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RUNNING FOR INTEGRATION: CCNY AND THE PROMISE OF INTERRACIAL COOPERATION THROUGH BASKETBALL

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By Arthur Banton

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RUNNING FOR INTEGRATION: CCNY AND THE PROMISE OF INTERRACIAL COOPERATION THROUGH BASKETBALL

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

Dr. Susan Curtis

Chair

Dr. William Harper

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Dr. Cheryl Cooky

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Date

RUNNING FOR INTEGRATION: CCNY AND THE PROMISE OF INTERRACIAL
COOPERATION THROUGH BASKETBALL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

Arthur Banton

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2016

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

This dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and mother Yvonne Zenobia Evans Banton who passed away in 2015 during the completion of this project.

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

- The Lord's Prayer
Matthew 6:9-13

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In 2015, my mother unexpectedly passed away. For a moment, I felt like stopping because there was no need to continue. After the immediate pain subsided and my thoughts had some clarity, I started reflecting on the moments in the hospital when she introduced me in her final days to medical personnel as her son Dr. Banton. In

retrospect, uncertain of the future, she suspected these moments might be her only opportunity to utter those words and introduce me as such. As an educator with nearly fifty years of experience, I also reflected our countless conversations about education. When I first thought about pursuing a doctorate degree she encouraged me to speak my uncle, Dr. Melvin Evans about his journey for guidance. His experience and my mother's constant reminder about the importance of education and reflections on her pursuits of graduate study was certainly an inspiration and reminder to complete the job. As a result, I am able to write this acknowledgment because of those reflections and the investment of others in this endeavor.

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Department of Political Science has created an award in her memory. I thank them for eternalizing a star whose light was just beginning to glow.

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ABSTRACT

Banton, Arthur. Ph.D., Purdue University, August 2016. *Running for Integration: CCNY and The Promise of Interracial Cooperation Through Basketball*. Major Professor: Susan Curtis.

In 1951, an investigation of gambling in college basketball by New York district attorney, Frank Hogan, ultimately led to the arrest of more than 30 players from seven schools, including six players from the City College of New York (CCNY). Just a year earlier in 1950, CCNY became the first racially integrated basketball team to win the national championship; and the only one to win the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and National Invitational Tournament (NIT) championships in the same season. Unfortunately, their accomplishments were overshadowed by the gambling scandals.

The intention of this project is tell the story about that CCNY team, yet to be addressed in scholarship. How these young men arrived at CCNY and what prepared them to compete academically and athletically in an integrated environment many years before the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case that dismantled de jure segregation in schools. Existing literature interrogates the scandals, but the voices of these young men and what they accomplished is absent from the narrative. These student-athletes from various racially

and social-economically segregated neighborhoods, revolutionized the game with their up-tempo and kinematic style of play (known as the “city game”), accomplished the vision that Dr. Martin Luther King reflected in his I have a Dream speech thirteen years later – the promise of interracial cooperation.

In order for these players to come together as unit, the culture to which they functioned had to be tolerant and more accepting of people from different backgrounds. With that said, a significant portion of my research examines the culture of the schools these players attended, the neighborhoods they resided, the coach that embraced them and their style of play and finally the City of New York which became the epicenter for racial tolerance and ultimately integration.

This project follows the interpretive path by such scholars as Gerald Early, Brian Ward, and George Lipsitz, who have informed scholars in American cultural history to see youth culture as a serious site of social innovation and who have argued that scholarship on the African American experience can greatly benefit from the study of moments when positive interracial activity occurred. The championship team at CCNY in 1950, I argue permits us to do both.

INTRODUCTION

**RUNNING FOR INTEGRATION: CCNY AND THE PROMISE OF
INTERRACIAL COOPERATION THROUGH BASKETBALL**

As the tenure of the first unofficial basketball President draws to a close, it's important to reflect how the game impacted his life beyond the field of competition. In *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* Barack Obama reminisced on his adolescent years and what drew him to basketball, "At least on the Basketball court I could find a community of sorts, with an inner life all its own. It was there that I would make my closest white friends, on turf where blackness couldn't be a disadvantage. And it was there I would meet other blacks close my age who had begun to trickle into the islands [Hawaii], teenagers whose confusion and anger would help shape my own."¹

President Obama's experience with basketball underscores the social impact of the game on masses of boys and girls. Basketball was not only an endeavor for athletic competition but a vehicle for social integration. In the case of Obama, basketball helped formulate his identity and gave him the confidence to fellowship with other young men and build social networks that contributed to his professional accomplishments. After World War II, basketball became one of the most visible and accessible athletic endeavors to an educational opportunity. No team sport has a culture of inclusivity,

¹ Barack Obama, *Dreams from my Father: A story of race and Inheritance* (New York, New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004) 80.

specifically for African Americans, like basketball. More importantly, as Obama's narrative suggests, basketball provided many young men a vehicle to succeed beyond the field of competition.²

In 1950, the City College of New York (CCNY) became the first racially integrated basketball team to win the national championship which included the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and National Invitational Tournament (NIT) championships in the same season. Unfortunately, their accomplishment was marred the following year by a national gambling scandal that resulted in the apprehension of more than 30 players from seven institutions, including seven from CCNY. Though players from other programs (including Kentucky, Long Island University, and Bradley) were implicated and faced stiff penalties from the NCAA, it was CCNY who suffered the most severe consequences that resulted in the demotion of the athletic program from the highest level of intercollegiate competition at Division I to the lowest level or what is currently known as Division III.³

Unfortunately, lost in the scandal was the significance of their championship and the individual accomplishments by the players and their coach Nat Holman. For the first time in history, on a visible platform to a national audience, an interracial group of young men (blacks, whites, and Jews) were working together in a meritocracy to achieve a common goal. This dissertation *Running for Integration: CCNY and the promise of*

² Alexander Wolff, *The Audacity of Hoop: Basketball and the Age of Obama* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2016) 2.

³ Marty Burns, "First the Double, then the Trouble," *Sports Illustrated*, 3 April 2000:1; Unlike Division I, Division III schools do not provide its student-athletes with grants or athletic scholarships based on their athletic prowess. For more information about NCAA classifications and its history see the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) at NCAA.org. <<http://www.ncaa.org/about/who-we-are/membership/divisional-differences-and-history-multidivision-classification>>.

interracial cooperation through basketball interrogates New York City youth culture, and how it fostered a climate of integration that enabled this team to accomplish this historical feat – a conversation yet addressed in scholarship.

In this dissertation the operative word that drives this narrative is integration as opposed to desegregation, which in a racial context is the antithesis to segregation which has a more distinctive definition. According to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, segregation is defined as “the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.” As a result, desegregation can be interpreted as the creation of a facility/space that is not exclusive to any racial group; however, that does not necessarily entail social inclusion into a particular group. In other words, a school building that previously did not accept blacks, must now do so becomes desegregated but that does not necessarily mean they would be embraced or befriended in the social spaces occupied by a different racial group. These collective individual actions create an atmosphere that becomes cultural if practiced with consistency.⁴

Integration, in a racial context according to *Merriam-Webster* is defined as “incorporation as equals into a society or an organization of individuals of different groups.” Though integration is easily defined it can be difficult to measure. However, this dissertation will effectively demonstrate that CCNY fostered a culture in multiple aspects

⁴ “Segregation,” *Merriam-Webster*, 25 June 2016
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/segregation>>.

of student life that enabled its basketball team to immediately succeed and ultimately serve as a model of interracial cooperation.⁵

CULTURE AND TERMS

New York City during the postwar era like the rest of the nation was transitioning from WWII in which more than 418,000 American lives were lost and brought the nation out of the great depression. But New York City was also adjusting to a wave of black migration from the south and Puerto Ricans from the Caribbean that would alter the city's demographics, change communities, schools and the political landscape. 1950, the year CCNY won the national championship and cemented their place in history was also the last in which New York City public schools reached the peak of racial diversity. It would become the last year of a precipitous decline that would continue every decade thereafter. This information is important because these public schools were the feeder to the City College of New York which had an impact on their demographic shift. CCNY was open to all New York City residents whether they attended public, private, or parochial schools but its mission was to provide working-class families access to an academically-rigorous education. The requirements for acceptance was simple, applicants had to have a high school average of 75 and pass the rigorous entrance exam; some students who fell short of the requirements were granted conditional status to attend evening classes and demonstrate their worthiness before transferring to the regular day session.⁶

⁵ "Integration," Merriam-Webster, 25 June 2016
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/integration>>.

The student body of CCNY during this time period was reflective of the best and brightest of its public schools. It was racial diversity contingent on the pursuits of the most intellectually gifted. But it was a meritocracy and so the culture of institution was a hub of intellectualism but not absolved of the elements that would plague any coeducational post-secondary institution. There was a difference; there were no residence halls so students commuted largely via public transportation. This greatly impacted campus life and culture. Everyday a majority these students were commuting from their neighborhoods and intercepted by real world antidotes. The lines between asserting their independence and being dependent were certainly blurred and making the transition for some was certainly difficult. For some students commuting was a constant reminder of their ethnic/racial and cosmopolitan identity.

With a generation or two removed from immigrant antecedents. Most of these students attended high schools that reflected some semblance of diversity, either ethnic or racial. There was segregation but mostly economic as opposed to solely racial. At CCNY these students could reinvent their identities to their intellectual pursuits in a space that fostered such a trajectory. For some of these students their ethnic identity was second to their intellectual pursuits. And in some of these spaces these intellectual worlds collided to great debates that would sometimes last for hours. In some cases, days. Images from the Shepard Hall cafeteria in the 1940s demonstrate integration in still one of the racially segregated spaces in our society. CCNY was no means a racial utopia but a model reflective of our constitution and the vision articulated by Dr. Martin Luther King in his 1963 *I have a Dream* speech during the march on Washington.

In 1944, six years before CCNY won its national championship, the University of Utah became the first racially desegregated team to win the national title. That team featured two Japanese American players, Waturu Misaka and Masateru “Tut” Tatsuno. Unfortunately, Misaka and Tatsuno, were still part of a society that did not fully embrace them. Misaka, a reserve point guard born in Odgen Utah, lived in virtual segregation in a part of town that could be best described as a sordid area for vice, adult entertainment, and as a result a high-propensity for crime. He experienced discrimination including being denied service at restaurants even after he led Weber Junior College (Now Weber State University) to two championships prior to attending the University of Utah. The marginalization intensified after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.⁷

Tatsuno, born in San Francisco where his family owned a dry-goods store, was relocated to Topaz War relocation center near Delta, Utah after the President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which effectively placed more than 120,000 Japanese Americans (three-quarters who were American-born citizens or Nisei) whom lived on the west coast into internment camps in California, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah. In 1942, the War Relocation Authority had established the educational leave program which allowed Nisei to leave the camps temporarily for post-secondary schooling. It was under this program that allowed Tatsuno to attend the University of Utah and compete for the Utes.⁸

⁷ Alexander Wolff, “Utah the First Cinderella,” *Sports Illustrated*, 22 March 22, 2010: 2.

⁸ Wendy Ng, *Japanese American Internment During World War II*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002) 1, 47; Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001) 3.

After a successful season in which the Utes finished 18-4 (which concluded with a 46-38 to Kentucky in the NIT) they were invited as a last-minute replacement for the University of Arkansas which suffered a team tragedy and were forced to decline their invitation. Prior to departing to New York City to compete in the NCAA tournament, Tatsuno did not accompany the team on the trip, leaving them with only nine players. The odd number of players effectively left the team without the ideal amount of ten in order to construct practices that adequately reflect real game situations. As a result, one of the four assistant coaches (five in all) had to serve as stand-in so the team could have sufficient preparation for the tournament. According to James Smuin, the son of Dick Smuin who starred on the Utah team from 1943 to 1947, there was a vote either among the players, coaching staff, or administration as to whether they would take either both Misaka and Musano, one of them, or neither one, on account of what is exactly unclear. This position can be largely attributed to the racial bias levied against Japanese Americans which became exasperated as a result of the war and the unwillingness of the coach Vadal Peterson to arouse the sensibilities of whoever might object to their presence.⁹

However, some of the Utah players, note the reason Musano was left behind was on account of budgetary restrictions in which the University could only afford to send nine players to New York. Tatsumi Misaka, Waturu's younger brother offers a diverging and blunt perspective, "I think it was strictly prejudice that he wasn't taken." Regardless of the reason, based on how Misaka was also treated during his time in Odgen and Salt

⁹ Wolff 4; Transcending: The Wat Misaka story, dir. Bruce Allen Johnson and Christine Toy Johnson, 2008. DVD. Reimagined World Entertainment, 2010.

Lake City, prejudice is certainly a viable ally for his absence from competing in the tournament. This certainly raises question about the immersion of Japanese Americans into the fabric of acceptance and the culture beyond the team, underscoring the notion these players were not wholly accepted as student-athletes, representatives of the University, and U.S. citizens. The community which these players lived their lives were certainly desegregated but not integrated.¹⁰

As a result of the lack of inclusion, a plausible explanation, and recognition by the Utah players there was a vote (or conflicting information that suggests otherwise) in regards to the acceptance of their Japanese-American teammates, the CCNY story moves to the center stage and becomes truly the pioneering narrative of inclusion in college basketball and a model for interracial cooperation in our society.

Founded by Dr. James Naismith in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1891, basketball was the end result of a directive by his superiors at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to create an indoor activity that would keep restless adolescent boys (many of whom were first-generation immigrants) engaged and out of mischief during the harsh New England winter months. In many respects, the game served as a tool to reinforce societal structural norms, instill discipline, and build comradery.¹¹

Basketball was created for the participation and entertainment of adolescents, so the incorporation into youth culture played a substantial role in the proliferation and

¹⁰ University of Utah Athletic Department, 2011 Men's Basketball University of Utah Media Guide, Record Book & History (Salt Lake City, Utah: Utah Athletics, 2011) 87; Nielsen Chad, "That's Just How it Was" Continuum (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah), Spring 2010; Wolff, Alexander, "Utah the First Cinderella," Sports Illustrated, 22 March 2010: 4; Transcending: The Wat Misaka story.

¹¹ Bernice Larson Webb, The Basketball Man: James Naismith (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1973) 65; James Naismith, Basketball: It's Origin and Development (New York, NY: Association Press, 1941) 7.

popularity of the sport. New York City during the postwar period was a one of transition for the city's youth. Canteens and social programs aimed at teenagers were created to promote safe spaces of entertainment for this increasingly growing demographic.

Technological inventions such as the jukebox and the 7-inch, 45 RPM¹² record format in sound recordings made music more accessible to the sensibilities and economic realities of teens. Popular music among teenagers was shifting from jazz to bebop to doo-wop (which became the precursor to rock-and-roll). Teenagers, a demographic that always existed but never targeted by companies were now explicitly doing so. This all accrued while New York City public high schools reached the peak of its ethnic and racial diversity in 1950 - four years before public educational institutions were required to desegregate in 1954.

METHODOLOGY

Though this research is largely historical it does intersect and employ some of the ideological approaches utilized in sociology. Phillip Abrams, the late historian-sociologist described the close relationship between history and sociology as both disciplines “seek to understand the puzzle of human agency and both seek to do so in terms of the process of social structuring” as it occurs over a specific time period. As a result, my dissertation demonstrates that culture which is incorporated into commonly used terms like ‘tradition’ was essential to fostering the success of the CCNY team and the individual trajectories of its actors.¹³

¹² RPM – Revolutions per Minute.

¹³ Culture defined by renowned anthropologist Edward Sapir as the social inheritance “in the life of man, material, and spirit.” David G. Mandelbaum, ed. Edward Sapir, Selected Writings in language, culture and

In order to better comprehend this cultural phenomenon, I employed a methodology that encompassed research in conventional archival sources and those in the digital realm. The areas that proved to be quite fruitful were the student archives in the high schools. Some of this information included yearbooks, student newspapers, literary digests, minutes from student council and student government reports, etc. These previously unexplored areas provided a wealth of information that painted several intriguing images to the collective experiences of teens during this transitional and influential time period. School administrators understanding the significance of this project provided unprecedented access. The results outlined in this dissertation are a reflection of those queries. The exploration of these sources underscore why this dissertation is so important. The perspectives of young people were largely documented through the lens of adult narratives and media reports that openly questioned their culture, manners, and apathy to customary norms.

A great deal of research was conducted in New York State-based archives. The process of researching and completing this project would have been extremely challenging if it were not for the availability and accessibility of digitized archival materials and software that enabled me to remotely mine through an incredible amount of data. A task that would be extremely challenging and costly if solely conducted at those physical locations. Conversely, there is still a great deal of material such as those in the high schools that are not digitized and may not be in the foreseeable future. This is yet another reason why this project is so significant and innovative. The exclusivity and

personality (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1949), 308-309; Philip Abrams, Historical Sociology (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), x.

limited access (except to those conducting serious research) is also part of innovation, going beyond what is readily accessible to unearth narratives that are not. Despite continuous advances in digital search engines, the internet is still a wilderness of data yet to be fully explored. Discovering information may be accomplishment but is it as innovative as finding something not in its domain? Innovate thinking could very well be defined in the context of this body of work as finding data not readily accessible and having the wherewithal in succumbing to this reality and seek dated but still effective methods of conducting archival research.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT

The dissertation is significant because it is the first step in recovering the legacies and the accomplishments that have been silenced as a result of the gambling scandal. Those legacies start with the coach whose leadership greatly impacts the culture of the team. This research project is significant because it chronicles the systemic forces which fostered integration and enabled this moment to occur – a point never chronicled in scholarship prior to this dissertation. It also uncovers the individual accomplishments and legacies of the actors directly involved in this historical moment. The coach Nat Holman, one of the original Celtics, was one of the architects of modern basketball. He was a scholar, who authored three books on the subject and dubbed by the press as “Mr. Basketball.” Holman was one of only a few handful of coaches with the stature to appear on the cover of *Newsweek*. He was also instrumental in bringing global credibility to the game by lending his expertise on a series of goodwill tours to Israel, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. In the 1940s, he established a training program for coaches and physical

education instructors in Israel. The program currently housed at the Wingate Institute in Netanya, Israel was renamed after him in his honor. In 1964, Holman was enshrined in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

Holman's contributions to the game were immense and his name might be lost but his legacy remains through the accomplishments of young men he developed into coaches. Red Holzman, who played for CCNY in the 1940s, would win 613 games and two world championships as coach of the New York Knickerbockers. One of his protégés, Phil Jackson, would become a great coach and a master motivator in his own right. Jackson would win eleven world titles, six with the Chicago Bulls and five with the Los Angeles Lakers.

For many people of color, the game was more than just a sport, it was a symbol of ethnic and racial pride. During the 1930s and 1940s in San Francisco, second-generation and Chinese immigrants used basketball not only to transgress the real and imagined borders of segregation but also to establish their gender identity in a society that devalued them. Men competed against non-Chinese opponents with a style that was defense-oriented and placed a premium value on speed. The subtext of their strategy was to exercise their masculinity through athleticism and to neutralize the height advantage of their opponents. Chinese women challenged prejudice by playing more physical when competing against their Caucasian counterparts in their plight to gain respect as women.¹⁴

Established in 1847 as the Free Academy, for decades the City College of New York was the sole public institution of higher education in New York City. From its

¹⁴ Kathleen S. Yep, Outside the Paint (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple, 2009) 3.

inception it admitted people from all different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Since there was no charge for tuition until 1976, it was an institution where a student (the majority who were from working-class backgrounds) could receive an academically-rigorous, post-secondary education with minimal financial burden.¹⁵

Equally impressive is that CCNY was not a powerbroker in intercollegiate athletics. How these players arrived at this institution and what prepared them to function as a unit is multi-layered, complex narrative. CCNY attracted some of the best and brightest students and was affectionately dubbed the “poor man’s Harvard,”¹⁶ making the stories of these young men and what they accomplished even more remarkable.

