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## History of Sioux Lookout Black Hawks Hockey team, 1949-1951

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology

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## Abstract

Existing literature on residential schools in Canada indicates that sports played an important role within that system and were a positive experience for Aboriginal students. However, these sporting experiences have not been analyzed from the students' perspectives. This thesis aims to enrich our understanding of the role of sports within residential schools; the meanings former students attached to their experiences, and what sports mean to reconciliation initiatives using 1) narrative analysis of media representations of the Black Hawks team from Pelican Lake Indian Residential School during their 1951 hockey tour to Ottawa and Toronto, 2) a two-part interview process (photo elicitation and semi-structured interview) with those players. While sports were introduced for assimilative reasons, a purpose that was reinforced by media, this study shows that Aboriginal students created meanings out of their experiences that opposed those assumptions and resembled forms of resistance. Through these new meanings, students sought refuge in sports in the hostile living environment they experienced at school.

## Keywords

Pelican Lake, Sioux Lookout, Indian Residential School, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Hockey, Sports, Assimilation, Aboriginal Athletes, Media Analysis, Photo Elicitation, Semi-Structured Interview, Resistance Narratives

## Dedication

To my parents, Abdulla and Fouziya. Your sacrifices, unconditional love, patience, support, and continuous confidence in me are what got me this far. You have been my inspiration all along. This one is for you.

## Acknowledgments

To Dr. Janice Forsyth, you have been an incredible mentor and friend to me throughout my undergraduate and graduate years. You have challenged me to expand my thinking and truly helped me grow over the years. I am truly grateful to have a supervisor who cares, supports and encourages me to improve my work. Thank you for continuously believing in me, for guiding me patiently, and for helping me achieve my goals.

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## List of Abbreviations

IRS Indian Residential School

TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission

SL Sioux Lookout

SSM Sault Ste. Marie

CSAA Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Humans adjust to adversity in various ways; they create meaning and move on from life situations differently. It is these different meanings and coping mechanisms that determine how we will adjust and move forward in our lives. The Indian residential school system is an important part of Canadian history. Detailed research has been conducted to understand some aspects of the school system (e.g., government and mission involvement, and abuse); however, other parts are in need of attention. For example, the existing literature on residential schools in Canada clearly indicates that sports, predominately hockey, played an important role in the residential school system.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Sioux Lookout Black Hawks

This was the case for Pelican Lake Indian Residential School (hereafter Pelican Lake IRS).<sup>2</sup> Ever since the game of hockey, and, specifically, the Black Hawks hockey team was introduced to the school, interest never decreased among the boys. In 1951, the federal government went so far as to sponsor the Black Hawks hockey team to enable their involvement in a five-day hockey tour featuring competitions in Ottawa and Toronto, Ontario. This sponsored hockey tour was highly publicized in the mainstream press in both cities, and in other newspapers elsewhere in Canada. The story of the Sioux Lookout (SL) Black Hawks, particularly their 1951 hockey tour, is a residential school story in need of attention and thus provided a fruitful opportunity for research.

## 1.2 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that sports and recreation had in the lives of students at Pelican Lake IRS. This will be done by examining the lived experiences of select members of the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks, a bantam aged hockey team at Pelican Lake IRS. The years 1949 to 1951 are the focus of this investigation, although in talking about the lived experiences of the students, what happened later in life, after they left school is also relevant. With that context in mind, this study aims to accomplish three things: 1) document and analyze how the media represented the 1951 hockey tour; 2) investigate how the Black Hawks remembered their experiences of that tour and analyze the meanings they attached to their sporting experiences at school; 3) understand the relationship between sports, recreation, and the reconciliation process in Canada. In so doing, this thesis will enhance our understanding of the residential school system, the role of sports and recreation within that system, what meanings former students have attached to sports and recreation, what sports means to reconciliation initiatives, as well as give a voice to individuals and communities that have historically been silenced.

My focus on the SL Black Hawks hockey team builds on Braden Te Hiwi's doctoral dissertation, wherein he created a detailed administrative history of sports and recreation at Pelican Lake IRS.<sup>3</sup> The Black Hawks were an important part of Te Hiwi's research. He showed how major policy changes at Indian Affairs in the 1940s led to the government's interest in sponsoring this hockey team in 1951. My interest was somewhat different than Te Hiwi's: I was interested in investigating how media represented the

1951 tour, how the athletes remembered their experiences on that tour, and what they did with sport after they left Pelican Lake IRS.

There is a personal side to this story too, an interest that stems in part from my own lived experiences with challenging life situations: I survived a war in my childhood and witnessed ongoing violent political instability in my country of origin, Yemen. As a result, I sometimes find it difficult to maintain a sense of optimism and hope for the future. Although my experiences are different from what Aboriginal peoples faced (and continue to face) as a result of colonialism, I have come to appreciate the way people struggle to survive in difficult life situations. This story is essentially a story about the struggle to survive, using sport as the primary investigative lens.

In addition to sports being an under-explored aspect of the residential school system, the relationship between sports and reconciliation is similarly begging for attention. The final reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which documented and reported on the experiences of thousands of former students, made it clear that sports and recreation were an important part of students' lives and that efforts to reconcile the past must also include more culturally appropriate sports and recreation opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, especially the youth. This study will shed some light on the role that sports and recreation can play in the reconciliation process.

### 1.3 Contribution to Body of Knowledge

To date, there is a dearth of scholarly information on the sports and recreation experiences of former residential school students in Canada. What information does exist has examined the perspectives of local school administrators<sup>4</sup> or has been collected and published by the TRC. Even so, the TRC offers a limited window into their experiences.

Limited as these sources are, they are nevertheless valuable because they demonstrate that sports and recreation played an important role in the residential school system and that they are important to the reconciliation process. However, a deeper and more critical analysis of the students' perspectives is needed.

As such, in this study, I will contribute to the literature, which will help influence public discussions, by moving beyond the point of view of the local school administrators at Pelican Lake IRS, and by adding the perspectives of the students who participated in sports at the school, specifically those who played on the Black Hawks hockey team.

## 1.4 Methods

The methods are composed of two parts: 1) a media narrative analysis<sup>5</sup> of the newspaper reporting on the Black Hawk's hockey tour to the Ottawa and Toronto in April 1951, and 2) a two-part interview with selected former Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey players.

### 1.4.1 Part 1: Inductive Media Narrative Analysis

The first part of the study analyzes the ways in which the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks were represented in the commercial press during their hockey tour to Southern Ontario in 1951. This analysis was carried out using an inductive approach that focused on media content. This subject matter is the focus of Chapter 3.

An inductive approach was used for this study because of the dearth of information on media representations of residential school sports, as well as the need to generate new knowledge about how media interpreted the 1951 tour. An inductive approach enabled me to extract specific categories and concepts from the newspaper articles in order to provide a deeper understanding of how the Black Hawks were

represented in the newspapers. This information was then used to contextualize the oral interviews conducted with former team members, which is the topic of analysis in Chapter 4.

#### 1.4.1.1 Data Sample

The sample included newspaper articles that reported on the hockey tour, which took place from April 12-17, 1951. The newspapers were retrieved from three sources: 1) the personal archives of Kelly Bull, one of the students who played on the Black Hawks team and who took part in the tour. He is one of the two research participants who were interviewed for this study, 2) an archived newspaper collection from the Sioux Lookout Community Museum, and 3) the microfilm newspaper collection at Weldon Library at Western University.

In total, 37 articles were collected from those three sources. The titles of the newspapers, along with the number of retrieved articles from each source, are as follows: *The Fort William Daily Times Journal* (n=6), *The Evening Citizen* (n=6), *Kenora Miner and News* (n=2), *The Toronto Daily Star* (n=4), *The Telegram* (n=1), *The Windsor Star* (n=2), *The Montreal Daily* (n=1), *The Sault Daily Star* (n=2), *The Gazette* (n=1), *The Globe and Mail* (n=1), *The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (n=2), *The Hockey News* (n=1), *Le Droit Ottawa* (n=1), and newspapers with no attribution (n=7).

#### 1.4.2 Part 2: Interviews

The second component of this study included two semi-structured interview sessions with former Black Hawks hockey players. The semi-structured interviews were held on two consecutive days. The two sessions included: 1) a photo elicitation session,



and 2) a semi-structured oral interview session. In each session, the participants were asked to reflect on their sporting experiences at school and to assess their experiences from multiple points of view so as to better understand how their sporting experiences shaped their life experiences after they left school. All protocols conformed to the 2014 *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.<sup>6</sup> The interview processes, which are described in detail below, were initiated upon receiving approval from Western's University Research Ethics Board (refer to Appendix 1).

#### 1.4.2.1 Research Protocols

The call for participants was circulated through the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA). This organization is an important conduit to former students of residential schools in Ontario, including Pelican Lake IRS, as they maintain a regular contact list of people who have participated in various regional and national events related to the Indian residential school reconciliation process and who have experience speaking about their time at residential school. Since they have a detailed list of people who attended Pelican Lake IRS, the recruitment procedure was limited to the Association.

The process for identifying possible participants was made easier because of Te Hiwi's doctoral research, wherein he identified the Black Hawks members from 1949 to 1951. There were 25 names on that list. The list was submitted to the CSAA. The key contact there, Mike Cachagee, helped me to refine the participant list based on who was considered suitable for this study (e.g., who was known to be healthy enough to carry out multiple interviews, who was less likely to struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, who was talkative, etc.). In the end, three people were identified for the study. Other

factors made the sample quite small. Most of the team members had already passed away. Others were not locatable. One of the three people we identified as a possible participant did not return my calls. In the end, this left two surviving Black Hawks team members, both of whom agreed to participate in this study.

Upon contact with the two participants, I explained the nature and purpose of the project. The participants were also informed about the issue of anonymity and confidentiality, and were provided with the option of having their name and any identifying features made public or remain anonymous throughout the study. Both participants chose to be named. Furthermore, the participants were informed about their role in the photo elicitation and interview process. It was made clear to them that they had the choice to participate in, or withdraw from, any aspect of the project; they could ask questions at any time during the study and have them answered to their satisfaction; they could withdraw from the project at any time without explanation; and they were not required to answer any questions they were not comfortable answering. They were also informed that the two sessions would be audio-recorded, and that they could still participate in the study if they did not agree to be audio-recorded (provided consent was given), in which case I would make detailed notes during my interviews with them. Once the participants had a thorough understanding of the purpose of the research, I asked if they would be willing to take part in the photo elicitation session and interview. They agreed to both sessions and agreed to be audio-recorded.

Once the participants consented to the research process, I worked out a date, time, and place (either at the participant's place of residence or near their home) to carry out the sessions. When travel was not feasible, I worked out a day and time to carry out the

photo elicitation and interview sessions by telephone. The two sessions were done on two separate days to avoid fatigue for everyone. In each case, whether in-person or via telephone, and before the start of the interview, the participants were given the opportunity to reaffirm or change their decision to self-identify or remain anonymous for the study – both were fine with their initial decisions.

The participants were mailed, in a self-addressed stamped envelope, the Letter of Information and Consent. I called the participants one week after the package was mailed to discuss the Letter of Information and Consent and to respond to any questions the participants might have had. The participants were then asked to mail the signed letters back to me in order to proceed with the study. When I received the signed Letter of Information and Consent, I then mailed the photos, which were numbered, to the participants, for use in the photo elicitation session. Participants were given a week to review the photos prior to conducting the photo elicitation and interview sessions. All electronic data, including transcripts and audio-recordings, were stored on my personal laptop in a password-protected site. Each participant was provided with a small honorarium in recognition for their time and expertise.

#### 1.4.2.2 Session 1: Photo Elicitation

A variant of photo elicitation was employed here. Usually, with photo elicitation, participants are tasked with taking their own photos for a project. In my case, however, historically significant photos (n=26) were pulled from different sources and given to the participants. Thus, no new photos were taken for this study. The 26 photos were mailed to the participants ahead of time in preparation for the first session. The photos were then theirs to keep. The photos were used as a memory aid, to help the participants recollect

and share stories about their experiences<sup>7</sup> since this technique is known to be useful in helping to sharpen the recollection and memory elicitation process.<sup>8</sup> I thought this technique might be especially useful in this case, since the main event in question, the 1951 tour, took place 65 years ago.

The photos for this study were drawn from a larger study, to which this thesis is contributing. The images were originally collected from relevant public repositories, including the National Archives of Canada, Algoma University, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Sioux Lookout Community Museum, and newspaper articles covering the story of the Black Hawks hockey tour. All of the photos pertain only to the Black Hawks. I brought a copy of all 26 photos with me to the photo elicitation session for each participant. Each photo was numbered to help me keep track of the discussion. Each photo was discussed one at a time, in whatever order deemed relevant by the participants. Refer to Appendix 1 to view the script that was followed to initiate the discussion.

Approximately 1.5 hours were spent with each participant during this session (in addition to the 1 hour each participant spent reviewing the photos when they arrived in the mail). Follow-up sessions for this method were not needed. I audio-recorded each session but I also made notes on the themes from this session. These notes were used to inform the semi-structured oral interview that was carried out the following day.

#### **1.4.2.3 Session 2: Semi-Structured Interview**

Individual, semi-structured oral interviews were also carried out with each participant.<sup>9</sup> Oral interviews were important to this research because they enabled me to collect the type of data that allowed for a detailed, systematic analysis of individual experiences at school.<sup>10</sup> The protocol for the oral interviews followed the same process as

the photo elicitation session. The participants were interviewed on an individual basis (e.g. no group interviews). The questions they were asked pertained to their experiences on the school hockey team and the lessons they learned from sports, and how they applied those lessons after leaving school and later in life. Refer to Appendix 2 to view the interview guide that was used in this session.

Approximately 1.5 hours were spent with each participant during this session. Follow-up sessions for this method were needed for both participants and were conducted over the phone. I audio-recorded each session, but I also made notes throughout the discussions.

Both parts of the interviews were transcribed electronically using InqScribe. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and word-by-word, omitting frequent repetition, pauses, “uhm”s, and the like while retaining emotional expressions like laughing or sighing or other non-verbal features of the interaction that could be important in interpreting the interaction accurately. Once the transcripts were completed, they were mailed back to the research participants for verification. This gave the participants the opportunity to clarify or correct any details of the transcripts. I made the necessary adjustments to the transcripts once the participants mailed them back. The transcripts were analyzed manually without the assistance of coding software. Data-driven codes<sup>11</sup> were generated through reading of the material and becoming immersed in it. Re-coding and combining codes occurred upon more thorough readings of the transcripts as needed.

Due to the limited number of participants for this study, every relevant public repository for textual (diaries or journals) or audio/video records (interviews) of former students from Pelican Lake IRS was also searched. I paid close attention to the archives

at Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Both archives contain information about former residential school students (who are oftentimes referred to as “survivors”), records of their statements, and interviews and testimonials conducted for the TRC. I searched both archives for any records of students (female or male) who attended Pelican Lake IRS from any time period, and found nothing.

As such, the interviews I conducted with the two former students are the only sources of data we have to help us understand the lived experiences of the Black Hawks. This number may, at first, seem insignificant. However, considering the fact that these two perspectives are the only ones available, they shed much needed light on the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey team specifically, and residential school sporting experiences more generally.

## 1.5 Limitations

This study was hampered by one key limitation – the availability of research participants. Because this study focuses on a specific hockey team from a specific time period that dates back many years ago, the number of individuals still alive, capable, and willing to take part in this study was not expected to be high. This raised questions about generalizability. Could the information generated from this study be used to make claims about other residential school sporting experiences? Yes, is the short answer. The information generated from this study align with what other researchers have found and can also be used by other researchers as a platform to interview other residential school survivors about their sports and recreation experiences.

