality, but a bourgeois belief in the social, cultural, and economic benefits that would accompany the refinement of the working class. Other organizations founded on this principle in Halifax were the Mechanics' Institute that opened in 1832 and the Young Men's Christian Association that officially opened its doors on December 10, 1853. The latter believed in "setting before ... [young men] opportunities for the profitable as well as pleasant employment of their leisure hours, to encourage and assist them against the swelling tide of evil."<sup>365</sup> Purporting to be "a social organization for all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity...of whatever evangelical church," it offered its members a library, reading room, and regular lectures. In reality this society's magnanimous statement of purpose was greatly undermined by its membership restrictions. In order to use the YMCA's facility at 128 Barrington Street, a young man had to prove himself a convert to God, be avowed a member in good standing of one of the evangelical denominations,

be proposed by a member of the association, pass a lengthy inquiry into his eligibility, be elected by ballot, and then pay twenty shillings. In 1854 a successful candidate could have spent his leisure hours edified by lectures on "The Hebrew Nation," "Facts and lessons from Geology," "The Advantages of Literary Studies and their consistency with the spiritual life," and "The Formation of Character."

It is hardly surprising that these societies fell short of their objectives of uplifting and educating the working class. Richard Jarrell, after noting that forty-one Canadian Mechanics' Institutes received government grants by 1854, concludes that "[i]f the Mechanics' Institute movement can be seen as an attempt to bring the working class into middle-class culture, it must be branded a failure."<sup>366</sup> Despite the drive for respectability among many working men themselves, they refused to capitulate to bourgeois objectives. On April 18, 1857 one newspaper highlighted the Mechanics' Institute's managers' dismay over the mechanics' indifference to intellectual entertainment. The writer suggested that if the founders "wish the Institute to succeed, let them turn the lecture into a dancing room, where mechanics can shake their 'intellectual legs' through the brilliant movements of the polka."<sup>367</sup> This confirms Jarrell's conclusion that "for 19th-century Canadian scientific societies" social activity "was the primary function for the majority of members."<sup>368</sup>

Indeed, in Halifax at this time many highly visible organizations provided ambitious social agendas. The membership of the Mason's Hall, the original cornerstone of which had been laid in 1800, increased so rapidly that an 1850 addition proved inadequate, leading to construction

of a new Masonic Temple on the corner of Granville and Salter streets.<sup>369</sup> When the cornerstone for this facility was laid on August 31, 1875, the ceremony was witnessed not only by over nine hundred Masons, but also by the "'youth, beauty and fashion of the city,' and the representatives of the Dominion, Provincial, and Civic Governments and of the Army and Navy."<sup>370</sup> After the building opened on June 6, 1877, Haligonians arrived in droves to inspect the Aquarium, telegraph office, and art gallery. For this occasion over three hundred paintings had been put on display. In subsequent years the Mason's Hall furnished a premises widely used for balls, dinners, dances, and meetings of national societies. In 1851 the North British Society celebrated the Festival of St. Andrew with a dinner there,<sup>371</sup> and the St. George's Society in 1858 celebrated its day, April 23, with a march that originated and returned there.<sup>372</sup> In April, 1865 Thomas Leahy exhibited four hundred and eighty versions of flowers and plants<sup>373</sup> in the Hall.

There were also those organizations which combined social activities with social causes. More than three hundred children participated in a grand march through the city's streets as part of the Halifax Catholic Total Abstinence Society's first anniversary celebration on August 15, 1865.<sup>374</sup> And on January 24th, 1871 the dramatic class of the Young Men's Library Association gave a musical and histrionic entertainment at the Mount Hope Asylum "for the amusement of the unfortunate in that institution."<sup>375</sup>