This dissertation seeks to reclaim that legacy and demonstrate that what these young men accomplished on and off the court would forever impact the role of sport in our society. These young men demonstrated that integration can work in a meritocracy and might be best successful in smaller more concentrated settings without interference but with public support and a clear attainable goal. These young men got a chance to experience winning but also the opportunity to know one another as individuals through interracial socialization – which in the 1940s was still on the periphery of acceptable social norms. In doing so, they were able to voluntarily capitalize on America’s greatest strength – its diversity – before the mandate to integrate in 1954 with the Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

¹⁵ James Traub, City on a Hill: Testing the American Dream at City College (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1994) 8.

¹⁶ Traub 10.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CCNY's accomplishment has largely been contextualized as a footnote in the gambling scandal that were uncovered shortly thereafter. The significance becoming the first racially integrated team to win the championship is overshadowed by the perception of contemporary ideologies informed by the dominant number of black players in professional and the college ranks that blacks have always been embraced and central to the development of the game. There is also a pervasive ideology that racial integration in basketball was uneventful and normative in comparison to professional baseball and football that had either racial clauses and/or gentleman's agreements with team owners that openly prohibited desegregation. Finally, the scandal was egregious, ubiquitous, and a great story that piques the curiosity of our innate attraction and insatiable appetite for dramatic single-sided narratives.

Three texts address CCNY's accomplishment in the context of the gambling scandals, the *Scandals of '51* by Charley Rosen provides an in-depth look at the gambling scandal and the other schools and players involved but largely focuses on the CCNY narrative. *The Game They Played* by Stanley Cohen provides a broader picture of the CCNY players and their backgrounds. However, it does not examine their accomplishment from a social-cultural and racial lens. *Cheating the Spread: Gamblers, Point Shavers, and Game Fixers in College Football and Basketball*, as the title suggests examines the several of the gambling scandals throughout the twentieth century in the two most visible intercollegiate highest-revenue generating sports where these transgressions are most likely to occur.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

In chapter one, *Sowing the seeds of integration*, draws a comparative analysis between the CCNY and the Texas Western College of Mines who is most remembered for winning the national championship in 1966 and serving as the arbiter for racial integration in college basketball. That team had a starting lineup of five black players that competed against an all-white Kentucky team and their morally suspect coach Adolph Rupp. This chapter also addresses the some of the individual and collective styles of play rooted in urban culture that attributed to the success of both CCNY and the Texas Western College of Mines.

The second chapter *an Original Celtic and his pupils* narrates an abbreviated biography of CCNY coach Nat Holman, one of the original Celtics who played a brand of basketball reflective of the inner-city game. A brand of style which relied on speed, precision passing and aggressive drives to the basket. This style of play he implemented as coach was similar to the Celtics style and a departure from other styles of play during that time period. One player who excelled in his system was Bobby Sand, a young man whom Holman would hire as an assistant coach and ultimately assume the responsibility in recruiting the ‘core four;’ a reference to the four most talented freshmen to ever play for CCNY and who would lead the team to its grand slam championship.

The third chapter *the Public School Athletic League (PSAL): Administrative growing pains* explores the New York City Public School Athletic League and its role in fostering interracial cooperation through interscholastic athletics. Formed in 1903, the PSAL is one of the oldest but certainly the largest interscholastic athletic organization in

the United States; this chapter explores the administrative endeavors of the organization from its formation as a private entity to a municipal controlled organization under the auspices of the Board of Education in the 1930s.

The PSAL: Cultivating a sporting culture of equality continues the examination of the athletic league and its basketball endeavors. The chapter also addresses how it aggressively and passively used athletics as a vehicle for racial integration. All of the CCNY players, including Coach Nat Holman attended New York City public schools and competed on varsity programs administered and supervised by the PSAL. This chapter addresses briefly some of those respective high schools and the collective experience of student-athletes.

In chapter five *New York City and the Culture of Integration*, brings into conversation, the role of the city during World War II and the time period immediately thereafter in fostering a culture of racial equality through an emerging youth culture that was transforming American life. New York City (NYC) was no different and in many respects was at center of it. This chapter addresses youth culture in New York City context and some of the advances in technology that contributed to their experience. In many ways, their collective experience which cut across social and economic lines contributed to fostering a culture of racial integration.

One of the areas where teens had an impactful presence was in the high schools. In chapter six, *Culture of Integration: looking in the high schools*, the exploration of youth culture during the war years and the era immediately following continues by examining three high schools the players attended. These high schools were different in a

variety of ways but all of them in their own respective manner prepared their players for a racially integrated culture and basketball team at CCNY.

Building recreational spaces, most notably basketball courts, in the city of New York was a struggle. Nowhere was this more evident than in Harlem. In chapter seven, *Hoops, Harlem, and the Social Integration experiment* the focus shifts to Harlem and the basketball tournament that altered the narrative of basketball. Despite the lack of adequate facilities to meet the demand, Harlem became the epicenter to the development of not only basketball in New York City but also a cultivator of the street game. At least three of the players on the CCNY championship team, including Ed Warner, the first African American to win Most Valuable Player in the National Invitational Tournament, honed their skills on what facilities were available in Harlem which many respects served as training ground for social integration.

The final chapter *A scandal and a shipment of talent to El Paso* briefly discusses the gambling scandal and the impact it had on CCNY and other city campuses. One of the points argued here is the scandal demised college basketball in New York City and initiated a thirty-year exodus of talented players from New York City whom would make their mark on college campuses across the nation including: Kansas, UCLA, Winston-Salem State, and of all places El Paso – home of Texas Western College who was a beneficiary of the sojourn of players out west. Another point addressed here goes to the primary thesis of this dissertation is that CCNY's success demonstrated that racial integration in basketball and in a democratic, transparent society can work if all parties make the investment in accomplishing this goal.

CHAPTER 1

SOWING THE SEEDS OF RACIAL INTEGRATION

One measure of equality in organized athletic competition occurs when a racially-integrated team takes the field. Integrated teams symbolize a meritocracy not only in sports but also in society. In 1950, when CCNY, a racially-integrated basketball team (which had two black players in its starting lineup) won the national championship of college basketball it symbolized and validated that change arrived in college hoops. It validated the idea that black players were just as good as their white counterparts. More importantly, it also noted the two racial groups can co-exist, thrive, and succeed at the highest levels of competition through interracial cooperation. This point was made twice during the 1949-1950 basketball season when CCNY became the only school to win the National Invitational Tournament (NIT) and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) tournament in the same season. CCNY coach Nat Holman started the players that gave them the best chance of winning, a decision that involved a transparent system based on merit not politics. Players were largely assessed on their level of conditioning, skillset, and ability to execute plays during various team sessions. No college team represented equality in basketball like CCNY; for at least two decades prior to winning the championship they fielded racially-integrated teams. If it were not for the unfortunate scandals that transpired afterward, that team would serve a more prominent and visible role in narrative of racial equality in sports; equally important, the

team most-likely remembered as a symbol of racial equality, the 1966 Texas Western College of Mines, may not have won the national championship.

BASKETBALL HOOPS IN CIVIL RIGHTS

It was barely a minute into the game and the University of Kentucky Wildcats were up by a score of 1-0 but what transpired next heightened the level of intensity for the remainder of the game. Texas Western point guard Bobby Joe Hill in the corner of his eye saw his teammate David Lattin alone on the right side of the basket and promptly passed him the ball. Without hesitation or dribbling the ball, Lattin made a two-handed slam dunk through Kentucky player Pat Riley's outstretched arms and into the basket which drew a loud response from the crowd but also momentarily, rattled the Kentucky players. The score was 2-1, Texas Western had the lead and the psychological advantage. Another element of the urban style of basketball officially arrived, and the institutionalized game was never the same.¹⁷

On March 19, 1966, the Texas Western College of Mines (known today as the University of Texas El Paso) at the behest of its coach Don Haskins fielded a starting lineup of five black players – all of whom were from densely-populated urban environments. Their opponent, the University of Kentucky, led by Coach Adolph Rupp, who was seeking his fifth national title, fielded an all-white team. Texas Western won that game by a score of 72-65 and earned their place in history as the first college team to win a national championship with a lineup comprised of entirely of black players.

¹⁷ 1966 NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball Championship, 1966: Texas Western College vs. University of Kentucky, Produced by Thought Equity Motion, 1966. DVD. NCAA on Demand, 2007.

Previous teams had black players but never an entire starting lineup. In 1955, The San Francisco Dons featured three black players; in 1963 Loyola College of Chicago included four black players and finally Texas Western with five players. The game between Texas Western and Kentucky is significant for largely two reasons; first it occurred during the civil rights movement - one year after President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965. The act in many respects outlawed any restrictions legal or otherwise on voting; particularly in districts in the south and otherwise where such tactics were employed. His signature validated and reinforced the notion that African Americans (particularly in the South) were citizens and deserved all the benefits as such; secondly, the contest demonstrated that black student-athletes are equal to their white counterparts and should be extended the same opportunities to compete on the field of play.¹⁸

The game is also noteworthy because both competing institutions were from the south (where football is the sport of most revered) which demonstrated that Southern institutions could field nationally competitive teams. More importantly, the contest occurred during the Civil Rights Movement, which overshadows the accomplishment by the City College of New York in 1950, when it became the first racially-integrated team to win the national championship and provided a formula for success duplicated by Texas Western sixteen years later. Their accomplishment became immortalized by the media attention paid to the fortieth anniversary of the game which was driven by *Glory Road*, a Disney-produced film that unofficially commemorated the moment.

¹⁸ Aram Goudsouzian, King of the Court: Bill Russell and the Basketball Revolution (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2010) 34.

Michael Wilbon, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, categorized the game as a “triumph for racial equality” and recounts the event largely through the memories of University of Maryland head coach, Gary Williams, then a sophomore for the Terrapins who witnessed the game first hand at Cole field house on the University’s College Park campus. In attendance that day with Williams was his teammate, Billy Jones Jr., who was the first African American basketball player at Maryland and the first to integrate the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). Williams and Jones both admitted at the time they did not realize the racial significance of the game they were witnessing until afterward.¹⁹

Apparently at the time neither did the media. Newspapers, which still were a primary source of information consumed by the public, did not necessarily address the historical significance of the game. Both the *El Paso Times* and the *Lexington-Herald* were in Southern towns and general reports of the athletic program might have reflected deference to local culture and customs. In other words, general reporting might have made overt or coded racial references but during the coverage of this contest there was little if any mention of the racial identities of the players and its historical significance. *The El Paso Times* which covered the team throughout the season was obviously in a celebratory mood. The Miners were the National Champions and the city celebrated this accomplishment. *The New York Times* mentioned nothing of race nor historical implications of this event. There was a fleeting mention of the fact that three players on

¹⁹ Wilbon, Michael “A Win for Texas Western, A triumph for equality,” [Washington Post](#), 13, January 2006.

the Texas Western roster were from the city. Conversely, the *Lexington-Herald* took a more somber tone over the loss.²⁰

Located in El Paso, Texas, situated on the Rio Grande River, across the U.S. border from Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, at the far west of Texas, Texas Western College was founded as the State School of Mines and Metallurgy in 1914 and renamed in 1949 as the Texas Western College of the University of Texas before adopting its current name in 1967. Compared to the University of Kentucky (located in Lexington) in a basketball context, there is little comparison in stature between the two programs. Kentucky was the premier program with four NCAA national titles and Texas Western was a school very few people, especially east of the Mississippi, had ever heard of.²¹

This game does not reflect the reality of its imagined significance. The sum of the parts (or the narratives which inform the parts) are worth more than the whole. How the team arrived to this point and how they were able to accomplish what they did is the heart of the story and the one most undervalued. What Texas Western accomplished is unquestionably noteworthy but it overshadows the reality as to why it should be remembered. I argue that the romanticizing of the game or the memory of the game as a showdown between white and black Americans obscure the real reason it should be recognized.

²⁰ Craig Waters, "Frenzy erupts on Campus," *The El Paso Times*, 20 March, 1966, p. 1; Gordon S. White, "Texas Western Tamed Wildcats in NCAA," *The New York Times*, 21 March, 1966, p. 44.

²¹ Lisa Chamberlain, "2 Cities and 4 Bridges where commerce flows," *New York Times*, 28 March, 2007; Flowsheet 1945, *The Texas Western College of Mines Yearbook* (El Paso, Texas: Texas Western College, 1945) 4.

If anything the Texas Western versus Kentucky contest reinforces the color line in sports and overshadows any notions of equality. A starting lineup of five black players defeating a team of white players should not be considered a pivotal moment in the integration of sports. The accomplishment of Texas Western should be recognized for reasons beyond race. First, Texas Western was an independent school and not affiliated at that time with any conference and as a result had to rely upon being selected to the NCAA tournament as an at-large bid. Texas Western also became the only the third independent school to accomplish such a feat at that point. The other two were CCNY (1950) and Loyola of Chicago (1963); Secondly, as a result of not being affiliated with a conference and not being in a major metropolitan area like its two predecessors, Texas Western was allowed to succeed with minimal criticism as a racially-integrated team in the south. This could have certainly been a distraction negotiating their success. Thirdly, it validated elements of street ball or the city game even though their actual style of play was methodical and at a tempered pace that commensurated with the style preferred by many white coaches. The validation of street ball is manifested through the presence of black players and their assumed primitive, undisciplined, and athletic style of play (even though Texas Western played a more methodical and pedestrian approach); but this team was athletic and that athleticism was demonstrated with their man-to-man defense which contributed to the Wildcats poor shooting performance. Conversely, Kentucky played more zone defense (players covering a particular area as opposed to an individual) which enabled the diminutive Texas Western guards Bobby Joe Hill (5'10") and Willie Worsley

(5'6") to penetrate the Kentucky defense almost at will which led to more scoring opportunities.²²

Prior to Texas Western and after CCNY's victory, other integrated basketball teams that won national titles are not nearly remembered for their accomplishments even though they also continued a formula for success. In 1963, Loyola College won the national championship with four black players in the starting lineup, averaged 91.8 points a game during the season and literally ran its opponents off the court. The championship CCNY team, with its 13.2 scoring differential, disposed its opponents in similar fashion with its athleticism, endurance, and skillset to score consistently throughout the game. Texas Western though equally disciplined and as athletic as those other championship teams averaged 77.9 points per game and allowed 62.7 for a +15.2 differential. Texas Western could push the ball up the court and score at will but like the 1949-50 CCNY team, it was the emphasis on defense that would lead them to the championship and a place in history.²³

Texas Western's victory demonstrated that coaches (particularly in the South) had to take integration and cultural assimilation more seriously than ever which meant recruiting players, black and white from urban locales. With so many talented young men in densely populated areas, the level of skill and competition was elevated and intense.

²² Independent schools without ties to conferences had to overcome challenges of scheduling quality opponents and gaining respect. Conferences, and the quality of the opponents that accompany such an affiliation drew media attention which in turn informed national recognition and standing in the polls.

²³ Gordon S. White, "Texas Western Tamed Wildcats in NCAA," New York Times 21 March 1966: 44; University of Texas, El Paso Athletics, UTEP Men's Basketball 2008-09 Media Guide (El Paso, Texas: University of Texas El Paso Athletics, 2008) 178; Box 1, 00180. The City College Athletics Collection, 1893-1970. The City College of New York Archives & Special Collections, the City College of New York, New York, N.Y. July 14, 2011; The 1949-50 CCNY team averaged 68.7 points per game while yielding 55.5 for a +13.2 differential. "Loyola History" Loyola Chicago University Men's Basketball 2013-14 Media Guide (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Department of Athletics, 2013) 75.

All seven players (who were black) that competed in the game were from urban areas (New York, Detroit, Houston, and Gary, Indiana), two other players were local kids from El Paso and the other from Albuquerque, New Mexico, smaller and less-densely populated cities but cities nonetheless. Before the national semifinal game against the University of Utah, Texas Western did not play a single contest east of the Mississippi river. However, they did compete against one opponent the University of Cincinnati in a NCAA tournament game, but it was in Lubbock, Texas, less than six hours from their campus in El Paso. As a result, the team avoided the controversy of playing a large number of black players and fell under the radar of the largely east-coast centered media that was unfamiliar with the team, devalued the strength of their schedule and their chance of winning the national championship.²⁴

Despite being the underdog and not given much of a chance to succeed, Coach Haskins was forlornly nervous as his stomach was constantly churning. When he met with his players on the afternoon of the final game they appeared unfazed. Some of them sat there relaxed with nonchalant attitudes and making off-color remarks which unnerved Haskins even more. Haskins noted “I’m trying to tell them how good Kentucky is and they’re all just looking at me [with a facial expression that gives the impression that says], ‘You’ve gotta be kidding me.’ Bobby Joe Hill has got a toothpick hanging from his

²⁴ Frank Fitzpatrick, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) 203; From 1935 to 1961, Texas Western was a member and competed in the Border States conference prior to its disbandment in 1962. In 1967, the school became a member of the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) until 2005 when it joined Conference USA and currently remains a member.

mouth and I'm telling him how good Louis Dampier [The Kentucky point guard and his counterpart] is. And he gets this smile and just looks at me. I left."²⁵

Bobby Joe Hill and other northern city players understood the significance of the game but he displayed a cool temperament that a floor general, needed to possess in order to survive many of the economically-deprived communities and accompanying challenges in which they were raised. In retrospect, Haskins understood better that Hill's and the rest of the players' relaxed attitudes is something a player should have before a game. If he were visibly tense, Haskins (as any other coach) would be trying to calm the player down and focus on the task at hand. But this relaxed or cool demeanor was the result of growing up in underprivileged communities and was a mechanism for survival. Worsley noted, "We might have been cocky. But we were all from places (New York, Detroit, Indiana, and Chicago) where you had to be cocky to survive. We knew Kentucky was a good team; we weren't going to overlook them. But we felt we could beat them. If you would have seen us that afternoon [on the day of the game], you'd thought we had a pickup game that night. You would have thought that we could walk on water." Of course this legacy of cool had an entirely different meaning to Haskins before a big game and a formidable opponent.²⁶

There was pressure on both teams to perform well. Kentucky was the consensus favorite playing against a team that played extremely aggressive defense. Texas Western

²⁵ Fitzpatrick 202.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick 202. For more a sociological interpretation of the demeanor of African American Men in Urban environments refer to *The Cool Pose* by Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson and *What is Cool? Understanding Black Manhood in America* by Marlene Kim Connor. For an interpretation of demeanor and African American males as it relates to basketball see *Elevating the Game* by Nelson George.

had never competed against an opponent during the regular season as talented as Kentucky. But as the game wore on the confidence of the Texas Western players grew immensely even though the game was tightly contested. Orsten Artis, a 6'1" guard from Gary, Indiana, noted, "after we'd score a basket we made a habit of deliberately going down the Kentucky sideline. We'd wave, point, smile at Rupp." At halftime, Texas Western led 34-31 but Haskins felt the team should be leading by a larger margin and blamed their defense. Conversely the mood in the Kentucky locker room was different. According to Kentucky forward Larry Conley, "They had the best defense we saw all year...they really came after you." Before the game, Haskins addressed the issue of race as a factor to motivate his players but in a less-derogatory way than Rupp. According to *Sports Illustrated* reporter Frank Deford who was invited into the locker room for some off-the-record commentary, noted that Rupp used the word "coons" when referencing the Western players. Two Kentucky players claimed otherwise but also stated they wouldn't be surprised if he had.²⁷

With twelve minutes left in the game and Western leading 46-45, Kentucky was on the verge of taking the lead when Orsten Artis, stole the ball and scored on a jump shot. He and Hill scored free throws to extend the lead to 52-45. Kentucky made a final push and was down by three points with 8:42 left. Texas Western would begin a scoring and defensive surge creating turnovers that would push the lead to 60-51 with 6:54 left in the game. In the next three minutes the score would swell to eleven (68-57) before the unthinkable, which few had predicted, would actually occur. As the seconds ticked off the clock and the score became final, the Texas Western players, cheerleaders, and fans

²⁷ Fitzpatrick 213.

rushed onto the court and gathered below their team's basket. Texas Western College of Mines were the champions of college basketball. The final score was Texas Western 72 and Kentucky 65.²⁸

This game became a signature moment because it challenged widely held myths about integrated teams. It represented in the popular imagination a direct confrontation between the defenders of Jim Crow and those who favored racial integration, and the triumph of the latter has been seen as a landmark moment in the struggle for interracial equality and respect. This is ultimately the message of *Glory Road*. The film presents the game as a historic milestone on the path away from racial segregation, and it touts a society willing to move forward and pressing for change on the basis of athletic accomplishment instead of race. Even though a great deal of what went on behind the scenes and in many respects provided Texas Western extra motivation and incentive to succeed was steeped in race and racism. For example: the slam dunk was a move that originated in urban city playgrounds and was utilized by black players to demonstrate skill, athleticism, and hyper-masculinity. According to Larry Conley, white players also utilized the slam dunk but it had different meaning when David Lattin, a nearly-bald, 6'7", muscular black man dunked the basketball. The body politics were certainly racialized and rooted in stereotypes about black men. After slam dunking the ball within the first minute of the game Kentucky player Tommy Kron noted, "I think we were intimidated by their quickness and power." Certainly the bulk of that perceived power was courtesy of David Lattin. Perception is the operative word and certainly these

²⁸ 1966 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship, 1966: Texas Western College vs. University of Kentucky.

perceptions are rooted in stereotypes. The game is a great story but one that relies on individual perception. When Jackie Robinson integrated Major League Baseball, he was infiltrating an institution and culture built on exclusivity by skin complexion not talent.²⁹

RUPP VS. HASKINS

One of the keys to Texas Western's success was its leadership. As a coach, Haskins was largely responsible for creating and fostering a climate that embraced his players which enabled them to succeed. He identified their strengths individually and collectively as a unit. The culture of a team is largely reflected by the personality of its coach. For a racially integrated team, there is perhaps additional pressure on the coach to bring players together and foster a climate that allows camaraderie to compose and flourish. This element reflects part of the vision shared by Dr. Martin Luther King in his *I Have a Dream* speech in 1963. The ability for men of different backgrounds to see each other as equals and be assessed accordingly; but a climate must be created that is conducive to building a community and camaraderie. That moment first occurred in 1950 by CCNY, a team that demonstrated interracial cooperation. Evidence suggests that Don Haskins tried to foster such an environment within the team, despite some misgivings from the community at-large.³⁰

²⁹ According to Ben Lombardo, a Western scientist, one stereotype about men of African descent is that they are considered a brute which meant they were primitive, temperamental, violent and sexually powerful. These perceptions were extended from stemmed from racist ideology which meant to justify their athletic superiority at the expense of the European athletic performance. For more information about these tropes see Hall, Ronald E., "The Ball Curve: Calculated Racism and the stereotype of African American Men," *The Journal of Black Studies*, September 2001:106.

