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"And How Pretty They Are!": Lawn Tennis, Tourism, and Gender Relations at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 1880s-1920s

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Abstract

In the four decades straddling the turn of the nineteenth century, the small Ontario town of Niagara-on-the-Lake experienced marked growth in its tourism industry. Catering predominantly to wealthy upper-middle-class Canadian and American visitors, the lake-side settlement offered numerous opportunities for polite recreation. Chief among them was lawn tennis, a sport that sat somewhat outside of the mainstream in terms of its high-class, mixed-sex participation demographic. While its players were imbued with a strong amateur philosophy, local boosters recognized the sport's potential to generate tourism income through its two tournaments, but this hinged on the outward presentation among its players/guests of refined gentility—a reflection of both class and gender—both on and off the court. This article considers how lawn tennis tournaments fit into the town's burgeoning tourism industry, and examines gender relations—particularly the role of women—in relation to this development.

Keywords

Canada, tennis, femininity, tourism, amateurism

Annually, approximately 3.5 million tourists descend upon the small Ontario town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which is situated on the southern side of Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Niagara River and twelve miles downstream from Niagara Falls. Niagara-on-the-Lake was once the capital of Upper Canada (from 1792 to 1796) and a site of significant historical importance during the War of 1812; Fort George, within the town, was the central division headquarters of the British Army stationed in Upper Canada. Likely unbeknownst to most contemporary tourists, in the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth centuries the town hosted the two most important lawn tennis tournaments in Canada and was one of the sport's chief cultural epicenters. The tournaments became key focal points around which the town's summer festivities revolved, and a site for the reproduction and contestation of gender norms for both men and women.

The "Niagara International" was staged on the lawns of the prestigious Queen's Royal Hotel from 1885 to 1923—usually in late-August/early-September, immediately following the U.S. National Championships—and featured many of North America's leading tennis players. From

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1895 to 1911, Niagara-on-the-Lake also hosted the Canadian National Championships, which, according to historian Martyn Kendrick, brought "increased spectator attendance beyond numbers previously unimagined."[1] While the tennis tournaments enhanced the town's prosperity, they also played an important role in the sport's early growth. Indeed, today, the Canadian National Championships is better known as the Rogers Cup, one of the ATP Masters and WTA Premier tournaments and staged annually, concurrently in Toronto and Montreal.

The town and its tennis tournaments thrived during this period as an outcome of a combination of various social, cultural, economic, and geographical/climatic conditions. The history of Niagara-on-the-Lake as a former seat of colonial power ensured it remained well populated with Toronto "society" throughout the nineteenth century. Its climate was significantly cooler than in Toronto; thus, wealthy residents from the booming metropolis found in Niagara-on-the-Lake an enclave that was not only fashionable in a social sense but eminently liveable during the summer months, where they could partake in numerous outdoor activities—not limited to golf, bicycling, bass fishing, boating, yachting, bathing, lawn bowling and lawn tennis—away from the unbearable heat and humidity of Toronto and chiefly, though certainly not entirely, among "their own kind." "The headquarters for brilliant functions and the rendezvous for society" was the Queen's Royal Hotel, which was owned and run by Henry Winnett, proprietor of Toronto's premier establishment, the Queen's Hotel.[2] Accommodating up to 350 people, it put on numerous entertainments for guests, including some of Upper Canada's most important families alongside wealthy Americans from across the country. The Duke of York—later King George V—even stayed there in 1901. Such was the town's national distinction, the *Globe* referred to it as "the Newport of Canada," likening the numerous attractions, haute bourgeois clientele and milder climatic conditions of Niagara-on-the-Lake with the Rhode Island seat of WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) "old-money" wealth and conspicuous consumption.[3]

While lawn tennis was just one of several leisure activities available for Niagara-on-the-Lake guests, the "Tennis Week"—referring principally to the week of the Niagara International—took place during the summer's peak tourist period so was accorded perhaps the greatest importance. For much of its existence, it was sandwiched between three other "society" events: a lawn bowling tournament, a golf tournament, and a bicycle gymkhana.[4] However, given the status of the visiting guests, the media attention accorded to it, and its longevity, the tennis tournament was arguably the highest profile of them all. Equally, the Canadian National Championships staged in Niagara-on-the-Lake also generated considerable local and North American interest, and became a key site for the best Canadian players, male and female, to test themselves against the standard-bearing American "cracks."

One of the most significant features of lawn tennis in Canada was the unique gender relations on display. While sport generally was considered a "male preserve" throughout the late-nineteenth century, lawn tennis was one of the first non-native sports to accept females as both opponents and teammates of men in competition, and to involve them in numerous off-court roles.[5] Their inclusion as players remained conditioned by "a restrictive social code," but was nonetheless significant as an avenue for women—especially bourgeois women—to demonstrate their physical prowess within an outdoor public setting during a period when they were continuing to combat the more conservative mid-century social mores and prescribed behavioral norms that tended to delineate men and women into "separate spheres."[6] Within the Niagara-on-the-Lake tournaments more specifically, it was typically the men who presided over these events, organized the timetables, established the rules/regulations, made the important formal presentations and stole headlines for their on-court performances—thereby also taking most of the credit—yet women played important but subtle roles. Indeed, the tennis tournaments were opportunities for women to operate within an arena outside of the home—the institution that had come to be understood throughout the early/mid-nineteenth century as the "woman's sphere." Though they remained for the most part nameless influencers, aside

from a handful of the premier female players who galvanized audiences with their play, among other things the ladies—often exhibiting impeccable manners in their high-class fashions—were instrumental in setting the social tone of the entire event. This not only helped to maintain the sport's popularity among the middle classes, fusing it with a developing middle-class identity, but also reinforced traditional notions of women's "elevated moral authority" and their claims of ownership and dominance in this social sphere.[7] Throughout the nineteenth century, including even into the late-Victorian era, women's groups "celebrated the special moral nature of women, usually in contrast to men's capacity for immoral behaviour"; thus, their presence in significant numbers in the lawn tennis scene lent the sport a special and assumed virtue, which benefited all associated with it.[8]

For the most part, the public celebration of women's athletic prowess in late-Victorian Canada was rare in public discourse, though this did not prevent women from actively pursuing sporting opportunities and carving out spaces, both physical and social, where they could exercise both their bodies and their cultural influences upon local communities.[9] Among conservative commentators—both male and female—the notion of female athleticism remained anathema to longstanding and inveterate gender norms. While some would certainly have pushed back against the notion of "separate spheres" and, concomitantly, the longstanding ideological arguments that suggested a woman's supposedly natural physical frailty and biological disposition made her participation in sport inappropriate if not potentially damaging to her health, support for women's sporting participation from men and women alike remained hampered by deep-rooted cultural mores.[10] Reaching their zenith in the years of marked industrialization in North America (approx. 1780-1850) but lingering at least into the early twentieth century, inveterate gender ideologies implied that a woman's "place" was at home, commanding the private sphere, and not engaging in public activities that were considered part of the male domain—politics, economics, and also sport.[11] Though the extent that women comprehensively followed the "logic" of "separate spheres" has been exaggerated somewhat by historians of this era,[12] it was nevertheless the case that in many locales—upstate New York (Oneida County), for example—mid/late-Victorian-era women were cautioned never to "trespass beyond the feminine boundaries of the home, church, and charity" and "must be 'fastidious' in maintaining these bounds of womanhood."[13] For wealthy or middle-class women, the rhetoric was also deeply engrained. Amanda Vickery contended, "a new ideology of ultra-femininity and domesticity had triumphed by the mid-Victorian period"; the "rise of the ideology of domesticity was linked . . . to the emergence of middle-class cultural identity."[14]

Changes were noticeable by the 1880s and 1890s, when several liberal/feminist commentators—some of whom graduated from the newly opened women's colleges that preached a more progressive doctrine—were encouraging women to pursue sports and other moderate physical activities, not only for health reasons but also to facilitate their greater confidence and independence, which could be translated into community influence—to take their position "as the force of moral order."[15] For Frances Willard, for example—the feminist reformer and North Western Female College graduate who became, from 1879 to 1898, President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union—bicycling among other mixed-sex physical pursuits was encouraged for women in alliance with the precepts of the broader Social Gospel movement, which sought social/cultural reform through liberal Christian (Protestant) ethics.[16] Bicycling could aid the "physical development of humanity's mother-half" and also "[diminish] the sense of superiority in men" by developing "good fellowship and mutual understanding between men and women who take the road together."[17] For Willard,