Another point important to mention is the affect of bias on my work. It is known that personal bias can affect the research process in many ways.<sup>12</sup> I recognize that my personal bias affected this study from the very beginning when I decided on the topic of study. I saw a personal connection and interest to my topic of study, which resulted out of my personal life experiences, knowledge, and beliefs, and this connection was one of the reasons for my decision to pursue this field of research. Further, having survived living through war and political instability and oppression helped me draw similarities and generate an understanding of the difficult life situations that Aboriginal peoples faced (and continue to face) in Canada. This basic understanding affected the way I conducted my research, such as in my data collection (specifically with the choice of question selection for my interviews) and analysis. For example, during the interviews, I sometimes did not probe the research participants or asked them to further elaborate on certain topics, because I felt like I understood what they meant when they talked about various difficult life situations like facing discrimination, and alienation, being forcibly separated from family, and experience loss of family and friends, based on my life experiences, and understandings. This bias could have further had an influence on the analysis of the collected data. My personal experiences, understandings, and beliefs, which shape my biases could enhance the research process because of the similarities and deeper understandings I had with my research participants, but it could have also been a shortcoming as it could have prevented me from asking further questions and probing the participants for more detailed responses.

## 1.6 Delimitations

This study focuses on male athletes who played on the Pelican Lake IRS Black Hawks bantam hockey team between 1949 and 1951. There are a total of 25 recorded players who participated during the 1949-1951 hockey seasons. Lastly, my research population only included people who speak English and who resided within the province of Ontario.

## 1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of study; it sets out the purpose of this study as well as its contribution to the body of knowledge. It also provides additional details pertaining to the research structure. Chapter 2 is composed of the literature review, which sets the foundational framework that will help to understand and analyze the collected data from the newspapers and research participants. Chapter 3 provides the findings gathered from the narrative analysis of the media representation of the Black Hawks hockey team during their hockey tour to Ottawa and Toronto in April of 1951. Chapter 4 provides the findings gathered from the analysis of the two-part oral history interviews, which were conducted with the two former Black Hawks hockey players. A discussion of the narrative that was constructed from the two research methods will then be provided in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 will contain concluding thoughts as well as recommendations for future research.



## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> James R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 271-272.
- <sup>2</sup> Pelican Lake Indian Residential School is also referred to as Sioux Lookout Indian Residential School hence the hockey team being called the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks. In this study, the name Pelican Lake will be used when discussing the school, but the name Sioux Lookout will be used only in reference to the Black Hawks hockey team.
- <sup>3</sup> Braden Te Hiwi, "Physical Culture as Citizenship Education at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School, 1926-1970" (PhD diss., The University of Western Ontario, 2015).
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> The body of literature that was used to inform the media narrative analysis process is also commonly referred to as "media content analysis". I choose to use the term narrative analysis because it draws emphasis on the qualitative nature of this study. Moreover, the media narrative analysis that I conduct in this study focuses directly on the text itself and the media messages, particularly those found in newspapers, are narrative in nature as they tell a story. As such, the term narrative is more appropriate to use in this context.
- <sup>6</sup> Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, December 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London, UK: Sage, 2001), 40.
- <sup>8</sup> Pranee Liamputtong, *Researching the Vulnerable* (London, UK: Sage, 2007), 721.
- <sup>9</sup> Steinar Kvale *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006).
- <sup>10</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London, UK: Zed Books Ltd, 1999).
- <sup>11</sup> Kvale, *InterViews*, 202.

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<sup>12</sup> Beloo Mehra, "Bias in Qualitative Research: Voices from an Online Classroom," *The Qualitative Report* 7, no.1 (2002), 8.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Colonialism

According to Indigenous political scholar, Taiaiake Alfred, colonialism is the “development of institutions and policies by European imperial and Euroamerican settler governments towards Indigenous peoples.”<sup>1</sup> In Canada, colonialism consisted of a process of cultural dislocation of Aboriginal peoples by the colonizers, who imposed a state of wardship and fostered an environment that supported systemic racism. Aboriginal rights were eventually eroded as a result of European colonization and their imposition of Euro-Canadian law.

Aboriginal peoples inhabited, and organized themselves as sovereign nations on what is now Canada for thousands of years prior to European contact. The majority of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples were composed of hunters and gatherers who now comprise three distinct political and identity groups under Canadian law: the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These Aboriginal groups had their own cultures, economies, and governments and possessed close knowledge of their ecosystems, knowing where to find and how to exploit the resources for survival on the land. Moreover, Aboriginal peoples owned the land and the resources in which they lived on, exercised governmental jurisdictions, and possessed property rights over it.

## 2.2 Aboriginal Physical Culture

Dance, sports, and games, the human behaviors consisting of expressive body movements, were also an important part of the ritual, social, and religious lives of Aboriginal peoples long before the arrival of transatlantic explorers.<sup>2</sup> The Potlatch, Sun Dance, spirit dancing, and other forms of traditional ceremonies were a vital way of life for Aboriginal peoples. During these ceremonies, material goods were distributed and shared amongst the people, and with other communities; social, economic and political alliances were established or re-affirmed; healing ceremonies were conducted; and marriages and births were celebrated – to name but a few key functions that the ceremonies serve.<sup>3</sup> In other words, these practices were the foundations of cultural life; it was during these ceremonies that the values and practices of the people were taught and reinforced.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, Aboriginal peoples had their own games and physical contests that differed from those of the colonial settlers.<sup>5</sup> These games and contests were an important part of kinship and interpersonal relations within Aboriginal communities and cultures, and they were also fun.<sup>6</sup> They were also an important means through which to learn how to survive on the land. Through these games, the people developed the technical skills and competencies, such as strength, survival, endurance, speed, hunting precision, and resilience to pain, that prepared them for survival.<sup>7</sup> Gambling games also served important practical purposes like distributing and sharing tools, goods, and food within Aboriginal communities.<sup>8</sup>

The meanings and cultural significance that Aboriginal peoples attributed to their physical practices also differed from those of the colonial settlers. The spiritual, religious,

emotional, and cultural motivations, and meanings derived from physical movements is what distinguished Aboriginal physical practices from the activities that the colonizers participated in (such as walking, running or jumping). For instance, settler colonial physical activities were focused primarily on the element of competition and winning.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the meanings and values that Aboriginal peoples attributed to their physical practices were related to the preservation and enhancement of family and community, building cooperative relations with others, healing, etc. They also attributed close connections between movement and the practical necessities of their land-based way of life.<sup>10</sup> Aboriginal physical cultural practices were thus an integral part of their cultures.<sup>11</sup> It was precisely for this reason that the federal government and religious societies targeted Aboriginal physical cultural practices in their plans for assimilation. Ultimately, the federal government and churches aimed to replace Aboriginal physical practices with those of the colonial settlers.

Legislation, such as the Potlatch Law of 1884, which targeted Aboriginal ceremonies that were considered to be counterproductive to assimilation, was passed to “protect the Indians from themselves” and to weaken familial and community structures.<sup>12</sup> Government agents and missions were frustrated with the Potlatch ceremony, which was practiced primarily by Aboriginal peoples along the West Coast, because the ceremony involved the redistribution and destruction of material goods, and was thus considered wasteful.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Europeans considered traditional Aboriginal forms of dancing a frivolous waste of time, as well as a savage custom. Dances were seen as the primary cause of indifference to education, of sickness and death among children, and of neglect of livestock and farms throughout the winter months.<sup>14</sup>

The Sun (or Thirst) Dance, which was the largest Aboriginal summer gathering and religious ceremony in the Prairies, was the most extensively criticized ceremony.<sup>15</sup> Colonists condemned aspects of the ceremony, such as the giving away of goods and the flesh-piercing rituals, believing the practitioners to be savages, heathens, and pagans, and the entire practice a form of devil worship.<sup>16</sup> Indian agents and other people with the administrative power to enforce the legislation used intimidation tactics, interference, and even withheld rations to force compliance.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, sacred ceremonial objects were confiscated and destroyed as a way to suppress these practices.<sup>18</sup> The suppression grew increasingly repressive as further amendments were made to the *Indian Act*, the federal statute that determines government involvement in Aboriginal lives. For instance, it was considered a criminal offence to participate in, encourage, or assist Aboriginal peoples in their traditional ceremonies.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the enforcement of these laws, the federal government attempted to impose its assimilative agenda on Aboriginal communities by implementing sports days and agricultural exhibitions.<sup>20</sup> Sport days and agricultural exhibitions were introduced to fill the void created by the prohibitions.<sup>21</sup> The replacement of Aboriginal cultures with European physical culture was considered a final “endeavor to substitute reasonable amusements for this senseless drumming and dancing.”<sup>22</sup> As a result, many Aboriginal communities had little choice but to adapt to the new practices and learned very quickly how to fit them into their rapidly changing lifestyles. The adaptations, which might be called resistance to domination, came in different forms.<sup>23</sup> Some Aboriginal peoples used sports as a way to reinforce their cultural beliefs and practices.<sup>24</sup> As an example, many Aboriginal communities used sport days as an avenue to secretly participate in their

traditional ceremonies and dances.<sup>25</sup> These secret ceremonies would take place in isolated areas away from the purview of Indian agents who frequently monitored Aboriginal gatherings.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, sport days brought the people and communities together helping Aboriginal peoples to preserve their cultural identities and traditional practices.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.3 Indian Residential School System

Another way in which Aboriginal physical practices were transformed was through the Indian residential school system.<sup>28</sup> The formal system was put in place in the 1880s and lasted till the 1990s. It was organized and funded by the federal government, through the Department of Indian Affairs, and run and administered by religious organizations.<sup>29</sup> The residential school system started as a social engineering project that sought to transform the attitudes and behaviours of the students so that they could become full independent citizens of Canada.<sup>30</sup> Children were believed to be the key to assimilation because they would be the next generation of parents and leaders, and would thus influence the way future Aboriginal peoples thought and lived. The residential school system became the primary mechanism through which to enact that change.

From the 1880s to the 1940s, the primary goal of the residential school system was to assimilate, civilize, and indoctrinate Aboriginal children into a Euro-Canadian, Christian lifestyle. The children were isolated from their homes, families, languages, and traditions for prolonged periods of time. Students were usually in school for ten months or so. The only time they were allowed to return home was during the Christmas holidays and over summer. In some cases, years would pass before they returned home.<sup>31</sup> School administrators took away traditional artifacts, belongings, and clothing from the children once they arrived at school.<sup>32</sup> They also cut the children's hair and prohibited them from

speaking their native languages or referring to or practicing their cultural traditions.<sup>33</sup> Instead, children were taught and told to speak only English or French.<sup>34</sup> Schools were also usually segregated by gender. Even brothers and sisters, and other extended family, were kept apart.<sup>35</sup> These prolonged periods away from their family heightened the psychological and emotional trauma students experienced at school.<sup>36</sup> And all too often, when they returned home, they experienced a kind of culture shock as they felt more like an interloper in a once familiar and safe place. Some students no longer believed in their peoples' traditions, while others felt ashamed of their cultural background.<sup>37</sup>

Students faced many challenges and problems in the residential school system. They lived in substandard conditions and endured physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, the quality of education they received was very poor, with most schools "teaching" students the manual labour skills the needed to participate in the workforce (and this teaching was accomplished mostly through work done at the school).<sup>39</sup>

In 1946, the *Indian Act* underwent an extensive review by a Special Joint Committee of the House of Commons and Senate. In 1951, as a result of the review, the *Indian Act* was revised. The revisions affected the future of the residential school system.<sup>40</sup> From this point forward, Indian Affairs mandated that "wherever and whenever possible First Nations children should be educated in association with other children."<sup>41</sup> So began the winding down of the residential school system. Aboriginal youth were henceforth moved into the public school system whenever possible.<sup>42</sup> This change was slow in coming. It was not until the 1970s that most residential schools were shut down, with the last school being closed in 1996.<sup>43</sup>



## 2.4 Pelican Lake Indian Residential School

Pelican Lake IRS, which was also known as Sioux Lookout IRS because it was located 10 kilometers west of the town of Sioux Lookout in Northern Ontario, was situated in a heavily wooded region along the shores of Pelican Lake.<sup>44</sup> Indian Affairs and the Anglican Church established the school in 1926 so that First Nations children living in remote areas of Ontario had schooling opportunities.<sup>45</sup> As such, many students who attended the school were from Northern Ontario communities.<sup>46</sup> The school typically taught students grades one through eight, however, children as young as two years old were admitted to the school in some cases where they were orphaned or the school officials thought that they did not have a suitable home.<sup>47</sup> By the 1940's, around 150-160 students, drawn from various northern Ontario communities in Treaty Nine territory, and from the closest reserve, Lac Saul, attended the school. The school included girls and boys' dormitories, classrooms, two hospital rooms, two playrooms, a medical dispensary, as well as a chapel. The days were highly organized and regulated.<sup>48</sup> The students were in class from 9am until 4pm, and operated on the half-day system, where half of the day was spent on academics and the other half doing chores to maintain the school. Religious instruction was also woven into their daily routine, including time spent outside of normal school hours. After World War II, children began to be moved out of the residential school and placed into the public school system.<sup>49</sup> The school no longer operated as a school and became a hostel instead. Although the school officially closed in 1970, the structure remained a residence for students later into the 1970s.<sup>50</sup> The buildings of this school were eventually demolished, but a new First Nations school was built and is currently operating on the same site.<sup>51</sup>

Aside from a limited amount of academic literature, like a chapter in Donald Auger's, *Indian Residential Schools in Ontario, Physical Culture as Citizenship Education at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School 1926-1970*, a PhD dissertation by Braden Te Hiwi, as well as *Tracks beside the Water*, a history of the town of Sioux Lookout<sup>52</sup>, there is a limited amount of recorded information about Pelican Lake IRS.

## 2.5 Physical Culture at Indian Residential Schools

The introduction of sport, games, and physical education into the Indian residential school system served at least two purposes. First, they played a role in the government's agenda to introduce a new embodied sense of identity among the students. Second, they were used to help to generate and facilitate civic support for Indian assimilation.<sup>53</sup> In other words, these programs were implemented to “instill the ideological value system of individualized pursuit of success that was required to become a successful citizen, and to promote a distinctly Canadian sense of identity, through sport and physical culture.”<sup>54</sup>

Prior to 1950, Indian Affairs had made no attempt to encourage the uniform development of programs across the country.<sup>55</sup> Activities, and the level of engagement in those activities, varied widely across the residential school system. Change came in 1950 when Indian Affairs created a portfolio for physical education and recreation within its branch.<sup>56</sup> Programs were to follow provincial curricula.<sup>57</sup> Thus, after 1950, organized sports became a more pronounced feature of the residential school system. Competitions were organized between students within a school, between different residential schools, and between students from residential and public schools. Sport became a popular feature of residential schools in Canada.

Students, in particular male students, embraced the game of hockey, one of Canada's most powerful national symbols. Hockey became a symbol of colonization for onlookers and a site of cultural resistance for the players. According to Michael Robidoux, "the playing fields become a source of instruction for the newly colonized to assume qualities and customs of the empire."<sup>58</sup> He goes on to explain that although First Nations people passionately embraced the game of hockey, these sporting practices did not replace their traditional local sporting practices. Rather, these traditional practices imposed themselves on the Euro-Canadian construct of hockey and consequently made hockey a key place of "cultural enunciation, not cultural capitulation."<sup>59</sup> In a discussion with the Chief of Esketemc First Nation, Robidoux asked if he [the Chief] saw sports (specifically referring to hockey) as a threat to culture. The Chief responded by saying that he thought that it was an enhancing tool, especially if the (First Nations) did it better.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the Chief believed that their mastery over hockey, despite its assimilative purposes, was a form of resistance and a way of countering colonial designs.<sup>61</sup> This is how many Aboriginal peoples, particularly students, excelled at the game of hockey and used it as a form of cultural resistance and self-expression.