³⁰ "I Have a Dream," by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered, August 22, 1963, The National Archives, accessed, 15 September 2015 <<http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>>

Whether deserving or not Rupp, has become the unsympathetic symbol of Jim Crow in sports, one that reflects the antithesis to progress, equality and a meritocracy to which competition, sportsmanship, and athletic achievement rests upon. In 1965, Rupp was then the all-time winningest coach in college basketball, who won four National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships in 41 years. He also has the distinction of being characterized as a racist (a branding to which I do not necessarily subscribe); however, he was quoted by an assistant coach and confidant for making racially-insensitive remarks and made little, if any effort towards integration while fielding all-white teams during his tenure thus reinforcing separatism. Rupp did make uninspired attempts to recruit black players in the early 1960s but he was unsuccessful until 1970, when Tom Payne, a seven-foot-one center from Louisville, Kentucky, agreed to sign with the Wildcats.³¹

According to Harry Lancaster, assistant basketball coach since 1962 (who would later become athletics director in 1968), Rupp returned from one meeting furious with interim athletic director Robert L. Johnson (a New York native) that integration, was being shoved down his throat. Rupp reportedly remarked to Lancaster, “Harry, that son of bitch is ordering me to get some niggers in here. What am I going to do? He’s the boss.”³²

Lancaster also noted that Rupp “had never been around blacks” and feared an uncertainty of coaching players from backgrounds and cultures to which he was

³¹ University of Kentucky Athletics, Men’s Basketball 2011-12 Media Guide (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Athletics) 97; Harry Lancaster and Cawood Ledford, Adolph Rupp as I knew Him (Lexington, Kentucky: Lexington Productions, 1979) 88.

³² Lancaster 88.

unfamiliar. In 1969, when Rupp, finally successfully recruited his first black player, it was largely due to the efforts of his assistant and future head coach, Joe B. Hall, whom might have used Rupp's mandatory retirement age to entice him and quell concerns to potential recruits about Rupp and his ambivalence toward blacks. It should be noted that Rupp only apparently agreed to seriously recruit black players because his hand was forced by the University President. The Kentucky football program and other Southeastern Conference programs such as Vanderbilt had already started recruiting black players; with the mandatory retirement age a few years away, Rupp perhaps wanted to in some capacity to rehabilitate his image, knowing full well that he had only two years left as coach and only one year at best coaching a black player (NCAA rules prohibited freshmen from competition), thus minimizing his level of discomfort.³³

The large number of blacks at the collegiate and professional ranks clearly demonstrated that blacks could play and were capable of qualifying and succeeding academically (Rupp suggested that he could not find any blacks who could achieve both). In 1966, the year Texas Western defeated Kentucky for the national championship, the NBA (despite quotas that limited the number of blacks on a team), was nearly 50% black. At the collegiate level, where most professional players are drawn, with the exception of five teams, black players were present on the rosters of every National Championship team since 1949-1950, the year CCNY captured the title. The five teams that did not have a black player on their roster were the Kentucky championship teams (1951 & 1958), Indiana (1953), North Carolina (1957), and California-Berkeley (1959). By 1969, every

³³ Lancaster 88.

major program within the state of Kentucky had been recruiting black players including their future in-state rival Louisville (which had been recruiting since 1954).³⁴

Rupp unsuccessfully attempted to recruit Seneca high school and Louisville, Kentucky, native Wes Unseld in 1964, and Mr. Kentucky basketball Butch Beard from Breckinridge High School in Hardinsburg in 1965. Both players would attend the University of Louisville. A couple of years earlier in 1961, Rupp had made some explicit overtures that suggest he supported integration and it was inevitable the SEC would follow suit. During a basketball banquet, Rupp was quoted as saying “the end of segregation in Southeastern Conference athletics” would occur, “when I turn my hand.” His comments suggest that he was prominent and influential enough to determine the desegregation of SEC. When addressing how other schools in the Southeast conference would respond he noted “What will these teams do if I bring an integrated team into their cities to play? If they refuse to play me then they’ll just have to forfeit according to the rules and I’ll take all the easy victories that I can get.” This final statement suggests that Rupp was aware of his influence and the opportunities that lay at his doorstep for initiating change. Unfortunately, it also demonstrates a sense of cowardice for not being more aggressive in recruiting black players and having to wait until almost a decade and after nearly every major program in the commonwealth of Kentucky signed blacks before

³⁴ Ron Thomas, [They Cleared the Lane: the NBA’s Black Pioneers](#) (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) 134; [Indiana University Men’s Basketball 2006-07 Media Guide](#) 142; [St. John’s University Men’s Basketball 2009-10 Media Guide](#) 154; [Kansas University Men’s Basketball 2009-10 Media Guide](#) 129; [LaSalle University Men’s Basketball 2011-12 Media Guide](#) 90; [University of San Francisco Men’s Basketball 2006-07 Media Guide](#) 56; [University of California Men’s Basketball 2010-11 Media Guide](#) 123; [The Ohio State University Men’s Basketball 2011-12 Media Guide](#) 183; [The University of Cincinnati Men’s Basketball 2008-09 Media Guide](#), 171; [Loyola University of Chicago Men’s Basketball 2013-14 Media Guide](#) 80; [The University of California, Los Angeles Men’s Basketball 2013-14 Media Guide](#) 134.

UK followed suit. The University of Kentucky had desegregated its student body in 1950 when Lyman Johnson, a graduate student in history, and nearly thirty other students comprised the first class of African-Americans at the University. This alone would have provided a basis for promoting integration of the athletic programs.³⁵

Donald Lee Haskins was not a crusader for racial justice; he was just another coach who was trying to win games and keep his job. “The Bear,” as he is affectionately known, was never in jeopardy of losing his position but the reality is that college basketball is a business and all coaches are paid to win as many games as possible. In 1961, when Haskins arrived at the Texas Western College of Mines he inherited an integrated roster of talented players including an outstanding scorer in Nolan Richardson Jr. who led the team during his sophomore season - with an average of 21-points per game.³⁶

Haskins was born on March 14, 1930 in Enid, Oklahoma, the same year Rupp began his coaching tenure at Kentucky. Enid enforced Oklahoma state laws on segregation. Blacks could not attend Enid high school but instead went to the all-Negro Booker T. Washington High school. One memorable moment that shaped Haskins’ views on race occurred at thirteen when he witnessed a black soldier from the nearby Vance Air Force base in full uniform drinking from a water fountain that was designated ‘colored’

³⁵ “Lyman T. Johnson, Civil Rights activist,” Milwaukee Sentinel, 6 October 1997; John A. Hardin Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1904-1954. (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky) 37; Clem Haskins and Marc Ryan. Clem Haskins: Breaking Barriers (Champaign, Illinois: Sports Publishing Inc., 1997) 60; Gregory Favre, “Rupp Forecasts the End of SEC Segregation,” The Atlanta Journal, Wednesday, 26 April 1961: 53; Larry Boeck, “Rupp Visits Unsel Home and Offers U.K. Cage Grant,” Louisville Courier-Journal 17 April 1964; “Negro Star Eyed By Rupp Hasn’t Made His Decision,” West Virginia Gazette, 8 April 1964.

³⁶ University of Texas, El Paso Athletics, UTEP Men’s Basketball 2008-09 Media Guide (El Paso, Texas: University of Texas El Paso Athletics, 2008) 178.

during this time period when the nation was at war and under attack. Haskins thought it was odd that he was, “good enough to get his ass shot for his country, but not drink out of a water fountain? That bothered me and stuck with me.”³⁷

Herman Carr, who was black, struck a friendship with Haskins while the two were co-workers at a feed store in downtown Enid. Though the two could not attend the same high schools they both enjoyed sports, particularly basketball and the two started playing one-on-one after work in park near the center of town. Haskins favored baseball over basketball but was talented enough to earn a spot on the varsity basketball team during his freshman year. But he really developed his skills through his interactions with Herman. Haskins could outshoot Herman but by his own admission, Carr was a better athlete, more experienced, and smarter. There was a psychological component to the game that Carr helped Haskins understand.³⁸

When Haskins arrived in El Paso, it was a clash of cultures, between Haskins a self-described farm boy and a contingent of black players from the inner-city. “He was a typical country boy,” said Richardson. Haskins’ dialect and accent were so pronounced that understanding what he was saying was difficult. “We couldn’t understand the things he was saying,” Richardson replied. Eventually Richardson and another player Willie Brown asked the ‘country guys’ on the team to translate.³⁹

³⁷ Don Haskins and Dan Wetzel, Glory Road: My story of the 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and How One Team Triumphed Against the Odds and Changed America Forever (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2006)18.

³⁸ Haskins 21.

³⁹ Haskins 80.

Whatever Haskins said to the players the message was received loud and clear – De-Fense. In his first year at the helm, Texas Western finished with an 18-6 record but the most striking difference from the previous season was the team’s defense. The Texas Western Miners were allowing opponents to score only 56-points a game – a 24-point differential from the 1960-1961 season.⁴⁰

The 1963-64 team finished with a 25-3 record and their scoring differential of 17.2 was the greatest in the Haskins era and second to only UCLA (18.9). That same year, UCLA under coach John Wooden, won the first of his ten national championships with the program that season. Also on campus that year for Texas Western was Nevil Shed who played at Morris High School in the Bronx. Shed would be one of the earliest New York City players to find their way to El Paso. Since players could not compete as freshmen, Shed would have to wait until the following year before he could contribute to the team.⁴¹

Since Blacks were on the Texas Western team since the 1950s, (several years prior to Haskins arrival) the pressure and politics of recruiting blacks was less restrictive. The first player to greet Haskins was actually Nolan Richardson who assisted his family with the moving of their belongings into their first residence that was initially the men’s dormitory. Nolan had been raised in El Paso and was a three-sport athlete (basketball, baseball and football) at Bowie High School. Despite his own encounters with prejudice, Richardson had a less-difficult transition to Texas Western which abetted players like

⁴⁰ UTEP Men’s Basketball 2008-09 Media Guide (El Paso, Texas: University of Texas-El Paso Department of Athletics, 2008) 178.

⁴¹ University of California, Los Angeles Department of Athletics, UCLA Men’s Basketball Media Guide 2013-2014 (Los Angeles, California: UCLA Department of Athletics) 131.

Willie Brown, the first of many ‘New York city slickers’ that would find their way to campus. Brown was originally recruited by Haskins’ predecessor Harold Davis but never officially signed. Upon his arrival, Brown kept pestering Haskins with letters “asking me to give him a scholarship.” Brown appeared so desperate to get out of New York City that Haskins started questioning his level of talent. He assumed that if he was constantly sending him letters other schools probably were not; which could be interpreted as signal that he was not very good. Fortunately, Mary Haskins convinced her husband to offer him a scholarship – which in turn was one of the best decisions he ever made. Brown would become a great player for the Miners and a successful businessman at the conclusion of his playing career. Equally important, Brown was instrumental in convincing other players from New York City [including the 5’6” Willie Worsley] to play in El Paso. Brown, Worsley and other New York City players would form the nucleus of the 1966 championship team.⁴²

Like Brown, black players literally fell into Haskins’ lap. Some like Bobby Joe Hill from Bryant, Texas, were handed to him on a silver platter (and in some instances) by rival coaches. According to Haskins he was barely on the job for two weeks when Bob Rogers, a coach at Texas A&M, who played at Oklahoma A&M a few years before Haskins arrived, called him about kid who was talented enough to play at A&M but he couldn’t offer him a scholarship because the school was still segregated. At 6’4” Bobby

⁴² Haskins 82, 86.

Joe Hill was a great rebounder and defender who played an instrumental role on that inaugural 1961-1962 Haskins team that held opponents to 56-points per game.⁴³

Haskins seemed to have a cradle of talented black players at his disposal but playing five on the court at the same time met challenging an unwritten rule and a custom in intercollegiate basketball. During the 1962-63 season, Texas Western's five most talented players at each position were African American but that did not necessarily mean all five of those players would be on the court at the same time. Andy Stoglin who played for Haskins from 1962-1965 recalls a meeting he had with the coach at the start of the season. He noted that Haskins informed him that "I know you should start, but I can't start five black players." Haskins reportedly emptied a pile of letters in his desk and asked Stoglin to read them and he would solicit his opinion afterwards. Stoglin read some of the letters and the general tone was that Haskins was playing "too many niggers." After a half-hour Haskins returned and asked him not to tell the other players about the letters. Stoglin recalls he was generally upset about the situation. What was interesting is that during the season, Haskins experimented with different lineups due to player injury or underperformance, and there were at least a couple of games in which there were five black players starting the game or at least junctures during the course of games.⁴⁴

Coaching players who played the playground/street style that defined the city game required a period of adjustment for Haskins but it didn't take him long. Within five seasons of his arrival in El Paso in 1961, he was a National Champion. Two players that

⁴³ Haskins 88.

⁴⁴ Haskins 114.

brought elements of the city game to Texas Western was the second Bobby Joe Hill from Detroit and David Lattin from Houston. Hill, who transferred from Burlington Junior College in Iowa possessed exceptional ball-handling skill and speed rarely seen in the college game during that era. In retrospect, Haskins compared him to a latter day Allen Iverson. The concern for Haskins was the style of play that he interpreted as showboating. Hill would dribble the ball behind his back and between his legs when attacking his opponent at mid-court. This was definitely a product of street ball and signature part of Hill's game. During the 1964-65 season Haskins tried to coach him to dribble the ball in front of him as opposed to his preferred style. Hill was never comfortable with this adjustment and it reflected in his game. As the point guard and floor general, Hill needed to play how he knew best and Coach Haskins recognized this. Prior to the Championship season, Haskins loosened the reins on his point guard and instructed him "to get the ball down the floor the best way you know how. I want you to play just like you've always played." In that conversation, he responded with a smile "Coach everything is going to be OK now." He was right, Hill led them to a 28-1 record that season and a national title.⁴⁵

David Lattin of Houston brought something entirely different to the game. He was a phenomenal player in high school whom Haskins wanted dearly. Haskins recruited him incessantly but Lattin instead chose Tennessee State in Nashville. The experience fell short of his expectations, so he transferred after a semester. The scholarship that Haskins offered was still available but due to NCAA transfers rules he had to sit out the 1964-65 season though he could still practice with the team. During these practice sessions, Lattin

⁴⁵ Haskins 125-126.

demonstrated his skills but during unsanctioned team ‘pickup games,’ he raised his level of intensity. In a one-on-one game with Andy Stogin, Lattin dunked the ball so hard over him that he tore the rim off the backboard, cut himself and knocked Stoglin unconscious when he attempted to disrupt the dunk with his body. Though the injuries were minor, the impact was significant as it demonstrated his resolve and power.⁴⁶

The player who could score on a slam dunk exercised psychological intimidation over his opponent and drew adulation from spectators. Haskins relished the psychological edge too. The dunk was an important cerebral element of intimidation that complimented its athletic foil. Other players such as Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain dunked in college during the 1950s but both stood about 7’1” and their efforts were minimalized as a result of their height. But Lattin was a 6’6” muscular player who could elevate and dunk with authority (as Stoglin could attest). One of Haskins’ earliest lessons on the psychological part of the game occurred during his teenage years with Herman Carr. David Lattin perhaps rekindled those memories for Haskins. Dunking the basketball not only underscored a psychological advantage but a virtuoso hyper-masculinity that is unparalleled in the game. Unfortunately, due to NCAA rules, Haskins had to wait until the 1965-66 season to unleash this weapon.⁴⁷

CCNY AND THE RISE OF THE SLAM DUNK

Most of the black players from the city understood the street game and utilized it whenever their coaches permitted them to do so. CCNY players (both black and white) utilized the dunk whenever needed. During a contest versus Fordham University on

⁴⁶ Haskins 100.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

February 20, 1950, with the game tied at 58 and two minutes left, Alvin Roth, a 6'4" reserve who won a PSAL championship at Erasmus high school in 1947, took a pass from center Eddie Roman and dunked the ball, giving his team the victory and sending the crowd into a frenzy. The dunk from its inception had a psychological edge with its ability to draw an emotional response from not only the opponent but for the spectators as well. Before the 1965 NCAA Championship game Haskins told Lattin to dunk the basketball as quickly as possible. He wanted his team to send a message that would set the tone of the game. Haskins discouraged behind-the-back dribbles and passes that he felt were demonstrations of showboating that usurped strategy, discipline, and the established system of team competition; but he did encourage dunking. He recognized the psychological power of intimidation from the dunk which bore its roots in the street game with the same intended effect. That psychological power complimented physical power which underscored athleticism not only on offense but defense. The ability to attack the rim also suggests the physical ability to protect it.