> the old fables, myths, and follies associated with the idea of woman's incompetence to handle bat and oar, bridle and rein, and at last the cross-bar of the bicycle, are passing into contempt in presence of [women's] nimbleness, agility and skill.[18]

Revealing the nuances of Willard's position, she wanted "to help women to a wider world," believing that "the more interests women and men can have in common, the happier will it be for the home"; young bourgeois women were to find in sport a means to become more healthy, confident, morally astute, and socially conscious, but also "graceful" in appearance (read: feminine).[19]

Aligning with this development, German and Swedish gymnastics also retained a notable influence in both the United States and Canada, helping to cultivate a feminine ideal, balancing physical and mental activity, while encouraging "elegance, grace, and an athletic and healthy form."[20] Within this sphere of expanding opportunities for women's physical culture, lawn tennis became an avenue—and one of the very first—for middle-class women to develop their physical form. With its potential for more vigorous play and competition, it separated itself somewhat from bicycling that was thought by some—though not Willard—to masculinize women or cause them undue physical strain.[21] Arguably, a key feature that contributed to the success of lawn tennis in this regard was the fact that most clubs and tournaments operated in secluded suburban locales, where women would not be subject to the public gaze of a mass audience or of those outside of her own social class. For those tied to conservative ideals of womanhood—perhaps the parents of late-Victorian young women—this was probably quite important; thus, the garden parties, clubs, and tournaments were seen as relatively "safe" environs for their daughters to frequent. A key feature of tennis that helps to explain its popularity, therefore, was that it bridged the gap between (public) sport and (private) domestic home life, thereby appealing to conservatives and liberal social reformers alike. Crucially, given the "social" aspects inherent to the early development of lawn tennis culture, women could also demonstrate their domestic prowess—and exert moral influence—through hosting garden parties and associated social events, and could retain an elegant "feminine" appearance and deportment both on and off the court. Indeed, by the 1890s, music, dance, and theater had been combined with calisthenics as part of programs of physical culture in other parts of Canada, so had become normalized for young middle-class women.[22] Tennis afforded women opportunities to participate in sport without severely challenging the heavily gendered traditions of home life that remained deeply engrained until at least the 1920s.

The tennis events at Niagara-on-the-Lake also provided early examples in Canada of the growing respect that men had developed for women in a sporting domain. While early tournament reports gave often the briefest of accounts of the ladies' play, by the late-1890s/early-1900s, their performances garnered more attention and their play was often commended. This shift must be understood in the context of first-wave feminist developments, which culminated in suffrage for women and saw growing support from those men who had little or no stake in maintaining the old culture of "separate spheres."[23] While the participation of women in lawn tennis assisted in their broader efforts to attain respect and equality, their social "performances"—alongside physical appearance and off-court behavior—remained heavily regulated by gender and class norms. Their participation in lawn tennis thus highlighted the nuances of late-Victorian leisure for bourgeois women, which combined elements of empowerment and resistance with cultural reproductions of gendered behavioral norms and bodily restrictions.

For male players, the ways in which they used, viewed, displayed, and conceptualized their bodies were important cultural markers of class, thereby reaffirming the importance of sports/games and leisure as repositories of masculine values. Lawn tennis play offered men opportunities to promote and embody a more refined and genteel form of gender identity.[24] The ever-presence of women as playing partners, opponents, and spectators, alongside men's participation in the numerous off-court social events, demanded of them comparatively more responsible behavior. "Gentlemen" were expected to mix socially with women, and show civility, respect, chivalry, and gallantry when in their company. The sport's non-contact nature and the requisite self-control and restraint needed for play positioned lawn tennis for men outside of or

even diametrically opposed to perceptively more "manly" sports and leisure activities that were considered oftentimes violent, brutal, and unrefined.[25] It offered an alternative for aspirational middle-class men to the more popular forms of entertainment often seen in inns and taverns, where protecting one's honor demanded participation in fist-fights, brawls, and other tests of physical strength.[26]

Much like male figure-skaters, elite gentlemen might exhibit "grace and elegance" through lawn tennis play, which was highly valued according to Mary Louise Adams.

> Among men of the upper classes in Europe and North America, grace was considered an essential characteristic of masculinity. Men of privilege were expected to demonstrate their refinement by the grace of their demeanour and by their knowledge and mastery of graceful arts and skills.[27]

While this form of upper-class masculinity had been diluted somewhat, as an outcome of the burgeoning Muscular Christianity movement that filtered upward through the elite schools, its sentiments lingered in sports like lawn tennis.[28] Despite the declining power and authority of the Colonial British elites throughout the mid-late nineteenth century, the aspirational middle classes continued to defer to the aristocracy in some matter of taste, lifestyle, and cultural values, but there were clearly limits to how far this extended in terms of sport and appropriate expressions of the male body.

As an indication of this shift in masculine ideals, Henry Slocum, the American player and two-time U.S. National Champion (1888 & 1889), proposed to redefine the parameters of what it meant to play with "grace," which was something that had previously been widely encouraged. To "cultivate 'grace' in your movements in order that you might win the admiration and applause of spectators" was opposed; in doing so, "you are cultivating a serious fault, for your game will surely lose in strength." Graceful play was still celebrated only insomuch as it aligned with "good form" and "free and easy movement" of the body.[29]

Within the historical context of lawn tennis play, the exhibition of male behavior continued to be heavily regulated, not only through shifting gender norms but also in part through the strictures of amateurism, which conditioned not only the types of rewards one could obtain through playing but also how to approach the game or behave while playing. In these regards, the broader structures of gender and social class intersected to position lawn tennis as a sport specifically for upper-middle-class/haute-bourgeois ladies and gentlemen, and a symbol of status for those aspiring to their ranks. The broader context of shifting class relations in Canada during the nineteenth century attests to the significance of urban/suburban sports clubs as important institutions for the maintenance of a class hierarchy underlined by the dominance of colonial British elites.[30]

Historical Context and Focus

Since the 1820s, Torontonians had been founding urban sports clubs that were private and exclusive as locations for socializing with those of a similar background. The members of such clubs, as Ann Hall noted, were typically "gentle*men*, white, relatively wealthy, probably Tory in political affiliation, and associated with the ruling Family Compact, a small group of men linked by family, patronage, and shared political and social beliefs to the professional and mercantile upper-middle-class."[31] Until the mid-late nineteenth century, women were often excluded and received little support to form their own institutions. As such, these clubs remained sites of male bonding.

Due to the gradual but pronounced insurgence, throughout the nineteenth century, of the middle classes into the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres that had once been dominated by the aristocratic elite in Canada, the latter experienced a decline in influence. There was a shift in what defined the "elite" class, which expanded to accommodate the

burgeoning wealthy "professional" (upper-) middle class comprising white-collar business owners and entrepreneurs.[32] According to Keith Walden, the blurring of upper- and middle-class distinctions within this new hybrid elite—and the concomitant bourgeois mimeticism that featured alongside it—brought "confusion and anxiety" and an "urgent need to create comprehensible markers" of status.[33] Social distinctions became more subtle—material wealth was no longer solely an aristocratic privilege—and exercised increasingly through deportment, fashions, and sophisticated cultural tastes.

Private clubs for cricket, lawn bowling, and fox hunting initially served this purpose, requiring members to develop a certain skill set and adhere to a strict code of behavioral etiquette,[34] though it was becoming evident that the sporting cultures that supported the authority of the colonial elite were being destabilized. As Metcalfe explained,

> by 1867, the residual notions of colonial British North America were challenged by the emergent ones of an increasingly industrialized Canada. In the case of sport, the victors won the opportunity to establish hegemonic control of future sport development; and . . . the colonial notions . . . lost out.[35]

These older pursuits declined in popularity but were soon replaced—as sports for the new ruling class—with curling, golf, and lawn tennis, which retained elements of British elite culture but were accessible to members of the burgeoning professional (upper-) middle class.[36] In lawn tennis, the former almost always remained the cultural reference group, even though their participation within lawn tennis dwindled by the 1890s; they retained influence as club patrons and were often invited to open tournament proceedings and present trophies.[37]

Within Canada, Ontario became the epicenter for lawn tennis development before the turn of the century. Between 1876 and 1900, at least 28 clubs had been formed in Ontario—nine in Toronto alone. In their enthusiasm for lawn tennis, the young men and women of this new hybrid elite class demonstrated their preference for participation within a broader socio-cultural context demanding refined gentility. Like "domestic" bicycling, golf, and other sports for this class, lawn tennis can be understood similarly as an "expression of urban civility."[38] These elements were abundant in Niagara-on-the-Lake around the turn of the century.