## 2.6 Physical Culture at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School

Literature on the physical culture practices specifically in individual residential schools in Canada is even more limited. Braden Te Hiwi's PhD dissertation was the first to examine the entirety of a residential school's physical culture program, particularly that found at Pelican Lake IRS.

Like the other parts of the day, recreation and leisure periods at Pelican Lake IRS were also highly regulated. Overall, informal games and recreational activities rather than organized competitive sport were in existence at Pelican Lake IRS prior to the 1950's. For example, the school's recreation program heavily relied on the lake located behind the school for swimming in the summer and skating and hockey in the winter. In addition, calisthenics, sack races<sup>62</sup>, and indoor play and recreation was also provided in designated spaces in the main school building.<sup>63</sup> However, similar to the reality of many other residential schools, there was a lack of safe and healthy recreation space for students at Pelican Lake IRS.<sup>64</sup> The designated space for play and recreation in the basement of the main school building suffered from flooding problems as a result of seeping rainwater.<sup>65</sup> As such, there was a clear disconnect between the realities of everyday residential school life and the promoted vision for physical culture in residential schools.<sup>66</sup>

The lack of equipment, facilities, and funding resulted in an evident lack of recreational opportunities available at Pelican Lake IRS and this was even recognized by Indian Agent Gifford Swartman.<sup>67</sup> However, the school eventually developed a program of organized sports during the 1940s. Specifically, the first real hockey rink, aside from the existing small rink cleared on Pelican Lake, was created for the school in 1948.<sup>68</sup> During the same year that the rink was created, the Black Hawks, an all-Aboriginal boys' bantam hockey team (ages 12 to 14) was created at Pelican Lake IRS.<sup>69</sup>

In the winter of 1948, the school hosted tryouts for the Black Hawks team. Although most of the boys at Pelican Lake IRS did not know how to skate prior to 1948, they practiced on a regular basis and very quickly became talented hockey players.<sup>70</sup> The

young boys also did not have skates or sticks, but equipment was donated by local citizens and through a grant from Indian Affairs.<sup>71</sup> The team was then entered into the Sioux Lookout and District Hockey League where the team competed in its first tournament in that season.<sup>72</sup> The Black Hawks made a name for themselves on and off the ice as they participated in various tournaments in nearby cities and towns. By the winter of 1950, the game of hockey became the center of the physical culture program at Pelican Lake IRS.<sup>73</sup>

The Black Hawks learned the sport and became skilled in a short period of time. The Minister of Health, Paul Martin (Senior), even noticed and was impressed by the skillset of the young players.<sup>74</sup> As a result, the Department of Health and Welfare and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (under which Indian Affairs was housed as a branch) co-sponsored a hockey tour for the Black Hawks to participate in. The tour, which took place in 1951, sent the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks the national and provincial capitals of Canada and Ontario, respectively, to compete against other hockey teams in Ottawa and Toronto.<sup>75</sup> But the hockey tour was more than about sport. It was also an opportunity to introduce the youth to important cultural sites, such as the Parliament buildings, the National Museum, as well as the National Archives. The tour was meant to educate the young boys about modernity and civilized Canadian life, which was presumably opposite to their traditional Native ways.<sup>76</sup>

## 2.7 Media Representation

Rarely did the media print news stories about Aboriginal involvement in sport, especially those of residential school students. However, this hockey tour received high media attention from newspapers at the time. Newspapers celebrated the athletic

accomplishments of the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey team and emphasized their great sportsmanship as a way to showcase the success of the residential school system and gain support for its assimilative purposes. The public viewed this hockey tour as a success story resulting from the positive efforts expended in residential schools by the government and the Department of Indian Affairs. This tour was used to demonstrate to the public that the residential school system was needed to shape Aboriginal children into educated, civilized citizens.<sup>77</sup>

It is well established that media can shape public opinions and ideas about ‘other’ groups of people. However, according to Amanda Boyd and Travis Paveglio, the media’s influence is increased when the object of attention, such as a population group (e.g., Indigenous people, Muslims, or individuals with disabilities etc.), is unfamiliar to the audience.<sup>78</sup> Thus, an analysis of the media representations of the Black Hawks’ 1951 hockey tour is necessary in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which media framed the story of the Black Hawks to the public, and how that framing was linked to broader understandings of the residential school system, the integrative potential of sport, and Indigenous assimilation in Canada. The following sections will provide a foundation for understanding media messages and Aboriginal representations in Canadian media.

### 2.7.1 Media Messages

Media can be divided into two broad categories: print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, books) and electronic media (e.g., radio, television, film).<sup>79</sup> The main functions of media are to inform/educate, interpret, and entertain, though seldom are all three functions accomplished within the same source (e.g., one might inform and

interpret, but not entertain).<sup>80</sup> Yet, no matter what the function, the images and messages that are produced and circulated by media provide a conceptual framework for how to think about the world, thus influencing the way people relate to one another and the environment around them. Media is thus a powerful force that shapes worldviews, public opinions, behaviour, values, as well as sense of class, ethnicity, race, and nationality, as well as other lived experiences and identity positions.<sup>81</sup> People spend a tremendous amount of time participating in and attending to various forms of media, and as such, media culture influences everyday life.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, people incorporate media into their lives in different ways, such that its influence varies from one person to the next.

Although many people believe they are getting unfiltered news, and are thus learning about what is happening ‘in the world’ from unbiased sources, media content is anything but free of distillation. The content is carefully selected, edited, and packaged by those who own and control the means of production. These individuals and groups act as filters because they select the information for consumers based on what they think consumers want and/or need, and these determinations are further based on their own vested interests in media production.<sup>83</sup> In other words, power relations affect the priority and attention given to certain media content. Those who have more power and wealth in society have more control over the production process in terms of what makes the news and how that news gets framed, and they do so in accordance with their interests and goals.<sup>84</sup> Those interests are usually tied to generating profit. Media producers shape the values and behaviours of consumers in order to create consumers and to build their own reputations with the aim of fostering a loyal consumer base. This is especially true in the commercial press industry, where the profit motive underlies its decisions and actions.

In the case of sports, the organizations and people who control the media decide which sports are to be covered, what type of commentary should be used, and the images that will get attached to the storylines.<sup>85</sup> As such, what appears to be objective reporting is actually coverage that provides only one of many possible messages and perspectives. The objective framing is reinforced by a culture of sports reporting that often frames sporting news as entertainment. Yet, sporting events are not merely presented “the way it is,” since the images, commentary, and messages are important in shaping the framework that people use to understand sports.<sup>86</sup> Thus, sports media too are carefully selected and edited in ways that support the interests of media producers, as well as the owners of sports teams, whose business interests are often intertwined with media ownership.

There are a number of issues and problems that stem from sports reporting, including a media culture that constructs and reinforces stereotypes, which are usually intertwined with various forms of discrimination of marginalized populations, including women, people with disabilities, men whose values and behaviours challenge dominant forms of strong sporting masculinities, African Americans, and Indigenous athletes.<sup>87</sup> This pattern is not new to sports writing. From the earliest years of sports reporting, writers have used their privileged position as journalists to promote their work, the newspaper they were writing for, social and political ideologies, as well as certain types of athletic events and personalities.<sup>88</sup> It was the journalist’s literary skills that spurred early interests in newspapers generally and sports writing specifically – a pattern that still holds true in contemporary society.<sup>89</sup>

Today, sports programming and reporting have become a significant feature of media culture. Critical theorists Aaron Baker and Todd Boyd have noted that sports are a



fundamental part of American culture and, as such, the narratives that surround sports have become embedded in nationalistic discourses about what it means to be American – discourses that also convey messages about who is not American.<sup>90</sup> Thus, although sports reporting is often framed as, and commonly understood to be, entertainment news – not social and political commentary – it is developed from and reinforces ideas about race, gender, nationhood, etc. Sports reporting are thus an important messaging site to unpack since the messages that are presented to its audience can have a significant impact on how they relate to one another on and off the field of play.<sup>91</sup> By critically reading and analyzing media representations of sport, one can begin to identify and understand the power dynamics that influence the production and reproduction of symbolic meanings conveyed through the press.<sup>92</sup> Understanding the power dynamics will help reveal the multiple layers of meanings and interpretations encompassed within the stories that are presented as objective truths about sports and the athletes who play them.<sup>93</sup>

### 2.7.2 Aboriginal Representations in Canadian Media

In Canada, the commercial press is still one of the most popular forms of communicating and educating the public. Commercial newspapers are therefore sites worthy of investigation. Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal issues are of particular concern in this context because of the long-standing problematic relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the state. Newspapers, of course, play a role in shaping how the public views Aboriginal peoples and the state. However, Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal issues in Canada. Aboriginal peoples and their voices (telling stories from their own points of view) are habitually underrepresented and misrepresented in the media, resulting in a news effect that reinforces stereotypes and discrimination.<sup>94</sup> In other words, Aboriginal perspectives that

might challenge the interpretive biases of writers (and readers) are habitually ignored by media. As a result, messages that might lead to new and more complex understandings of what it means to be Aboriginal in Canada are largely missing in the public realm, where commercial media receives the most attention.

There is a scarcity of literature that examines racist and colonialist discourses in Canadian press content.<sup>95</sup> This is especially true for Aboriginal peoples and Canadian press.<sup>96</sup> However, what little information exists shows that when Aboriginal peoples are talked about in the news, the perspective is usually negative and reinforces racist and colonialist views.<sup>97</sup> This pattern is tied to Canada's British imperial history and its ongoing colonial (and neo-colonial) relations with Aboriginal nations.<sup>98</sup> Within Canada, the mainstream press tends to homogenize Aboriginal peoples, glossing over important differences between cultural groups and their histories, and rely on stereotypes to explain the 'problems' that Aboriginal peoples face as a group.<sup>99</sup> In doing so, media expresses and reinforces ideas and values that support colonization and the unequal power relations that privilege dominant understandings about what life should look like in Canada and how its citizens should contribute to the development of the state. Such views ignore the relationship that Aboriginal peoples have to their traditional territories and the way they have adapted their cultures and their way of thinking to fit modern contexts. Those same colonizing views led to the establishment of the Indian residential school system, which was a systematic attempt to eradicate Aboriginal peoples of their traditional cultures, which were thought to be impediments to broader social and economic development.<sup>100</sup> A study conducted by Robert Harding on the historical representations of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian news media revealed that the framing of Aboriginal issues in media

was consistently carried out in ways that protected dominant interests, while presenting Aboriginal peoples as a threat to those interests.<sup>101</sup>

Issues of colonialism and racism also permeate media representations of Indigenous athletes. In their media analysis of Fred Simpson, an Ojibway runner from Rice Lake, Ontario who competed in the 1908 Olympic Games, Janice Forsyth and Josh Archer found that newspapers frequently relied on common stereotypes to describe Simpson's exploits to readers. Similar to other Indigenous athletes, Simpson was usually depicted as 'the Indian' and hardly ever as 'an athlete' without the racial signifier. His athletic accomplishments were usually measured against commonly held assumptions about Indigenous peoples, imaginings that carried racial stereotypes and reinforced colonial and paternalistic dynamics between Indigenous peoples and the settler society.<sup>102</sup>

Tom Longboat was another remarkably successful Indigenous athlete who also competed at the 1908 Olympic Games. In addition, he also won the Boston Marathon in world record time, broke numerous records during his career, and was the first World's Professional Marathon Champion.<sup>103</sup> His athletic performances attracted large crowds and global media attention. He dominated the public consciousness of Canadian sport more intensely than most athletes at the time.<sup>104</sup> However, he is also another example of an outstanding Aboriginal athlete who was racialized by media. Never mind the fact that he was always identified as a native, "the Indian athlete", or as an "Indian man",<sup>105</sup> which implicitly designated him as being different and inferior to non-natives,<sup>106</sup> newspapers often used racist descriptions when referring to Longboat. For example, he was explicitly referred to as a 'pagan' Indian.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, numerous expectations and racist remarks were made in media discussions of Tom Longboat's marriage to Laretta Maracle, who

was born and raised on an Indian reserve but was a Christian and was educated and raised far from any religious or cultural traditions of her culture. For example, when describing Laretta, the *Globe* stated: “Hers is a far stronger personality than that of Longboat. She is refined, educated, a musician of no mean quality, a lover of poetry and good literature. In all the world no more fitting mate could be found for the Indian runner. He will be a mere child in the hands of this wise, sane and determined little girl.”<sup>108</sup> Not only does this passage make assumptions regarding Longboat’s lack of education and his ungraceful demeanor, it also indicates that Laretta, being a Christian, would be his savior out of his uncivilized ways by virtue of her Christianity. Even more striking, the same article continues to state:

Gowned in a dark skirt, and rich blouse of white satin, . . . her [Laretta’s] hair in the latest style, her neck encircled by one of the fashionable ruffs, few would imagine that she had been born and raised on an Indian reservation [sic] and was of Indian blood. In every way she is a winsome little girl who has, as she says, been educated away from many of the traditions of her race. She does not like to talk of feathers, war paint or other Indian paraphernalia. She is ambitious for Tom and if anybody can make a reliable man and good citizen of that elusive being, Thomas Longboat, it will be his wife . . . Tom Longboat will be Christened today. He is, as I write, what is known as a ‘pagan’ Indian, but he will be received into the English Church at once.<sup>109</sup>

Again, various implicit and explicit racist remarks can be noted in the previous news excerpt. Specifically, the newspaper provides a description of Laretta’s clean, and fashionable physical appearance and proceeds to credit it with her disconnect from the Indian ways of living and practices. This implies that people of Indian blood are

uncivilized, could not dress well, and cannot carry themselves in the same way that non-Aboriginals can until they leave their backwards traditions and practices.

Moreover, Longboat's story was typically framed as the 'rise and fall' of a once-great athlete, a narrative that invited constant public scrutiny. His losses, and eventual downfall, were usually attributed to the inherent weaknesses of his race.<sup>110</sup> Newspaper reports conjured up stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples and their lifestyles to explain what happened to Longboat. For instance, there was no shortage of commentary about his laziness,<sup>111</sup> lack of willingness to train,<sup>112</sup> presumed drinking habits,<sup>113</sup> foolish spending on fancy clothes,<sup>114</sup> and wasteful investments: negative attributes that were believed to be inherently ingrained in Aboriginal peoples. Rarely were alternative depictions of Longboat offered to the public.

Longboat's skewed media representation is another example of how newspapers frame certain stories based on cultural beliefs that support business interests. Upon closer examination of Longboat's story, it is evident that he had developed an effective systematic training program to prepare for his races, which included a combination of hard exertion training days followed by lower intensity training and rest. This hard-easy method went against prevailing training philosophies, which eschewed the need for rest, equating it with indolence. Not surprisingly then, the newspapers (and his trainers) usually criticized Longboat for his lower intensity and rest days, believing him to be the lazy Indian who was succumbing to the wayward habits of his race. What he needed was careful supervision and discipline. Newspapers criticized him for only walking twelve miles a day and for not doing enough speed work because runners were expected to consistently train hard without taking time to rest and recover.<sup>115</sup> This expectation was

ideological and not physiological, since lower intensity and recovery days are now known to be an essential part of an effective training program. Despite his successful athletic career, newspapers habitually invoked racist stereotypes that coloured his character and training habits. Yet, as Kidd pointed out, Longboat made his own decisions about how to live his life, as well as how to train and race – perspectives that were missing from the newspapers.

In addition to ideas about race, the majority of Aboriginal representations in sports are male dominated. Very little is said about the experiences of Aboriginal girls and women in sport.<sup>116</sup> The underrepresentation of Aboriginal girls and women in the literature reinforces the broader assumption that sport is the proper domain of boys and men, and that Aboriginal girls and women, along with girls and women generally, have little to contribute in that area (and where they do not belong). Yet, what information does exist shows a rich history of Aboriginal female involvement in traditional and Euro-Canadian sports.<sup>117</sup> The underrepresentation of Aboriginal female athletes in the media reinforces inaccurate ideas and stereotypes about Aboriginal girls and women, to the general public, as well as to Aboriginal peoples.