Dunking the basketball also demonstrated a form of black masculinity that was celebrated, praised, and fetishized in many economically-depressed inner-city communities which blacks were disproportionately numbered. "Even if you draw a foul," replied Haskins, "I want you to take it to the guy and show him something he hasn't seen."⁴⁸

Tommy Kron, a 6'5" forward for the Kentucky Wildcats noted, "I think we were intimidated by their quickness and power. We didn't quit playing but I think were

⁴⁸ Herb Kanarek, "Beaver '5' Rips Fordham, 66-62," Observation Post, 21 February 1950: 4; St. Francis finished the season 19-11, an improvement of thirteen victories; Fitzpatrick 207, 162.

intimidated to the extent that we didn't go to the boards [rebounding & driving to the basket] as hard as we could." Popularized on inner-city playgrounds, the slam dunk was disavowed by coaches from the game's inception in 1891 to the 1950s. At this time several northern urban predominately-black schools began using the dunk as a weapon of intimidation during warm ups before the game.⁴⁹

When the slam dunk actually originated is difficult to substantiate. However, the earliest utilization in the college game on record goes back to the mid-1940s at Oklahoma A&M College - a place quite familiar to Don Haskins. Bob Kurland, a 6'10 ½" center from St. Louis whom attended high school in Jennings, Missouri (a suburb of St. Louis) utilized the dunk during games (though not with great regularity) was known largely for his defensive skills like Bill Russell nearly a decade later. The first recorded dunk and Kurland's first arrived by accident during a December 9, 1944 contest against Temple University in Philadelphia. The ball bounced away under the Oklahoma A&M basket. Almost instinctively he grabbed the ball then he "got it up and stuffed it in." Kurland noted "that's what started it I guess...it was an unintentional accident. It wasn't planned."⁵⁰ He was such an imposing presence that University of Kansas coach Phog Allen often derided him as a "glandular goon." Kurland dominated and led Oklahoma

⁴⁹ Ira Berkow, The DuSable Panthers: the greatest, blackest, saddest team from the meanest street in Chicago, (New York, New York, Atheneum books, 1978) 3; Fitzpatrick 210 – 211.

⁵⁰ Blair, Kerkhoff "Bob Kurland, credited as first player to dunk in a basketball game, dies at 88," Campus Corner 21 March 2014 < <http://www.kansascity.com/sports/spt-columns-blogs/campus-corner/article328546/Bob-Kurland-credited-as-first-player-to-dunk-in-a-basketball-game-dies-at-88.html> >; Temple University Department of Athletics, Temple Men's Basketball 2011-12 Media Guide (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Athletics, 2011)120.

A&M to consecutive NCAA championships in 1945 and 1946 to which Kurland was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament.⁵¹

Bill Russell of San Francisco State (1953-56) would utilize the slam dunk with regularity but arguably not with the same flair or tenacity as Lattin a decade later. Russell who is considered a defensive stalwart to which others are measured, also led San Francisco State to consecutive NCAA championship titles. However, one of his teammates, K.C. Jones, a 6'1" point guard from Tyler, Texas gained attention for slam dunking the ball during the 1955 NCAA Championship game versus LaSalle University in Kansas City. It was rare for players to dunk the ball and it was even more of a rarity for someone at Jones' size.⁵²

David Lattin, who hailed from Houston, Texas, knew (like other black players) the slam dunk was a form of expression that indirectly might be fueled by social inequalities and lack of respect for black masculinity. Part of that expression is also intimidation (at least that is how others may perceive it) by virtue of the said act, vocal exclamations, and facial expressions that demonstrate joy, relief, anger and a litany of emotions. The NCAA recognized this as well and outlawed the slam dunk from intercollegiate play in 1967. It was affectionally dubbed in basketball circles as the "Lew Alcindor Rule" – after Kareem Abdul Jabbar, a New York City native and seven-foot tall freshman at University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) who annoyed the opposition with what was perceived to be an overt and egregious attempt of intimidation - A point

⁵¹Richard Goldstein, "Bob Kurland, 88, Pioneer for Basketball's Big Men, Dies," New York Times, 30 September 2013; Kevin Fixler, "Bob Kurland, the first player to dunk was a pioneer for big men," The Daily Beast, 21 March 2014.

⁵²James Johnson, The Dandy Dons: Bill Russell, K.C. Jones, Phil Woolpert, and one of college basketball's greatest and most innovative teams (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2009)117.

that Lattin's teammates who were from Detroit, Gary, Indiana and New York city knew too well. The NCAA did not reinstate the slam dunk until 1976. During the game, in 1965, however the 6'6" David Lattin, exercised the slam dunk at will over the opposition.⁵³

The players recognized their chances of winning the game would be compromised by racial stereotypes of black athletes. According to Worsley, "they [Kentucky] thought they could outsmart us. They thought if they slowed [the game] it down, we would get impatient and commit stupid fouls. We wouldn't be able to stand the pressure. We were from the ghetto. We were on national TV so we'd get a big head and become selfish." With the score was tied at 9-9 with 10:18 remaining in the first half when Nevil Shed hit a free throw that gave Texas Western a 10-9 lead. A couple of minutes later Lattin slam dunked the ball again; this time surrounded by three Kentucky players to give the Miners a 16-11 lead as the crowd roared. Rupp immediately signaled a timeout.⁵⁴

In response to the NCAA ruling Lew Alcindor, then a sophomore at UCLA noted "To me the new 'no-dunk' rule smacks a little discrimination." He added, "When you look at it all the way down to the high school level, most of the people who dunk are black athletes...I'm not trying to be biased, really, that's just how it is."⁵⁵

The outlawing of the slam dunk was largely attributed to the racial intimidation and fear that slam dunking the basketball brought to the game. White players were

⁵³ Gena Caponi-Tabery, Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball & Black Culture in 1930's America (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008)106; Pete Axhelm, The City Game: Basketball from the Garden to the Playgrounds (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1970)127.

⁵⁴ 1966 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship, 1966: Texas Western College vs. University of Kentucky; Fitzpatrick 212.

⁵⁵ "Alcindor Claims Bias in New Basketball Rule," New York Amsterdam News, 16 September 1967: 36.

dunking the ball as well but it had an unsettling connotation to white sensibilities when black players exercised it. In many respects black players were demonstrating a form of masculinity that was emphatic, powerful, poetic and intimidating at the same time. Dunking the basketball became an unspoken mouthpiece for black masculinity, rooted in urban communities in which hyper-masculinity is valued and utilized as tool for survival. When the American Basketball Association (ABA) was founded in 1967, players were allowed and encouraged to express their individuality and athleticism with the slam dunk. Dunking' a submerged staple of playground basketball rose through the play of New York luminaries who brought the game to the professional ranks such as Connie Hawkins, Lew Alcindor, and Julius Erving (alias Dr. J for his defensive prowess) all honed their game on the streets. In competitive settings, players were susceptible to injury very much like the 1964 pick-up game between Lattin and Stoglin. But the slam dunk was a weapon of intimidation and if it were not for his dunks and the psychological power they yielded over the opposition, Texas Western's chances of winning the contest would be reduced and the trajectory of the dunk and the NCAA response would in all likelihood been delayed for a season or so. After all, Lew Alcindor and other influential players on the college game were still a year or two away.⁵⁶

The Slam Dunk certainly existed in informal settings since the basketball rim replaced the original peach basket. However, the rules of the game which leads to slam dunking the ball did not exist until 1937 when some rules changes that shaped the modern game occurred. At the conclusion of a made basket, each team would assemble at

⁵⁶ Haskins 130; [Arthur Ehrat Papers](http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0907.html), ed. Frederick Tyner, 2005, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, January 2014 <<http://amhistory.si.edu/archives/AC0907.html>>.

mid-court and jump for the ball. This rule allowed the fast break to develop and served as vehicle for improvisation with the ball. Most of the acts involved dribbling or shooting with one hand off the dribble as opposed to a set shot. This led to the creation of the jump shot and the crossover dribble.

Slam dunking the ball was rare because few guys were tall enough to do so but during the postwar years, the dunk seemed to catch on with players and coaches. In 1950, St. Francis College (Brooklyn) coach Danny Lynch was giddy when addressing the outlook of his 1950-1951 team; especially when it came to his fleet-of-foot, altitude-altering sophomore Vern Stokes. “This Stokes can really dunk that ball. He averaged 17 points a game playing freshmen ball. What a jumper he is.” After finishing with a record of 6-18 from the previous season and their intra-city rival winning the national championship this was certainly a strategy to build confidence, enticement and interest in his team and not necessarily a vehicle for intimidation. In some instances, players dunked the ball because they could. At DeWitt Clinton high school, Ed Warner (known then as “Leapin’ Ed”) demonstrated his ability to dunk but was razzed by his coach for showboating. Afterwards Warner rarely dunked in practice much less games.⁵⁷

Nat Holman did not have a too many players in his coaching career endowed with height but he did have some exceptional athletes who developed their game on the playgrounds and the streets of New York City. Once Holman decided to loosen the structural reins and let his players exercise their athletic gifts the rewards were immense.

⁵⁷ “Basketball Opens Saturday; St. Francis Foe at Garden,” Observation Post, 21 November 1950: Basketball supplement 1; St. Francis finished the season 19-11, an improvement of thirteen victories; Wattenblog Ben J. Wattenberg, September 9, 2006, 15 September 2015 <http://wattenblog.blogspot.com/2006/09/sports-and-society_09.html>.

It makes sense that a coach from New York City would understand ‘city kids’ their abilities and the possibilities from just letting them play. This is one reason why Nat Holman became a National Championship coach and known as “Mr. Basketball.”

Before a predominately black team from El Paso, Texas, could win the national championship, and before the widespread use of the slam dunk could create anxiety in the predominantly white world of college basketball, a team in New York City found ways to win by incorporating the styles of play that came from the streets of the city and reflected racial and ethnic diversity of the team. Texas Western’s achievement is not to be diminished, but the burden of this dissertation is to show how the 1949-1950 CCNY championship basketball team represented the real breakthrough in college basketball’s journey toward racial integration.

CHAPTER 2

NAT HOLMAN, AN ORIGINAL CELTIC AND HIS PUPILS

The 1920s was deemed the golden age of sports. This was a time period where wealth and excess seemed to be in abundance. The commodification of intercollegiate sports was a product of that excess and football was king. Universities from across the United States were building stadiums en masse to fill the growing demands. Some of the most storied programs to date Stanford (1921), Ohio State (1922), Franklin Field (University of Pennsylvania, 1923), Louisiana State University (1924) and the University of Alabama (1927) all followed this growing trend. As sports flourished so did the media coverage. Many newspapers were reporting sporting activities as far back in the 1840s. The modern sports page began to take shape in the 1880s and 1890s but did not become standardized in many newspapers until the 1920s. *The New York World* became the first newspaper with a special sports newsroom in 1883. In the 1920s, forty percent of the local news of the New York World and 60% of the local news of the New York Tribune consisted of sports news.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Daniel Beck and Louis Bosshart, "Sports and Media," *Communication Research Trends*, Volume 22, No. 4 (2003): 7; National Collegiate Athletics Association, *2012 NCAA Football Records* (Indianapolis, Indiana: National Collegiate Athletics Association, 2012) 112-113; Michael Oriard, *King Football: sport and spectacle in the golden age of radio and newsreels, movies and magazines, the weekly & the daily press* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2001)

Stories about basketball dominated the city tabloids. As CCNY accumulated victories, Nat Holman's notoriety began to build. By 1932 Holman had a .782 winning percentage (30 points higher than Phog Allen, the great Kansas Jayhawk coach). That same year Holman wrote the first of three books that was unabashedly entitled *Winning Basketball*; a text that addressed the fundamentals of the game from the vantage point of the ball (offense and defense) through the perspective of the player. Nat Holman prided himself on exercise and physical fitness and demanded his players to condition their bodies in order to effectively execute his ricochet style of hoops.

In 1921, Holman decided to extend his footprint and philosophies of fitness beyond basketball when he and his brother Jack founded Camp Scatico for Children. At the core of the camp mission was a dedication to education, recreation and sportsmanship. Holman's efforts did not go unnoticed. In 1935 during a radio address on the subject of "Health and Character Building in Camp Life," Holman read a letter from J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau Investigation commended his efforts for building a healthy society of young people.

"Please be advised, that I am constant in my belief that the happy and healthful atmosphere incident to a youth's camp – are conducive to healthy bodies, clean minds, and the growth of sound principles of living. Any boy or girl, who has undergone the sympathetic and practical discipline at an efficiently supervised camp, receives benefits of tremendous importance to the building of staunch character. You are at liberty, in your intended radio talk on the subject of camping within the near future, to advise your listeners of my views on the matter.

With best wishes and kind regards,

I am, Sincerely yours,

- J. Edgar Hoover.⁵⁹

The letter by J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to Nat Holman is significant for a variety of reasons but most importantly it demonstrates the notoriety and respect, Holman earned as an architect and innovator of basketball. The letter also underscores support for Holman and his efforts to supervise and demonstrate the importance of maintaining good health and physical fitness. J. Edgar Hoover, was an advocate of physical fitness. During his tenure as chief he instituted a level of professionalization for the Bureau and its agents which included sophisticated training in the area fitness and good health. He argued these were essential elements in reinforcing the level of patriotism necessary to enforce the constitutional element of the law.⁶⁰

Holman was an advocate for physical fitness and usually led by example, William “Red” Holzman described his relationship with his former coach when he arrived at CCNY in 1940. Holman worked out readily “when he coached me he was in his late forties, trim, a tough squash player, and a guy who believed in keeping himself in shape.” He was a perfectionist and demanded nothing but the best from his players mentally and physically.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Nat Holman, “Health and Character Building in Camp Life”,(Elizaville, New York: Self-published, June 8, 1935) 4.

⁶⁰ Edward J. Escobar, Race, Police, and the making of a Political Identity (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999) 160.

⁶¹ Red Holzman and Harvey Frommer, Red on Red (New York, New York: Bantam, 1987) 12.

During the 1940s Nat Holman was dubbed “Mr. Basketball,” a term reflective of his contribution to the game as a player with the original Celtics and later a college coach at CCNY. He was so well respected that he was consulted by the coaches association on rule changes. Some of his suggestions contributed to the reconfiguration of the game that closely resembles more contemporary styles. A significant portion of Holman’s legacy as a coach, can be attributed to embracing a style of play, affectionately known as the ‘city game.’ This style of play could be best interpreted as organized chaos. The game was played fast as the ball, and most importantly the players were in constant motion. This style ran counter to the pedestrian, more methodical play that numerous college coaches seemed to favor. This offensive attack that place a premium on conditioning and athleticism was complimented by an equally aggressive defense that pressured the opponent into committing turnovers which lead to an imperious push to score before the opposing team could establish its defense. This was otherwise known as the fast break.⁶²

Nat Holman was born Nathan Helmanowich on October 19, 1896 in New York City, the son of German/Russian-Jewish immigrants. He was the seventh of ten children and spent most of his formative years in the immigrant enclave of Manhattan’s Lower East Side where his parents owned a grocery store. Ironically, the Helmanowiches had been forced out of Germany in the 1880s because of growing anti-Semitism in the recently established nation. Ironically, the rise of global anti-Semitism in the 1930s,

⁶² Stephen Steiner, *Interview with Nat Holman*, 1978, transcription, 100; *Interview with Nat Holman* 109; Larry Weiner ed. *The City College of New York 1950-51 Basketball Guide* (New York, New York: The City College Sports Information Department) 7.

would fuel Holman's desire to champion a Jewish state and utilize basketball to build self-esteem and national pride.⁶³

Though the family was large they were close; all seven boys played sport and earned varsity letters. Arthur and Jack played soccer. Irving and Sandy played high school basketball (the latter would compete for New York University (NYU)). Morris played basketball and was captain of the CCNY basketball team in 1918. Aaron played for the NYU team that captured the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) title in 1920.⁶⁴

Though all the brothers were talented, it was Nat whom demonstrated the most athletic prowess competing baseball, soccer, and basketball, while earning more than earned twelve varsity letters during his tenure at Commerce High School in Manhattan. But it was basketball, a sport invented only five years before his birth that proved to be his calling. The social clubs and community refuges such as the Henry Street settlement helped Holman develop and refine his game prior to High school. Holman played organized basketball for the first time with the Roosevelt Big Five, a team of Jews on the Lower East Side. As Holman remembered years later "The settlement houses played a significant role in the life of every Jewish youngster on the Lower East Side. They provided us with homes away from home. There were a variety of sports and cultural activities, plus functions."⁶⁵

⁶³ Sam Goldpaper, "Nat Holman is Dead at 98," The New York Times, 13 February 1995: B7; Nat Holman: The Man, The Legend and CCNY, July 2011, CCNY Archives digital Exhibit, July 2010 <http://digital-archives.ccnycuny.edu/exhibits/holman/holman_early_years.html>.

⁶⁴ Bernard Postal, Jesse Silver, and R. Silver. Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports (New York, New York: Bloch Pub. Co., 1965) 87.

⁶⁵ Nat Holman: The Man, The Legend and CCNY

Settlement houses proved to be a refuge for numerous young people desiring to escape overcrowded tenement apartments and avoid the trouble lurking in the streets. In 1913, a publication entitled *Handbook of Settlements* listed some 413 houses in Boston, Chicago, and New York City. These houses were important reform institutions constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The intention of these houses (which are closely associated today with community centers) was to provide a place where overcrowded immigrant enclaves such as the Lower East Side of Manhattan could access services to remedy the some of the elements of life associated with poverty and transition to better quality of life.⁶⁶

These settlements were first established in the United States on New York City's, Lower East Side in 1886, where there was a large concentration of European Immigrants - many who spoke very little English. Even though the neighborhood was multi-ethnic, the general perception was these communities were Italian or Jewish. Settlement houses intended to serve the entire community but not all ethnic groups responded with such enthusiasm. While language was one barrier, religion was another. Most Italians were Catholic and churches tried to establish benevolent programs and parochial schools that served their interests. Not to mention, the staffers in these settlements were predominately female, (including the Hull House in Chicago founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr), posed a concern to patriarchal Italians until male leaders for

⁶⁶ Howard Husack, "Bringing back the settlement house," *Public Interest*, Issue 109 (September 1992) < http://www.nationalaffairs.com/doclib/20080709_19921094bringingbackthesettlementhousehowardhusock.pdf>; James R. Grossman, Ann D. Keating, and Janice L. Reiff. *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago); Mina Julia Carson, *Settlement Folk: social thought and the American settlement movement, 1885-1930*. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 7.

Italian boys groups could be found. In spite of these limitations, settlement houses were the best means of achieving social unity in ethnically-diverse neighborhoods.⁶⁷

Historically these settlements were to not establish a welfare-system but to assist the poor and transition them to adopting a social-Christian lifestyle. “Historically, the purposes of the settlement movement reflected a desire both to assist the poor and to bind the social classes with a common purpose.”⁶⁸

This ideology was exercised courtesy though the benevolence of affluent and educated men like Stanton Coit, who established the first settlement house, the *Neighborhood guild* in 1886. The intention of these settlements were to bridge the social-economic and cultural divide by drawing the affluent and poor in contact with one another by attracting idealistic college-aged and upper-middle-class youths to settle in these facilities or to the very least, volunteer and donate their time for a noble cause.⁶⁹

The welfare of Children, an improvement for their lives was a driving force behind some of these settlements. Sports became a vehicle for disciplining children and many organized teams served in this capacity. Most did organize or were involved with tournaments and leagues but not until in the 1920s when the municipal federation of settlements, an organized body that represented city establishments was formed. The sport that proved to be one of the most popular was basketball. Its popularity was attributed to an important but often ignored factor tied to the city environment – space.

This was a statement underscored by Holman, “Basketball, in the Lower East Side was

⁶⁷ Judith A. Trolander, Settlement Houses and the Great Depression (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1975) 19.

⁶⁸ Husack 54.

⁶⁹ Husack 56

the number one sport...you could play it in a small area. To play baseball you needed a park, to play soccer you needed a park.”⁷⁰

On the Lower East Side, sports such as basketball and boxing which required minimal space and expenses for equipment thrived in popularity. Some of the most notable Jewish pugilists such as Benny Leonard who was known by the pseudonym ‘Ghetto the Wizard’ (born Benjamin Leiner), Barney Ross (nee Dov-Ber David Rosofsky), and Leach Cross (nee Leach Wallach), more affectionately known as the “Fighting Dentist,” were all raised in the L.E.S. and developed their skills in the settlement houses. Cross studied dentistry at New York University and is credited as one of the pioneers that popularized boxing among the Jewish community.⁷¹

Boxing was a symbol of ethnic and religious pride for sporting members of the Jewish community but by-far Basketball was favored. The settlement houses in the L.E.S. had all established teams. Basketball besides being accessible to immigrant communities with limited means served a greater need to athletic reformers in the Jewish Community. Basketball became a vehicle to transform immigrant boys closer to the masculine ideal and eventually into productive American citizens.