Lawn Tennis and the Burgeoning Tourism Industry in Niagara-on-the-Lake

While Niagara-on-the-Lake had always been blessed with a pleasant scenery and summer climate, its embrace of tourism as a key industry in the late-nineteenth century was less a matter of choice than necessity. The decades prior represented a period of uncertainty for the town's residents, as a series of setbacks had converged to threaten its local economy, notably: the opening of the Welland Canal in 1829—and its subsequent expansions in 1854 and 1887—which diverted commerce away from the area; the closure of the Harbour and Dock Company in 1864, which reduced cross-lake employment and traffic; the withdrawal of the British garrison in 1870; and the relocation of county government to St. Catharines around the time it was incorporated as a city in 1876.[39] The town's small-scale industrial production consisted of saw and grist mills, basket and canning factories, and shipyards, but poor railway accessibility meant that receiving raw materials and shipping goods remained relatively expensive.[40] During this period, some notable improvements were made in the local transportation networks that connected Niagara-on-the-Lake with larger urban centers nearby, but while the town was made more accessible, it simply could not compete on an industrial or manufacturing scale with the likes of Toronto, Hamilton, and Buffalo.[41] In response, local residents, business owners, entrepreneurs, and councilors began to push for investment to develop and exploit tourism as the most viable industry moving forward. Especially from the 1890s onward, correspondents in local newspapers repeatedly promoted Niagara-on-the-Lake as a "'sleeping beauty' to be awakened by increased improvements and more visitors."[42]

In time, upper-middle-class Torontonians came to regard Niagara-on-the-Lake as an extension of their city, where among cooler temperatures they could practice their haute bourgeois proclivities away from the "plague of nuisances"—drunks, peddlers, rowdy boys, noisy music makers—that apparently constituted Toronto's working-class community.[43] This is not to say that working-class people did not also frequent the town—the 75-cent (economy-class) steamship fare from Toronto ensured a healthy mix of visitors—but arguably it was the wealthiest patrons that exerted the most influence upon the town's emerging tourism culture. And while the Canadian contingent was significant, it was the influx of wealthy Americans that had the most important impact. Indeed, it was often pressure from American summer-homeowners, or rather the potential threat of their withdrawal, that prompted action from the local council to legislate for and invest in infrastructural improvements. "We have conversed with gentlemen who are in the habit of coming here every summer—owning fine residences—and spend thousands of dollars in town annually, and they express regret . . . [that] the council takes such little interest in the town's welfare," lamented on anonymous Niagara-on-the-Lake citizen in 1896. Lest the council show greater "moral courage" to take decisive action on issues, such as, for example, the destruction of property caused by roaming horses and cattle, "Niagara-on-the-Lake's popularity as a summer resort will be a thing of the past."[44]

With "civic boosterism" in mind, newspapers extolled the town's virtues as a summer haven for higher-class guests, and reminded local residents to "clean up their properties and welcome tourists."[45] Brochures served a similar purpose. Published in 1897 by the Niagara District Board of Trade, one of them described in some detail the town's ease of access, beauty of scenery, historic interest, and its wealth of attractions and health-giving qualities.[46] It stated that social events at the Queen's Royal Hotel, especially the Saturday "hops," "bring together the cream of society from Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Buffalo and Rochester."[47] Another brochure self-published by local resident John S. Clarke exclaimed,

> Can one imagine a pleasure more ideal to spend a hot summer's day than lolling under an immense shade tree on a rolling piece of land covered by beautiful green lawn and three-quarters surrounded by water, having a view on one side of gorgeous Lake Ontario and the other the most beautiful and renowned Niagara River, with all sorts of sailing craft passing to and fro, and not a minute of the 24 hours daily without a cool breeze; such a place is Niagara-on-the-Lake.[48]

Attesting to their apparent importance to the image and prosperity of the town—taking up more than half of the entire brochure—Clarke also included half-page photographs of 18 different summer houses owned by residents outside of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their places of residence included Toronto, alongside towns/cities in the states of New York (Buffalo, Canadaigua, Rochester & Kingston), Ohio (Columbus, Richwood & Sandusky), Michigan (Bay City), Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh & Philadelphia), and Louisiana (New Orleans). Their professions ranged from manufacturing (cars, soap, glass, brick, & heavy machinery), lumber, the railroad and distilling, to banking, publishing, and law—all solidly middle-class. The Niagara International was given particular attention in these publications, and the description of the "unusual gaiety" found during the event—the "'tournament' balls, dances, boating parties and entertainments [that] make the evening hours slip by on golden wings of pleasure"—reaffirmed the town's high-class and mixed-gender target audience.[49]

From these publications alone, it was apparent that wealthy upper-middle-class ladies and gentlemen represented the key demographic toward which the town's leisurely activities and excursions were aimed. The Queen's Royal Hotel, which opened in 1868, not only afforded its guests premier accommodation, facilities, and catering, but also capitalized on the mixed-gender participation that this class increasingly enjoyed in its leisure activities. While ladies still tended to remain more private, the recreations afforded by the hotel and throughout the town most often were conducted within relatively secluded spaces. Refined individual sporting activities that

afforded mixed participation were much preferred over more competitive, "manly" team sports—that is, ice hockey, lacrosse, baseball, Canadian football—that had stronger lower-middle/working-class participation and were better established in urban areas with a larger and more ethnically diverse population.[50]

As the focal point for the Niagara International, the Queen's Royal converted their vast back lawn into grass courts, which were apparently "unequalled anywhere else in [North] America."[51] Reports intimated that the social accouterments rather than the actual tennis were what brought a healthy repeat custom year upon year. "We go there ostensibly to play tennis, but tennis is an ingredient, not an essence," remarked the editor of *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide* (hereafter *W&D's*) in 1899 when describing the town.[52] Eight years later, the editor reiterated, "The tennis tournaments at Niagara are a signal for a good time"; upon their commencement "everyone starts in and no time is lost."[53]

From the mid-1890s, many of the leading American players, both male and female, regularly made Niagara-on-the-Lake part of their annual summer tour. By this time, assisted by the U.S. and Canadian lawn tennis associations, many tournament committees organized their events in succession so players and spectators could travel to one after the other. After the Canadian Championships typically staged in July, the focus was always the U.S. National Championships in mid/late August in Newport (1881-1915). The Niagara-on-the-Lake tournament typically came immediately afterward, which meant that instead of it being a serious warm-up event for North America's most important championship it was a more relaxed occasion, to be enjoyed rather than vigorously contested. Indeed, the importance of its position within the tournament calendar and the presence of American "cracks" was revealed in 1897 when, due to "rainy weather" in Newport that caused matches there to be postponed, the Niagara-on-the-Lake committee decided to delay the commencement of its own tournament.[54]

American players were considered the standard-bearers of performance across the continent, especially those from the Ivy League schools in the north-east. Tournaments throughout Ontario not only celebrated their presence but also relied upon them to attract spectators and add excitement along mildly competitive patriotic lines. The report of the third annual Canadian National Championships held at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club in 1892, for example, noted the "greater interest among the clubs and players of the Dominion" and "the improvement in the home players as year after year rolls on," yet "our visitors from across the border [are] still the superior players."[55] American entries, "are always much appreciated," but "a good many expressions of disappointment" were voiced when, at the same tournament two years later—this time held in Ottawa—no American players entered the main singles draw.[56] It was decided that Niagara-on-the-Lake would be a more suitable host; indeed, just eight weeks later, by contrast, the town enjoyed "the most expert and numerous gathering of tennis players hitherto seen on Canadian courts" at the Niagara International.[57] The large contingent of American "cracks" were supported by a throng of spectators for the men's final—"the largest gathering ever seen at a tennis match in Canada"—who brought great enthusiasm to the occasion.[58] Undoubtedly, the impressive attendance of 600 guests that was numbered for the previous year's tournament-closing dance was likely far surpassed by the 1894 event.