Just as some societies involved a cross section of society, so were there those groups that remained indisputably elitist. The Athenaeum of Halifax in its original prospectus of December, 1844 had stipulated that

it would

be open every evening to its members, for Social Intercourse, and Literary and Scientific Recreation, and at least once in every week for the consideration of Literary and Scientific matters, The discussion of questions on all subjects.... And for Reading and Music...Works of the most distinguished authors and composers ... the voluntary interchange of the intellectual and elegant attainments characterising genteel society.<sup>376</sup>

Other groups that did not so specifically advertise their exclusivity exhibited a high degree of it in their membership and in their intellectual pursuits. On January 2, 1878 a meeting was held at 4 p.m. at the Legislature Library room of the Provincial Building to form the Nova Scotia Historical Society. Dr. W.J. Almon was called to the Chair. Among those absentees who sent letters of support were Lieutenant-Governor A.G. Archibald, Chief Justice Sir William Young, and L.B. Aiken, Esq.<sup>377</sup> The doors were also open to upwardly mobile merchants, such as George Morton, whose avid business pursuits had afforded him a significant degree of social status.

Morton's diary for February, 1878 included a press clipping of the Historical Society's formation. A rather sarcastic article described a long discussion of whether the entrance fee for city members of the Society should be five or two dollars, with the resolution being five dollars for the first year and two for the second. The writer noted that "one would have thought from the earnest tone of the discussion that an attempt was being made by some members to make the Society aristocratic and exclusive, for the rich only, with hundred dollar fees."<sup>378</sup> Dues for country members would be two and one dollars for the first and second years respectively, but these participants would have no voting rights.

The fact that many societies provided libraries and/or museums for their members theoretically afforded a potential for self-education. The Mechanics' Institute, for instance, sought to provide resource material for the craftsmen interested in studying the technology of their jobs, thereby enhancing their vocational training. Still, the effectiveness of this middle class hope depended upon the motivation of the working class members to take advantage of it. The presence of reading material suggested respectability, but the mere fact of having a place for social interaction with one's peers may have been more important to working people.

In addition to these numerous societies there were other attempts to establish libraries and museums. By 1895 there were over 100,000 volumes in nine book collections in Halifax, but only the 22,000 volumes in the Citizen's Free Library could be used by every citizen of the city, provided that his application was signed by a taxpayer.<sup>378</sup> Sir William Young purchased the Mechanics' Library and benevolently presented it to the City Council to be suitably housed and opened to the public. Yet according to Phyllis Blakeley, "[t]hrough the Citizen's Library had the nucleus of an excellent library, through the lack of public interest and the neglect of the City Council it had failed to educate the workingmen and to supply the citizens with wholesome reading material."<sup>380</sup> Although immediately after the official opening on Natal Day, 1873, the library received over one thousand enrolments, popularity waned over the years as city funding provided for neither the purchase of new books, nor the repair of old ones. The 32,396 volumes issued in 1880 declined to 13,801 in 1884.<sup>381</sup> Donations of texts from wealthy citizens could not alleviate

the problems caused by the neglectful attitude of the aldermen. Not until the mid 1890's after the library was moved from cramped quarters in Argyle Hall to City Hall, and the Library Committee under Alderman Gilbert listened to Dr. Archibald MacMechan's reform ideas regarding new cataloguing, the need for a competent librarian and wiser budget expenditures, did the readership rise as the facility began to meet the needs of the people.

In 1890 five hundred prominent Haligonians appeared before City Council to propose construction of one building on the Parade Square to house the School of Art and Design, the Provincial Museum, and a combined library of the N.S. Historical Society, the Natural Science Institute, and the Citizen's Free Library.<sup>382</sup> Given the earlier problems with the last of these, plus the fact that the Provincial Museum since its establishment in 1868 had occupied a single room in the attic of the Post Office, such a structure would appear to have been badly needed. However, the proposal failed to elicit City Council's financial support, and died.