Organizations like the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA) in New York served on the front-line of organized sport and provided a model for communal athleticism. Founded in 1874, the YHMA included an extensive program that featured clubs and workshops in literature, religion, social-etiquette and education. Leaders of

⁷⁰ Interview with Nat Holman 39; Trolander 47.

⁷¹ Allen Bodner When Boxing was a Jewish Sport, (Wesport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1997) 9.

these organizations or athletic programs promoted sport as a way to dispel stereotypes that Jews were weak creating a barrier between them and other recent immigrants.⁷²

With the promotion of engaging in athletic competition from Jewish Leaders, the barriers erected by families weakened. Adolescent Jewish boys not privy to these stereotypes, playing basketball was a vehicle to avoiding mischief and accessible to players of any size. Barney Sedran, the shortest player ever inducted in the Hall of Fame at 5'4 noted that basketball "was the only sport I could play with little trouble... It was difficult for an East Side youngster like myself to play baseball because there were no diamonds close by."⁷³

Sedran's comments reflect how basketball epitomized the ideal team sport considering the spatial and economic constraints of the environment. Baseball for many youths remained popular in their imagination of integrating into this national pastime and identity; however, for many of these youths, their environment forced them to embrace a different reality.

The entire Jewish community did not necessarily embrace basketball but the response to the sport was so pronounced that by the 1930s, sportswriters identified it as the "Jewish" game. Paul Gallico, a veteran sportswriter for the *New York Daily News*, wrote in 1937 essay explaining Jews and their affinity for basketball through an anti-Semitic lens. "Jews flock to basketball by the thousands...it appeals to the Hebrew with

⁷² Arie Sclar, "A sport in which Jews Excel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stony Brook University, 2008) 15.

⁷³ Postal 65.

his Oriental background is that the game places a premium on an alert, scheming mind and flashy trickiness, artful dodging and general smart aleckness.”⁷⁴

Both Sedran and Max “Marty” Friedman, were raised on the Lower East Side and were the first Jewish basketball players elected to basketball Hall of Fame. Their first interaction is when they became teammates in 1903 while competing for the “midget” team of the University settlement House located a few blocks from where Holman was raised. Sedran learned the game at University Settlement. Conversely Marty Friedman, bypassed college and turned professional at sixteen.⁷⁵

For Nat Holman and other Jewish players, these settlement houses were a refuge from a mainstream society that marginalized them. Outside of these communities, the world was quite different and did not necessarily embrace them. When traveling to other neighborhoods to compete, Holman and other Jews were often bullied based on their ethnicity. Bruce Holman, Nat Holman’s nephew recalled when his uncle shared a story about some kids presumably of Irish or Italian descent threw rocks at him while traveling through their respective neighborhood. This incident had a profound impact on Nat. Basketball became Holman’s refuge; his safe space from the world but more importantly the people who interacted within the basketball community. These ill-harbored feelings toward Jews were also exercised during inter-neighborhood competition. Holman

⁷⁴ Peter Levine, Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 29; Postal 78.

⁷⁵ Postal 29.

recalled an incident during a baseball game when an opposing player took exception to his performance.⁷⁶

“When I was up to bat I got a long hit and got on base, moved around, and as I slid home, the catcher, instead of tagging me, hit me in the face with the ball...we started to fight and boy was I in trouble. But there was a lot of feeling [animosity] there when you got into those neighborhoods.”⁷⁷

Holman suggests that playing baseball, though accessible required transgressing culturally imagined geographical borders which during games, particularly contests that were closely competitive, had serious, often physical harmful repercussions.

For Jewish kids, the probability of getting into altercations when they traveled beyond or to the periphery of their de facto segregated neighborhoods was certainly a reality. These moments certainly presented an intriguing dichotomy. Though the athletic contests brought kids from different backgrounds together in a common space to participate in the national pastime there was resistance to the theoretical melting pot often promoted by the dominant culture.

There was little interracial and interethnic cooperation. Many of these teams reflected the ethnic demographic of their communities. Playing baseball, espoused assimilation of a commonality during competition, however in reality, it was defending, cultural and ethnic pride, your turf and in many respects your masculinity.

⁷⁶ Bruce Holman (Author phone interview). 8 June 2013.

⁷⁷ Interview with Nat Holman 49.

According to Bruce, the rock throwing incident suggests this was important and integral element in shaping Nat's consciousness about identity. Nat ran to avoid being injured. Running away, regardless of the situation, could not have been a boost to his masculinity much less his self-esteem. This incident reinforced his passion for the game of basketball and allowed him to emerge himself or even hide from complex issues by over-investing his time. Equally important, it enhanced or made him aware that being different and navigating through homogenous communities of contested spaces could result in serious consequences.⁷⁸

This and other minor incidents did not necessarily draw Holman closer to his faith but it did sensitized him to the experience of discrimination and basketball could've been by default a vehicle for assimilation, while maintaining one's identity through individual performance. For Nat Holman basketball was a metaphor of life as opposed to an element of life. This is perhaps why Holman was such a basketball man. One could forget or focus less on individual differences and more on similarities in achieving the objective between the lines which was to play well enough to win the game. Anything beyond the field of play became political, and complicated; cultural and racial differences - the bane of society's problems - was something Nat divested from.

Holman raised athletic competition with his siblings to a different level by earning varsity letters in four sports – soccer, baseball, football, and basketball while enrolled at

⁷⁸ Author Interview, 8 June, 2013.

commerce high school. Holman also earned the distinction of being named an all-scholastic in soccer and basketball.⁷⁹

As a sophomore, Holman was named captain of the basketball team that captured the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) title and virtually functioned as coach during the remainder of his tenure. Despite his involvement in interscholastic sports, Holman never lost sight of his academic goals and still found time to serve as president of the student council.⁸⁰

During his sophomore year, he led commerce to the New York City championship. As varsity captain, he led by example scoring all but 4 points in a 20-15 victory over Boys High. Upon graduation, he continued his post-secondary schooling at the Savage School for Physical Education (which later became part of New York University), and played basketball for two seasons going undefeated with a 30-0 record.⁸¹

Holman also demonstrated a promising future in baseball. For at least a month in 1919, two years after graduating from Savage in 1917, Holman played baseball with the Chicago Americans earning more than \$2,000 for his services. He was offered a more lucrative contract as a pitcher with the Cincinnati Reds but instead he decided to focus on

⁷⁹ Interview with Nat Holman 34.

⁸⁰ Nat Holman: The Man, The Legend and CCNY

⁸¹ Murry R. Nelson The Originals: the New York Celtics invent modern basketball (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1999) 70; "Holman Wins for Commerce Five," New York Tribune, 18 December 1915: 17.

basketball and promoting physical education, the latter would earn him praise throughout his career including from J. Edgar Hoover.⁸²

Located in midtown Manhattan on Broadway and 65th Street (at the location to where Lincoln Center currently sits), Commerce High School followed a rigorous academic program; one that mirrored some of city's specialized public high schools including Stuyvesant and Brooklyn Technical. In order to graduate each student is required to complete more than 3,000 periods of instruction (each period is fifty minutes) over the course of six years (with a minimum of three), which includes studying a foreign language for three years. Needless to say Holman, completed these requirements in four years while lettering in four varsity sports.⁸³

While attending Savage, Holman concurrently played professionally with the New York Knickerbockers until earning his degree in physical education in 1917. After graduation and a brief career playing professional baseball, Holman was appointed as a full-time instructor of physical education and basketball coach at CCNY. His responsibilities also included coaching soccer and the freshman basketball team while teaching courses in hygiene. Despite this demanding schedule Holman continued to play professionally.⁸⁴

During World War I, Holman relinquished his position as coach and enlisted in the Navy where he served little more than a year. Upon discharge, he returned to CCNY

⁸² Morris Weiner, "Jews in Sports: Have You Heard That," Jewish Advocate, 4 September 1942.

⁸³ George Locke "The High School of Commerce, New York City" The School Review, Vol. 11, No. 7, (September 1903): 560.

⁸⁴ Nat Holman Resume. 1, February 1957. Box 6, Nat Holman papers, City College of New York Archives & Special Collections, City College of New York, New York, NY. 8, August 2012.

in 1919 and was renamed head basketball coach. Holman remarked during an interview year's later, "I think my brother Morris put in a good word for me." At twenty-three, Holman was one of the youngest coaches in the country. His new found responsibility allowed him to continue playing professionally. During the 1919 season Holman competed for two teams, the Bridgeport Blue Ribbons of Connecticut and the Whirlwind Athletic Association in Newark.⁸⁵

Holman's professional endeavors as a player continued throughout the 1920s. He moonlighted playing for Scranton of the Pennsylvania State League (1919-1920) and Germantown of the Eastern League (1920-1921). He also played simultaneously for several independent teams (since all of the top leagues suspended operations during the Great War) before joining the Celtics in 1921.⁸⁶

Holman continued this demanding schedule as player during his inaugural season as varsity coach. He managed to negotiate a rather unique arrangement with the college; one that allowed him to continue playing professional basketball, while remaining the coach. If there was ever a scheduling conflict which required him to leave a game early or if he was arriving late from a road trip with the Celtics, Morris, his younger brother would assume coaching duties in his absence. His dual career did not interfere with his responsibilities as coach. In his first season as coach, CCNY finished the season with a win-loss record of 13-3. Holman quickly implemented his system but more importantly, his players bought into his philosophy.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Vita *ibid*; Nelson 70.

⁸⁶ Nelson 70.

⁸⁷ Interview with Nat Holman 69.

As a player, Holman was good shooter, a great passer, and a splendid court general. He knew at a glance how to exploit an uneven matchup on defense. Holman, who learned the game on the city streets, adjusted easily to the Celtic style of play which involved constant motion by the players and swift ball movement. Between 1921 and 1928, the Celtics won more than 90 percent of their games and their style of play was adopted by hundreds of teams from high school to the professional ranks. Not surprisingly, Holman quickly implemented his system, and his players bought into his philosophy.⁸⁸

The 1920-1921 squad finished the season with an 11-4 record. In two seasons as coach Holman amassed an astounding winning percentage of 0.774, one virtually unmatched by any coach, much less one under the age of twenty-five. Holman continued his stellar play on the court, during a five-game series in April against the Albany Senators, champions of the New York State League. The Miners of Scranton won that series three games to two. By this time Holman was considered the best ever to play the game and during an August trip to Pittsfield, Connecticut, he announced that he'd signed a contract with the New York Celtics.⁸⁹

Holman was an exceptional basketball player. A poll of sportswriters named him, the third greatest player of the half-century. Sport Magazine chose him to the All-time College All-America second team. He was named All-time All-Pro first team in 1941. Joe Lapchick, a player for the Original Celtics, regarded as the best center of his era,

⁸⁸ Interview with Nat Holman 56.

⁸⁹ Nelson 71; "Holman Signs with Celtics" New York Tribune, 14 August 1921: 19.

called Holman “the brains of the original Celtics.” A team considered by many to be the greatest professional team in history.⁹⁰

With his cat-like skills, Holman dribbled and passed the ball almost flawlessly. He was also a great shooter that played excellent defense and could anticipate every move of every man on the floor. At 5’11 and 165-pounds, he was not by any stretch a big man but a perceptive one. His unique skill-set proved to be extremely valuable to the Celtics during his eight-year tenure with the team. From 1921 to 1929, Holman competed in more than 130 games or so per season. He remarked “It was a great thrill playing in those games. With no backboard, we felt humiliated if we took a shot without getting in close where we had a real chance to score.”⁹¹

Milton Gross summarized Holman’s contributions to the Celtics for *Sport* magazine in 1947. He noted that Holman was “an artist.” He directed the Shamrock short passing, weaving and meshing game. He set up their block plays and was instrumental in devising what even today is one of the most important features of the game – the pivot play. That stratagem revolutionized basketball with constant player movement, sharing of the basketball, along with great team defense which led to the vaunted fast-break. Every game in which the Celtics appeared was a virtual clinic. College coaches flocked to serve the finesse with which the master, Holman, could feint an opponent out of position, and run him into the pivot or post. He would then cut by him, receive a short give-and-go pass, and lay up for an easy basket.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Nelson 86.

⁹¹ Nelson 87.

⁹² Nelson 87.

The Celtics were a team largely comprised of Jewish and Irish players but that demographic composition did not initially start that way. The team was originally composed as a settlement house team in the Chelsea neighborhood just north of Greenwich Village on the lower west side of Manhattan. The neighborhood largely comprised of first and second generation Irish families, had a reputation of being hard-nosed, particularly for oppositional ethnic groups.

When Holman signed in 1921, he was the only Jewish player on the team comprised of three Irishmen, John (Pete) Barry, Johnny Witty, George Haggerty, and Czech native Joe Lapchick. Another Irishman, Eddie Burke joined the team in 1922 along with Philadelphia native Dave Banks. The ethnic diversity of the team played well with the media. Newspapers noted the ethnic backgrounds of professional players in an effort to exploit interest on ethnic lines. One New York City writer, “Lank” Leonard referred to Lapchick as the “tall pole,” despite the fact he wasn’t Polish but of Czechoslovakian descent. In 1927, Dave Banks, who played with the Philadelphia SPHA’s prior to joining the Celtics, was referred by Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Gordon MacKay as the “young Hebrew,” or the “Hebrew star.”⁹³

These labels were not made with malice, but to identify with players with certain groups that could either serve as vehicle for breaking stereotypes or reinforcing them. This ethnic reporting played well with fans and contributed to the popularity of the Celtics. The player’s level of talent was the ultimate factor in the success of team but the investment of fans through ethnic pride served as a model for achievement. This

⁹³ Nelson 20.

encouraged assimilation for countless numbers of immigrant and ethnic Children who had few role models that openly mirrored their identity.

The Celtics were ethnically diverse but unfortunately not racially diverse. Due to by large the racial composition of his neighborhood Holman's early interaction with non-Jews off the court as an adolescent was limited. A great deal of his experience occurred usually at the expense of anti-Semitism. However, basketball brought opportunities for interracial cooperation more than other facets of society. The experience as an adolescent of getting rocks thrown at him for transgressing racial/cultural borders was a lesson or an indoctrination about society as to what areas of miscegenation are permissible. Even though during a baseball game, a member of the opposing team transgressed the parameters of sportsmanship to exercise prejudice, Holman took solace in their commonalties which was the game of baseball. Both teams enjoyed and played the game and wanted to win. Perhaps through the progression of time, these boys as teenagers and young adults would focus on their commonalties which were the love of baseball. At the end of the game miscegenation could quietly recede into the background and everyone could continue living in their homogenous corners of the world. Society was flawed but basketball was not.

Holman and the rest of the team had no problems competing against teams of other racial backgrounds. On March 22, 1925 the Celtics played the New York Rens, the top all-black basketball team for the first time defeating them 49-38 in front of a capacity crowd in New York. A calm Celtics team played well from the outset with as one reporter describes "amused expression" on their faces. The Celtics were not startled at all

by the capacity crowd that filled the stairways in this much publicized contest. For the better part of the decade, the Celtics played the New York Rens, the best all-black basketball team, several times winning the first five years while capturing the world's championship title. On December 22, 1925 the Celtics, for the first time, lost the world Championship to the Rens 37-30 at the Renaissance casino. More three-thousand fans witnessed this historical event. The Celtics were much more physical including Holman who played exceptionally rough defense against the younger, more fleet-of-foot team. The Celtics were called for fifteen fouls by referee Chris Hulswould, the only sanctioned colored basketball official in the east. In a demonstration that the victory was not a fluke, a month later, the Rens defeated the Celtics again at the West Orange, New Jersey armory by a score of 32-28.⁹⁴

The battles continued with regularity until 1928 when the Celtics were forced by the American Basketball league to disband and disperse its roster to other teams in the league. Nat Holman along with David Banks were sent to the newly formed New York Hokoahs where they concluded the season with a win-loss record of 18-25 for a .418 winning percentage – the lowest in Holman's professional career. Holman remained with the team until they disbanded in December during the 1929-30 season. Holman then joined the dreadful Syracuse All-Americans franchise but they too would cease operations in January before the season concluded with a 4-20 record. Holman then joined the Chicago Bruins franchise where they finished the season a respectable 29-25

⁹⁴ "Thousands witnessed the thrilling battle that brought victory to the Renaissance Five," New York Amsterdam News, 23 December 1925: 6; "Renaissance Five Clinches Claim to World's Title by Again Beating Celtics" The New York Amsterdam News 3 February 1926: 6; "Blasé New York Hoodwinked as the Rens lose to Celtics in 'hectic' game," Pittsburgh Courier, 28 March 1928; Nat Holman's performance is unknown as the author did not identify any of the scorers from the Celtics team only those from the Harlem Rens.

win-loss record for a .537 winning percentage. Between the cavalcade of franchises Holman still managed to score an average of 4.8 points a game which was tenth in the league but only two points from second place.⁹⁵

In 1930, after 13 seasons of playing professional basketball, Holman decided to end his career and devote his time solely to coaching; but not necessarily at CCNY. In June of that year, Holman accepted the position of director of physical education at the Young Men's Hebrew Association (Y.M.H.A.). A new building was being constructed on the corner of 92nd street and Lexington Avenue in Manhattan's Upper-East Side at a cost of \$2.5 Million. The facility was described as state-of-the-art and one of its kind. This additional position served as opportunity to not only continue an additional income stream but also an opportunity to develop new talent and recruit players to CCNY. Holman's compensation for this new position was an annual salary of \$5,000. The average salary for the working man in 1930 was \$1,900 per year.⁹⁶

One of his responsibilities was supervising an annual budget that rose as much as \$33,000 a year while turning profits at time where few recreational endeavors were doing so during the great depression.

In the meantime, at CCNY the basketball team was doing extremely well. Since assuming duties as coach in 1919, the Holman-coached Beavers won-loss record was 120-42 for a .740 winning percentage. Fifty-one points higher than his career winning percentage of .689. Unfortunately, national championship tournaments had not been

⁹⁵ [The Association for Professional Basketball Research](http://www.theassociationforprofessionalbasketballresearch.com), 1997, 11 July 2014 <APBR.org>.

⁹⁶ George Joel "Nat Holman to lead Y.M.H.A., Gives up Basketball playing" [The Jewish Advocate](http://www.jewishadvocate.com), 3 June 1930: 2; Levine 20.

established until the late 1930s, otherwise CCNY would have certainly been a serious contender for the national title. Holman's second decade as coach of the CCNY Beavers would turn out to be statistically, one of the most dominating stretches of in the history of college basketball.

The 1931-32 season started with uncertainty, more than sixty players contested for a limited number of slots for the junior and varsity team. CCNY would assemble a group of players that would end up becoming statistically the winningest stretch of Nat Holman's career. From 1931-1934, Holman's teams compiled 43-3 record with an astounding .934 winning percentage - thirty-five percent higher than his career average.

The 1931 season began with more than sixty players trying out for nineteen roster spots on the junior and varsity teams. This included the veteran trio of Joe Davidoff, Moe Spahn, and Julie Trupin. These three players would form the nucleus that would lead CCNY during the first half of the decade. Coupled with the returning upperclassmen were Moe Goldman, forward Pete Bereneson, and defensive stalwart Artie Kaufman, impact players promoted from the junior varsity. This trio of players were the nucleus for the next three seasons during that historic run.⁹⁷

The plethora of talent caused Coach Holman to be optimistic of the teams' success. Holman thought so highly of this team that he arranged several practices and

⁹⁷ "Lavender Quintet Holds First Drill" The Campus, 13 October 1931: 1; "St. Nick Quintet Holds First Drill" The Campus, 11 October 1933: 1.

scrimmage sessions with the Original Celtics. As expected, CCNY held its own against the seasoned professionals underscoring Holman's prediction.⁹⁸

The 1931-32 team finished the season with a record of 15-1, for a .941 winning percentage with their only loss at Temple University in Philadelphia, the highest win total of Holman's career as coach to that point, a mark that would not be eclipsed until nearly a decade later by the 1940-41 team. In its final regular season contest, a 33-21 victory over NYU, the Beavers won the mythical metropolitan area and eastern league championship thanks to their undefeated record versus the New York City teams which included victories over St. John's, Manhattan, St. Francis College, Fordham (twice) and NYU. A feat last accomplished during the 1924-25 season. Despite their loss to Temple, CCNY could lay claim to the mythical Eastern league title⁹⁹ based on their won-loss record. Also noteworthy is the contest attracted more than 5,000 spectators at the 102nd regiment armory in Washington Heights, one of the largest crowds to attend a CCNY game to that point. The large crowds continued for the next several seasons and drew the attention of Ned Irish, who recently obtained a position to coordinate its athletic events. A former newspaper sportswriter – turned executive – Irish was able to convince Holman and the CCNY athletic department to stage some of their home games in their 18,496-seat facility on Eighth Avenue and forty-Ninth Street.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ "Lavender Gridmen to Meet Jaspers in charity tussle," The Campus, 29 October 1931: 1.