As the years progressed, the tennis culture at Niagara-on-the-Lake blossomed and at least until the Great War, the player list for the "International" included "anyone of any significance in the North American tennis world."[59] Given its position toward the end of the season, the Niagara International was "always a popular tournament, being the last good one of the year"; it "brings together many of the best players, as a winding up to their season's outing."[60] To round out its program of men's and women's singles/doubles events, the hosts also put on a men's handicap singles event and a mixed-doubles event. These were recognized as consolation events and never intended to tempt overly competitive play. Their inclusion in the tournament program helped to lend the entire occasion an appearance of relaxed, casual play that was unequivocally "amateur"

in spirit and held up as idyllic. This had an impact on the forms of masculinity and femininity performed at the town's tennis events, which were reflective of broader class norms and behavioral expectations.

Amateurism and Its Intrinsic Value

Historians have acknowledged that amateurism was not a homogeneous concept across all sports; its underlying code was interpreted in different ways, its emphases shifted across geographical contexts, and its written/unwritten rules were enforced unevenly.[61] According to Metcalfe, the period of "greatest debate" over amateurism in North America was 1895-1909, which coincided with "a time when workers were not only organizing in trade unions but also participating in sport in significant numbers."[62] Officials representing lacrosse, baseball, ice hockey, and Canadian football—the leading team sports in Canada—were most concerned with the practices of "sham-amateurism": under-the-table payments, dubious job offers, and illegal transfer bonuses for players.[63] Professionalism was anathema to sport's "true ideals," but the growth of "large paying crowds" and inter-town/inter-city rivalries brought commercialism—notably financial inducements and business sponsorships—into these sports.[64] The Amateur Athletic Association of Canada (AAAC) struggled to control the professionalization of these team sports, but their influence proved stronger in individual-based sports.[65]

Aligning itself with the AAAC, the Canadian Lawn Tennis Association (CLTA) established a definition of an amateur upon its formation in 1890 as "one who has never played or taught any sport as one of his ordinary means of livelihood, or in connection therewith."[66] Exponents of the sport across North America, however, regarded lawn tennis as above such malfeasance, and so likely proposed an amateur definition as a precautionary measure more than as a response to known transgressions. Indeed, within tennis the strictures of amateurism were such that even the practice of "pot-hunting"—players choosing what tournaments to enter based upon the value of their prizes—was widely condemned.[67] While American influences were frequently identified as a key factor in the spread of professionalism into other sports,[68] in lawn tennis the staunchly amateur United States National Lawn Tennis Association (USNLTA) influenced Canadian lawn tennis in the opposite direction. Writing in 1891, the USNLTA executive committee member Howard A. Taylor wrote of tennis as "free from the inroads of the professional athlete," celebrating the game's "nice parentage," having been nurtured in England, "under influences and ideas and people where sports have not been played for business, but for pleasure."[69] The USNLTA President Joseph S. Clark was equally unequivocal in his praise, arguing that lawn tennis "is recognized and patronized by the best class of people in every community, and is one of the cleanest, most honest, and best of our outdoor games."[70]

With a few exceptions, lawn tennis players were considered a special class of "gentlemen," unmotivated by financial gain. Historian Kevin Jones identified seventeen sports in Canada that had professional athletes "in their ranks" by the year 1900, but lawn tennis was not one of them.[71] Four years later, tennis writer J. Parmly Paret reaffirmed the sport's special, incontrovertibly amateur status when he described its players as "men of comparative refinement," and reassured, "There are no professionals, for there is no money making side to the sport. Most of the regular tournament players are collegians . . . or men of leisure."[72] Evidently for Paret, women were not true "players" of the sport and as such were not included in debates about amateurism, which speaks as much to the sexism endemic to sport in general as to the superior moral standing assumed of women at this time.[73]

The strength of the amateur ideology held intrinsic value for all who were connected to lawn tennis in Canada, as it elevated them above those of other sports seemingly corrupted by sham-amateurism, gambling, and other monetary rewards. However, beyond personal ethics, there were vested interests at play. Simply put, if lawn tennis maintained an image of upper-middle-class

respectability and gentility, wealthy tourists or those aspiring to a higher-class lifestyle would be attracted to the sport and the establishments and towns connected to it. From this perspective, it is apparent why the lawn tennis events were accorded special significance within Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their atmosphere, where the off-court festivities at times seemed to take precedence over the on-court play, perfectly complemented the celebrated amateur ideals for which tennis reportedly stood.

Yet despite the relaxed atmosphere *within* the grounds of the Queen's Royal Hotel during the Niagara-on-the-Lake tennis tournaments, behind the scenes and prior to the events, the tournament organizers/hotel management were industrious and strategic in their efforts to attract tourists. In this regard, the sport figured centrally in numerous textual and visual advertisements for the town.[74] "Special rates" were offered to competing players, obtained "from the railroads and steamboat lines and from the [Queen's Royal] hotel," which also advertised a $5 package "good for steamboat fare and board at hotel from Saturday to Monday."[75] The town's other main hotels—the Riverside, Oban and Chautauqua—offered alternative accommodations that were "designed to appeal to a broader, somewhat less well-off group of tourists."[76] Evidently, the elitist pretensions of hotel proprietors and their desires for exclusivity were never strong enough to forego lucrative commercial opportunities. Indeed, supported by the relatively cheap steamship fares and affordable hotel rooms, not all of the town's visitors from Toronto and elsewhere were bourgeois. Working-class people/families would have enjoyed many of the town's attractions, including walks, picnicking, and hiring bicycles, and while there are no comprehensive records of who frequented the lawn tennis tournaments, it is highly likely that some of the spectators would have been working-class.

From 1895 onward when the town enjoyed hosting two tournaments—both the Canadian National Championships and the Niagara International—organizers made sure to capitalize. Their calculated strategy was revealed subsequently in 1899:

> The bold policy of announcing, weeks before the [Canadian Lawn Tennis Championships] event, in every newspaper from Baffin's Bay to Patagonia, that everybody who was anybody would be on hand for sure at the biggest tennis tournament on earth, had its effect at last, and it got to be so that that shower bouquet of stars . . . were scared to stay away . . . Then when the public began to scratch its head and think for itself, it was too late, the toboggan had started and Niagara-on-the-Lake had asserted its right to a front seat among the playgrounds of two nations.[77]

Aside from the weather, almost nothing was left to chance. The commodity value of the players, especially the traveling American "cracks" and their entourage of supporters, was dutifully recognized, and the facade of amateurism cleverly hid the reality of creeping commercialism. Morgan remarked,

> It was no secret that hotelkeepers and local boosters hoped that Americans would constitute a significant part of their clientele . . . [E]veryone, it seemed wanted to welcome the Americans. At the very least, they were encouraged to behave as though they did.[78]

The importance of American tourism dollars to the town's prosperity was duly noted in 1900:

> This year, we have been favoured with a large number of tourists principally from the southern and northern States and we urge an intelligent effort not only to retain but largely increase this business . . . We agree our summer business is our most valued and paying one.[79]

It only took a matter of a few years for profit-making to emerge as a potential threat to the amateur edifice of lawn tennis in Canada and elsewhere in North America.[80] These developments that indicated a more focused intent to secure tourism revenue from the tennis events could be

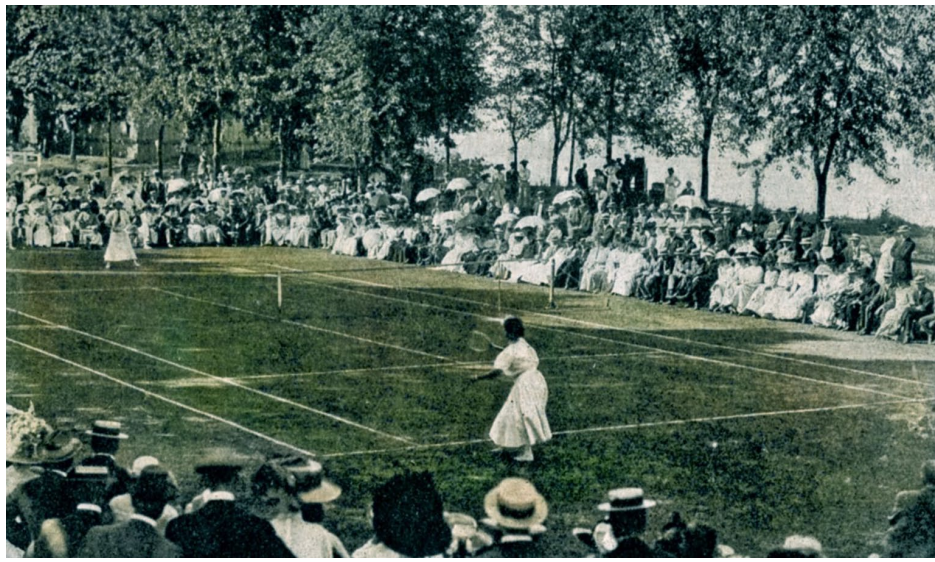

Figure 1. Championship match between May Sutton (foreground) and J.H. Hannam, 1909.

seen as a warning for things to come, but in the 1890s and early 1900s the threat of these commercial impulses was not seen as significant, and tennis continued to celebrate its amateur ideals in the light of gradual changes to the underlying commercial realities of elite sport. Moreover, it was apparent that the amateur ideology was something worth protecting to sustain this lucrative industry. The lawn tennis events had become evidently part of an elaborate business plan for the town, and only the sight of summer gaiety—the ladies and gentlemen in their fine frocks "[lying] listlessly in a hammock or stretch[ing] one's self out on the grassy slopes and dream[ing] away the hours"—masked this underlying emphasis.[81] Far from innocuous, the gender and class ideals that both ladies and gentlemen expressed actually played an important role in promoting the sport's genteel and amateur image, which was certainly exaggerated but held value for the tournament hosts and local businesses.