Just as library and museum facilities, although minimal, did exist for the general public outside the boundaries of societies, so was there ready access to lectures, the frequency of which accelerated during this era. Held in halls, schools, theatres, or almost any public building, and given by prestigious individuals, both local and visiting, lectures in the arts, history, or literature constituted evenings out, social events centred on the accomplishments of cultured persons. Because few papers were written on a high level, almost anyone could benefit from hearing them.<sup>383</sup> Thus, lectures were available as popular entertainment for all those inclined towards intellectual discourse and self-improvement. The fact that

lectures often were accompanied by pictures, experiments, or some other visual attraction would greatly have broadened the spectrum of classes to which they appealed, as would have been true of those with minimal or no admission charge.

In the 1850's press advertisements spoke of "Literary and Musical Entertainment" indicating a multi-faceted program. For instance, during the winter of 1856 Sir William Young spoke at Temperance Hall on "The Progress of Society", a presentation illustrated by pictures of The Prehistoric, The Middle Age, and the Present. Music enlivened the evening which cost a family of three persons 1 s., 3d.<sup>384</sup>

In 1858 phrenology's popularity drew crowds to hear Messrs. Fowler and Wells of New York give six lectures ranging from "How to read character scientifically" to "[o]ur social relations...who should and who should not marry", and "...the right government, training, and proper culture of children." The personal addition of "Private examinations - professional delineations, with charts and full written descriptions of character"<sup>385</sup> undoubtedly swelled the audience at a time when the spectacular in science, the visual presentation, had assumed an importance equal to, or even greater than, the lecturer's subject itself.<sup>386</sup>

At their most formal, lectures were held in conventional settings like that of Temperance Hall with dignitaries chairing. Such was the case in 1869 when the Honorable Miles Gerald Keor, Her Majesty's Colonial Secretary in Bermuda, visited Halifax on his way to England. Citizens paying fifty cents for seats in the Dress Circle or half that for the Parquette listened to "Some Anecdotes and Arguments Concerning Persons Who Have Wielded Power, illustrating certain very opposite ways of using it,"

while his Worship the Mayor presided.<sup>387</sup> The same theatre was used two years later as Sir William Young hosted an evening when the Archdeacon of Manitoba lectured on his province and the North West.<sup>388</sup> Similarly, in 1882 Oscar Wilde spoke to a "large number of the best people in Halifax ... an audience...so large and so fashionable" at the Academy of Music.<sup>389</sup>

On a smaller scale local and visiting religious leaders frequently offered lectures in the many churches or halls, a natural extension of the sermonizing and communal caring inherent in their vocations. The informality of these presentations would have been more likely to draw the average working man than would have the grander affairs at Temperance Hall or the Academy of Music. A few of these included: Reverend Professor McNight on an unspecified topic in Theological Hall, Gerrish Street on November 1, 1869;<sup>390</sup> Reverend G.W. Itill on "A Trip to Scotland", at Argyle Hall on June 4, 1847;<sup>391</sup> Reverend Mr. Feltwell of Moncton on "The Present Condition of the Episcopal Church in Great Britain and America," in Association Hall on September 29, 1874;<sup>392</sup> Reverend Jesse B. Young on the Battle of Gettysburg at St. Matthew's Church in September, 1878.<sup>393</sup>

### Conclusion

To conclude then, Halifax's culture developed over a wide spectrum of recreational spaces in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Civic pride often saw all classes working together, such as in the case of the Summer Carnival of 1889 when the public decorated their homes with bunting and participated avidly in hopes of out-shining the recent carnival in Saint John. But there is little evidence that working people blindly emulated those above them. When they were denied horseracing on the

Common, working people turned to the picnic which not only became a highly visual leisure activity, but was eventually copied and made fashionable by the middle class. When societies with middle class patrons provided self-improvement lectures, the working class often shunned them in favor of more active entertainment like dancing. Young and Willmoth's "principle of stratified diffusion", the emulation of the rich by the rest of society and the gradual diffusion throughout the social order of ideals and practices of the wealthy,<sup>394</sup> fails to comprehend the complexity of the process of cultural production. In 19th century Halifax, as was true elsewhere, working class culture might have intersected with, but remained distinct from, the culture of the bourgeoisie.