In Canada, Aboriginal peoples and organizations have responded to the larger problem in which this sporting problem is embedded: media bias. They have provided more opportunities, where possible, to include Aboriginal voices in media to challenge the media bias. For instance, some Aboriginal organizations have established media relation branches that work closely with media to educate writers and producers about their biases.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, by the 1970s, as a result of pressure from Aboriginal groups, the *Vancouver Sun* assigned a journalist to exclusively cover Aboriginal issues in its

paper.<sup>119</sup> Some Aboriginal organizations like the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Action Committee on the Media have also lobbied powerbrokers and have reached out to government regulatory bodies looking for systemic change.<sup>120</sup> Despite these examples, much more work still needs to be done in order to create a discourse that includes, challenges and changes the images and representations of Aboriginal peoples in the media, including sports media.

## 2.8 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) serves as an important historical record of the history of Indian residential school system in Canada. The TRC provided an opportunity for the voices of those who were most directly affected by the Indian Residential School experience (particularly the former students) to be heard and shared in the historical records. Specifically, the TRC received and collected 6,750 statements from survivors, their families, and other individuals who wanted to speak about the history and legacy of the residential school system.<sup>121</sup>

Not only did the TRC act as a catalyst for developing national awareness and understanding of the history of residential schools, it also focused our attention on the experiences of the former students, the people who were most directly affected by the system. The TRC also initiated a dialogue about what is needed to heal from this historical trauma and it pointed out that the dialogue must include the survivors, their families, their communities, and the nation. If people are to be transformed by this history, and are serious about addressing historical trauma, these dialogues cannot happen in isolation from each other. Furthermore, the centre of these dialogues must revolve

around the testimonies of the survivors. It must also include the perspectives of their families, former school staff, government and church officials, and Canadians more broadly, since the residential school system is an important part of Canada's past. Getting these witness accounts directly from the people who were affected by it, is important for collecting the truth about the residential school system which is key for justice and reconciliation.

Canada's colonial history of prejudice and discrimination, particularly through the IRS system, has been felt by generations of Aboriginal peoples after European contact, has had significant effects on the health, cultures, and languages of Aboriginal peoples.<sup>122</sup> The IRS system has left long-lasting impacts on Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. However, as previously discussed, although the IRS system was a big part of our shared Canadian history, this history remains incomplete. In fact, the voices of Aboriginal peoples who were directly affected by the residential school system were excluded from media reporting such as the ones about the Black Hawks hockey tour in 1951, and from official school documents, leaving us with an incomplete understanding of those experiences and how those experiences affected them later in life. However, education and awareness of the IRS legacy as well as of its impacts on generations of Aboriginal peoples and communities is a step forward towards healing and repairing this relationship. This need was recognized by the TRC and it was the mandate on which it was created.

As discussed, sports and recreation were an important element in the lives of Aboriginal peoples and communities, but were also an important element in the lives of Aboriginal students in residential schools. The importance of sports was highlighted by



the TRC, which drew the attention to the role of sports and recreation within the residential school system and the reconciliation process. In the summary of the Final Report of the TRC, called “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future,” sports and recreation are discussed in three sections: 1) “Sport and culture: ‘It was a relief,’”<sup>123</sup> 2) “Public memory: Dialogue, the Arts and Commemoration,”<sup>124</sup> and 3) “Sport: Inspiring Lives, Healthy Communities.”<sup>125</sup> Those three sections speak to the importance of examining the role of sports and recreation in the residential school system, as well as how former students understood those opportunities and experiences.

The TRC also provides “94 Calls to Action,” which are priority action areas that governments, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions can use to address the legacy of the residential school system as they work towards reconciliation. The TRC identified five Calls to Action relating to sports, recreation, and reconciliation. These call for public education about the history of Aboriginal athletes, reduction of barriers to sports participation by continuously supporting the North American Indigenous Games, amending the Physical Activity and Sport Act, and ensuring that national and international sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples and the respect and engagement of Indigenous peoples’ territorial protocols and communities.<sup>126</sup>

As such, the TRC clearly recognizes the significant role sports and recreation played within the residential school system. It illustrates how participation in sports, particularly hockey, was often a bright spot during a dark and painful time for many students. While the TRC’s discussion about the positive role sports played in the lives of many Aboriginal students in residential schools is correct, a more critical analysis of the

students' perspectives is still needed. This analysis must look beyond the binary of whether sports were a positive or negative experience for the students and it must provide a more thorough analysis of those experiences, which contextualizes those positive experiences within the assimilative school environments that the students endured.

The TRC also points to the importance of sports in the reconciliation process. Reconciliation carries different meanings for different people. However, the TRC describes it as being an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships between former IRS school staff and students, their families, communities, religious entities and leaders, government, as well as Canadian citizens. This process may occur individually or collectively, but it requires commitment from all parties affected. Ultimately, this reconciliation process is meant to repair the damaged relationship between Canada and Aboriginal peoples and communities. Making apologies, and following it with taking actions to make concrete changes and progress can help in establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. Additionally, the revitalization of Indigenous traditions and law is another method of healing the relationships between Canada and Aboriginal peoples.<sup>127</sup> Reconciliation is about healing from the damaging effects of colonization and the residential school legacy, moving forward, and creating societies where the next generations can live together peacefully and with dignity.<sup>128</sup>

While the TRC plays a significant role in bringing attention to the importance of sports in residential schools and in the reconciliation process, and has created a new discussion on sports and the residential school system, much more work is still needed to gain a complete understanding of those sporting experiences, what they meant to the students who participated in them, and how they play a role in the process of

reconciliation. This study aims to help build this understanding by providing a thorough analysis of the media representations of the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks as well as presenting the individual experiences of two former Black Hawks hockey players.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>21</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties That Bind*, 218.
- <sup>22</sup> Paraschak, “Reasonable Amusements”: *Connecting the Strands*, 123.
- <sup>23</sup> Pettipas, *Severing the Ties That Bind*, 221.
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- <sup>47</sup> Te Hiwi, *Physical Culture as Citizenship Education*, 58.
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- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.
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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 65.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 104.

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<sup>96</sup> Daniel Drache, Fred Fletcher, and Coral Voss, *What the Canadian Public is Being Told About More Than 1200 Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and First Nations Issues: A Content and Context Analysis of Major Mainstream Canadian Media, 2014-2015*, April 2, 2016. Available at SSRN: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2758140](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2758140)

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Harding, *Historical Representations of Aboriginal people in the Canadian News Media*, 224.

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 516.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 524.

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 516.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 524.

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<sup>116</sup> Victoria Paraschak, "Invisible But Not Absent: Aboriginal Women in Sport and Recreation," *Canadian Women's Studies* 15, no. 4 (1995), 71.

<sup>117</sup> Ann Hall, *The Girl and the Game: A History of Women's Sport in Canada*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2016). See also, Ann Hall, "Toward a History of Aboriginal Women in Canadian Sport," in: *Aboriginal Peoples and Sport in Canada: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Issues*, eds. Janice Forsyth and Audrey Giles (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 64-91.

<sup>118</sup> Harding, *Historical Representations of Aboriginal people in the Canadian News Media*, 224.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>121</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Ottawa: ON, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, 25.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 297.

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## Chapter 3

# Analysis of the Media Representations of the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks Hockey Tour

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes how the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey team was represented in the commercial press during their government-sponsored hockey tour to Ottawa and Toronto in 1951 where they competed against other highly skilled bantam-aged hockey teams and visited key tourist attractions.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a lack of Aboriginal representation in the print media, especially of involvement in sport from residential school students. However, the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks' hockey tour of 1951 gained the interest of print media outlets in various cities across Ontario and beyond. Knowing the influence media can have in shaping public opinions and ideas about specific population groups, especially those who are unfamiliar to the general public<sup>1</sup>, I wondered how media representations on the Black Hawks' 1951 hockey tour were framed to the general public and what the media effects of those representations might have been.

As such, I aim to contribute to this gap by conducting an inductive narrative analysis of the newspaper reporting on the Sioux Lookout Black Hawk's hockey tour to the Ottawa and Toronto in April 1951.

### 3.2 Inductive Media Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis was selected as the method of analysis of the media representations of the Black Hawks because it is known to be an effective research

method for describing and quantifying data.<sup>2</sup> It is also effective for developing a deeper understanding of the messages found within written, verbal, and visual communication.<sup>3</sup> It focuses on the meanings and contexts of the text.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of narrative analysis is to understand the text's explicit and inferred meanings.<sup>5</sup> It is an important method for making inferences from the data, to uncover new understandings and representations of such data.<sup>6</sup>

Depending on the study design and purpose, narrative analysis can be conducted inductively or deductively. Inductive narrative analysis is recommended if there is not enough knowledge about the topic, in which case, categories and concepts are extracted from the data that are analyzed, thus creating new knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Whether using an inductive or deductive approach, the researcher must first become familiar with, and immersed in, the data by reading through the data numerous times in order to make sense of it.<sup>8</sup>

In inductive narrative analysis, the researcher must first organize the data in a general way. This can be done through open coding, where the researcher reads the text and notes overarching patterns related to initial themes (e.g., 'being left out' as a theme might be interpreted as racism or gender or both, depending on the context). More notes and headings that describe the content are recorded as the researcher re-reads the text.<sup>9</sup> Once the researcher has thoroughly gone through the text, the headings are then transferred to coding sheets where data is organized into categories that share a common theme or pattern. Once this open coding process is complete, categories that share a common theme or pattern are grouped together under higher order headings (e.g., racism, survival, forgiveness, etc.). Similar categories are collapsed into broader higher order

categories, reducing the total number of categories.<sup>10</sup> These categories then become the means through which the research topic is described.<sup>11</sup> The themes that emerged from the data did not appear naturally, but were rather guided by pre-existing knowledge on the topic. This knowledge was formulated through the consultation of various relevant literature. As such, the various branches of literature that I consulted for this study helped inform the generation of themes. These branches include literature focusing on media representations of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, as well as Native Americans for a more comprehensive understanding. It also includes literature on Canada's colonial history as well as the history of residential schools in Canada. The findings from this inductive narrative analysis was then used to contextualize the oral interviews that were conducted with former Black Hawks team members, which is the topic of analysis in Chapter 4.

### 3.3 Findings

#### 3.3.1 The Black Hawks as Spectacle

Newspapers reported on the hockey tour with interest and enthusiasm, providing more media coverage than was usually given to such matters. Generally, the tour was highlighted for its novelty in mainstream circles. For instance, one journalist compared the commotion caused by the arrival of the Black Hawks in Ottawa to that of the “introduction of the trolley car,”<sup>12</sup> a comment that also implied Ottawa was slow to adapt to change (the trolley had been “introduced” to Ottawa in 1891). The photographers followed the boys everywhere they went, capturing photos of them at rest and play. Even in their dressing room “prior to the game,” noted one journalist, “photographers snapped the boys from every angle.”<sup>13</sup> Such descriptions bordered on fetishism. In some cases, as with *The Evening Citizen*, more than one story about the tour was published in the same

newspaper on the same day.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the number of articles about the tour, the way in which the stories were told was also important since they indicated the meaningfulness of broader goals that lay at the heart of the tour, including the role of sports in Indigenous lives and the benefits of residential schooling.

Journalists and photographers were not the only ones who took an interest in and placed a high significance on the hockey tour; various government officials and sports figures also invested considerable time, money, and effort into various aspects of the tour, with most trying to capitalize on the publicity opportunities that the tour provided. For example, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Walter Harris, Minister of National Health and Welfare Paul Martin Sr., and Governor-General Viscount Alexander attended the hockey games in Ottawa. Experts, such as Lionel Conacher and Bucko McDonald (former National Hockey League stars and later Members of Parliament) took time out from their duties as MPs, to lend a helping hand at the exhibition game. They also met with the team and took pictures with the boys, suggesting a friendly, almost fatherly acquaintance (See Illustrations 1 and 2).



**Illustration 1: Health Minister Paul Martin Sr. speaking with members of the Black Hawks hockey team in the dressing room prior to a game.<sup>15</sup>**



**Illustration 2: Bucko McDonald & Lionel Conacher (former NHL stars and later Members of Parliament) with two members of the Black Hawks hockey team.<sup>16</sup>**

Newspaper passages, such as “Dignitaries, photographers and presentations marked last night’s arrival of the all-Indian Sioux Lookout Black Hawks at the Auditorium,”<sup>17</sup> broadcast a number of messages to the public, including how important and unique the tour was in Canadian political circles. It seemed like nothing escaped the public eye. The high significance associated with this hockey tour in the newspaper reporting and in the participation of various prominent community figures is important to note because it provided the readers (who were predominately non-Aboriginal) with a framework for how to view the story of the Black Hawks and, thus, capturing their attention.

All of the newspapers covering the hockey tour represented the Black Hawks as a unique and especially positive showcase of Aboriginal achievement stemming from the residential school system, where there were typically few stories of positive achievements to be found. The fact that their accomplishments derived from an easily



recognizable sport linked to Canadian identity – hockey – also furnished the tour with symbolic meaning. Thus, media played a key role in suggesting that residential school sports was the best way to teach Aboriginal students the values and skills they needed to become successful members of society. Even more to the point, hockey was framed as a critical component supporting efforts to assimilate Aboriginal youth into broader Canadian culture.

### 3.3.2 Affirming Images of Integration

Another key theme in the newspaper reporting of the Black Hawks hockey tour was that of integration. The media highlighted the different integrative aspects at work on the Black Hawks. First, they experienced integration through the sport of hockey, Canada's national sport. This point was already discussed above. Second, they experienced integration through their interactions with non-Aboriginal youth and dignitaries, on and off the ice. Third, they experienced integration through the learning they derived from their visits to various tourist attractions, which were supposedly done for their own edification.

The hockey tour brought together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth in a friendly, competitive way. *The Telegram* described one of the games as, “Probably the friendliest feud that has ever been staged at Maple Leaf Gardens.”<sup>18</sup> Another newspaper stated, “Ottawa's young people, and no doubt many older ones too, will be glad to have the Black Hawks come here.”<sup>19</sup> Other than oblique references to these types of interactions, which always took place on the ice, no details regarding any personal interactions with non-Aboriginal youth or the general public were mentioned in the press. Everything appeared to be tightly controlled and scripted, leaving little to no room for the

Black Hawks to have spontaneous moments with youth their age. The absence of such descriptions suggested that the tour, and by extension the residential schools, took Indian education, and thus integration, very seriously, leaving nothing to chance.