⁹⁹ There was no official league championship but the team with the best record in the Northeast region would be recognized by their peers as the champion.

¹⁰⁰ "Lavender Quintet to Climax Season with Violets," The Campus, 26 February 1932: 1; "Lavender Trounces Violet, 33-21" The Campus, 29 February 1932: 1; Temple concluded its 1931-32 season with a record of 13-7, which included losses to Fordham and St. John's Universities.

CCNY concluded its historic season by adding another chapter to its illustrious history. At some point during the season, Holman arranged a charity game against Howard University, a historically black private-University in Washington D.C. The game was the first time CCNY competed against a historically black college (HBCU) and conversely the first time Howard played against a predominately white institution (PWI). Seventy-percent of the proceeds were donated to the Gibson Committee on Emergency Negro unemployed relief fund to alleviate the conditions in Harlem and the remaining thirty percent to the Community Chest of Washington, D.C. CCNY won the interracial contest by a 43-26 score. More than fifteen-hundred were attendance to witness this historic event. Even more importantly, participating in this event demonstrated Holman's nobility and his ability to acknowledge and embrace athletes of any racial or ethnic background as equals. Howard University, like its City College counterpart prides itself on academic excellence and is considered by many to be as prestigious (in servicing historically underrepresented students) as Harvard. The University can claim a list of prominent alumni including, David Norman Dinkins, the first African-American mayor of New York City, whom spent a career as an attorney before moving into politics.¹⁰¹

Despite the lopsided score and disparity of talent, the Howard Bison according to a campus reporter, fought "a surprisingly stiff fight." The reporter was perhaps not privy to how the Bison, despite being over-matched would respond to not only this historic meeting but also the grounds for this meeting which was to aid Negro relief during this era of the economic depression. Howard's style of play was very similar to CCNY's, one

¹⁰¹ "Lavender quintet to meet Howard U tomorrow evening," The Campus, 4 March 1932:1; "Lavender Quintet Overcomes Howard in Post-Season," The Campus, 8 March 1932: 1.

that placed a premium on speed and short-precision passing. Unfortunately, there was gulf between the two teams in regards to talent. Even though the starting five were out-performed, Howard did have some success against CCNY's reserves.¹⁰²

The Campus, the CCNY student newspaper published a photo of the two captains, Howard's Sylvester Hall and CCNY's Joe Davidoff shaking hands before the contest. The staging of this photo underscores the significance of this event which reaches beyond the immediate perception of sportsmanship. It also demonstrates a human and global community united together for a cause with basketball, as the vehicle. Even though these two schools were from drastically different communities but with similar academic missions, it was their respective basketball teams that provided a bridge where commonalities could be celebrated for a charitable cause.¹⁰³ CCNY played integrated teams featuring black players prior to Howard University but black representation was always minimal and certainly never an entire team. At the conclusion of the season Holman released *Winning Basketball*, the first of his three books. The book deconstructs the art of winning from both sides of the ball. The two are interconnected but Holman breaks them down individually.¹⁰⁴

The 1932-33 CCNY team continued the standard of excellence from the previous season by equaling the number of losses with one, against thirteen victories. The final score was a 36-23, over rival NYU at the armory where last year's contest was held. Captain Moe Spahn and Julie Trupin played their final games while Juniors Moe

¹⁰² "Lavender Quintet Overcomes Howard in Post-Season," The Campus, 8 March 1932: 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ "Lavender Quintet Overcomes Howard in Post-Season," The Campus, 8 March 1932: 1.

Goldman and Artie Kaufman made their contributions that continued the program's success during their three-year tenure. One noteworthy player from that team was Samuel Winograd, who in addition to playing varsity baseball (he would later serve as captain) was the only starting underclassman. Winograd, a defensive stalwart, would later serve as an assistant to coach Holman in 1937. Ten years later in 1947 Winograd would become athletic director and theoretically Nat Holman's superior and senior administrator. Winograd was one of several former players who ended up in coaching for Nat Holman.¹⁰⁵

During the 1933-34 season, CCNY won their first fourteen games behind the stellar play of Goldman, Kaufman, and junior Sam Winograd, who was second on the team in scoring behind Goldman. Their season concluded with their only loss, a 24-18 defeat to downtown rival NYU. The players were obviously crestfallen in coming so close to completing their season undefeated and retaining the mythical metropolitan and eastern titles. For team captain Moe Goldman, the loss concluded a three-year career and one of the highest winning percentages during such a span.¹⁰⁶

The following season Sam Winograd was named captain of a team that finished with a mediocre 10-6 record and the most losses in one season by Holman coached team to date. Despite the disappointing season Winograd, a multisport athlete who also played varsity baseball and would later play professionally for the New York Giants, earned All-American and All-Metropolitan honorable mention for his accomplishments on the

¹⁰⁵ "Winograd to aid Holman," *The New York Times*, 27 October 1937: 25; "Winograd is named head of athletics at C.C.N.Y.," *New York Times* 26 June 1947: 32.

¹⁰⁶ "Lavender caps brilliant season with sole defeat," *The Campus*, 7 March 1934: 1.

hardwood. Equally important was Winograd's development as a leader. Aside from his exceptional basketball talent he also embodied other qualities that exemplified leadership despite playing only basketball for a couple of years. These qualities were recognized early on when Winograd was named team captain during his tenure at Thomas Jefferson high school in Brooklyn. He was not recruited to play basketball at CCNY. Winograd only tried out for the team because of Nat Holman's reputation as a disciplinarian and cerebral approach to the game - qualities that certainly resonated with Winograd.¹⁰⁷

In his lone season on junior varsity during the 1931-32 season, Winograd became a standout player by leading the team in scoring in route to an 11-1 win-loss record. This team like the varsity squad was considered one of the best ever. A sportswriter for the *Campus* describes him as "tall, strong, has a wonderful pass, is fast and should make a serious bid for a regular berth" on the varsity squad next season.¹⁰⁸

In 1937, two years later after graduating from CCNY in 1935, Winograd was hired by the athletic department to coach for the junior varsity baseball team. Later that fall his responsibilities increased as he was hired to assist Holman with the varsity basketball team. His primary responsibilities were to identify players with the most potential from tryouts and coach junior varsity (JV) by implementing the Holman system. Since CCNY did not offer athletic scholarships and did minimal recruiting from the prep school ranks they had to rely open tryouts from the student body. In 1933, more than seventy-five candidates tried out for only a handful of spots on the varsity roster. That

¹⁰⁷ Herbert G. Richels "Sport Sparks" *The Campus*, 12 March 1935: 3; "Winograd is named head of athletics at C.C.N.Y.," *New York Times* 26 June 1947: 32.

¹⁰⁸ "Junior Varsity Five Ends Hard Season" *The Campus*, 2 March 1932: 4.

same year junior varsity, a team comprised of underclassmen had at least eighty aspiring candidates. Winograd's responsibility would have been to assist, if not outright manage the process of diminishing the pool of players to a more manageable level.¹⁰⁹

Winograd mastered the Holman system quickly as a freshman, so it was fitting that when his playing career ended and the head coaching position became available he would be a prime candidate. CCNY was an institution known more for its academics than its athletic programs and without the benefit of athletic scholarships, locating high-caliber players required luck. With its highly-competitive entrance exam and rigorous academic programs, the student was certainly placed before the athlete.

Winograd remained an assistant coach until 1943 when he relinquished his title and joined the Army. Prior to his resignation, Winograd coached the baseball team and was given the rank of instructor. After his discharge from the Army in 1946, he was re-hired as the baseball coach before being promoted to faculty manager of athletics in 1947. The following year he was promoted to the rank of Assistant professor.¹¹⁰

In 1938, Nat Holman resigned from his post as athletic director of the YMHA. Between his coaching and teaching responsibilities at the College, time was scarce. His responsibilities to the college became effectively a full-time position. This was perhaps a

¹⁰⁹ "St. Nick Quintet Holds First Drill" The Campus, 11 October 1933; Larry Weiner, "All Sports Newsletter," Box 1, CCNY Press Clippings Folder 1916-1940, The City College Athletic Association. City College of New York Archives & Special Collections, City College of New York, New York, NY. 8, August 2012.

¹¹⁰ "Winograd is named head of athletics at C.C.N.Y.," New York Times 26 June 1947: 32; The title of faculty manager was the equivalent to Athletic Director but since Winograd was hired as a coach and instructor in the Hygiene and Physical Health department.

step of an increasing trend in college basketball, in which coaching shifts from a seasonal to a full-time, year-round position.¹¹¹

During the 1938-39 season Winograd's first as the coach of JV and the assistant coach to Holman was a period of transition, the team finished with six wins and eight losses. These players became the feeder to the varsity team the following season in 1939-40 which finished with a record of eight wins and eight losses. The losses eclipsed Holman's coaching high of six-losses from the previous season. Unfortunately for CCNY, they would continue to struggle as a unit and remain with a sub-winning percentage.

One of the issues during the tryouts in 1938 was that even the players whom demonstrated the most potential and awarded a position of the team never played High school basketball. The lack of experience from these reserve players fortunate enough to make the varsity team, could not provide an antidote to squad that struggled to remain competitive through a schedule which featured formidable opponents.¹¹²

BOBBY SAND, THE BUFFER AND RIGHT HAND MAN

Assistant coaches play a prominent role in the success of an intercollegiate basketball program. While the responsibilities may vary by program to program the constant objective is to "assist" the head coach in establishing the goals of the team. The duties of Assistant coaches, particularly at athletic scholarship granting programs, include player development, scouting, team travel, running practices, but arguably the most

¹¹¹ Louis Effrat "On Basketball Courts," New York Times, 29 December 1938: 23.

¹¹² "Court Squad Sees Moves," The Campus, 25 October 1938: 3.

important task is recruiting, as it is extremely difficult to win games without talented players.¹¹³

Though CCNY was not an athletic powerhouse it still had administrative and instructional tasks to fulfill to which at a point became a burden for one man to administer. In 1938, Norman Tandy served as team manager to assist with many of these responsibilities. After several years of performing double duty as baseball and basketball coach, Holman hired, Harold “Bobby” Sand another former player as an assistant coach whose sole responsibility was to assist Holman in shouldering the responsibility of running the program.

When Sand was hired in 1941 as assistant coach, Holman had already won 252 games in twenty-one years at CCNY but he was coming off his worst season (8-8) to date. Sand, who played for Holman from 1936 to 1939, earned a reputation as self-less and cerebral player. In 1939 during his senior year, Sand was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, a national scholastic fraternity. This was the first time in the history of the college, that a basketball player would be bestowed with such an honor. Aside from his scholastic accomplishments, Sand was affable, studious and understood the intricate details of the game but also adept at recruiting talent.

Sand also served as a buffer between the players and Holman who garnered a reputation for being particularly rough on young players. According to Floyd Layne, a reserve guard on the 1949-50 championship team “He was a basketball man, very precise

¹¹³ Rhonda J. Singleton, “The Effect assistant coaches have on the success or failure of a Universities woman’s basketball Program” (Unpublished Thesis: Seton Hall University, 2003) 6.

and better known as the professor... When he told you to get something done, you'd better do it and do it his way. He was very strict but very helpful."¹¹⁴

Coaches whether willing or not, serve as mentors to players and often may give advice on how to manage other aspects of their lives. One Basketball coach spoke about their involvement in their players' lives. "You cannot eliminate the athletes' private lives. We talk about nutrition, their home, school and business life. If one of these stinks, it will distract them from their sport performance."¹¹⁵

Nat Holman did not particularly serve these other areas well. He was strictly hands off the athlete when it came to matters outside the gym, even though these external matters could hinder or at least be obstacle in a player's performance. Bruce Holman, his nephew, describes a common thought with many of his players. "As a person, they [the players] were not overly friendly with him," He continued, "he wasn't very social at all. The players respected him as a coach...not as a person."¹¹⁶

If there was a person who could fill the other areas to which Holman lacked, it was coach Bobby Sand; whom it many respects was the antithesis to Holman. Sand was affable, intelligent with a tendency to view life in a larger more nuanced context. Bobby was "A great person, very intelligent, who knew the game backwards and forward. He was a staunch person for the fundamentals of the game," replied Layne. He also added "we called him Phi Beta Sigma Bobby," because he was an A student throughout his

¹¹⁴ Floyd Layne (Author phone interview). 2 February 2013.

¹¹⁵ Gordon Bloom "The importance of mentoring in the development of coaches and athletes" International Journal of Sport Psychology, Volume 29 (1998): 277.

¹¹⁶ Bruce Holman (Author phone interview). Folder 3 7:35. 8 June 2013.

college career. Layne continues “the informality of coaching was more or less with Bobby... He also helped me as a person...a very influential person in my life.”¹¹⁷

The sentiments about Bobby Sand were ubiquitous. When he wasn't mentoring his players he was devising new schemes for the offense (since Holman tended to favor defense). In reality Holman stressed competency and execution on both sides of the ball but since he had the most profound respect for Sand's cerebral abilities, he gave him more flexibility in that area. During games Sand would call for most of the substitutions and when things didn't work out favorably, Holman had no qualms about dressing him down with profanity-laced tirades in the presence of the team. Despite this unfavorable behavior, Sand spurned offers to become the head coach at other universities. Sand was Holman's sounding board and the Calvary when the situation got out of hand.¹¹⁸

Sand practically lived at City College. His wife had a chronic heart ailment and his daughter suffered from tuberculosis. Both of them spent most of the winter months in Florida, leaving Sand with additional time to focus on the team. During vacation periods, the CCNY gymnasium would be available to high school teams and Sand would arrange for two schools to have a scrimmage against one another. He got to know all the players and identified anyone who had any potential for CCNY.¹¹⁹

Even though Holman had successful teams fully capable of executing his style of play, he never possessed the talent needed to produce a national championship. CCNY, known more for its academic rigor than for its athletic programs, did not offer athletic

¹¹⁷ Floyd Layne (Author phone interview). 23 January 2013.

¹¹⁸ Charley Rosen, Scandals of '51: How Gamblers Almost Killed College Basketball (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978): 56.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

scholarships, due in part to the fact the university did not charge tuition. The only obstacle for acceptance was its rigorous entrance exams that provided many intelligent, high-academic achieving students from working-class backgrounds access to a premium level of higher education but without costs associated with private and parochial institutions in New York City like Columbia, St. Johns and Fordham Universities. As a result, the college was dubbed “Poor Man’s Harvard” and “Harvard on the Hudson.” With its strong emphasis on academics, acquiring top flight athletes to matriculate at CCNY was challenging.¹²⁰

Sand was very much involved in every aspect of recruiting. Prior to his arrival recruiting was minimal and virtually non-existent. CCNY’s tough academic standing provided a remedy for that. If there was a player he felt could help the program, Sand could persuade him then convince their parents. Sand was a self-contained academic transition unit. He filed the paperwork to admissions, counseling players, and even served in the role of academic advisor, recommending courses that commensurated with their academic prowess. Sand served as sports information director writing essays and other materials for the media guide and souvenir program.¹²¹

Sand also arrived at CCNY during a very tumultuous time. The United States was on the verge of entering World War II and millions of young men, some whom might have gone to college instead enlisted in the armed forces. The draft severely depleted the talent pool. Some colleges did not field teams while others played a reduced schedule.

¹²⁰ James Traub, City on a Hill: testing the American dream at City College, (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1994): 10; “The City College of New York/About/History” The City College of New York, 21 July 2013 <<http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/about/history.cfm>>.

¹²¹ Bobby Sand, “Respite, Adspice, Prosprice” CCNY vs. Queens College souvenir program, (New York, New York: Madison Square Garden, November 26, 1949): 5.

CCNY continued to field teams but lost several players to military induction. To counter their departure, players from junior varsity were promoted during the season as replacements. Their inexperience and the lack of depth over the next two seasons contributed to the disappointing seasons of 1942-43 and 1943-44 in which the Beavers finished with records of 8-10 and 6-11, two of the worst seasons of Holman's coaching career. Prior to those disappointing years, Holman inherited a gem of player during the 1940-41 season when a young man named William 'Red' Holzman transferred from the University of Baltimore.

RED HOLZMAN: STUDIOUS PUPIL, MASTER TEACHER

Holzman was phenomenal two-sport athlete from New York City, who played basketball and handball at Franklin K. Lane High School in Queens. Holzman was recruited and received athletic scholarship from Charles Edward 'Bucky' Miller, a former two-sport athlete (football and basketball), whom competed for the University of Maryland. Miller, who served as an assistant of the programs predecessor John M. Odgen, was hired as the head coach in 1938 and attempted to continue the success of a team that two years earlier had won nineteen of twenty-one games. Miller attempted to raise the profile of the program by scheduling more high-profile opponents including Stanford and the University of Oregon.¹²²

As a sophomore and reserve forward during the 1939-40 season, Holzman was a key contributor on a team that was attempting to become a force on the national stage.

¹²² The Reporter, University of Baltimore Yearbook, (Baltimore, Maryland: University of Baltimore, 1939) 81; The Reporter, University of Baltimore Yearbook, (Baltimore, Maryland: University of Baltimore, 1937) 93; Red Holzman and Harvey Frommer, Red on Red, (New York, New York: Bantam, 1988) 10.

The highlights of the season were road victories over Villanova (47-42) and the Georgetown Hoyas (40-34), a game in which Holzman scored 11 points. In a hard-fought 45-43 loss to the highly-touted Stanford Cardinal, Holzman contributed 13 points. The Baltimore Bees completed the season with fourteen wins and five losses. The program appeared to be heading in right direction.¹²³

Despite his individual accomplishments and the success of the team, Holzman was unhappy. He was homesick and never fully adjusted to the campus and the culture of the city which was vastly segregated. Holzman didn't eat much and noted the food was 'foreign' and "not like the soul food" his mother made. After that season he returned to New York City and transferred to City College.¹²⁴

In 1940 after a season in which CCNY finished with a 500. Record of eight wins and losses, Holzman's arrival paid immediate dividends. In his first season, the Beavers finished the season at 16-5 and in 1941-42 his senior season, a team decimated by injuries and military inductees, finished with a record of 16-2. At only five-foot ten and with lightning quick speed, he commanded the attention of the opposition. "Holzman was the team," noted the *Microcosm*, the City College yearbook. They continued, "Holzman fed the passes, out jumped all opponents to grab the ball...took the ball downcourt and ran the team on the floor."¹²⁵

¹²³ The Reporter, University of Baltimore Yearbook, (Baltimore, Maryland: University of Baltimore, 1940) 97.

¹²⁴ Holzman 11.