Representations of Gender at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Lawn Tennis Events

With regard to the blossoming "tennis tourism" in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the actions of (especially bourgeois) women in particular helped to enhance the spectacle of lawn tennis, reaffirm its amateur pretentions, and help to assuage public fears of the encroachment of professionalism upon it. In general, argues Howell, the presence of women as sport spectators in Canada at this time was thought to "purify the moral atmosphere, inspire men to behave respectably, and restrain the 'unregulated passions' that might otherwise be released." There is not necessarily any direct evidence to support this claim for the Niagara-on-the-Lake events, but the photographs—see Figure 1 as an example—that show a sizeable proportion of female spectators do lend weight to their importance.[82] Moreover, the expectation upon bourgeois ladies to be both proprietors of morality and ornaments of beauty were voiced frequently. These twin elements were neatly captured in an article by the correspondent *Lady Writer* entitled "The Charm Women Bring to Tennis" in *W&D's*.

> They are graceful and gentle; they have spirit and enthusiasm; and in tennis, as in other things, they stimulate man to do his best. How they thank you with a look! How they rejoice with you! How they

> comfort you! How often they outdo expectation! And how pretty they are! . . . It would be a bad day for lawn tennis were it to discard the feminine element. Professionalism would follow, and then, good-by [*sic*] to it.[83]

The correspondent Miss Hellwig in the *Official Lawn Tennis Bulletin* repeated the connection between the absence of women and professionalism—and, by implication, the presence of women and amateurism—when lamenting the supposed fact that

> Very many good women players of [the US] are deterred from entering open tournaments for fear of too great publicity. It is true that the accounts of these tournaments are reported in most newspapers, but are not also other social events likewise reported, such as dances, fairs, musicals, and receptions? Are not tournaments social events as well? Tennis is purely an amateur sport, which fact alone would bar out all undesirable persons.[84]

This interesting connection speaks to the nuanced intersections of class and gender relations that were revealed in tennis at this time. These were seen in abundance at the Niagara-on-the-Lake events, where guests conspicuously displayed their wealth and status.

Peter Goheen described the practices associated with "parading" among the upper-middle classes in Toronto that, in the mid/late-nineteenth century, would have demanded of young women a type of performance reminiscent of the promenading ladies of the London season.[85] Indeed, the blurring of class lines and the gradual decline throughout the late-nineteenth century in the occurrence of courtly presentations—of society ladies "coming out" as debutantes in the presence of notable figures like the governor-general—opened up opportunities for new social rituals for the young, wealthy women who were part of Canada's ruling class.[86] Arguably, their participation in the activities associated with "tennis week" in Niagara-on-the-Lake—as players, spectators or casual guests—were a manifestation of shifting expectations in this regard. Those attending were expected to perform according to norms related both to their gender and their class, simultaneously.

Published discourse through advertisements and magazine/newspaper articles of the town's events for lawn tennis—alongside other genteel recreations that "drew their fair share of female participants"—helped to present "an image of tourists and residents (summer and full-time) engaged in polite, well-mannered entertainments."[87] The detail provided of such entertainments arguably "elevates them beyond the common-place of athletic competition."[88] For Mackintosh,

> the flaunting of fashion, reputation and wealth, and the cotillions, concerts, and music that accompanied the annual international tennis tournament . . . denote the presence of a bourgeois purpose grander than mere athleticism. Rather, the athletic events and their attendant "society" at Niagara-on-the-Lake came to signify all that was spatially and socially proper and refined.[89]

The "social" activities and festivities staged during "tennis week" demanded the presence of ladies dressed in the height of late-Victorian/Edwardian fashion. This was expected both on and off the court, as noted in the careful description of "lawn tennis dress" in *W&D's*:

> A French flannel, striped in alternative wide and narrow bands of navy blue on a white ground, is made full skirted over a Silesia or paper-muslin petticoat. A blouse of the striped has a sailor collar and deep cuffs of solid blue, with a narrow line of gilt braid running about the edge. A blazer does not come made for this *simple* frock, but . . . by careful searching, one of the solid white or blue and often a striped coat to match the dress goods, is found.[90]

Much like the private lawn tennis garden parties that peaked in popularity during the sport's early years—mid/late 1870s to early 1880s—the dances, concerts and other après-sport events at

Niagara-on-the-Lake were examples of what Lane and Murphy called "obligated leisure" for the wealthy, that is, heavily regulated social obligations necessitating all participants to favorably represent their families and conspicuously display their wealth, status, and class.[91] By the 1890s, these events—and the women in them—had become decidedly "public"; thus, lawn tennis featured as part of women's gradual insurgence within public domains, that is, outside of the home and/or away from purely domestic responsibility. The social and physical freedoms that a young woman may have sought through tennis, alongside the opportunities afforded for creative expression both on and off the court, rarely trumped the more important goal of sustaining her family's social position or maintaining her own value in the "marriage market";[92] the "most important battle" was "to win a desirable spouse."[93] In these social environments, alongside displaying a feminine appearance, a premium was put on the exercise of good manners, as etiquette writers of the time warned that a woman could expect to suffer the indignation of exclusion among her peers unless her manners were adjudged agreeable.[94]

Arguably, lawn tennis for the Anglo-Canadian elite was a context that had become more significant in the light of shifting gender roles and social obligations in wider society. While the reality of "separate spheres" sometimes did not align with the rhetoric, which conjured up "images of clear, precisely drawn social boundaries around the lives of females,"[95] delineations in terms of gender roles were nonetheless apparent throughout the course of the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth centuries, especially in the general realm of sport, which was tied—and arguably still is—to more traditional rather than progressive gender ideologies. Remarking on the existence of separate spheres, Elise Chenier suggests that while men "maintained an almost exclusive monopoly over formal power, they ceded a good deal of control over the social sphere" to women.[96] In truth, it is probably more appropriate to emphasize women's agency in and control over this domain, and to speak of women's dominance within their social spheres. Outside of their homes and neighborhoods, this was seen clearly in the functions and events associated with "society." Simultaneously both public and private, "society" was an

> in-between space that privileged women developed and used to wield power and craft and protect a class identity, to create a public presence for at least women, to further the fortunes of their families, and to create the culture and entertainment that young cities . . . did not otherwise possess.[97]

The descent of "society" folk upon Niagara-on-the-Lake every summer—comprising wealthy Americans and members of the Anglo-Canadian elite—lent significance to the sporting and social events they attended, transforming them into occasions where the presentation of class and status often took precedence over the specific activity they were attached to.

That tennis culture also bridged the gap between the public and private spheres accounted for its significance for elite young women; the various private aspects of tennis culture—secluded courts, exclusive rather than mass audiences, and private parties/events—blended with the more visible appearance of women as arbiters of morality and good taste and as ornaments of beauty, civility, and gentility. Young women remained largely innocuous figures across a cultural landscape that continued to valorize masculine power and celebrate male dominance. Both of these processes worked in tandem.