Similarly, the newspapers made plenty of references to meetings with prominent public officials yet made few explicit comments about the intent behind such meetings, leaving readers to make the connections themselves. On the one hand was the novelty of a residential school hockey team playing and competing against big-city teams, even if only bantam-aged. On the other hand, however, the meetings alluded to the educational benefits of meeting high-ranking public officials, who would presumably impress upon the youngsters the benefits of civic engagement, modernization, city living, and economic prosperity. During the tour, the Black Hawks met a slew of government officials and dignitaries. News reports repeatedly mentioned their visit to the Parliament Buildings, where they would “possibly see Prime Minister St. Laurent.”<sup>20</sup> Other dignitaries, including other lesser known Members of Parliament, as well as city Mayors, also scheduled meetings and photo opportunities with the boys. The youth also visited the Mayor of Ottawa, Grenville Goodwin, at his office. More photos were taken there.<sup>21</sup> Ontario Premier Leslie Frost also personally escorted them through Queen’s Park.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Heath Minister Paul Martin Sr. chatted with the Black Hawks in their dressing room before their big game in Ottawa<sup>23</sup> (Illustration 1). In addition to these publicly arranged sessions, the boys also attended various civic functions, which were also captured by the press.<sup>24</sup> These civic events included attending a dinner with “Mayor Grenville Goodwin and lunch with W. M. Benidickson, member of parliament for Kenora-Rainy River.”<sup>25</sup>

Augmenting the significance of these meetings were reports about which sights the boys went to see. Readers learned that the boys were taken to attractions that were deemed to be of high civic value. Stops in Ottawa and Toronto included the National Museum, the National Archives, the Parliament Buildings, and the Maple Leaf Gardens. Not much is said about these excursions, however, while at the National Museum, the newspapers reported, “The eager band also looked forward to an inspection of the tomahawks, arrow heads, and other relics in the Indian exhibit at the National Museum.”<sup>26</sup> However, no further details were provided beyond this description leaving the reader to assume the ideological basis of the tour. For example, the brief description left the reader to conclude that the students were being given cultural lessons that were deemed important despite the fact that these cultural practices and symbols were prohibited in residential schools. This visit to the National Museum also suggests the boys were being given history lessons about how Canada was settled peacefully by the British and how political leaders were helping the Indians to make their way in a fast-paced world. The press also mentioned the Black Hawks’ hotel stay at the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa, the most prestigious and expensive hotel in the city. There, they got to swim in the hotel pool (as opposed to Pelican Lake, which surrounded their school in Sioux Lookout). They also went to the National Archives and were even treated to the movies at a local theatre.<sup>27</sup> Such reports suggested to readers that the residential schools were doing their best to integrate Aboriginal youth into Canadian culture by exposing them to some of the finest examples of Canadian culture.

The interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth and dignitaries, as well as their sightseeing experiences were depicted as being important because they

exposed the Black Hawks to what were thought to be proper ways of living and behaving. Furthermore, the newspaper reports also introduced the readers to Aboriginal youth, who were in training to be future citizens of Canada (and who would presumably give up their Indian status to gain full citizenship once they graduated from residential school). In essence, the news reports helped to allay fears that the public might have about Aboriginal integration, especially with the winding down of the residential school system and the movement of Aboriginal students into provincially run schools – a process that was put into action informally in the 1940s and became official policy with the changes to the 1951 changes to the *Indian Act*. Seeing such happy images (Illustration 3) of Aboriginal students doing things that other Canadians would recognize suggested to readers they do not need to be too concerned about Aboriginal integration into mainstream society. Rather, they should support integration; especially since Aboriginal students could develop the necessary skills to become Canadian, as symbolically expressed through their involvement in hockey. Indeed, the newspapers frequently mentioned how admiring and considerate the public was towards the Black Hawks. For instance, *The Globe and Mail* stated, “[The] only thing they [Black Hawks opponents] didn’t have was the crowd (about 500), which was enthusiastically on the side of the young visitors.”<sup>28</sup> Or in a similar passage, “They [competitors] didn’t have the support of the crowd which was enthusiastically on the side of the young visitors.”<sup>29</sup> Or “His [a Black Hawks player] stickhandling would bring approval even from the Leaf wizard.”<sup>30</sup> Or finally, “The happy little fellows from Northern Ontario won the respect and admiration of the crowd and their opponents with a fine display of courage and clean

play.”<sup>31</sup> Quotes such as these, along with other, occurred repeatedly in the press, suggesting to readers, they too should support the Black Hawks and thus integration.



**Illustration 3: Black Hawks members, Jerry Ross, Johnny Yesno, Kelly Bull, and Ernest Wesley, are shown smiling while lacing their skates prior to a game.<sup>32</sup>**

### 3.3.3 The Civilized Indian

Another common theme, closely linked to that of integration, was the social and cultural advancement of the Black Hawks. The press expressed how sport, especially hockey, provided opportunities for the team members to learn proper character traits befitting young men.<sup>33</sup> For instance, the press made frequent references to their sportsmanship, which was described through their style of play, their overall effort, and their adherence to game rules.<sup>34</sup> For example, *The Gazette* reported, “Ability and sportsmanship brought these Sioux Lookout Black Hawks to Ottawa.”<sup>35</sup> Numerous newspapers also emphasized their “clean” playing style in passages like the following: “[The Black Hawks are] known at the head of the lakes for their clean, clever play”<sup>36</sup> and “The Bantam Black Hawks are known as astute and clean players.”<sup>37</sup> Other passages, such as, “Still [despite being four goals behind], they weren’t rough. In fact, they were

given no penalties, compared to five issued to the Toronto team”<sup>38</sup> suggested the boys had learned how to follow orders and would not be disruptive, even if antagonized. For instance, one journalist commented on the lack of penalties the team received: “Not a single penalty in 3 years, and that’s as long as they’ve been at the game.”<sup>39</sup> Another highlighted their restraint on the ice: “There was no scalping, roughhouse or angry words. Just clean play, goodwill all around.”<sup>40</sup> The focus on their clean play, by acknowledging their lack of aggression, suggested that the Black Hawks had learned to tame their savage ways – no “scalping”<sup>41</sup> – through playing hockey at residential school. The racialized depictions that were part of such commentary signalled just how far the boys had come under the watchful eye of their coach and instructors. The emphasis on the astute, skilful style of play of the Black Hawks demonstrates one of the ways the team possessed sportsmanship and thus was progressing. Such comments also suggested a love for the national pastime, implying a love for country. Nationalistic associations were easily spun from hockey imagery.

Additionally, the team’s hard work was emphasized even during losses. For example, *The Globe and Mail* reported, “In the first period they were outclassed but never lost even part of their determination.”<sup>42</sup> Other newspapers reported, “They [the Black Hawks] overhauled the All-Stars four times before bowing out”<sup>43</sup> and described how the boys “put up a battle.”<sup>44</sup> Lastly, the media repeatedly commented on the team’s adherence to the rules of hockey: “He [Walter Kakepetum of the Black Hawks] had to be led to the penalty box where he sat out a crestfallen two minutes.”<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, the style of play of the non-Aboriginal players was never discussed, with the exception of one newspaper, where the journalist reported: “Commendably, Shopsy’s weren’t playing

it as rough as they, or any other local minor club can, normally an aggressive outfit, they played this one clean on the sportsmanlike instruction of coach Oscar Brooks and manager Jack Humphreys, even that they absorbed all six penalties.”<sup>46</sup> The focus on the Black Hawks’ performance reflected the level of attention that the newspapers attributed to this all-Aboriginal team.

Learning how to engage in proper civilized behaviour also meant learning proper, masculine social graces. The press focused on two interactions that were reprinted in various newspapers, so that the stories received wide circulation. In one interaction, Albert Carpenter, on behalf of the Black Hawks team, presented Lady Alexander with a bouquet of roses before the start of the game in Ottawa.<sup>47</sup> The other interaction involved the Black Hawks presenting their opposition in Ottawa with lacrosse sticks.<sup>48</sup> The gifting of the roses to Lady Alexander and the lacrosse sticks to their opposing team symbolized respect and friendship, although each gift created its own situated meaning. The gifting of the roses to Lady Alexander demonstrated that the boys understood proper gender relations in terms of how to treat a woman of wealth and taste. The gifting of the lacrosse sticks was significant for two reasons. Firstly, the newspapers did not report that the “white” boys gave anything to the Black Hawks. Secondly, the boys did not play lacrosse at Pelican Lake IRS (or at most residential schools). Yet, this fact did not matter, as lacrosse would have been widely understood by the public as a traditional Aboriginal activity that all Indigenous groups would have played at one time or another.

The numerous social events that the boys attended also demonstrated to the public that the boys had learned basic social skills in terms of how to dress, behave, and conducted themselves in front of others. In fact, their physical appearance, especially the

way they dressed, was a key theme in the press. One report, for instance, noted how the Black Hawks were dressed in “colorful [sic] windbreakers.”<sup>49</sup> Other reports made similar mention of their team uniforms,<sup>50</sup> indicating their likeness to non-Aboriginal teams. Reports on their clean, colourful windbreakers, as well as their new hockey uniforms, suggested that the Black Hawks were just like the white boys who played hockey, evoking images of similarity rather than difference.

Newspapers also referred to the way the boys conducted themselves in public. One report noted how the boys were happy<sup>51</sup> and all “smiles” and that this was particularly gratifying because they were “Indian smiles.”<sup>52</sup> It is not clear what the author meant by “Indian smiles”, although readers likely assumed the boys were happy and content in their lives at school, where they got to play hockey and go on lavish, educational trips to big cities. The edifying narrative was overt in other instances. For instance, *The Fort William Daily Times Journal* reported, “Despite last night’s loss, [Art] Schade [manager of the all-Indian team] was happy about the trip. ‘It had been a wonderful education for the 10 Ojibways and two Crees from Northern Ontario,’ he said.”<sup>53</sup> In addition, the same newspaper reported Assistant Coach Bruce McCulley saying: “These three days in Ottawa will be worth three years’ schooling for the boys.”<sup>54</sup> Another newspaper quoted the team coach who reported said that the trip was “better and meant more to the kids than five years at school.”<sup>55</sup> These quotes reveal how this hockey tour itself was viewed with high regards as being an irreplaceable experience for the boys because it provided them with interactive learning opportunities that showed them what Canadian culture was and it exposed them to real-life situations that allowed them to interact with non-Aboriginal leaders and youth. These were all lessons that could not be



learned at school, but were thought to be important for the Aboriginal students to undergo.

### 3.3.4 Textual Silences

The voices of the Aboriginal players were consistently absent in all the newspapers that reported on the hockey tour. In fact, newspapers often spoke on behalf of the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks and made assumptions about their experiences during the tour. These textual silences in the newspapers are just as telling as what was included. Comments such as “The eager band also looked forward to an inspection of the tomahawks, arrow heads and other relics in the Indian exhibits at the National Museum,”<sup>56</sup> or “Their three-day program is packed with receptions, visits to public buildings, luncheons, and sightseeing tours. Who wouldn’t be a good boy for all that?”<sup>57</sup> were frequent in the press. In all of the articles used for this study, there is only one example of an attempt to interview the Black Hawks team. The example comes from the *Fort Williams Daily Times Journal* and is not even a quote from one of the students: “With so much to do it isn’t any wonder they were kind of uncommunicative when reporters quizzed them about their adventure.”<sup>58</sup> The silence is thus reproduced with the boys apparently being resistant – “uncommunicative” – to being interviewed.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>2</sup> Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah Shannon, “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis,” *Qualitative Health Research* 15, no. 9 (2005), 1277.
- <sup>3</sup> Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngäs, “The Qualitative Content Analysis Process,” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 62, no. 1 (2008), 108.
- <sup>4</sup> Hsieh and Shannon, *Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis*, 1278.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Elo and Kyngäs, *The Qualitative Content Analysis Process*, 108.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 109.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 108.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 111.
- <sup>11</sup> Hsieh and Shannon, *Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis*, 1285.
- <sup>12</sup> “Sioux Lookout Bantam Indians Opposing Ottawa East Tonight,” *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), April 13, 1951.
- <sup>13</sup> “Polish Off City Champs In Fast and Clean Clash,” *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), April 14, 1951.
- <sup>14</sup> “Indian Team In Capital For Games,” *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), April 12, 1951, “12 Indian Puck-Toters Here For Bantam Series,” *Evening Citizen* (Ottawa, ON), April 12, 1951.
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- <sup>18</sup> “4-Foot Brave Wows Em,” *Telegram* (Toronto, ON), April 17, 1951.
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- <sup>20</sup> “Indian Bantam Squad Tops Ottawa,” *Windsor Star* (Windsor, ON), April 14, 1951, “Indian lads’ Hockey Tour Cost \$1,800-‘Well Worth It’,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), April 17, 1951, “Indian Boys Win From Ottawa Squad,” *Sault Daily Star* (Sault Ste. Marie, ON), April 14, 1951, “Sioux Indian Bantams Win 5-3 at Ottawa,” *Fort William Daily Times Journal* (Fort William, ON), April 14, 1951.
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<sup>34</sup> Te Hiwi, *Physical Culture as Citizenship Education*, 107.

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<sup>54</sup> “Governor-General to Drop Puck. Sioux Lookout Indian Boy Ice Stars Play in Ottawa,” *Fort William Daily Time Journal* (Fort William, ON), April 13, 1951.

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## Chapter 4

### Analysis of Interviews Conducted with Former Sioux Lookout Black Hawks Hockey Players

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the lived sporting experiences of former residential school students. I specifically focus on the perspectives of two former Black Hawks hockey players from Pelican Lake IRS.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the exclusion of the voices of residential school survivors from media reporting and official school documents from the time leaves us with an incomplete understanding of those lived experiences and how those experiences affected them later in life. The TRC began an important dialogue on the significant role of sports within the residential school system. However, thorough examinations of the individual sporting experiences of former Aboriginal athletes are still needed.

As such, I aim to contribute to this gap in the dialogue on sports by conducting a two-part semi-structured interview with two former hockey players from Pelican Lake IRS.

#### 4.2 Two-Part Interviews

##### 4.2.1 Session 1: Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation is a common method of data collection in Aboriginal research because it places Aboriginal perspectives at the center of attention and thus prioritizes their experiences and concerns.<sup>1</sup> Usually, with photo elicitation, participants are tasked with taking their own photos for a project. In my case, however, historically significant



photos (n=26) of the Black Hawks hockey team were pulled from different sources and given to the participants. Researchers have found this technique useful to help sharpen the recollection and memory elicitation process.<sup>2</sup> As shown in Annette Kuhn's autobiographical study "Family secrets," photos can trigger a "memory response" and unlock a series of memory stories.<sup>3</sup> This memory response is an emotional reaction to the image, which arouses flashbacks and feelings that might not have come to the surface with other interview techniques.

Photos are also useful for interviews because people react differently to the two symbolic representational formats (words and images), which can spur on a conversation, allowing the subject to make all sorts of associations between the past and the present that might not otherwise have happened with conversation alone. According to Douglas Harper, "images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words."<sup>4</sup> In other words, photos can help elicit a more personal experience.

Photo elicitation is also effective in de-centering the authority of the researcher, thus shifting the power within the research process away from the researcher and towards the participants. This helps to empower research participants to share their experiences and create a storyline that is framed around their values, meanings, and memories. Specifically, photos help initiate the interviewee's active participation and engagement in the dialogue and provide them with the power to guide the interview in the direction they find most suitable.<sup>5</sup>

Photos were labeled with numbered to help keep the discussion organized. Each photo was discussed one at a time, in whatever order preferred by the participant. As such, the participants were free to lead the conversation, in the manner they deemed important, however, a general script was used to initiate the discussion. These discussions were used to inform the second component of the interview process.

#### 4.2.2 Session 2: Semi-Structured Oral Interview

The individual, semi-structured oral interviews were used to complement the data collected from the photo elicitation session. The oral interviews were important to this research because they enabled me to collect the type of data that allowed for a detailed, systematic analysis of individual experiences at school.<sup>6</sup> These interviews are integral because they helped provide a direct understanding of the lived experiences of the Black Hawks.

In the photo elicitation and semi-structured oral interview sessions, participants were asked questions from a prepared interview guide that invited them to reflect on their sporting experiences at school and to assess their experiences from multiple points of view so as to better understand how their sporting experiences shaped their life experiences after they left school. The participants were encouraged to elaborate on topics they brought up and discuss their experiences uninterrupted by me. Thus, the overall process was interactive with the researcher and participant engaged in a “fluid” dialogue, with the participant's point of view leading the direction of the conversation.