¹²⁵ *Microcosm*, The City College of New York Yearbook, (New York, New York: the City College of New York, 1943) 81

Holzman's execution of the teams' mission of defense first paid dividends as the team reached the National Invitational Tournament in Madison Square Garden and won the metropolitan championship which included defeating its downtown rival, New York University. Coach Holman tutored Holzman on his style of play and he executed exceptionally well. Later on, when Holzman had the opportunity to play and coach at the professional level he would credit Holman for instructing him to play championship level basketball. Nat "taught you with an eye to playing pro ball," noted Holzman. "He had good theories about team defense, and I picked up a lot of insights from him. Holman always gave me the toughest guy to guard and tutored me in denying the passing lanes." Many years later when Holzman got into coaching, he applied those same defense-oriented theories. Holzman utilized a technique by playing a big guy from the front to deny him the ball. A practice that proved vital when Holzman coached the New York Knickerbockers decades later during championship title runs in 1970 and 1973. Ironically, Holman and Holzman are two native New Yorkers who were able to lead their respective New York teams to championship titles in basketball and ironically in the same building – Madison Square Garden.¹²⁶

WARTIME BLUES AND GARDEN GREEN

The United States entry in World War II meant that hundreds of thousands of young men would be called upon to serve their country for military duty. The total number of Americans that served in the military exceeded twelve million which included

¹²⁶ Holzman12.

casualties north of 400,000. In all, 310 CCNY students and alumni perished in active duty during the War.¹²⁷

Across the nation, war mobilization dramatically and drastically reduced the size and scope of intercollegiate athletics. Thousands of athletes enlisted leaving many of their former teams shorthanded. In many instances, some athletes left mid-season or departed unannounced. During the 1941-42 season, Red Holzman's senior year, a couple of players did exactly just that; including Harold Judenfriend, the senior captain of the 1942-43 team. Rations on petroleum contributed to travel restrictions and many teams were forced to reduce their schedules. Some schools even disbanded or temporarily suspended their athletic programs. A majority of the varsity programs disbanded were football. The large number of players and resources associated with running the program for a number of smaller institutions made it a financial burden they could no longer bear. CCNY would discontinue their football program in 1951. A year later NYU would follow suit.¹²⁸

During the middle of the war years, 1942-1944, the decline in talent was pronounced. This was reflected in their win-loss schedule. Over the course of the next two seasons CCNY would lose 21 games, including a record of 8-10 during the 1942-43 season, which became the first losing record in Holman's coaching career. Unfortunately, it would get worse the following year when the team finished with a 6-11 record.

Fortunately for Holman, there would be a silver-lining. The junior varsity team finished

¹²⁷ Memorial plaques providing the numbers and honoring those who gave their lives can be found in the second floor rotunda of the North Academic Center on the CCNY campus.

¹²⁸ CCNY vs. Queens College souvenir program, (New York, New York: Madison Square Garden, November 26, 1949): 5; "Football in the Balance" New York Times 5 April 1951.

the season undefeated with nine victories. Also during that season several freshmen were added to the squad to replace injured or players drafted into the military. One of those talented young men was Sidney Trubowitz, a player with blistering speed and a scorer's mentality. During his sophomore year he earned All-Metropolitan and All-American honors while breaking two CCNY scoring records; the first, for the most points in one season with 240 and the most points in a single game with 34. During the 1946-47 season Trubowitz would later serve as co-captain with Paul Schmones; another talented freshman from the 1943 squad who served as captain of the 1945-46 team.¹²⁹

In 1944-45, the last full season during the war, there were thirteen players on the roster, this did not include Sidney Trubowitz, who was in the process of serving a two-year enlistment in the United States Naval Academy. Nor did it include Rube Feldman, who also enlisted in the military or Norm Zareko, who directed all of his athletic investment into running cross-country. Without many of talented players from the junior varsity, the expectations of varsity team were somewhat uncertain. Paul Schmones, Harold Korovin, and Seymour Friedman were returning players who could provide leadership but with a thin reserve unit on the bench, the question was who would follow.¹³⁰

With all the other fall varsity teams not faring well, morale around athletics was low, and basketball seemed to be the last gasp of lifting the campus' self-esteem. With

¹²⁹ City College vs. New York University souvenir program, (New York, New York: Madison Square Garden, March 11, 1947): 23.

¹³⁰Harvey Schiffer, "Holman to start promising year against Upsala," The Campus, 21 November 1946: 1; CCNY year-by-year basketball roster and season results. Box 5, City College Athletics, City College of New York Archives & Special Collections, City College of New York, New York, NY. 8, August 2012.

eight scheduled games at Madison Square Garden and with CCNY a huge drawing card, a successful team was certainly desired, not just financially but also for emotional well-being.

For many students, time seemed to be short. An institutional study revealed that twenty percent of the freshman class had to retain employment in order to financially support themselves while attending college. For CCNY and other City University students from working-class backgrounds this was somewhat of the norm. However, with many heads of households serving their country either in the military or through an industrial related capacity, many students were forced to shoulder some of the financial responsibilities. With the pool of fans quickly diminishing, attendance dwindling, coupled with two consecutive losing seasons, the Campus newspaper editorial made an emotional plea for student support, especially for the six games held in the Campus gymnasium.

“The City College brand of ball has always been a pleasure to watch for lovers of good basketball, and this year will be no exception. The Beavers, however, need support. In the Garden and especially at home, College rooters are a necessity. It’s your team, and what’s more, it’s a winning team. Give it your best. Get out there and give a good substantial yell.”¹³¹

The plea to the student body and building a positive outlook was successful. The first home game in the campus gymnasium was filled to capacity in a 66-41 victory against an overmatched Juniata College. Paul Schmones led all scorers with nineteen

¹³¹ Editorial, The Campus 22 November 1944: 2.

points. The energy continued throughout the semester when 18,000 fans witnessed the Beavers, rally from a 12-point deficit to upset St. John's University 42-41. A feat that required CCNY, with a two-point lead, to keep the ball away from their opponent for a whopping 90 seconds. After the victory the campus was buzzing again. One campus columnist noted, "Everyone is whispering, talking, wondering, thinking, all debating the same subject. Basketball, temporarily supplanted by politics and education once again reigns supreme at the college...Lunchroom debates on the court sport usually start as soon as there are two or three students seated at a table."¹³²

With the student body more engaged with basketball and game attendance increasing, the athletic department sought to capitalize of this newfound investment of school spirit. Athletic Director Anthony Orlando authorized monies from the athletic association budget after a committee approved a life-size likeness of the college's mascot – a beaver. Other metropolitan area schools such as St. John's and New York University had mascots but what made CCNY most interesting is that it's student body differed from its peers as it primarily served a working-class clientele; secondly, was the lone public institution, and finally since the College did not charge tuition the initiative of having a mascot with a budget of \$100 was largely in response to revenue generated from its basketball program which played a majority of its games away from campus and downtown at Madison Square Garden.¹³³

¹³² "Five Routs Juniata..." The Campus, 30 November 1944: 2; "Beavers beat St. John's..." The Campus, 4 January 1945: 1.

¹³³ "College to Get Eager Beaver," The Campus, 1 March 1946: 2.

The increase in revenue was not lost on the Campus newspaper editorial staff who made various pleas to the student body to attend games throughout the semester. The essay noted, “with home attendance holding up as well as can be expected, and Garden tilts, the major source of the team’s income, heading for new records, the team is headed for a campaign which will be success financially as well as in won-lost percentage.”¹³⁴

The fact that these student editors are this conscious of the economics of the intercollegiate sports demonstrates the potency of the commercialization and visibility of intercollegiate basketball. When the program suffers two losing consecutive seasons (and understandably so with the attrition of players to military service) it warrants attention because the team contributed to the emotional foundation of the student body; not to mention that other schools were affected by the war appeared to be doing fine. At the end of day, regardless of the circumstances where talent is downgraded en masse, championship tournaments were still conducted and someone had to be crowned champion. Unfortunately, for CCNY, for two consecutive seasons that champion (courtesy of the National Invitational Tournament) was rival St. John’s University who as a result of their success had comfortably secured metropolitan area bragging rights.

During the two seasons with a depleted roster the team continued to play a significant number of their home contests at the Garden. Ned Irish, a former sportswriter with the New York Telegram, who served as basketball director, sponsored the first regular season intercollegiate basketball doubleheader game on December 29, 1934. The

¹³⁴“Beavers beat St. John’s...” The Campus, 4 January 1945: 3; Tony Shub, “Editorial” The Campus, 1 March 1945: 3.

contest drew 16,180 spectators that witnessed New York University defeating Notre Dame 25-18; and Westminster outscoring St. John's University 37-33. The large crowd made it quite clear that college basketball was big business for Madison Square Garden.¹³⁵

College basketball games were not unfamiliar to the Garden, there were games played there before but they were generally local schools and charity events. The idea for scheduling multiple games was perhaps inspired by a 1931 fundraiser for Mayor James J. Walker's Unemployment Relief Fund. On January 19, six teams, took part in a tripleheader that drew 15,000 spectators that witnessed Columbia defeating Fordham 26-18; Manhattan over NYU 16-14, and in the marquee contest, St. John's upended C.C.N.Y. 17-9. More importantly the charity event totaled \$22, 854 in receipts.¹³⁶

The following fall, another trifecta of charity basketball games were scheduled involving the same schools this time on New Year's Eve. This was the only date to which all six schools would be available. At least one school, Fordham University expressed concern over interrupting the winter break for the student-athletes who were all dispersed while the campus was closed for holidays. Fordham agreed to participate and unbeknownst to faculty they shouldered the responsibility of providing board and housing during this time. Since this was a charity event for the mayor, negotiations and all the arrangements were made through and at city hall.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Sam Goldpaper, "Edward S. (Ned) Irish, Founder of Knicks Dies," New York Times, 22 December, 1982: B6.

¹³⁶ Arthur J. Daley "15,000 to see St. John's, Columbia, and Manhattan quintets triumph in the garden" New York Times 20 January 1931.

¹³⁷ "Six teams to play at Garden for the Unemployed," New York Times, 12 November 1931.

For the next three seasons, the double-header contests were exhibition games that were usually tied to a charity fund of some sort. However, during the 1934-35 season at the behest of Ned Irish, doubleheaders were no longer charitable contests but for profit entities. On January 3, 1935, CCNY defeated St. John's 32-22 before an announced crowd of 17,000. The setting was perfect for CCNY, who was coming off a three game road losing streak, and needed the additional motivation from the 'home' crowd which earlier witnessed NYU upending the heavily favored Kentucky Wildcats 23-22. This 'inaugural' home game at the Garden carried a steep ticket price of \$1.42, which included \$0.75 for upper level seating.¹³⁸

The actual number of students in attendance was difficult to quantify but the 17,000 patrons were definitely partial to CCNY even though St. John's played a number of its alternate home games at the Garden. Here are several theories as to why the crowd supported CCNY. First, CCNY was only public institution of the big-six schools to participate at the Garden during this time (Brooklyn College would play games there in the late 1930's), this sole municipal institution also drew and appealed to a broader geographical (serving New York City as opposed to one borough) and multicultural audience; secondly, this was CCNY's inaugural home game at the garden which certainly piqued curiosity from not only from CCNY supporters but basketball fans in general. Thirdly, for years CCNY's campus gymnasium which had a capacity of 1500 (including standing room) was bursting at the seams with some fans "hanging treacherously from

¹³⁸ Z. E. Lebolt "Quintet wins 32-22 topping St. John's in garden Contest", The Campus, 7 January 1935: 1.; "Prices for St. John's game," The Campus, 3 January 1935: 3.; Students with Athletic Association (A.A.) discount cards could receive reduced upper-level tickets at \$.40. Other sections did not offer reduced prices for students. Otherwise tickets were \$1.10, \$1.65, and \$2.20 for the lower level. The average household income in New York City was less than \$3,000 a year. Source: 100 years of U.S. Consumer spending, United States Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <<http://www.bls.gov/>>

the running track” that circled the gymnasium from above. It wasn’t uncommon to have thousands of people waiting outside attempting to gain entry, this was supplemented by the fact that CCNY was on a forty-three home court winning streak. The team had not lost a home game since 1930 and many seniors were perhaps especially intrigued by the prospect of that streak continuing at their new alternate home court. Finally, and one of the most important factors for the partiality of the crowd was Nat Holman. As a player for the Celtics, Holman played numerous games here during the early days of the garden when it opened in 1925. Interestingly, the first basketball game at M.S.G. featured the Original Celtics defeating the Washington Palace five 35-31 in a game marred by fouls. Nat Holman scored three of the team’s 35 points. But on this day Holman’s very successful City College team would take the floor for this historical moment which surely drew the interest of many basketball fans.¹³⁹

Playing contests at the Garden was inevitable. The costs of running an intercollegiate athletic department were constantly increasing and so was the size of the student body. CCNY had a student enrollment of nearly 17,000 and a gymnasium seating 1,300. Since CCNY did not charge tuition, its only recourse to generate revenue was to charge admission for athletic contests. In 1933, the Athletic Association (A.A.) (known today as the Athletic Department), experimented with a new plan to increase student membership and revenue; previously A.A. members were entitled to discounted tickets. The new plan called for free admission to all athletic contests (with the exception of

¹³⁹ Z.E. Lebolt, “Sport Sparks” The Campus, 28 November 1934: 3; “Celtics Nose out Palace Five,” New York Times, 7 December 1925.

football) in Lewisohn Stadium with a paid membership. This included baseball, Lacrosse and Track and Field events.¹⁴⁰

Basketball was the athletic department's primary source of revenue. In a 1928 report, basketball receipts for the 1927-28 fiscal year totaled \$4,896.33 or 41.3 percent of the athletic budget. Shifting select home games to the Garden would increase revenue and support the other varsity teams such as baseball and football which were losing money and becoming increasingly expensive to operate.¹⁴¹

The scheduling of games in the Garden provided CCNY with a greater source of revenue but also enhanced their visibility to a national audience. Nat Holman noted the move was a "step in the right direction...Few of the metropolitan colleges have courts with a seating capacity of over 2,000." Three of those schools Columbia, New York University, and CCNY accounted for three of the five largest student enrollments in the country.¹⁴²

In a city infatuated with college basketball this move was overdue. The intersectional contest between Notre Dame and New York University was hyped as a 'mythical championship' since Notre Dame finished the previous season with a 20-4 win-loss record and was considered the Midwest champion; conversely NYU was considered the Eastern Champion. Such ballyhoo amplified the idea of creating a tournament that would ultimately decide the National Championship. With an established venue as a

¹⁴⁰ "C.C.N.Y. Teams Net \$2,899.74 for year" *New York Times*, 21 August 1928.

¹⁴¹ "C.C.N.Y. Teams Net \$2,899.74 for year" *New York Times*, 21 August 1928.

¹⁴² "C.C.N.Y. ranks 5th with 16,890 Students Making This World's Largest College," *The Campus*, 10 February 1926: 1.

potential host in New York City, considered the mecca of college basketball, this idea in a couple of years later become reality.¹⁴³

The intersectional contests at the garden also increased the opportunity for the game to grow much like football with the bowl games. It also provided the fortune for fans to see the varying styles of play. The east coast style of play was supposedly different from other regions and coaches would in many respects borrow and alternate styles in order to succeed at the national level.

In 1928, riding the wave of a fourteen-game winning streak, CCNY played host to Fordham University where a capacity crowd was expected. More than 13,000 ticket requests were made causing the ticket office to cease sales more than a week in advance. Four hundred tickets were held by the college and made available for undergraduates who were members of the athletic association. As a security measure the local police department stationed units on campus to prevent persons without tickets from entering the grounds. Two years earlier, fights erupted in the crowd outside the gymnasium from persons who could not obtain tickets. Scheduling high-profile games at the Garden made fiscal sense to meet the student and public demand.¹⁴⁴

Scheduling home games at the Madison Square Garden, meant CCNY was responsible for filling seats; that meant fielding a winning team was essential. In the 1940s revenue generated from Basketball was firmly subsidizing other intercollegiate varsity programs including Football. After World War II the attention of the nation was

¹⁴³ "College Basketball injected with Ballyhoo" The Literary Digest, 12 January 1935: 33.

¹⁴⁴ "C.C.N.Y-Fordham will clash tonight" New York Times, 21 January 1928.

focused more on domestic matters and college basketball thrived. During the 1946-47 season, 26 of the 27 contests played at the Garden drew crowds of 17,000 or more.¹⁴⁵

CCNY was firmly entrenched more than ever in big-time basketball and getting talented players became more vital. Bobby Sand, felt the yet identified pressure to satisfy that demand by engaging in subtle but deliberate recruiting strategies. Unfortunately, there were parameters set in place by the New York City Board of Higher Education that raised the admission requirements from a 75 high school average to 80 not to mention there was also a residency requirement that was limited to New York City; which meant the scope of the recruitment pool was narrow.¹⁴⁶

BOBBY SAND: BUILDING A CHAMPIONSHIP ROSTER

As a player, Bobby Sand was a stalwart who acquired a reputation for being cerebral and diligent player. He followed Holman's instructions with precision. Even though he was not blessed with an abundance of talent his effort was commendable and earned the respect and admiration from Holman. Off the court, Sand was an exceptional student and a member of Phi Beta Kappa – a distinction rarely afforded to student-athletes. Sand was characterized by one student as a human alarm clock. One who assumed the leadership and responsibility of making sure his teammates awoke on time for class. He would run about in his pajamas waking his teammates up in the morning by

¹⁴⁵ "Garden Attendance This year" New York University vs. City College souvenir program, (New York, New York: Madison Square Garden, March 11, 1947): 29.

¹⁴⁶ History of Open Admissions at CUNY, The Mayor's Advisory Task Force on the City University of New York (New York, New York : Archives of Mayor W. Giuliani, June 1999) 14, <<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/cuny/>>; James Traub City on a Hill, (New York, New York: Addison-Wesley, 1994) 9.

banging on their doors to ensure they did not oversleep. Bobby Sand was just a take charge, selfless person, who would place the needs of team before his own.¹⁴⁷

When Sand joined Holman's staff his mission was to recruit championship caliber players. This directive did not necessarily come from Holman who appeared content in many respects of shaping players from a variety of skill levels into his style of play. Sand's motives appeared to be largely directed at enhancing his value with his unique skill-set in order to demonstrate his worthiness of replacing Holman when necessary. Prior to Sand's arrival, CCNY did not recruit players from high school in the fashion needed to win championships. Holman didn't appear to place a premium value on players with advanced skill sets, such as the 6'9" Harry Boykoff, (from Brooklyn, New York) who nearly outscored St. Joseph's College by himself with his 45-point outburst in a 76-46 victory. That season Boykoff, in his first year of varsity, averaged 16.6 points per game and led St. John's to its first NIT championship in 1943. This was the caliber of player needed to win national championships and the kind that eluded CCNY.¹⁴⁸

Holman was oblivious to the level of talent necessary to win. Instead he seemed content on molding low-and-limited skill players into the team he wanted. In one interview he noted that one of his greatest accomplishments as a coach were the "16 or 17 captains who never played [basketball] in high school." Recruiting was non-existent. City College did not subsidize its student-athletes. Academics were always the first priority and no one understood this philosophy more than Bobby. Holman routinely boasted

¹⁴⁷ Morton Paul "Sport Sparks: Life begins with the Basketball team" The Campus, 23 December 1936: 3.

¹⁴⁸ St. John's University Basketball Media Guide (Jamaica, New York: St. John's University Athletic Department, 2011) 137.

about the five players from his 1941-42 team that were intellectually deft enough to become physicians. However, consecutive losing seasons (1942-1944) during the war left little to boast and were a prime opportunity for Sand to make his mark on the program.¹⁴⁹

Wingate Hall housed the College's gymnasium and when not in use during the vacation periods it was made available to the city's public schools. Sand would make arrangements to have two schools scrimmage one another. The coaches supported this endeavor because the extra practice time gave them an opportunity to develop their skills. Sand would observe workouts and occasionally provide advice. This was an opportunity for Sand to establish contact with some really talented or good ball players. Sand would speak to the benefits of being a student-athlete at CCNY. After recruiting the player, he would follow through by convincing his parents.

For many parents CCNY was an easy sell. Its stellar reputation, low-maintenance, and its lack of residence halls, all assured that boys would remain in the home. Keeping young men close to home was a staple in many Jewish and working-class communities. Recruiting championship caliber players was challenging but Sand had several invaluable advantages at his disposal. The first was Coach Nat Holman and the Garden. To an aspiring recruit, Bobby Sand in many respects became the face of CCNY. His knowledge of the game was demonstrated by designing offensive strategies suited to the skillset of his team. Also as the coach of Junior Varsity he also prepared them for Nat's very deliberate style.

¹⁴⁹ Rosen 54.