The tournaments at Niagara-on-the-Lake afforded young bourgeois ladies greater personal freedom, oftentimes away from the prying eyes of parents/chaperones. Tennis was considered a relatively "safe" sport for their daughters to follow or play, where they could mix socially with gentlemen of similar class backgrounds in the context of relaxed, amateur sporting competition. The tradition of "five o'clock tea" on the Queen's Royal veranda was well known, but for those seeking a more secluded setting, the hotel grounds contained numerous groves, flower gardens, and wooded walks—including the infamous "Lovers Lane" beside the river—which afforded young/unmarried ladies and gentlemen occasions for courtship. The tennis tournaments provided

extended opportunities to gaze upon the lithe bodies and refined movements of athletic young men and women. By all accounts, flirtatious encounters were de rigueur within the Niagara-on-the-Lake tournaments. For tennis writer J. Parmly Paret, "tomfoolery" and "dark deeds" were commonly associated with its social events.[98] Rumors, dialogue, and such topical matter were regularly featured in the tournament's daily newspaper, *The Lark*, which chronicled all manner of occurrences, however trivial.[99] This included subtle references to the romantic/sexual exploits of popular male players, such as the millionaire "summer girl-crusher" Dwight Davis, taking "evening strolls in the shrubberies" with notable ladies.[100] Young women were often represented in published discourse—always through a heteronormative lens—as prized companions for the elite male players. Indeed, as an object of female attention in the summer of 1896, Davis took the place of the recent Yale graduate Arthur Foote, whose absence was "subject to much comment, there being a row of shirt-waisted summer-girls on the terrace like a lot of Rachels, 'weeping and would not be comforted.'" Likewise, Davis's Harvard teammate Malcolm Whitman brought forth "the most intense approval from the feminine section of the dress circle" for his "lithe, active figure and delirium-tremens service."[101]

For young gentlemen, the occasion for sport afforded them opportunities to display masculine prowess. While they were expected to adhere to amateur sporting conventions through their on-court performances and demeanor, which demanded fair play and the exercise of self-restraint, off-court their social prominence could be conveyed through conspicuous displays of wealth and status and through public dialogue on their romantic exploits with the young maidens in attendance. Lawn tennis remained a sport dominated by men, though by the 1890s it was apparent that the performances of women on court were beginning to have a lasting impact upon general attitudes toward their physical capabilities.

Women's Tennis as a Means of Gaining Respect

In the mid/late-nineteenth century, as the dominant ideal of North American women as "pale, thin and frail" was beginning to give way to a "more voluptuous and athletic female form," lawn tennis among other gender appropriate recreational activities was recognized for helping to develop a graceful yet healthy, strong, and robust form of womanhood, exhibited within a context that was decidedly more "public" than in the previous generation.[102] In 1891, the editor of *W&D's* claimed the sport "has done more to develop among girls a taste for outdoor sports than have all other exercises combined . . . The old-fashioned idea that a girl, to be ladylike, must not run or walk rapidly is fast disappearing."[103] While this realization as part of the "New Woman" movement had encouraged many young women to take up lawn tennis, it had not had the effect of markedly shifting the gender roles that pervaded off-court activities. The report of the 1893 Ontario Championship reinforced the apparent divide: "The ladies at Hamilton turned out in large numbers, making the scene on the ground an animated one. Naturally the chief interest centered in the result of the men's singles."[104] Indeed, descriptions of women's play in the reports of many tournaments, including those staged in Niagara-on-the-Lake, commanded far less space, provided less detail, and always followed the apparently more important reports of men's singles. For many, a woman's role remained unchanged: to convey prestige to an event by her off-court presence rather than her on-court play, and to support men's athletic performances and valorize the male body.

In time, the performances of several of the leading female players proved noteworthy, though often they remained described within a context of prevailing feminine ideals. Lottie Dod, the "well-known English lady tennis player," was commended in *W&D's* for being "healthy, ruddy, and as strong as a man," though the editor still felt obliged to proclaim "with all her training [she] has not lost a particle of her womanliness."[105] Within Niagara-on-the-Lake, several notable female players came to the fore and the tennis events provided a prime opportunity to showcase

their strength and athleticism to an audience often used to seeing women, demure and conservatively dressed, in more sedentary positions. It was apparent that women's play was beginning to garner more respect from male audiences, though descriptions sometimes took a patronizing tone. The "exhibition of tennis" at the Niagara International ladies singles final in 1893 was apparently "very fine," though the editor intimated his surprise at the standards attained by noting, "In some rallies, more especially one at the close of the first set, there must have been at least a dozen returns of difficult strokes by each player."

One of the most dominant female players in Niagara-on-the-Lake was Juliette Atkinson from Brooklyn.[106] Her first triumph in the 1896 Canadian Championships over the defending champion "Mrs. Sydney Smith" was "practically a foregone conclusion," as Atkinson "was playing well enough that day to beat most men."[107] The strongest test for Atkinson came from a fellow New Yorker, Elizabeth "Bessie" Moore, who bested her at the U.S. National Championships two months later. Much was expected of their anticipated meeting at the 1897 Canadian Championships, but Moore's absence from Niagara-on-the-Lake brought "general regret . . . as a contest between these two young ladies is of more interest to the average spectator than a dozen battles between men, howsoever well they may play."[108] Occasional hyperbole aside, it was apparent that as the century approached its end, descriptions of women's play remained comparatively brief and sometimes condescending.

The exploits of a young Californian eventually transformed the dominant narrative, in a broader Edwardian context that witnessed a redefinition of femininity to better appreciate women's strength and courage. May Sutton enjoyed her first noteworthy achievement in becoming the first overseas Wimbledon singles champion in 1905, defeating the English stalwart Dorothea Lambert Chambers in straight sets. In reporting her victory, *Spalding's Lawn Tennis Annual* broke with its usual tradition of glossing over the achievements of female players. Over one page in length, the report also featured a statistical stroke analysis. Her play, especially from the baseline, was widely commended: "The 'top' Miss Sutton manages to get on to all her drives, especially those which cross the net at an oblique angle, is an asset of remarkable value, and time after time the spin of the ball deceived her opponent."[109] Her first appearance at the Niagara International two years later was met with "great crowds of spectators"; "thousands came to see her play and all were well repaid" (see Figure 1).[110] She was, by all accounts, "the conspicuous figure" there, while in claiming her second Wimbledon singles title two months earlier she "fairly electrified both the men and women experts on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean by what was termed phenomenal exhibitions."[111] Perhaps, the most noteworthy performance involving Sutton in Niagara-on-the-Lake was in 1911, when she met Hazel Hotchkiss, who just a week earlier had secured her third straight U.S. National Championships singles title. The match, won in three sets by the latter, was described as "all and more than had been expected, being spectacular in the extreme"; their meeting "completely overshadowed every other feature of the tournament, the men's events fading into insignificance in comparison."[112]

Conclusion

The achievements of female tennis players at this time were capped by the play of Atkinson, Sutton, Hotchkiss, and others at tournaments like those in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their achievements set the tone for the marked advances made by sportswomen after the Great War, when their play—led by Suzanne Lenglen among others—came to the forefront of public attention. Tennis was a vehicle to deliver a more comprehensive revaluation of women's physical capabilities, and the prewar tournaments at Niagara-on-the-Lake served as an important precursor to this development. Unfortunately for the town itself, and its tennis events, the interwar period brought significant decline. As the CLTA sought to expand its national championships, the tournament moved to Vancouver in 1912, then back to Toronto for 1913 and 1914. The use of larger urban areas for

hosting the Canadian championships, which continued after the four-year hiatus during the Great War (1915-1918), spelled the end for the event at Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the tournament never returned there. The last Niagara International was held in 1923, a year after the Queen's Royal Hotel was offered up for sale to the Niagara Parks Commission after declining tourist numbers. The hotel's sustained financial difficulties only worsened during the Great Depression, and by 1934, the hotel sat derelict—its furniture and fittings "auctioned off"—and the town took possession of it in lieu of back taxes. Soon after, it was dismantled and turned into parkland.[113]

For forty years, Niagara-on-the-Lake diverted resources toward and focused attention on hosting lawn tennis tournaments to support its tourism industry, and civic boosters recognized the Canadian Championships and the Niagara International as lucrative events for the town's hotels, restaurants, and other businesses. Steamships and railways that connected with Niagara-on-the-Lake enjoyed significant business via the tourism that lawn tennis helped generate. The main drawing card was the strong contingent of American "cracks" who became, in effect, commodities that were sold to prospective visitors. The injection of American dollars into the town economy became vital to its success, as did the presence—on and off the court—of both ladies and gentlemen, who played equal roles in capitalizing upon the sport as a form of tourism.