### 4.3 Interview Participants

This section provides general background information on the two participants, Kelly Bully and Chris Cromarty. While they both went to Pelican Lake IRS and played on the Black Hawks hockey team in the late 1940s and early 1950s, they each had distinct, and sometimes quite divergent views on their experiences at school and on playing sports. Both Kelly and Chris recalled being exposed to the game of hockey at Pelican Lake IRS. Chris, in particular, remembered spending most Saturday evenings with the rest of the boys listening to live national hockey game broadcasts on the radio. He explained that his deep affinity for hockey began with these live broadcasts and only intensified through the years, as he came to understand the game, and then played it. Chris explained:

That was the first time I heard a hockey game. The interest really picked up after that – it spread like fire. We would look for anything about hockey in the papers, or anywhere. It was really interesting to all of us. We'd pass it around and that's how we developed our enthusiasm for hockey. Then, every Saturday night after that, it was the same thing – we'd all gather around the radio and listen to the hockey games.

Kelly also described his experience listening to live hockey broadcasts and explained how it was the catalyst for his interest in hockey, as well as for the rest of the boys at school. As with Chris, Kelly said that one of his highlights at Pelican Lake IRS was when he and his friends would gather around the radio to listen to live broadcasts of Foster Hewitt's Hockey Night in Canada. That is how many of the students, like Kelly, learned about hockey and became familiar with its stars, such as Rocket Richard, Ted Kennedy, and Howie Meeker.

What follows is a brief biography of Kelly Bull and Chris Cromarty. The biographies are meant as further background information and contextualization for their stories. The analysis follow immediately afterwards.

#### 4.3.1 Kelly Bull



**Illustration 4: Kelly Bull.**<sup>7</sup>

Kelly Bull (Illustration 4) is a member of the Lac Seul First Nation, whose reserve is located about 56 kilometers northeast of Dryden, Ontario. He was admitted to Pelican Lake IRS in 1944. He was six years old. He remembers the long canoe journey he went on with his parents to get from Lac Seul to the school. Like most Indian residential schools at the time, Pelican Lake IRS imposed a highly regimented environment, comprised of chores, work, academics, and religious instruction in grades one through eight.<sup>8</sup> Students were then typically transferred elsewhere for high school. After completing grade eight at Pelican Lake IRS, Kelly was transferred to Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School where he completed grades 9 to 12 and then graduated. Like many other Aboriginal students at this time, Kelly lived as a resident at

Shingwauk Indian Residential School (IRS) while attending Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School and had to take a long bus ride every morning to get to the school in town and then another bus to get back to Shingwauk IRS at the end of the day. This is because the residential school system was in the process of being phased out in the late 1940s, with the result that Aboriginal students were now being redirected to the public school system.<sup>9</sup> Residential schools that were in strategic locations were quickly repurposed. Shingwauk, which had historically been an Indian residential school, was one of those schools; it was turned into a boarding institution for Aboriginal students whose home communities were too far away to allow for daily travel from home to school.<sup>10</sup> The daily commute had negative implications on the youth because it meant they could not stay at school to participate in extra curricular activities like intramural sports teams and library visits. Therefore, integration into the public school system was only in name, since Aboriginal students who were in boarding situations were often isolated from the types of activities that would have provided them with opportunities to build rapport with their fellow students and teachers. Kelly and Chris each recalled having to catch the bus back to Shingwauk IRS to eat supper every day, which was only offered at a set time, and this meant that they could not be involved in anything fun at the school. Shingwauk IRS was eventually closed in 1970 and was renamed to Shingwauk Hall, which is now an integral part of the Algoma University campus.<sup>11</sup>

In the highly monitored and rigid environment at Pelican Lake IRS, students enjoyed the time they were able to spend outdoors in the sun and fresh air. Kelly recalled taking every opportunity to be active and play sports with his schoolmates, even prior to the creation of the Black Hawks hockey team at Pelican Lake IRS. He described having

to improvise when playing sports, especially since they did not have sports equipment at school: “There's street hockey today right? Well we had something similar. We used to make little goals out of potato sacks. We would also cut a piece of wood, that size (gestures), we would make sure it was nicely rounded like a puck, and we would tape it to make it stronger.” The students naturally gravitated towards spending time outdoors and playing sports, even when the school did not provide equipment or opportunities for them to participate in organized sports. As such, the level of interest and excitement among the students was high when school administrators finally created the Black Hawks hockey team at Pelican Lake IRS and even more so when they were provided with equipment and uniforms.

Kelly, who describes himself as a natural athlete, was one of the students selected to play on the original Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey team in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He remembered travelling to nearby cities to play games: “You got to go to other places and that was a big thing - to just be able to get away from that residential school and go to Thunder Bay for instance. You know, we went to tournaments there and at Port Francis, Kenora, Macintosh, and Cecilia Jeffrey.” He also described other perks of being on the team, such as having nice team jackets and being able to visit places that most residential school students never had access to, such as museums and galleries (as on their hockey tour to Ottawa and Toronto).

Kelly's interest and involvement in hockey and other sports continued when he moved to Sault Ste. Marie. While studying at Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School, Kelly played on the city midget hockey team. However, he talked about his hockey experience as a form of culture shock mixed with uncertainty. The following

exchange captures his experience of wanting to be involved in hockey, then “backing off” because he felt unwelcome and awkward on the team:

Kelly: I went to high school there [the city of Sault Ste. Marie] and that’s when I was really introduced into integration in sports with white players. I got to play on the city hockey teams with them [white players]. And there was another guy, John Yesno. We [being the only Aboriginal players] were on a midget team in the Sault and the rest were all white kids, so we were different.

Fatima: Was it a different experience for you, with sports?

Kelly: Yeah. We withdrew I guess – backed off a little bit.

Fatima: Why was that?

Kelly: Well, I don’t know. We felt comfortable with our own kind I guess and it was white kids there and we were different. Like they would walk around in the shower stalls after a game with nothing on, and we weren’t like that. We were shy. Things like that.

Racism was a big problem for Kelly during his high school years in in Sault Ste. Marie. He vividly remembered getting into fights with players who often “trash-talked” and called him derogatory names, and fouled him out during games. Kelly nevertheless continued to play hockey despite these challenges. While in high school, Kelly also developed a strong interest in basketball. His love for sports continued long after his schooling days were over. In addition to hockey and basketball, he played baseball and competed in track and field as a young man, and later on, played golf. Furthermore, his

involvement in sports was not restricted to being an athlete. He also coached, and he was a leading advocate for Aboriginal sports and recreation in Ontario and Canada, spending many years developing the Aboriginal sport system that now exists because of his and his colleagues' efforts.<sup>12</sup> Talking about his sporting experiences brought up feelings of pride and nostalgia for Kelly, which drastically contrasts with the feelings that were evoked from talking about his schooling experiences. Kelly currently lives with his wife in Timmins, Ontario.

#### 4.3.2 Chris Cromarty



**Illustration 5: Chris Cromarty, second player from the left on the front row, with teammates at a hockey tournament in Thunder Bay in 1951. This team photo, and this particular trip represent Chris' favourite memory of being on the team.<sup>13</sup>**

Chris Cromarty (Illustration 5) is a member of the Big Trout First Nation, located about 600 kilometers north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. In the winter of 1944, Chris' father, along with other First Nations men who were not placed in the armed forces, was recruited to work in the mines to replace the men who were away serving in the war. As a result, Chris and his family moved off the reserve to a mining town called Pickle Crow,



north of Pickle Lake, Ontario (Pickle Lake is about 540 kilometers north of Thunder Bay). Pickle Crow is thus a remote area. Chris explained that he was able to learn a small amount of rudimentary English as a result of his family's move to Pickle Crow. In 1945, when he was eight years old, Chris was admitted to Pelican Lake IRS. He remained there until 1952, when, like Kelly Bull, he moved to Sault Ste. Marie to attend the Technical and Commercial High School there. He graduated in 1956. Chris also resided at Shingwauk IRS during this time and commuted daily between the public high school in town and Shingwauk.

During his time at Pelican Lake IRS, Chris participated in various sports, though he had a clear affinity for hockey. It was his favourite sport of all. Unlike Kelly, however, Chris recalled playing sports before hockey was formally introduced to students at Pelican Lake IRS. Indeed, the ice rink and hockey figured prominently in his memory. For instance, he remembered enjoying other sports before the ice rink was built and certainly before the Black Hawks hockey team was established. Soon after hockey was introduced, however, it became an integral part of student life and school culture at Pelican Lake IRS, especially for the boys (since the girls did not play). It is no surprise then that both Chris and Kelly became more interested in the game. They and the other boys at school spent most of their Saturday evenings listening to Hockey Night in Canada on the radio, playing the game whenever they could, and dreaming about playing whenever their mind was allowed to wander.

Chris did not officially play on the Sioux Lookout Black Hawks hockey team until his last two years at Pelican Lake IRS: 1951 and 1952. Even though he was part of the team in 1951 – the year of the government-sponsored hockey tour to Toronto and

Ottawa – Chris was not included in the lavish excursion. Even after all these years, Chris still remembers being excluded from the experience. He explained that it likely had to do with wanting to win against the big city teams:

No, I didn't make it on the tour. In the case of Ottawa for instance, I didn't go and somebody else didn't go either. The team picked up two players from Cecilia Jeffrey School instead. They were picked up to bolster the team on their long journey to Ottawa and Toronto, and so this left a couple of us guys off the team, including myself.

Being left off the team would leave a lasting impression on Chris, as would be expected given the importance of hockey to the students and to the school.

During his time at Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School, Chris' involvement in hockey decreased because of various limiting factors such as his daily commute after school and there being no opportunities at Shingwauk IRS to play. He occasionally played scrimmage hockey on a pickup team in the city. Instead, basketball came to occupy an important part of his life in Sault Ste. Marie. After school, he worked with the Federal Government processing employment insurance claims, then with the provincial government at the Indian development branch as a welfare officer, then as a community development officer, probation officer, and child welfare worker for the province of Ontario. He was also a teacher for a short time. He describes himself as a "Jack of all trades, master of none." Chris was also involved with the North American Indian Club and was later a board member of an Indian Friendship Centre. All of this is to say, Chris' graduation from Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School marked the end of his involvement with organized sports.

Chris retired to Wunnumin Lake, Ontario, where he lives with his wife and two foster children. Despite being retired, Chris continues to be an active community member by volunteering on the Economic Development Board, where he attends monthly meetings to discuss and resolve various issues pertaining to local businesses such as restaurants and hotels.

## 4.4 Findings

### 4.4.1 Importance of Sports and Winning

Hockey was important to Chris, like it was to many former residential school students, especially the boys. It was an opportunity for them to develop their skills and excel at something that they enjoyed participating in. Like most sporting experiences, playing hockey meant some games would be won and others would be lost. However, during the interview with Chris, it became clear that losing was something that he took very personally. For Chris, losing meant something much deeper than merely losing a game. In fact, in his description of losing, specifically at hockey, he expressed that he “never learned to lose graciously” and “didn’t take kindly to [losing].” He also explained how he “used to get depressed when [they] lost” and “that [losing] used to drag [him] down.”

His strong reaction to losing in hockey led me to wonder why it elicited so much emotion from him. However, after placing Chris’ emotional description of losing within the racialized context of the era, and the fact that the Black Hawks played other residential schools, as well as non-Aboriginal schools and leagues, and after learning about the important role it played in his life, it was easier to understand Chris’ antipathy towards losing. Playing hockey was a rare opportunity for him, and other Aboriginal

students, to be good at something, especially in an environment where the students were constantly being brought down. As such, the experience of losing a hockey game, especially to non-Aboriginal teams, took away that opportunity to excel at something, thus limiting the types of activities that could be used to build pride and self-esteem.

Kelly also described hockey as being significant to his memory of residential school. Similar to Chris, Kelly was competitive and skilled at hockey and did not take kindly to losing. In Kelly's case, he became very good at the game and got used to winning all the time, so it was hard for him to accept the occasions when his team lost. Kelly explained that self-improvement and skill building was important to him, particularly when it came to hockey, so he took it upon himself to work on his skills whenever he was given the opportunity. In addition, school administrators had high expectations for the students to excel in sports and expected them to always give their best during practices, during games, and in school. For example, Kelly explained that just before every game, the coaches instructed the Black Hawks give more than their best: "I want 110% from you tonight" is what they would say. The coaches instructed them to "play [their] hearts out, to not give up and to keep trying." Kelly took these lessons to mean more than just trying hard in sports. He explained, "They [the school staff] were looking at us to be an example for the other kids [not on the team]. We were aware of our responsibility to set an example in school." The combination of Kelly's love for the game, the level of dedication he had for honing his skills, as well as the pressure the school placed on students to excel and win games made it difficult for him to accept defeats.

Moreover, students like Chris and Kelly described hockey as the only opportunity they had to break free of their life and to make something of themselves. It was the only chance they had, coming from the highly oppressive residential school environment, to work towards something that everyone appreciated and to reap the reward of their hard work. The students knew that if they worked hard, they might be selected to play on the Black Hawks team that travelled to Ottawa and Toronto. As a result, the potential benefits of being on a sports team became the driving force for the male students to practice their skills every chance they could get. It also led them to behave better in school since behaviour was a prerequisite to make it on the team as well.

Furthermore, hard work on the ice was believed to translate to productivity off the ice. Kelly explained how he related the two versions of work: “We got to a point where some of us realized that hard work can be beneficial, especially when it came to playing hockey; you get stronger when you work hard.... there was a personal satisfaction, at least with me, to be better.” For Kelly, the two types of hard work were related, with one feeding into the other. It also meant that sport was no longer just about fun; it was a form of work that some students, like Kelly, willingly undertook themselves because it was fulfilling. It was inherently meaningful, as better skills on the ice were believed to translate to better workers (and a better life) off the ice.

Most students were not properly educated in the residential schools and, as a result, struggled with learning. Formal education was thus a negative experience for many students. The classroom was an emotionally and psychologically agonizing space. In contrast, the space of sport, set as it was in the context of residential schools, provided an opposite set of experiences. Athletes, especially winning athletes, were frequently

rewarded and recognized for their efforts and achievements. Similar to Kelly, Chris talked about what he learned through his sports participation at residential school and especially with the Black Hawks. He honed in on the value of teamwork. “You could get things done if you worked together and worked hard,” he said. He went on to explain that this was important because the students did not learn about teamwork or even hard work in the classroom. Rather, they learned these lessons through hockey. To Chris and Kelly, personal and professional development never took place in the classroom, but they did in hockey, and this is one of the reasons why hockey became so important to them, as it surely did for many other male students.

#### 4.4.2 Sports was Not About Health and Well-Being

It became clear that students were not participating in sports for health reasons. Students, like Chris and Kelly, were not taught to think about sports from the point of view of physical (or even emotional or psychological) well-being. Kelly explained that students were never educated about the potential health benefits of exercise: “That kind of knowledge was never talked about back in the day. Well, maybe they [the school administration] knew those things in their heads, but it certainly wasn’t made clear to us that those were the benefits of keeping in shape.” When sporting opportunities were provided at Pelican Lake IRS, it was not for the long-term benefits and wellbeing of the students. Instead, the students were taught to think about sports from a point of view of excellence and performance.

It was clear that the coaches at Pelican Lake IRS set high expectations for the students to excel at hockey. However, it seemed that this was not done to benefit the students. Consider Chris’ exclusion from the hockey tour to Ottawa and Toronto in 1951.

He had to stay behind at school, despite the fact that he was a member of the Black Hawks hockey team, because (according to Chris) the school administrators wanted to bolster the team by having only the best players present on the trip. The purpose was to have the team demonstrate the good work that was being done at the school, and therefore the best athletes were wanted. This objective had nothing to do with providing positive sporting experiences for the students. Otherwise, Chris would have been on the team that travelled to Southern Ontario.