## Conclusion

19th century Halifax cannot be perceived as classless. Layered according to inequality, the divisions ranged all the way from the slums beneath the Citadel to the imposing mansions on the North West Arm and the rapidly developing, restricted area of Young Avenue. At the same time class boundaries are never easily articulated; rather, they constantly fluctuate in response to economic changes and cultural developments. As E.P. Thompson has suggested, class is not so much a thing as it is a process. The will of people to effect changes for their own self-fulfillment led to battles on many fronts, including the terrain of leisure. And it is in those struggles that classes make themselves.

The picture of popular entertainment in Halifax during this era is complex with many groups struggling to influence the cultural life of the city. As leisure pursuits helped to shape the character of Halifax, so were they highly influenced by people of all classes. It is a myth to contend that working class Haligonians passively accepted the imposition of a bourgeois culture. Instead, the attempt of reformers to shape leisure to suit their own objectives was riddled with contradictions.

For example, bent on instilling respectability in the masses and pressured to increase door receipts, Victorian reformers encouraged general admission to theatres and sporting events. But the "Gods" in the balconies asserted themselves in a manner that necessitated police patrols and that made it necessary that theatre bills include a variety of presentations ranging from serious drama to farcical comedy. At the same time, displeasure with bourgeois forms of sport or with admission charges

to settings like the Wanderer's Grounds led various groups to establish their own athletic pursuits. Sport never functioned as the great equalizer, but events like track and field meets and yacht races involved residents from a broad public base. Reformers encouraged everyone to witness demonstrations of manly competition, hoping to implant values like fairness and good sportsmanship. But the idea of emulating "polite" society failed to impact upon the working class, who utilized their leisure time to derive pleasure from their own versions of various sports. Almost everyone owned a boat or sleigh of some sort, or could join an informal game of baseball, football, or cricket. Halifax vibrated with athletic activities - enough to include everyone in some capacity.

So often the battles that raged over popular entertainment originated with the question of what constituted fruitful or beneficial use of leisure time. The bourgeois desire to provide morally uplifting culture to counteract debauchery and drinking led in 1865 to legislation against pub games and in 1883 to the temporary closing of dance halls in Grafton Street.<sup>395</sup> The city's poorer residents who valued such places as crucial to their social lives found alternative locations, thereby actively shaping and asserting the right to their own culture. Each strata of society possessed its own notions of respectability and when middle class reformers tried to destroy a sub-culture which appeared at odds with their own ideas of respectability, they failed.

Thus, the leisure culture in Halifax during the latter half of the nineteenth century, while enduring, proved also to be in a constant state of change. Susceptible always to economic and ideological fluctuations, it also was highly affected by the outcome of class battles. Social

change is not achieved through an omnipotent class imposing its design on others. Rather, change is the result of class conflict and the contesting of power on many fronts. Theatre, sports, and general recreation developed in Halifax as residents at all levels on the social scale pursued activities that met their intrinsic needs. Just as the city was never classless, nor was any class powerless in the production of the cultural life of 19th century Halifax.