In the broader context of turn-of-the-century leisure in southern Ontario, lawn tennis at Niagara-on-the-Lake did more than boost local tourism. It also provided another cultural epicenter, outside of Toronto, for lawn tennis and other recreations fashionable among the upper-middle class to thrive. As CLTA/USNLTA administrators carefully navigated through the troubling waters of sham-amateurism, claiming lawn tennis and its players as in effect "above" the insalubrious transgressions endemic to other sports, the slow but perceptively developing tourism industry generated through lawn tennis in Niagara-on-the-Lake offers an opportunity to critique the sport's supposed amateur purity and anti-commercial stance.

The presence of bourgeois ladies and gentlemen, lolling about the town during "Tennis Week," highlighted a broader discursive purpose of this sporting event wrapped up in the "moral environmentalism" of the day, and also helped mask the creeping commercialization of lawn tennis. Gender relations manifested themselves in other important ways, too. Lawn tennis at Niagara-on-the-Lake was an avenue for men and women to express and at times affirm or challenge dominant gender norms appropriate to their elevated social class. Gentlemen were strongly conditioned by amateur ideals and expected to perform according to a strict code of etiquette, which forbade all forms of remuneration and demanded fair play, self-restraint, and the exhibition of genteel behavior. In the context of shifting class dynamics and blurring lines of "elite" status in Upper Canada, this was significant. While ladies were also influenced by the amateur ethos, their adherence was assumed, at least in lawn tennis, without question. Off court, they set the high social tone and demonstrated appropriate femininity through their roles as ornaments of beauty and prized companions for elite male players within the tournament's social events. Only with advances in, and subsequent growing respect for, their on-court play did the broader social expectations of their role within the tennis events in Niagara-on-the-Lake expand. The influence of players like Juliette Atkinson and May Sutton not only helped transform broader expectations of female play during this period, but also helped put—or perhaps keep—the Niagara-on-the-Lake tennis events "on the map," as they occasionally bested the men as the tournament's star attractions.

As the Rogers Cup passes its 130th year, a record television audience is anticipated for its 2021 event when the Canadian Bianca Andreescu looks to defend her title.[114] It is worth remembering how the Canadian National Championships came of age in Niagara-on-the-Lake, simultaneously providing an important boost for the sport and the town. Female players have also come a long way. The image of the sedentary, corseted, young lady on the sidelines has been replaced by the world's most famous, wealthy, and accomplished professional athletes. The sport remains popular among Canadian women who, as of 2018, represent 44 percent of the 6.5 million regular tennis players in Canada.[115] Also, the two most well-known Canadian female

tennis players—Andreescu and Eugenie Bouchard, with a combined net worth of $10 million as of mid 2020 ($4 million and $6 million, respectively)—represent the highest paid Canadian female athletes across *all* sports. Visitors to Niagara-on-the-Lake today would do well to learn of how significant the sport of lawn tennis was in boosting its tourism industry before the Great War, and how the town featured within the history of Canadian tennis and the marked advancement of women's sport more broadly.

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Notes

1. Martyn Kendrick, *Advantage Canada: A Tennis Centenary* (Toronto: Tennis Canada, 1990), 27. From 1907 to 1911, it merged with the Niagara International into a single tournament, where there appeared to be eight separate events: Men's Singles, Ladies' Singles and Men's Doubles: Canadian Championships (open to Canadians only); Men's Open Singles, Ladies Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies' Doubles and Mixed Doubles: International Championships (essentially, the Niagara International); and the Men's (International) Handicap.
2. Niagara District Board of Trade, *Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada* (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara District Board of Trade, c.1922), 12.
3. *The Globe*, July 23, 1895, 8.
4. A bicycle gymkhana involved the adjudication of dressage and riding skills performed on bicycles.
5. Alan Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport and the Development of Amateurism in Canada, 1807-1914," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, ed. Jean Harvey and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 43. For a discussion of sport as a 'male preserve, see Eric Dunning, "Sport as a Male Preserve: Notes on the Social Sources of Masculine Identity and Its Transformations," *Theory, Culture & Society* 3, no. 1 (1986): 79-90.
6. Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 43.
7. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (1984): 630.
8. Ibid., 633.
9. See M. Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).
10. See M. Ann Hall, "Cultural Struggle and Resistance: Gender, History, and Canadian Sport," in *Sport and Gender in Canada*, 2nd ed., ed. Kevin Young and Philip White (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Jennifer Hargeaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London: Routledge, 1994); Kathleen McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge, 1988); Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Champaign, IL: Uniersity of Illinois Press, 1994).
11. See Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 186-229.
12. For a discussion and critique of "separate spheres" as a category of historical analysis, see also Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," in *Toward an Intellectual History of Women: Essays by Linda Kerber*, ed. Linda Kerber (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 159-99; Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate

Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 383-414.
13. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 188.
14. See Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres," 387.
15. Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 644.
16. Frances Willard, *Wheel within a Wheel* (Chicago: Women's Temperance Publishing Association, 1895).
17. Ibid., 39-40.
18. Ibid., 41.
19. Ibid., 39.
20. Michael Smith, "Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood: The Sporting Culture of Women in Victorian Nova Scotia, 1870-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23, nos. 1 & 2 (1988): 121.
21. Smith, "Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood," 130.
22. See Smith, 'Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood," 126.
23. See Baker, "The Domestication of Politics,' 643.
24. For a discussion of new forms of masculinity in the 19th century, see Philip Carter, "An 'Effeminate' or 'Efficient' Nation? Masculinity and Eighteenth-Century Social Documentary," *Textual Practice* 11, no. 3 (1997): 429-43.
25. Robert J. Lake, "Social Class, Etiquette and Behavioural Restraint in British Lawn Tennis: 1870-1939," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 6 (2011): 876-94; Robert J. Lake, "Gender and Etiquette in 'Mixed Doubles' Lawn Tennis 1870-1939," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 5 (2012): 691-710.
26. Kevin B. Wamsley & Robert Kossuth, "Fighting It Out in Nineteenth Century Upper Canada/Canada West: Masculinities and Physical Challenges in the Tavern," *Journal of Sport History* 27, no. 3 (2000): 405-30.
27. Mary Louise Adams, "The Manly History of a 'Girls' Sport: Gender, Class and the Development of Nineteenth-Century Figure Skating," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 24, no. 7 (2007): 879.
28. For a discussion of the promotion of masculinity in Canadian elite schools, see Paul Bennett, "Training 'Blue-Blooded' Canadian Boys: Athleticism, Muscular Christianity, and Sports in Ontario's 'Little Big Four' Schools, 1829-1930," *Journal of Sport History* 43, no. 3 (2016): 253-71.
29. H. W. Slocum, Jr., "Hints to Young Beginners," *Spalding's Tennis Guide*, 50 (1896): 12-3.
30. See Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 34-5.
31. Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 14.
32. Don Morrow and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*. 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2013), 42.
33. Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, 23. See also Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage, 1987), 170-3.
34. See, for example, Greg Gillespie and Kevin Wamsley, "The Aristocratic British Hunting Code and Early Game Legislation in Nineteenth-Century Canada," *Sporting Traditions* 22, no. 1 (2005): 99-119.
35. Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 34.
36. Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 42-3.
37. Upon its formation in 1881, Ottawa Lawn Tennis Club invited the governor-general, Lord Lorne, to become patron, and to open its first season the following summer. Also, various high-ranking military officers constituted the club's original membership. See *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, June 17, 1882. Similarly, Toronto Lawn Tennis Club's first tournament in 1881 attracted Ontario Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Beverly Robinson and his wife Mary, who officially opened the proceedings. See "Lawn Tennis," *Globe*, August 3, 1881, 10.
38. Phillip Gordon Mackintosh, "A Bourgeois Geography of Domestic Bicycling: Using Public Space Responsibly in Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1890-1900," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 20, no. 1-2 (2007), 136; see also Robert S. Kossuth and Kevin B. Wamsley, "Cycles of Manhood: Pedaling Respectability in Ontario's Forest City," *Sport History Review* 34 (2003): 168-89.
39. See Janet Carnochon, *History of Niagara* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1914), 4; see also Cecilia Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts: History, Memory and Commemoration in Southern Ontario, 1860-1980* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2015), 116.