Both Chris and Kelly explained that although there was much athletic talent found in the students in Pelican Lake IRS, they felt the school administrators did not address sports and recreation as seriously as they should have to encourage the students to continue playing and improving their skills later in life. This was especially evident in Chris and Kelly's sporting experiences after their time at Pelican Lake IRS. It seemed that the coaches and school administrators wanted the students to excel at sports for a short duration of time, after which they were not encouraged to pursue sports. This point is more clearly explained through Kelly's experience with sports at Sault Ste. Marie Commercial and Technical High School. Despite Kelly's athletic competence, the high school administrations did not place the same level of interest and investment in providing sporting opportunities for him and other Aboriginal students. In fact, school leaders usually discouraged Kelly from pursuing anything beyond recreational level sports. In one case, school administrators prohibited him from trying out for a local elite basketball team:

That year, my last year, there was a senior basketball team in Sault Ste. Marie called the 49<sup>th</sup> Gunners. They were senior caliber and that's where they used to get basketball

players to play for team Canada in the Olympics – that was one of the teams they would look at. Don Lilly [another student] and I got invited to go and try out [for this team]. But this is where my career in sports really went down. They asked the principal if I would be permitted to play for the team, but he said, “No, he’s here to be educated.” So we had to turn that opportunity down. And the same went for the junior hockey team, which we got invited to try out for as well.

In Kelly’s estimation, the principal’s decision was an example of racism, but which was also rooted in the challenges that students coming from residential schools faced. Kelly explained:

[There was] a steadfast rule for all students – to educate these people [the Aboriginal youth] and not to let them go [play sports]. It’s too bad; I don’t know why we couldn’t have done both [academics and athletics]. What makes me mad today is that they [residential schools] really didn’t prepare us for academics either. I mean you only went to school for half a day. The kind of teaching we were getting wasn’t conducive to preparing us for higher learning. They were more interested in us learning life skills – to know how to build a table or house and stuff like that, but maybe I wanted to be a lawyer perhaps.

Thus, the racism operated at two levels. The residential schools generally did not adequately prepare Aboriginal students for anything beyond menial labour. If they continued on to high school, administrators there believed Aboriginal students needed as much structure and discipline as possible to keep them focused on their education, where they needed a lot of help because they were not as intelligent as white students.



But even at the recreational level, the high school did not place much effort on facilitating sporting opportunities for the Aboriginal students. For example, Kelly, along with his Aboriginal schoolmates, enjoyed and excelled at basketball. However, Shingwauk IRS, the residence where they spent most of their time after school, did not have a space for the Aboriginal students to play. It was left up to the students to create sporting spaces and to find equipment, which they did, after getting the permission from the principal at Shingwauk IRS. They used an old abandoned barn to play basketball. The boys spent three weekends cleaning the interior, fixing the floors, and hanging two baskets for nets.

Despite the decision to keep Aboriginal students in school and away from sports, many students, like Kelly and Chris, still received a less than adequate education at high school. Students were ill prepared for anything but blue-collar work. Or, if they were skilled enough at sports and got a lucky break, they did not receive the type of business training that would allow them to remain in professional sports or to even continue their studies. The students were led to believe that schooling was where they should be focusing their energy, even when the education they were receiving was deficient. In fact, after graduating from Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial high school, Chris went on to Ryerson Polytechnic for post secondary studies in industrial chemistry, but explained that he lasted only three months before having to drop out. “I didn’t make it; I couldn’t get used to doing research, I didn’t even know how to do research. When we were in high school, we never had a chance to visit a library.”

### 4.4.3 Comraderie

Chris and Kelly both talked about the sense of comraderie that hockey created among the boys at Pelican Lake IRS. As a result, they see sport, especially hockey, as a tool that can be leveraged to bring people together. Both talked about how nearly every boy at Pelican Lake IRS strived to make it on the Black Hawks hockey team, but only a small handful were chosen. It was thus a highly competitive and selective process that winnowed the youthful talent down to an exclusive team. In spite of this exclusivity, Kelly and Chris believed the team had a certain sense of harmony with the rest of the boys at the school. Chris explained:

Enthusiasm among the boys was so intense. Everybody wanted to play hockey. Even if you were on the team, you went and played with the guys that weren't on the team in scrimmage hockey.... We didn't look down on anybody who didn't make the team and the guys never hung around like a team either; they were still students in the school... We played with them [the students who did not make the team], but we didn't discourage them.

Hockey's harmonizing effect was a key point for Chris. He explains that the competitive nature of the team was never established at the expense of other students. For Chris, this demonstrated that sports could play a role in bringing people closer together:

Chris: Everybody wanted to be good at it [hockey]. But we couldn't all belong to the team because there were 75 of us there [at school].

Fatima: So did it encourage the other kids that were not on the team to practice hard so they would make it on the team the next year?

Chris: Oh yes. But they weren't out to bump somebody off the team. They did it to learn the skills constantly, especially the skating.

Of course, Chris and Kelly were members of a highly coveted team. It might well be that boys who did not make the team would see things quite differently than Chris and Kelly.

Kelly even went further than Chris in stating his belief that although this hockey experience brought all of the boys at school closer together, it seemed to have created even more special bonds among team members:

Up to that point [the introduction of the Black Hawks hockey team at Pelican Lake IRS], because of unknown factors, we were sort of alone and we stayed to ourselves. But once we started playing on the team, we had teammates. I can always lean on or talk to one of my teammates about things. Things like if anyone was bullying me. Without knowing perhaps that we were doing it, we built a bond.

Chris and Kelly kept in touch with most of the team members after their time in residential school. These bonds, forged during their formative years, clearly have had a lasting impact on both survivors.

Interestingly, some Aboriginal youth showed a form of resistance in school despite their participation in sports, revealing that sports did not always lead to assimilation as was intended by their schooling. Kelly describes his experience further in the following passage:

One of the things we kept quiet about [at school] is our hunting instinct. We still had our skills to hunt and so on Saturdays we would do that, we used to make slingshots...on the Saturdays that the supervisor would tell us that we had two free hours, we would go hunting for partridges. We would shoot them, build a fire, cook, and eat them. Even if we caught fish, we would eat them in the bush.

#### 4.4.4 Different Understanding of Sport Later in Life

Kelly developed an understanding of the health benefits of sports and recreation over time and found it important to continue being involved with sports after his time in school. To Kelly, sports are critical components of a strong healthy community and are important for individual and community development. He also recognizes the health benefits resulting from participating in sports and recreation. To Kelly, sports are a vital part of the overall wellbeing of a people:

In order for us to build healthy communities, strong leadership, strong people, healthy people, we need to do sports and we need recreation. We have to have people go to the gym and work out if they're stressed out after coming home from work. And nourishment – we've never talked about that before. Our kids are so accustomed to eating pop and chips, and I spoke up and said that we have to get away from that. Where do you think diabetes and high blood pressure came from?

His advocacy work within Aboriginal communities further demonstrates his strong belief in the importance of sports and recreation. However, Kelly explained that a lot of work still needs to be done: “Nowadays, when I address recreation and its merits, like how it gives you a better life, I realize that this is an unfamiliar conversation for

many people.” He links the root of this problem back to his residential school experience and the lack of understanding about the important role that sports and recreation can play in improving one’s health and wellbeing, and how Aboriginal students generally are still not encouraged to take part in sports and recreation.

Interestingly, and despite the high level of importance Chris attached to hockey during his time in residential school, he did not seem to place the same level of importance on it later in life. To illustrate this, when asked about his level of involvement in sports after his time in residential school, Chris explained that he was not involved in sports at any level, not even as recreation. He expressed that when it came to sports, he “wasn’t geared towards it, it wasn’t [his] thing anymore” and that he “moved on to do more mature things with his life.”

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Tara Leigh McHugh, “Physical Activity Experiences of Aboriginal Youth,” *Native Studies Review*, 20, no. 1 (2011), 7-26; Tara Leigh McHugh, “An Exploration of the Meanings of Sport to Urban Aboriginal Youth: A Photovoice Approach,” *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 5, no. 3 (2013), 291-311; Heather Castleden, Theresa Garvin, and Huu-ay-aht First Nation, “Modifying Photovoice for Community-Based Participatory Indigenous Research,” *Social Science & Medicine* 66, no. 6 (2008), 1393-1405.

<sup>2</sup> Pranee Liamputtong, *Researching the Vulnerable* (London, UK: Sage, 2007), 721.

<sup>3</sup> Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 1995), 23.

<sup>4</sup> Liamputtong, *Researching the Vulnerable*, 143.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 724.

<sup>6</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London, UK: Zed Books Ltd, 1999), 119-122.

<sup>7</sup> Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, *Pelican Lake Indian Residential School (Sioux Lookout, Ontario) Photo Album*. Algoma University, 63.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Auger, *Indian Residential Schools in Ontario* (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, ON: Nishnawbe Aski Nation, 2005), 93.

<sup>9</sup> Donald Wilshere, “The Experiences of Seven Alumni who Attended Shingwauk Residential School as Children 1929-1964” (PhD diss., Lakehead University, 1999), 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>12</sup> Janice Forsyth, “From Assimilation to Self-Determination: The Emergence of J. Wilton Littlechild’s North American Indigenous Games, 1763-1997” (Master’s Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> The photo was retrieved from the Jan Eisenhardt Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, Western University, London, Ontario.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the data that was presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

#### 5.2 Discussion

As outlined in Chapter 2, sports were introduced to the residential schools to help instill discipline and obedience among the students. However, in this study, I attempt to analyze this idea further. My interviews with Chris and Kelly suggest that residential school hockey, and sports generally at these institutions, are best understood as a form of what Andrew Woolford called “regulated desire.”<sup>1</sup>

Regulated desire refers to the self-monitoring practices that incorporate elements of “fun” to keep people engaged and invested in their own transformation. Organized sport fits that description. The training regimes, the record books, and the monitoring of diet and sleep patterns are just some of the ways that people are pulled into monitoring their own behaviour, and these practices are linked to ideas about broader society, such as notions about progress and development. Thus, regulated desire was an important aspect of the residential school system since the underlying tenet of these institutions (all schools really) was that the students were supposed to learn how to assimilate into Canadian society and then keep up their acculturation process after they left school. It is also an important concept for understanding residential school sports because many of the students remember these activities as being “fun”, which suggests that they were positive and unproblematic elements of their schooling experience. This thesis complicates that

simplistic framing. While Chris and Kelly enjoyed their sporting experiences at school, and sports provided positive memories for them, we must still recognize that any understanding of residential school sports cannot be divorced from the system in which they were embedded – a system that aimed for assimilation.

The Sioux Lookout Black Hawks' 1951 hockey tour was a highly unusual event. Indian Affairs rarely supported anything that required more money beyond its already meager investments. However, 1951 was different. The Black Hawks came along at the same time as the 1951 changes to the *Indian Act* were legislated, creating a perfect opportunity to promote the updated *Act*. An important element of the *Act* was the winding down of the residential school system and the off-loading of residential school students into the public school system. The 1951 tour was thus a political project aimed at promoting Aboriginal assimilation into mainstream society to non-Aboriginal people. The images of young Aboriginal boys having fun while playing hockey – the quintessential Canadian sport – would convey messages about their ability to fit in better than any interview with a government official talking about policy goals ever could.

The media helped to heighten the uniqueness of the event. Apart from the number of articles written about the tour, the way in which the stories were told was important since they indicated the meaningfulness of the broader goals that lay at the heart the tour. At one level, they were stories about boys playing hockey. But at another, deeper level, they were stories about how sport and physical education were being used as tools to aid in the program of assimilation. Both were messages that the broader public would have understood and appreciated. Thus, the way in which the media reported on the tour created an unproblematic framework for understanding what was going on. This was



more than just a bantam aged team playing hockey: this was how Aboriginal youth could be assimilated into Canadian culture – through sports, and hockey specifically – providing another reason for Canadians to be proud of their game. Never was there any mention in the press of what was being taken away from the young players: their language, culture, and family. Nor, of course was there any discussion about the mental, emotional, or physical abuse they endured (these stories would come much, much later, in the 1990s). The media instead suggested that the Black Hawks were being given something more than what they had – a better way of life, celebrated through hockey. All of the newspapers covering the hockey tour represented the Black Hawks as a unique and especially positive showcase of Aboriginal achievement stemming from the residential school system, where there were few stories of positive achievements to be found. Thus, the media played a key role in suggesting that residential school sports, and especially hockey, was the best way to teach Aboriginal students the values and skills they needed to become successful members of society. Even more to the point, hockey was framed as a critical component supporting efforts to assimilate Aboriginal youth into broader Canadian culture.

The media representations also reinforced assumptions about white cultural superiority and, therefore, Aboriginal cultural inferiority, which lay at the heart of the residential school system. The media repeatedly suggested, through the story of the Black Hawks, that the residential schools were doing a good job of assimilating the youth and that the youth were eagerly absorbing the lessons they were learning at school and whenever they were away on school trips (the media also never mentioned how often they went on such tours). However, these conclusions were always made on behalf of the

youth. Not once did the media present the story from the Black Hawks' – the students' – point of view. What they thought, felt, and understood to be happening was missing from all media accounts. Instead, journalists sought the input and opinions of team coaches and government officials, even when the subject was meant for the Black Hawks, such as what the hockey tour and sporting experiences meant to them, how much fun they were having, or how the boys were enjoying their trip – topics that were well suited for youthful feedback. In other instances, there was no apparent speaker except for the journalist, who responded on behalf of the students. However, more than sixty five years later, it is clear that being a member of the Black Hawks, and being on the 1951 tour (or being left behind in Chris's case) left the Black Hawks with indelible memories.

Some of those memories are positive, according to Kelly and Chris. Sports helped them to build relationships that would sustain them through their time in school. Both Chris and Kelly describe how hockey brought the team members closer together and how it helped to foster a sense of community at Pelican Lake IRS. They did not mention any other “thing” that cultivated this sense of brotherhood – there was almost no mention of girls being connected to this sense of community. Hockey created a sense of camaraderie among the boys, fostering a sense of belonging and trust that neither Chris nor Kelly remember being there before the Black Hawks were established. Some of those friendships lasted long after their school days were over.

Hockey thus became a very important feature for nearly everyone at Pelican Lake IRS. The male students, like Chris and Kelly, placed a high level of importance on their participation in hockey and in sports generally. The high level of attention and investment that Indian residential school staff and officials placed on the Black Hawks hockey team

sparked their interest and kept them involved in hockey, so much so that Chris and Kelly believed the lessons they learned on the ice were more valuable than the lessons they learned in the classroom.

One of the lessons they learned was the importance of winning. Chris and Kelly were not alone in that regard. Winning in sports is a common thread in literary accounts of residential school experiences. Chris and Kelly's perspectives reinforce what is said in those accounts. For instance, Basil Johnston's *Indian School Days*, along with Richard Wagamese's *Indian Horse*, both focus a great deal on organized sport, especially hockey, as an important part of their characters' residential school experience. Johnston's book is based to some extent on the author's personal experience at Spanish Indian Residential School, located near Spanish, Ontario, while Wagamese's book is a work of non-fiction that focuses on an Indian residential school in a remote northern part of Ontario. There were many instances in *Indian Horse* where Saul, the main character in the book, used hockey as a way of showing off his skills to those who belittled him, mocked him, and tried to make him feel ashamed of being Indian. In one passage, Saul says, "My teammates had wanted me to drop my gloves and start throwing punches. [But] we pushed ourselves to excel, to show them that the game belonged to us too. So we were champions, and they wrote about us in all the newspapers."<sup>2</sup> These small, symbolic victories meant everything to the students.

The point in discussing the two novels is that they help to explain the importance that former students placed on hockey, and the meanings they associated with those sporting experiences, making it easier to understand why students like Chris and Kelly did not take kindly to losing. Sports were often used by Aboriginal peoples as a way of

demonstrating to the rest of society who they truly were.<sup>3</sup> While the school administrators introduced sports into the residential schools for assimilative purposes (as shown in the newspapers), Aboriginal youth, in fact, used sport, especially hockey for males, as an avenue to break stereotypes that depicted Aboriginal peoples as savages, uncivilized, lazy, and unintelligent. Even if nothing else in their lives changed from their involvement in sport, they believed their prowess on the ice would help dispel those myths.