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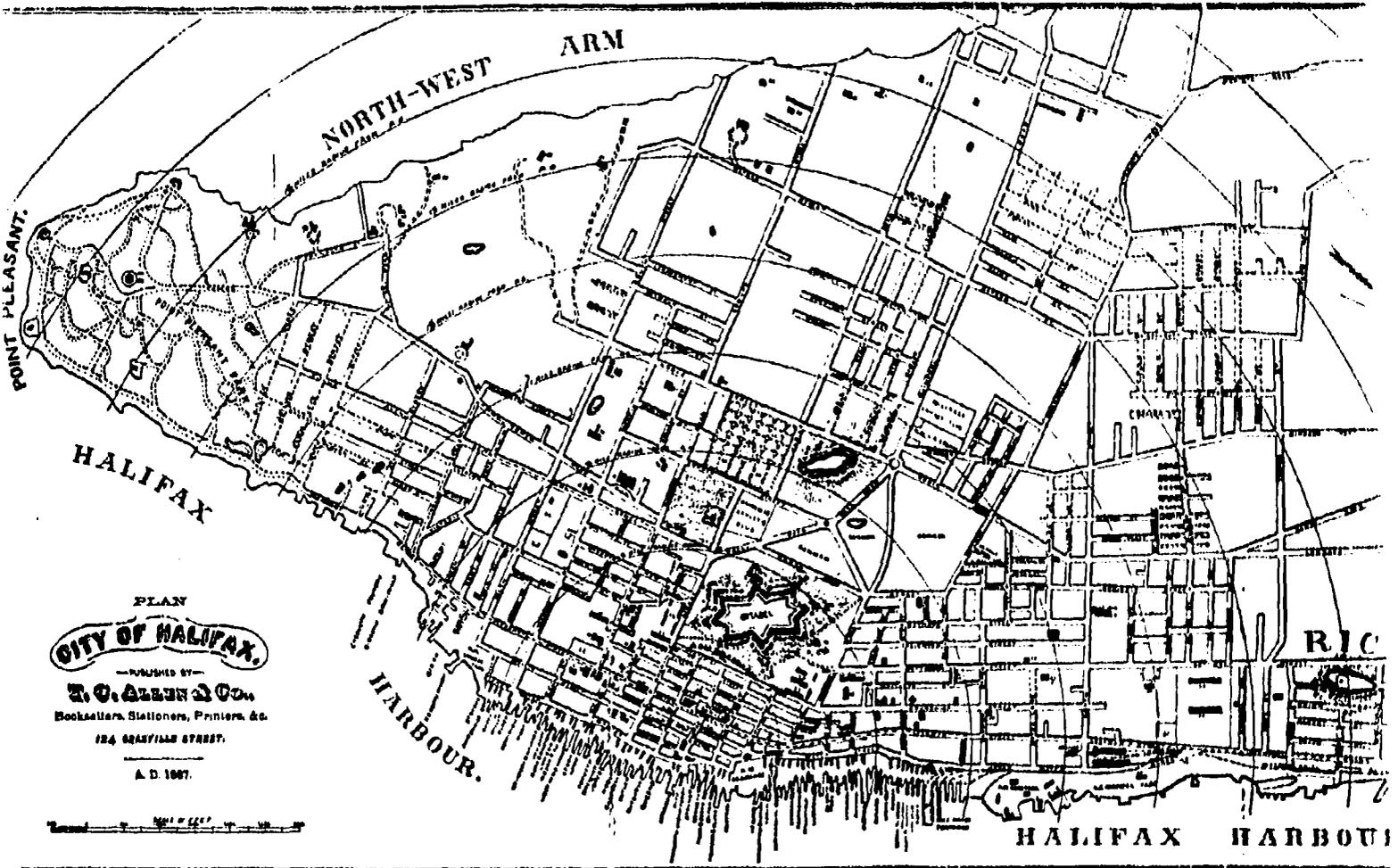
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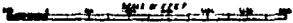
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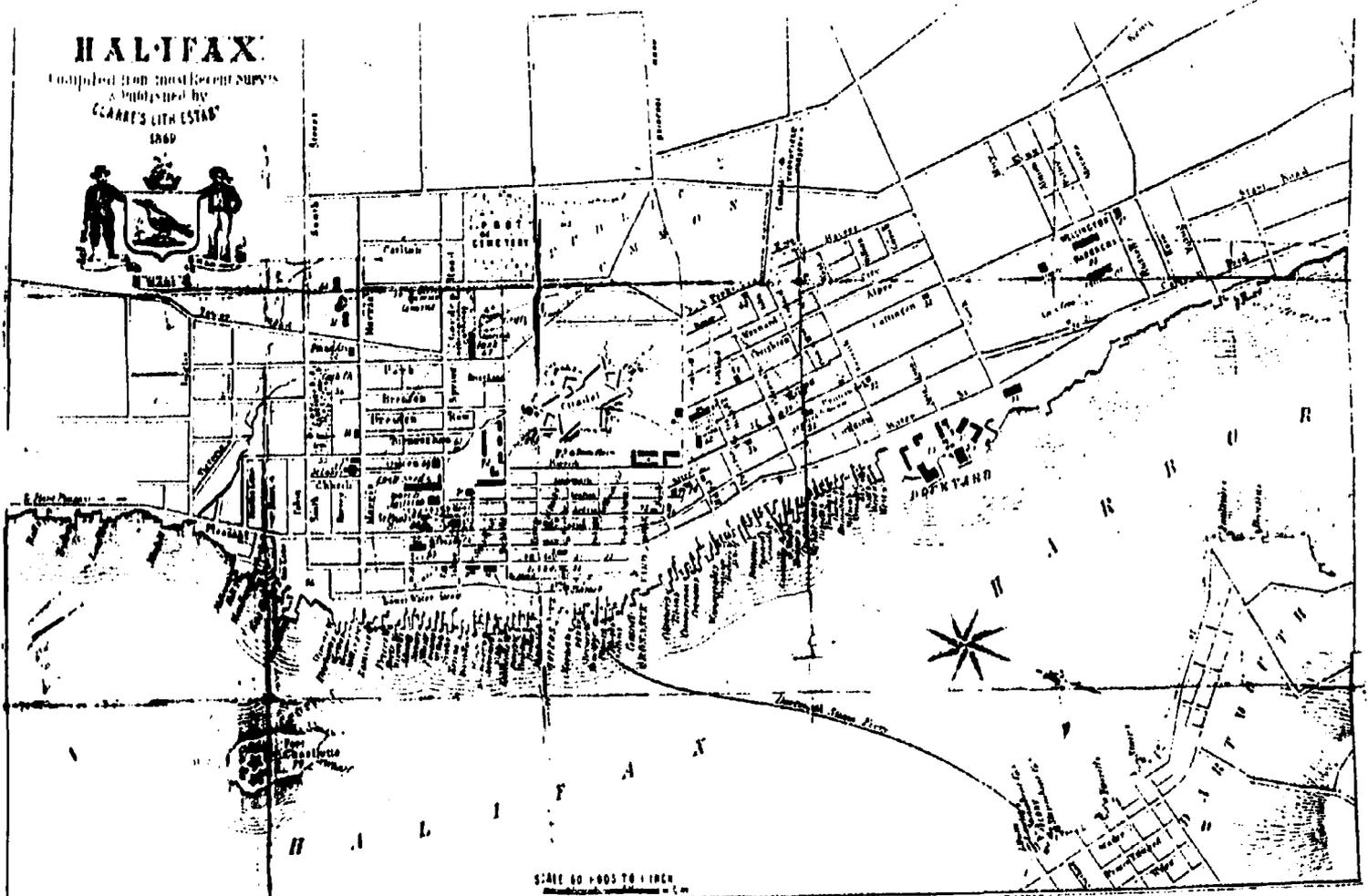
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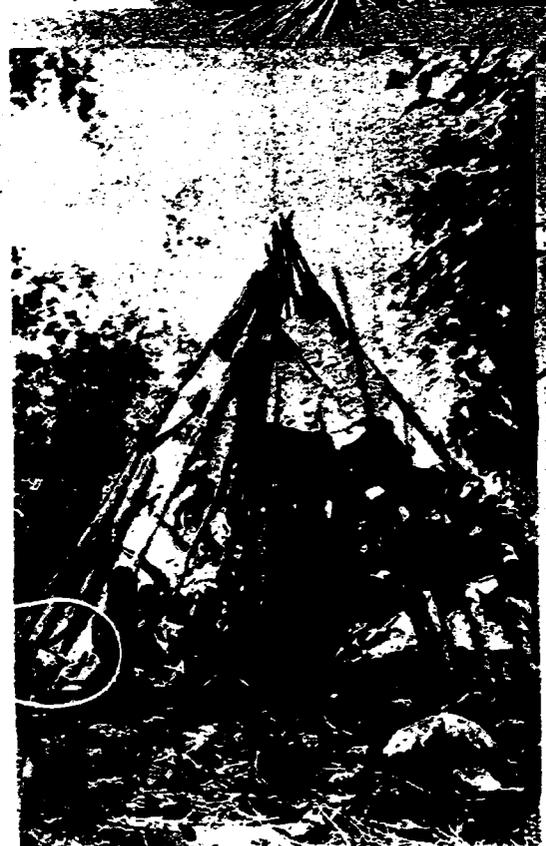