40. See Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 117.
41. In 1854, the Erie and Ontario Railroad extended its service up to Niagara-on-the-Lake, which allowed passengers to connect with the steamship service that the Niagara Navigation Company had run between Niagara-on-the-Lake and Toronto since the mid-nineteenth century. The steamship service expanded steadily and by the 1890s, six 2.5-hour round trips ran daily during the summer months, between Toronto and Lewiston NY, calling at Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston, ON. In 1864, the Erie and Niagara Railroad (ENR) extended to Fort Erie, which allowed passengers to connect with the ferry-boat service from Buffalo. One train per day ran between Buffalo and Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1864, which took approximately 5 hours, but passengers from Buffalo could connect from Rochester, New York, and other eastern cities. By 1873, the Canadian Southern Railway (SCR), which had merged with the ENR in 1869, ran three trains per day from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake. In 1878, the SCR acquired the ENR, which was itself taken over by the Michigan Central Railroad in 1882 and offered services to Detroit, Chicago, and the west coast.
42. Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 119.
43. Mackintosh, "A Bourgeois Geography of Domestic Bicycling," 129-30. Advertisements around the turn of the century suggested an average July/August temperature 5 to 9 degrees Celsius cooler than Toronto, though this may have been exaggerated. "Plague of Nuisances," *Toronto Evening Star*, April 30, 1898, 7.
44. "Something Must Be Done," *The Times*, May 14, 1896.
45. Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 203; see, for example, "Niagara: Concluding Remarks about Our Historical Town," *The Times*, May 14, 1896; "Chautauqua Guest List," *The Times*, July 23, 1898.
46. Niagara District Board of Trade, *Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada* (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara District Board of Trade, 1897), 2.
47. Ibid., 3.
48. John S. Clarke, *Illustrated Niagara-on-the-Lake Canada: Engraving of Some of Her Many Attractions* (Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON: John S. Clarke, 1900), 5.
49. Niagara District Board of Trade, *Niagara-on-the-Lake*, 4.
50. See Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 40-1.
51. *Youngstown News*, May 24, 1895.
52. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1899* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1899), 124.
53. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1907* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1907), 287.
54. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1898* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1898), 119.
55. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1893* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1893), 141.
56. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1895* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1895), 111. The only American male to compete in the 1894 event was the title-holder H.E. Avery from Detroit, who only played in the Challenge Round final.
57. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1895*, 116.
58. Ibid., 117.
59. Kendrick, *Advantage Canada*, 27.
60. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1901* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1901), 135.
61. See Norman Baker, "Whose Hegemony: The Origins of the Amateur Ethos in Nineteenth Century English society," *Sport in History* 24, no. 1 (2004): 1-16; Rick Gruneau, "'Amateurism' as a Sociological Problem: Some Reflections Inspired by Eric Dunning," *Sport in Society* 9, no. 4 (2006): 559-82; Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport"; Dilwyn Porter and Adrian Smith, "Introduction." In *Amateurs and Professionals in Post-War British Sport*, ed. Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (London: Frank Cass, 2000), vii-xvi; Stephen Wagg, "Base Mechanic Arms? British Rowing, Some Ducks and the Shifting Politics of Amateurism," *Sport in History* 26, no. 3 (2006): 520-39.
62. Metcalfe, "The Growth of Organized Sport," 44.
63. See Morrow, "The Cradle of Organized Sport," 21; see also Frank Cosentino, "*A History of the Concept of Professionalism in Canadian Sport*" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1973).

64. Kevin G. Jones, "Developments in Amateurism and Professionalism in Early 20th Century Canadian Sport," *Journal of Sport History* 2, no. 1 (1975), 29.
65. See Jones, "Developments in Amateurism and Professionalism," 29.
66. Canadian Lawn Tennis Association, *Constitution and By-Laws as Adopted by the Canadian Lawn Tennis Association* (Toronto: CLTA, 1890), 10.
67. See Robert J. Lake, *A Social History of Tennis in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2015), 52-5; see also John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).
68. See Jones, "Developments in Amateurism and Professionalism," 35; Gillespie & Wamsley, "The Aristocratic British Hunting Code," 106-7.
69. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Official 1891 Lawn Tennis Guide* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1891), 133.
70. Ibid., 125.
71. Jones, "Developments in Amateurism and Professionalism," 30.
72. J. Parmly Paret, *Lawn Tennis: Its Past Present and Future* (London: Macmillan, 1904), 35.
73. Only in cycling were female professionals known before the turn of the century. See Jones, "Developments in Amateurism and Professionalism," 37.
74. See Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 125.
75. "Canadian Tennis," *Official Lawn Tennis Bulletin* 2 (1895): 92-3; *Globe*, August 4, 1891, 8.
76. Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 124.
77. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1899*, 123.
78. Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 129.
79. J. S. Clarke, "Niagara as a Summer Resort," *The Times*, October 14, 1900.
80. See E. Digby Baltzell, *Sporting Gentlemen: Men's Tennis from the Age of Honor to the Cult of the Superstar* (New York: Free Press, 1995).
81. Joseph T. Whittelsey (ed.), *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1897* (Boston: Wright & Ditson, 1897), 154.
82. Howell, Blood, Sweat and Cheers, 90.
83. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Official 1891 Lawn Tennis Guide*, 206.
84. Official Lawn Tennis Bulletin, February 1895; cited in Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1895*, 135.
85. Peter Goheen, "Parading: A Lively Tradition in Early Victorian Toronto," in *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the Meanings of Places in the Past*, ed. Alan Baker and Gideon Biger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 330-51.
86. See Elise Chenier, "Class, Gender, and the Social Standard: The Montreal Junior League, 1912-1939," *The Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (2009): 671-710.
87. Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 128.
88. Phillip Gordon Mackintosh, "Polite Athletics and Bourgeois Gaieties: Toronto Society in Late Victorian Niagara-on-the-Lake," in *Covering Niagara: Studies in Local Popular Culture*, ed. Joan Hicks and Barry K. Grant (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2010), 12.
89. Mackintosh, "Polite Athletics and Bourgeois Gaieties," 6.
90. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Official 1891 Lawn Tennis Guide*, 207. Such a "simple" outfit was to cost no more than fourteen dollars, though this represented a little over a week's wage for an Ontario teacher at the time. See *Report of the Minister of Education (Ontario) for the Years 1880 and 1881* (Toronto: Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1882), 164.
91. Leeann Lane and William Murphy, "Introduction," in *Leisure and the Irish in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Leeann Lane and William Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), 17.
92. Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 35-6.
93. Michael Curtin, "A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985), 419.
94. Florence Klickmann, *Etiquette of Today* (London: Cartright, 1902), 5.
95. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 187.
96. Chenier, "Class, Gender, and the Social Standard," 677.
97. Georgina Hickey, "Social Seasons and Settlement Houses: Privileged Women and the Development of Cities," *Journal of Urban History* 29 (2009), 464.

98. J. Parmly Paret, "A Summer with Tennis Experts," *Outing*, August, 1898, 488-489.
99. Eaves and Lake, "Dwight Davis and the Foundation of the Davis Cup."
100. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1897*, 161; Charles A. Voigt, "The Origins of the Davis Cup," *Lawn Tennis and Badminton*, July 11, 1912, 485.
101. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1897*, 155.
102. Smith, "Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood," 120-1.
103. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Official 1891 Lawn Tennis Guide*, 208.
104. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1893*, 145-6.
105. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Official 1891 Lawn Tennis Guide*, 208.
106. Atkinson also won the Niagara International for three straight years (1896-1898), and was U.S. National singles champion in 1895, 1897, and 1898.
107. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1897*, 157. In tournament reports, it was customary to avoid using first names of married women.
108. Whittelsey, *Wright & Ditson's Lawn Tennis Guide for 1898*, 118.
109. "Miss Sutton an International Champion," *Spalding's Lawn Tennis Annual*, 265 (1906), 140.
110. "Lawn Tennis in Canada: Canadian and International Championships," *American Lawn Tennis*, September 15, 1907, 265.
111. "International Tourney at Niagara-on-the-Lake," *Spalding's Lawn Tennis Annual* 9, no. 4 (1908), 131; "Miss May Sutton in England," *Spalding's Lawn Tennis Annual* 9, no. 4 (1908), 136.
112. "Niagara's Silver Anniversary Tournament," *American Lawn Tennis*, October 15, 1911, 334.
113. See Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts*, 133-6.
114. Andreescu won in 2019; the 2020 event was canceled due to the global coronavirus pandemic.
115. See Tennis Canada, *Tennis Participation in Canada* (Toronto: Tennis Canada, 2018).

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