Another lesson that Chris and Kelly learned was that sports could be used as a way to survive the harsh conditions in which they found themselves. In that sense, sports were much more than “fun and games.” This finding helps to build our understanding of the sporting experiences in residential schools beyond merely being a positive experience. Although Chris and Kelly enjoyed participating in sport, and definitely referred to it as fun, the way in which they described their time at residential school, and later at Sault Ste. Marie Technical and Commercial High School, made it clear that sport was an important ameliorating activity that helped them deal with the mental and emotional struggles they faced on a daily basis. The literature on sports and recreation clearly indicates that vigorous physical activity can greatly improve one’s physical, mental, and emotional health. However, in order to fully understand the meanings and the level of importance students placed on their sporting experiences in school, we must recognize that within the context of residential schools, mental health and wellbeing is linked to basic survival. This is different than how the benefits of sport and physical activity are talked about for the general, non-Aboriginal population.

Whereas Chris and Kelly had regular access to a number of sports at residential school, when they graduated to high school, the opposite was true. Thus, integration into

the public school system did not mean integration into sports. In Sault Ste. Marie, Chris and Kelly found themselves marginalized from formal opportunities to play organized sports. Travel to and from school meant Aboriginal students staying at the residence at Shingwauk IRS did not have as many opportunities to participate in sports, and when they did find opportunities, they were actively discouraged from joining organized sports because school officials were concerned their sports participation would detract from their studies. What was even more frustrating for Chris and Kelly was that although classroom learning was said to be more important than sports participation, Aboriginal students were still not being adequately educated in the public high school system; both Kelly and Chris were frustrated about not being adequately prepared for post-secondary learning.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Woolford, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 159-166.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Wagamese, *Indian Horse: A Novel* (Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 2012), 145.

<sup>3</sup> John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 60.

## Chapter 6

### Summary, Conclusions and Future Recommendations

#### 6.1 Summary

The TRC highlights the important role that sports played in the residential school system and outlines, through the 94 Calls to Action, the role that sports can have in the reconciliation process. Despite the known significance that sports and recreation played within the residential school system, there have not been any studies conducted to understand those sporting experiences from the perspectives of those who were directly affected by them: the students. In fact, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, the voices of Aboriginal peoples who were directly affected by the residential school system were excluded from media reporting and official school documents. This has left us with an incomplete understanding of those experiences and how those experiences affected the students, and their communities, later in life.

This study helps to fill that gap in the literature by moving beyond the point of view of the local school administrators at Pelican Lake IRS and incorporating the perspectives of the students into the dialogue on sports and recreation in residential schools. This will help provide a richer historical account of the sporting experiences in residential schools, particularly at Pelican Lake IRS.

The study focused on the sporting experiences of the Black Hawks, especially how two of those members incorporated sports and recreation into their lives and the meanings they made of those sporting experiences during their time in residential school and afterwards. Additionally, this study aimed to contribute to the broader dialogue on

sports and reconciliation. A critical element of achieving reconciliation is collecting the truth about the residential school legacy and as such, the last aim of this study is to give back to Aboriginal peoples and communities by sharing their stories and contributing to a broader dialogue on sports and recreation within the residential school system.

## 6.2 Conclusions

Most of the literature on sports and recreation in residential schools examines this topic from administrative points of view. The TRC brings forward how participation in sports, particularly hockey, was often a bright spot during a dark and painful time for many students. While the federal government, churches, and school officials used hockey and other sports for assimilative purposes, it seems to have played a cathartic role for students who went to residential school and lived in an environment that aimed to suppress Aboriginal identity. Sports and recreation were something that students enjoyed and something that helped them to survive school and get them through the trauma that they endured.

Through the discussions with Kelly and Chris, it became evident that students at Pelican Lake IRS, specifically males, were involved in sports to varying degrees. Students who possessed certain qualities and skills were selected to play in organized sports like hockey, while others were excluded from those opportunities. However, the varying degrees of involvement in sports was not only between team members and other students, it was also found among different team members. For example, although both research participants, Kelly and Chris, were members of the Black Hawks hockey team at Pelican Lake IRS and enjoyed their experiences on the team, their level of involvement on the team was different. This occurred as a result of external factors beyond their

control (such as the school administration making decisions on their behalf). The level of involvement of these kids shaped their perceptions later in life. While Kelly remained heavily involved in sports after completing his formal education, Chris withdrew from sports completely.

Moreover, Kelly and Chris created meanings out of their experiences that were not in line with the assumptions that were made and reinforced by the media representations of the team and the school administration. While the students were introduced to sports for assimilative purposes, they seemed to use those sporting opportunities and created meanings of their own that resembled various forms of resistance instead of the original intended purpose of assimilation. It is through these new meanings that students sought refuge in hockey and sports in the hostile and dark environments they lived in. While the media represented these sporting opportunities as wholly positive experiences for the youth, as it enabled them to integrate to Canadian society and advance socially and culturally, Kelly and Chris, found these sporting opportunities positive because they used them for individual, communal, and social development and in a sense, strengthened their Aboriginal identity because it brought them closer to one another and allowed them to confide in one another. Through their participation in sports, Aboriginal students began to create bonds that lasted even past their residential school days. Moreover, students used their sporting experiences as an opportunity to be good at something and to prove their worth to others when the environments around them were constantly bringing them down and suppressing their Aboriginal identity.



While the TRC's discussion on the positives of sports in the residential school system is correct, this study contributes to that knowledge by looking beyond the binary of whether sports were a positive or negative experience and providing a more thorough analysis of those experiences. Additionally, this study attempted to understand how students transformed the meanings that were attached to these sporting activities in order to survive the harsh school environments that they endured. This distinction is important because it takes into account the students' accounts about the positive sporting experiences they had in residential school, but it also contextualizes these accounts within the rigid school environments they lived in and the difficult life situations they endured, thus offering a more complete understanding of their sporting experiences.

Although the TRC provides a definition for what reconciliation means, it also recognizes that reconciliation could mean different things to different people, communities, and organizations, and it can be individual and communal. Chris and Kelly both agree that the first few critical aspects of the reconciliation process involve repairing damaged relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians by making formal apologies and recognizing the history that Aboriginal peoples faced, and continue to face, in Canada. Essentially, at the heart of reconciliation is "truth". Relating this to the sporting experiences of Chris and Kelly, taking a critical look at students' accounts and including sports and recreation in residential schools in the broader dialogue is thus one of the important steps towards reconciliation. However, what follows after is of equal importance. The apologies and sharing the truth must then be followed through with concrete actions that will lead to evident societal changes and restoring and maintaining of respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The

TRC's Calls to Action, which were discussed in Chapter 2, is an important starting point towards reconciliation.

While keeping Chris and Kelly's stories in mind, sports clearly played, and continues to play, an important role in the lives of Aboriginal peoples and provides various benefits. Moving forward, reconciliation in sport could essentially mean promoting and providing equal sporting opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and communities that will foster a sense of pride and success in Aboriginal peoples and communities. Thus, these sporting opportunities can be used to revitalize Indigenous cultures and languages, while also providing health, and social benefits.

### 6.3 Future Recommendations

While research on sports and recreation in residential schools is slowly growing, there is a lot of work that still needs to be done to fully understand the sporting experiences of residential school survivors. One way would be to collect personal accounts of other Aboriginal students who participated in organized sport in other residential schools. This will help build a richer historical account of the sports and recreational in residential schools.

Additionally, the TRC, which published its findings on the residential school system in a series of reports in 2015, calls attention to how sports participation, especially hockey, was often a bright spot during a dark and painful time for many students. However, the majority of the TRC's discussions on residential school sports and recreation focus on male sporting experiences. The same silence can be found in the scholarly literature. Existing knowledge indicates that Aboriginal female students received different or fewer sport and recreational opportunities than males did in

residential schools. As such, another recommendation I would make is to investigate the female sport and recreational opportunities and experiences at Pelican Lake IRS and in other residential schools from the students' perspectives.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Ethics



Western  
Research

Research Ethics

**Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board  
NMREB Annual Continuing Ethics Approval Notice**

**Date:** January 03, 2017

**Principal Investigator:** Prof. Janice Forsyth

**Department & Institution:** Health Sciences\Kinesiology, Western University

**NMREB File Number:** 107488

**Study Title:** More than sports and games: Interviews with the Sioux Lookout Blackhawks hockey team, 1948-1970

**NMREB Renewal Due Date & NMREB Expiry Date:**

Renewal Due -2017/12/31

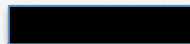
Expiry Date -2018/01/20

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed the Continuing Ethics Review (CER) form and is re-issuing approval for the above noted study.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), Part 4 of the Natural Health Product Regulations, the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA, 1990), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

  
Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair

Ethics Officer: Erika Basile \_\_\_ Katelyn Harris \_\_\_ Nicole Kaniki  Grace Kelly \_\_\_ Vikki Tran \_\_\_ Karen Gopaul \_\_\_

## Appendix 2 – Photo Elicitation Session Guide

Photo Elicitation Session Guide
<p>Most of these images are captured from your Tour to Ottawa and Toronto, but feel free to discuss your experiences with the Black Hawks even outside this specific trip.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please guide me through these pictures of the Black Hawks, what memories do you have of these photos?</li><li>• Have you seen these photos before? Or do you have record of them?</li><li>• Where are you in any of these photos?</li><li>• Do you hold any special meaning for these images and memories that the images carry? What are they?</li></ul>

## Appendix 3 – Semi-Structured Interview Session Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Session Guide
<p><b>Introductory Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where are you from originally? (I.e. which reserve)</li><li>• How old are you?</li><li>• What do you do for a living now?</li><li>• How old were you when you were admitted to Pelican Lake Residential School?</li><li>• What years did you attend Pelican Lake IRS?</li><li>• For how many years did you play on the Black Hawks?</li><li>• Were you on the tour to Toronto and Ottawa?</li></ul> <p><b>Sports at Pelican Lake IRS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Were there other school activities or sports, besides hockey, that you participated in?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ If so, what are they?</li></ul></li><li>• Were there any other groups at the school (school band, other clubs) that got to travel and compete? Or was the Black Hawks the only group who did?</li><li>• Did the Black Hawks team start while you were already at Pelican Lake or did it already exist when you were admitted there?</li><li>• It is reported in the newspapers that students at Pelican Lake did not know how to skate before the Black Hawks team was started in the late 1940's.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Is your experience on the Black Hawks your earliest exposure to hockey?</li><li>○ Did you know how to skate before joining the Black Hawks team?</li><li>○ Did you know how the game worked?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ If yes to any of above, how did you know about it (i.e. played on reserve, heard adults talking about it, heard about it on radio?)</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>

- Did your school have a radio?
  - If yes:
    - Were you allowed to listen to Hockey Night in Canada?
    - Was listening to the radio a privilege or was it accessible to all students?
    - Did girls also listen to this program?
- How were you selected to play on the team? (Were there try-outs?)
- What did hockey mean to you at the time?
- Was playing hockey important to you at the time?
  - Why/why not?
- How would you describe your experience on the team? Do you have positive/negative memories?
  - Did you enjoy practices and games?
- How were the hockey players treated compared to other students at the school? Did members of the Black Hawks receive special privileges? (I.e. better food, health care, exemption from chores, days off to train?)
- When did practices take place?
- What did you learn from your time on the team? How did you use those lessons for life after school?
- What is your best memory from your time on the team?

#### **Relationships:**

- Describe your relationship with other students who weren't on the team, did your relationship change after you were selected to be on the team?
- What did other students think of the hockey players?
  - Did you face any hostilities from those kids?
  - Were other kids jealous of you for being on the team?
- What about your relationship with your team members?
  - What was your relationship like after the school was shut down or after you went separate ways?
  - Did you keep in touch?
- How did you feel about your opposition?
  - Did opposing teams call you names or treat you with hostility?
- How did other coaches, spectators treat you when you played against non-Native teams?
  - Were any of the crowds hostile? Were there any fights in the crowds?

#### **Coaches:**

- How would you describe your memory of your coaches?
- How did the coaches respond to athletic injuries? Did you ever feel pressured to play through injuries?
- Did your coaches encourage you to be tough? Was anyone teased for not being tough enough?
- The newspapers reported that the Black Hawks played a 'gentlemanly' and "clean"

game and had so few penalties charges against them. Is this true? Was your team as gentlemanly as the papers suggest? Did your coaches tell you to go easy on the roughness for these exhibition matches?

- If the emphasis on gentlemanly conduct was an exaggeration, tell me about your reach experience of hockey- did you and your teammates ever get into fights in training and competition outside that tournament? Did your coaches encourage you to be physical? Did they ever tell you to deliberately injure another player?

#### **Tour to Ottawa and Toronto in 1951:**

- What was your reaction to the news of the tour?
  - Were you excited about travelling to the capitals?
- Did you enjoy your time on this tour?
- Did you feel privileged for having your team sponsored to go on this hockey tour and visit all the sights you went to?
- During the tour, there were a lot of prominent figures that attended your games, like the minister of health and other government officials. Did you know who those people were at the time?

#### **Publicity:**

- Were you aware of the press coverage your team was receiving at the time?
  - If so, what was your reaction to the publicity?
  - Did this publicity change the way you thought about yourself?
    - Were you more confident in your skills?
    - Did you feel more proud of yourself?
    - Did it encourage you to stay in sports?
    - Or no effect?
- Did reporters ever approach you to interview you?
- Did your team's progress and success affect your perspective on your overall experience at the school?
  - Did it make being at the school more tolerable?
- Were the people in your home community proud of your athletic accomplishments on this team and particularly on the tour (because the team was very successful)?

#### **Reflections:**

- Based on your sporting experience, would you say hockey brings different groups of people together in a friendly way? Or, do divisions between people become more pronounced in hockey?
- It was documented that there was a lot of disobedience, misbehavior and truancy by the students at the school. But the introduction of sports, specifically the Black Hawks team was the reason why students became more obedient and better behaved.
  - What do you think of this statement?

#### **After Pelican Lake IRS:**

- How was your hockey experience at Shingwauk IRS?

- Who was on your team? Aboriginal students only?
- Tell me about your experience with basketball at Shingwauk
- Were there any other sports that you participated in besides hockey and basketball?
- What did you do after leaving school?
- Did sports continue to be a part of your life later on? (I.e. coaching, teaching, playing professionally)
  - Explain

**Misc.:**

- What are some of your favorite memories at the school?
- How would you compare your experience of being on this hockey team with the rest of your school experience?
- Describe your hardest defeat on the ice and your best victory.
- What kind of hockey player would you describe yourself as?
  - Were there any professional hockey players that you looked up to and tried to mimic in their style?
- Do you think the game of hockey has changed over the years?
  - Describe your thoughts on this
- Did girls play any sports?
  - If yes,
    - What were they?
    - Did they have teams?
    - Did they get to compete against other female teams from other residential school or towns?
- Tell me about the Little NHL
  - Why was it started?
  - Who started it?
  - Explain further
- What did you think about the apology Minister Harper made in 2008?

**Conclusion:**

- Before we conclude, is there anything else that you would like to add or stories you would like to share that we didn't get to?
- Would you like me to mail you a typed transcript of this interview for your reference and validation?
  - If so, please mail it back within two weeks
- In the case that I run into more questions or need some clarifications, is it okay if I call you back to talk over the phone again?

## Curriculum Vitae

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Degrees:** The University of Western Ontario  
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**Contributions:**  
Forsyth, Janice and Archer, Josh. (2014). Fred Simpson Is No Longboat: Public Memory and the Construction of Historical Knowledge. *Sport History Review*, 45, 37-58. (contribution: data collection)