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| 2 New Provincial Barracks | 15 Barracks or Caspary | 22 Bank of British North America | 32 Old and Irish Asylm          | 42 Rail Depot                     | 52 Poor Affairs                   | 62 County Court House          | 72 Emery and Langlois Barracks |
| 3 Dr. Poir's Church - Age | 16 Court House         | 23 Peoples Bank                  | 33 Old French Church            | 43 City Hall                      | 53 Head Office                    | 63 Jail                        | 73 Town Clock                  |
| 4 Grand Parade            | 17 Luncheon Table      | 24 Insurance Land                | 34 St. John's Church - Pres.    | 44 The Citadel Battery            | 54 Cemetery of Holy Cross - M. F. | 64 St. Paul's Barrage Ground   | 74 Barracks                    |
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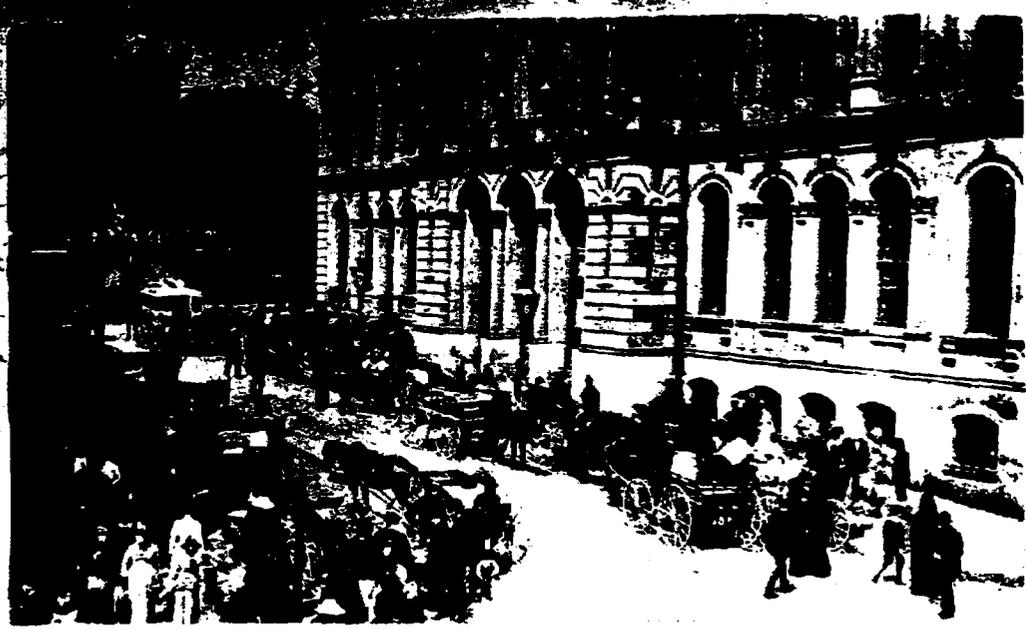
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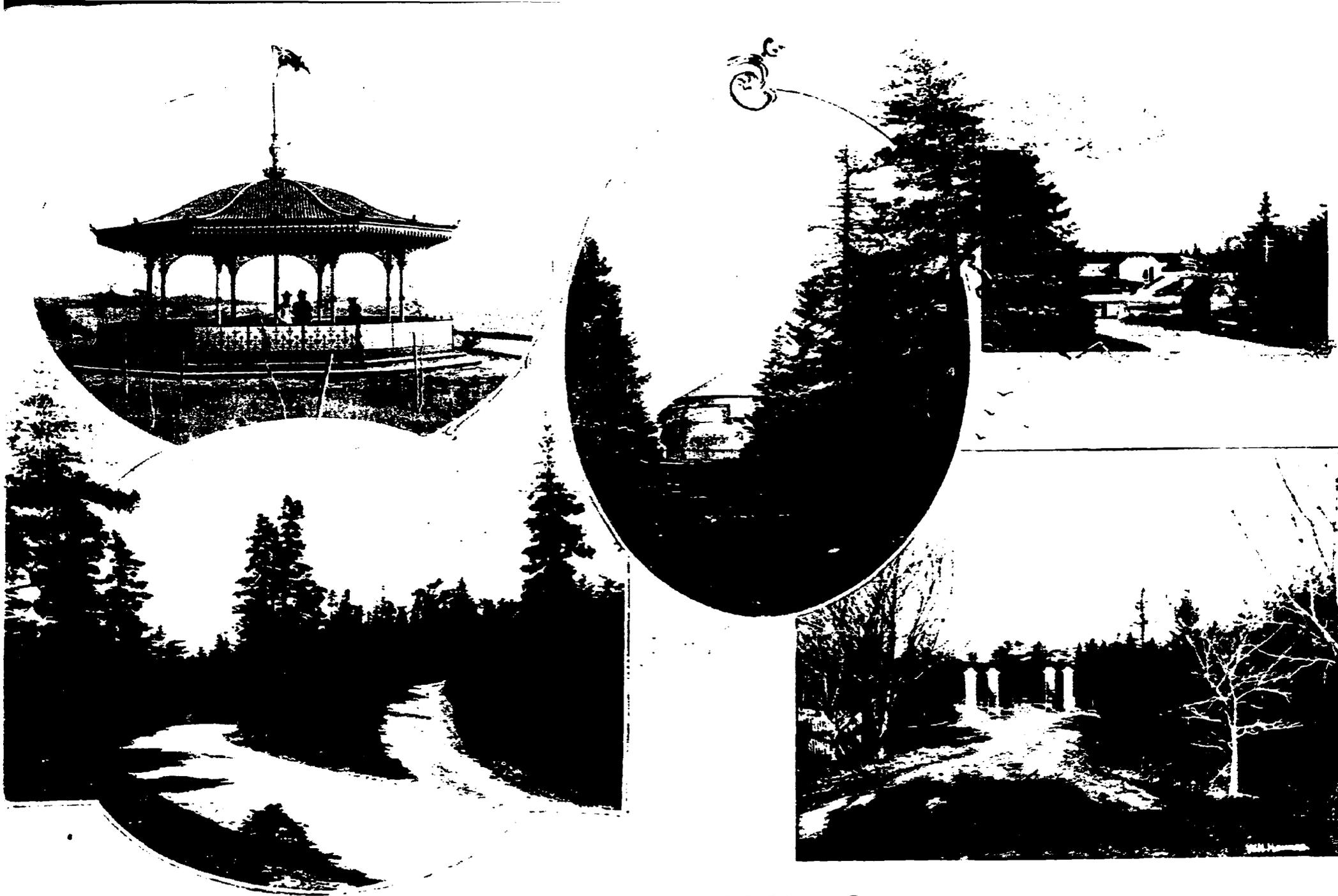
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