Since CCNY did not subsidize its players with athletic scholarships, attracting some of the top tier talent in the city proved challenging. Other schools in the city such as LIU, St. John's, NYU, Fordham, and Manhattan routinely played games at the Garden, neutralizing CCNY's advantage. One advantage for Sand was the Serviceman's readjustment act of 1944 more colloquially known as the Galvanized Iron (G.I.) Bill.¹⁵⁰

For WWII veterans returning home after the war, this was a huge advantage for those desiring to continue their studies in higher education. These benefits also included a stipend for living expenses. The G.I. Bill turned out to be a coup for Sand in the sense that since CCNY was a commuter school and did not have any residence halls (though evidence suggests that temporary living arrangements were made available on campus during the season). Armed with an unprecedented array of financial support from the Federal government, the most talented servicemen could attend any program they wanted and were not under obligation to return to their former institutions prior to enlistment. For CCNY, these players relieved the institution from any financial burden. Books, a stipend for living expenses, courtesy of the federal government leveled recruiting down to pitches and promises of playing time. When it came to recruiting, the affable Sand had little trouble convincing these young men to commit to CCNY. St. John's coming off its two NIT championships were able to recruit good players; however as a commuter school with no residence halls, the long trip to Jamaica Queens from other points in the city for some recruits was unappealing.

¹⁵⁰ "About the GI Bill" United States Department of Veteran Affairs, 9 May 2013
<<http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/history.asp>>.

Bobby Sand's high Basketball IQ was widely known throughout the coaching fraternity. Though he was an assistant to Holman, Sand's basketball expertise was respected and solicited by a number of prestigious journals. Unfortunately, Holman had a strong authoritative presence and discouraged him from commodifying his status as his assistant for personal gain. In response to his requests for exploiting these opportunities, Holman refused, instead replying to Sand, "Lou Little at Columbia doesn't let his staff write articles, so why should I?"¹⁵¹

Bobby Sand was Holman's sounding board. According to observers, Nat Holman would exert so much attention over a player's mistake that he would on occasion lose focus on the game. His lack of attentiveness enabled Sand to authorize substitutions during the course of the game. When a critical substitution didn't yield favorable results, Holman had no reservations using explicit language directed at Bobby right in front of the team. Despite the appearance of these humiliating moments, Sand kept his resolve and remained focused. He wanted the opportunity to become a head coach but declined numerous offers from Universities with more basketball prestige and generous budgets. Sand was passionate about New York City and CCNY. It was his home. He had established relationships with prominent high school coaches. He was well-versed with the players, facilities, etc. all he needed was ship to steer and tie all these connections together. For Sand, that ship was CCNY. Holman would not coach forever and perhaps Sand viewed himself as the heir apparent.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Rosen 56; Lou "Luigi Piccolo" Little was Columbia University's football coach from 1930 to 1956.

¹⁵² Rosen 57.

Sand's responsibility as a self-contained program administrator was part of an emerging trend in collegiate basketball, where the job responsibilities of assistant coaches were being redefined. There are several but two primary factors contributing to this shift at CCNY. The first factor were war veterans. During the war many Universities (including CCNY) experienced a talent drain. At the conclusion of the war many of these veterans wanted to resume their basketball careers. Many of the veterans were desirable players because they were older, more mature, had thicker skin, and more basketball experience. Combine these veterans with the conventional pool of talent from the high school level and the net result was inflated rosters deep with talent.¹⁵³

Another drawing card for many of these veterans to CCNY was the converted Army Hall. In 1943, the former Hebrew Orphan Asylum (built in 1883), was purchased by New York City and transferred to CCNY before it was converted into a classification center barracks for 3,000 soldiers under the generic name of Army Hall. At the conclusion of WWII it was reconverted to provide accommodations for 500 male students, classroom space, and storage for the library. Veteran players could reside here during their tenure at the school free of charge. This provided some relief for veterans who might have expressed concern about commuting from far rung locales in the city. The facility remained available until September 1952 when it was deemed unfit for occupancy by city authorities. At the conclusion of its operation, some two-hundred students resided in the facility.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Rosen 57.

¹⁵⁴“Army Hall Dorms Shut Down: Manhattanville not available”, *Observation Post*, Monday, 22 September 1952: 1; [The Lost World of CCNY: Architectural Gems of the Past – Army Hall](#), July 2011, CCNY Archives digital Exhibit, 21 December 2013

Sand was instrumental in recruiting war veterans, Mason Benson, Joe Galiber, and Irwin Dambrot, three centers that provided length and depth. He also contributed to the commitments of three prolific scorers, Lionel Malamed (who later serve as captain on 1947-48 squad), Sonny Jameson, and Paul Schmones. This team was considered one of the best ever assembled with homegrown talent. With the returning veterans, bolstered by a talented recruiting class, CCNY fielded a varsity team of eighteen players. With such an array of talent, Holman's biggest challenge was fielding a consistent starting lineup. During the 1946-47 season Holman, at one point had eleven different starting lineups. The constant rotation led to a lack of cohesiveness and inconsistent play. Despite the intermittent play and lineups the team finished the season at 17-6.¹⁵⁵

The second factor contributing to shift was the growing popularity of basketball beyond cosmopolitan areas and growth of intersectional recruitment. Schools in more rural locales were starting to recruit more city players; conversely schools in urban areas started recruiting players from other cities and other sections of the country. State Universities in the northeast did not have the basketball cachet as the parochial and private universities, and with a majority of these institutions located in metropolitan areas, recruiting intensified. Rail and vehicular travel made recruiting between the cities a great deal easier to navigate. The dominance of the private and parochial institutions were reflected in the NIT Championships. Prior to CCNY's championship season in 1950, eight of the first twelve championships were won by said institutions. The parochial

< <http://digital-archives.ccnycunyc.edu/exhibits/lostworld/armyhall.html>.>

¹⁵⁵ "Malamed Top Scorer of Lavender Cager," The Campus 13 March 1947: 3; Tony Shub, "Tannenbaum, McGuire Picked on 'Campus' All-Met Quintet," The Campus 13 March 1947: 3; CCNY Basketball season schedule/roster.

school dominance continued throughout the 1950s with eight institutions claiming titles, including five consecutive years from 1951-1955.¹⁵⁶

Bobby Sand's responsibilities contributed to the foundation and the roles that many assistants encompass today at major division I basketball programs. As Singleton notes, "They commit to doing the grunt work and seldom receive public recognition for their efforts but they are imperative characters in the success or failure of an entire program."¹⁵⁷ Other major programs during this time such as Indiana, Kansas, or North Carolina had assistant coaches whose primary responsibility was to serve in the same capacity as Sand did for CCNY. What distinguished Sand from his contemporaries was the fact that none of them had a recruiting pool as wide and racially diverse but none of them faced geographical constraints like CCNY, which was open only to residents of New York City.¹⁵⁸

Secondly, CCNY was a commuter school and did not have dormitories so the geographical constraints were reinforced. Thirdly, CCNY did not subsidize its student-athletes in the form of athletic scholarships which despite the absence of tuition made recruiting challenging as student-athletes were expected to absorb the costs for books and other related materials. Finally, there were the school requirements which included a minimum high school average of 80. Those who did not meet this requirement were

¹⁵⁶ Ray Floriani, The National Invitational Tournament (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia, 2005).

¹⁵⁷ Singleton 7.

¹⁵⁸ History of Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York. June 2011:14. <<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/cuny/pdf/history.pdf>>

subjected to pass an extremely difficult entrance examination. This criteria was perhaps the most challenging obstacle for Bobby Sand in locating talented players.¹⁵⁹

One casualty of CCNY's elevated academic requirements was Arnold Jacob Red Auerbach, a talented fleet-of-foot five-foot ten guard from Eastern District High School in Brooklyn; more importantly he is renowned for winning nine NBA titles as coach of the Boston Celtics from 1950 to 1967. In high school, Holman expressed interest in Auerbach but he didn't have the composite average necessary to meet the College's entrance requirements. Auerbach wanted to attend CCNY but no allowances were taken into consideration for his student-athlete status. Instead he accepted an athletic scholarship from Seth Low Junior college in Brooklyn. Seth Low, a two-year college established in 1928, was an extension of Columbia University. Its creation was largely to serve the increasing pool of applicants who were immigrants and their offspring. It also functioned as dumping ground for Jewish students when Columbia exceeded its quota. The school was dissolved in 1938, which would have been Auerbach's final year. Instead of playing that final year he instead he accepted a scholarship from Bill Reinheart at George Washington University in Washington D.C. As coach of the Celtics, he implemented a system similar to Holman's, one that would involve a style of play and emphasis on the 'fast break.' This involves a player rebounding the basketball and moving the ball up the floor at a breakneck pace in an attempt to score before the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, History of Open Admissions and Remedial Education at the City University of New York; The entrance requirements for admission to CCNY were actually lowered from a high school average of 80 to 75 from 1943 to 1948. In 1948, the requirements were raised back to an 80 average.

opposing team could set up their defense. Auerbach was quite successful as a coach but one could only wonder how he could have benefitted from Holman's tutelage.¹⁶⁰

With a pared down roster comprised of veterans and traditional student-athletes, the 1947-48 team finished the season with a record of 18 wins and 3 losses. The eighteen victories was the highest total in CCNY history to date. The program had officially rebounded from the consecutive losing seasons during the war. However, that success did not shield Nat Holman from criticism about failing to win pivotal games. This was perhaps informed by the fact that by 1944, two of his contemporaries and NYC rivals, Clair Bee (LIU) and Joe Lapchick (St. John's) had each won two NIT tournament titles.¹⁶¹

Since the founding of the Basketball Championship tournaments in the late 1930s other high-profile schools with less accomplished coaches appeared to be winning championships. The inaugural National Invitational Tournament (NIT) championship title in 1939 was won by Temple University in Philadelphia. Temple was a respectable program under Coach James Usilton whose teams compiled a 75-21 win-loss record from 1934-1939 culminating with 1939 championship. CCNY defeated Temple teams with regularity, winning eight of ten contests but the Temple Owls were fortunate to win the games when it counted the most. St. John's University won consecutive titles in 1942-43 raising the stature of their program to national prominence. Their coach, Joe Lapchick,

¹⁶⁰ Red Auerbach and Paul Sann, Red Auerbach: winning the hard way (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company, 1966) 11; Robert A. McCaughey Stand, a History of Columbia University (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) 275.

¹⁶¹ Rosen 54-55; CCNY Basketball season schedule/roster; New York University vs. City College Souvenir Program (New York, New York: Madison Square Garden, March 9, 1948).

Holman's former Celtics teammate was certainly respected as a coach but Holman was "Mr. Basketball."¹⁶²

Despite Sand's dedication to the basketball program, Holman did not mentor or mold him into a head coaching candidate. Bobby learned a few pointers from the old master but for the most part Sand learned the game independently from Holman. Despite their tenuous relationship, Holman did extend him - by default; some authority over the administrative responsibilities of the program and secondly, he did respect, Sand's intellect. Harold Bobby Sand, knew Holman's style and taught it well. When the freshmen class in 1948 graduated to varsity the following year, they were remarkable. CCNY had some talented players come through his program but none were as collectively talented as the class featuring Floyd Layne, Alvin Roth, Ed Warner and Ed Roman. If it were not for the poor judgment of several players, CCNY which finished the season at 24-5 could have gone undefeated.

Unfortunately, it was later discovered that Sand along with some of his contemporaries were implicated in a forgery scandal in which some of the players (including those on the national championship team) had their high school transcripts altered so they can gain admission to the college. Since the transcripts are handled by a

¹⁶² Weiner, Larry "Mr. Basketball: City College's Nat Holman is Hardwood's Babe Ruth," Sportfolio, 4 February 1949; Temple Athletic Department, "Records" Temple University 2012-13 Men's Basketball Media Guide, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University) 116-117.

large number of people in the registrar's office, it was difficult to identify the individuals involved and if the athletics department played a role.¹⁶³

What implicated Sand was that an investigation by the Board of Higher Education led to the review of high school records for 300 intercollegiate athletes admitted to CCNY from 1945 to 1951 revealed that 14 had been fraudulently altered in a way to raise the high school average sufficiently to establish eligibility for admission to the college. A portion of those athletes were basketball players.¹⁶⁴

Unfortunately, Bobby Sand never got to opportunity to actually serve as Holman's successor. Sand was probably mentored for the position but based on Holman's persona that is difficult to quantify. After the revelations of the gambling scandal of 1951, every coach and administrator became the subject of scrutiny. Nat Holman was granted a two-year sabbatical while the college and the Board of Higher Education conducted its own investigation. During the process the board decided that CCNY de-emphasize its athletic program from the highest level of competition which meant the basketball team would no longer competing at Madison Square Garden creating a huge revenue void. The athletic department experienced a massive shakeup. First Athletic Director Dr. Sam Winograd was relieved of his duties; secondly, all

¹⁶³ "Highlights of the Board of Education," The Observation Post, November, 1952: 1; "Report of the Committee on Intercollegiate Basketball" Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York 17 November 1952: 619.

¹⁶⁴ "Report of the Committee on Intercollegiate Basketball" 619.

coaches whom were not faculty members would not be reappointed as the College could no longer afford full-time coaches.¹⁶⁵

It was also discovered that Assistant Coach Sand compromised his position as an educator, leader, and moral authority by attempting to commit an act of perjury with intent to defraud a promoter of a planned South American tour by the City College championship team. This was compounded by the fact that Sand, offered Edward Warner, the captain and star of the team, financial compensation for playing on the tour, which is violation of the rules set by the Amateur Athletic Association. At roughly the same time, unbeknownst to Sand, Warner was being approached by gamblers to enlist his support in controlling the point spread in games – support for which the gamblers would compensate Warner.¹⁶⁶

Sand was dismissed from his teaching position in Economics and reassigned from the Hygiene department. Dave Polansky, who played basketball briefly for Holman from 1938-40 and competed in track, was appointed head basketball coach. After serving a paid suspension, Sand was reassigned to the Office of planning and design in 1954. Seven years later in 1961, after a two-year battle with the Board of Higher Education, the restriction imposed by the board that barred Sand from instructional status was lifted and he was allowed to resume teaching in the hygiene department. Sand was dedicated to the college and continued to serve with an advanced level of professionalism. In a bit of irony, his allegiance to the college was recognized in 1961, when he was extended the

¹⁶⁵ Joe Marcus “Purcell Heads Hygiene Department as result of Big Athletic Shakeup,” Observation Post, Monday, 22 September 1952: 1.

¹⁶⁶ Respondents Brief: 2.

Mark Asa Abbott Memorial Award for “development and maintenance of the high standards and ideals of the athletic program at the City College.” The irony is that Sand’s misdeeds were partly responsible for CCNY’s diminished status in athletics and in the process virtually erased the legacy of the man who was considered an architect of college basketball. Sand would never coach college basketball again.¹⁶⁷

Despite his banishment from coaching at the college, Sand did receive support from the student body that contextualized him as the fall guy in a pyramid of moral and unethical failings, while his superiors – including Holman – were exonerated from any wrongdoing. Dr. Frank Lloyd, director of the hygiene department and chairman of the Faculty Athletic Committee, resigned before hearings with the Board of Higher Education commenced. In a column by Herman J. Cohen in the *Observation Post*, he noted “Bobby Sand did nothing that did not have the approval of the men above him. He did a job like the rest of us.” The letters that went out to potential recruits had Holman’s signature and photograph in the header. The column characterizes Sand as the architect of the national championship team. It was Sand whose “youthful pleasing personality” that convinced young men to bring their talents to CCNY. Sand absorbed all of Holman’s wisdoms minus the explicit venom. The players enjoyed him as did everyone who had the pleasure of interacting with him.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ “Sand reassigned to records post,” *New York Times*, 13 March 1954; “Ex-Coach restored to teaching status,” *New York Times*, 17 April 1962; “CCNY Gymnasium called inadequate,” *New York Times*, 17 May 1968: 62.

¹⁶⁸ Jack Billig “Dr. Frank Lloyd resigns from College Post” *The Campus* 28 May 1953: 1; Herman J. Cohen “Scandal Aftermath: Bobby Sand,” *Observation Post*, 25 September 1952: 3.

The letter may perceive to be anti-Holman but in fact it just publicly supports Sand, in ways that perhaps Holman did not. Holman's personality was imposing and volatile. His focus laid squarely on the game of basketball and less on the young men who played for him. Holman was exonerated from any improprieties with the gambling scandal and resumed his coaching duties in 1954. Polansky was re-assigned to coach the freshmen team. Holman continued intermittently in his coaching position for two more years before taking another sabbatical from September 1956 through August 1958 to teach basketball in Korea and Japan. Holman returned to his post in the fall of 1958 and remained there until he requested a sick leave in December 1959 for the remainder of the academic year. In the spring of 1959, Holman unceremoniously turned in his letter of resignation. Nat Holman would unfortunately, not coach into his sixth decade of basketball at CCNY. The final game charged to his record – to which he was too ill to attend was a 73-58 loss to Long Island University. This was the first time CCNY competed against LIU since 1942. In his final season as coach, Nat Holman – a man whom prided himself on winning and had done so 405 times in thirty-seasons – did not win a single game - finishing 0-4.¹⁶⁹

THE HOLMAN LEGACY

The de-emphasizing of the program at City College contributed the forgotten legacy of Holman who was once called “Mr. Basketball.” In the 1950s after the de-emphasis CCNY continued to schedule their traditional rivalries with Manhattan, St.

¹⁶⁹ Arthur Dailey “The Old Master Retires” New York Times, 4 July 1960; “Holman may miss game against FDU,” The Campus, 10 December 1959; “LIU sends Cagers to fourth defeat”, “Holman extends leave to teach in the Far East,” The Campus, 16 September 1957: 8; “Holman back resumes old duties today,” Observation Post, 16 September 1954; Cohen 3.

Johns, Fordham and New York University. Unfortunately, after only two victories in thirty-two contests over the course of eight seasons, it was apparent that CCNY could no longer attract the level of talent it once had and remain competitive. In 1960, the aforementioned schools discontinued their rivalry and dropped CCNY from their schedules. This was dawn of a new era for CCNY basketball. Crowds were not as large and on many occasions sparse, the victories seemed to be fewer and farther in between. During the peak of its ascent, the team filled its campus gym, to capacity. Now crowds were sparse and tickets were plenty. In the 1960s, CCNY produced only three winning seasons. In the 1970s, there were double-digit losses every season, including a then school-record nineteen during the 1978-79 season.¹⁷⁰

Unlike the collegiate game, coaching legacies in professional hoops are rare and often measured in world championships as opposed to victories. Holman's coaching legacy is rooted in the National Basketball Association and indirectly connected to eighteen hundred and fifty-one victories and an astounding thirteen world championship titles. William 'Red' Holzman, was responsible for 696 of those victories. After graduating from CCNY he played professionally for a few years before transitioning into coaching. During his fourteen-year tenure as a coach of the New York Knickerbockers, he won 613 games and two world Championships in 1970 and 1973.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ "Traditional Rivals Dropped by Cagers," *The Campus*, 8 February 1960.

¹⁷¹ Alan Hahn "The New York Knicks: A complete illustrated history (Minneapolis, Minnesota: MVP Books, 2012) 74, 218.

Holman's legacy was largely forgotten in the collegiate ranks, due to the de-emphasis of basketball at CCNY and his protégées lack of visibility at the highest of level of intercollegiate competition. Holman is credited for bringing the 'city game' to the intercollegiate ranks but it was William "Red" Holzman whom transformed Holman's philosophy successfully to the professional level. Holman was very tough on his players. He wanted his vision and the corresponding plays executed succinctly. If a player did not perform to his expectation, he would verbally scold the offender.

The Holman style was to constantly pass the ball and locate the open man in a disciplined – almost mechanical like fashion. CCNY did not have many tall players to play the center position, so therefore he implemented a style that was absent of a 'big man' and catering more toward shorter and more interchangeable players that could rotate quickly on defense, make precision passes, and execute the fast break. It was a style developed and matured on the playgrounds of New York City. Holzman employed the same philosophy, except he used a more civil attitude – an essential element when dealing with professionals.

"[Nat] Holman was one of the greatest coaches of all time," Holzman noted in his autobiography *Red on Red*. "His understanding of the game was one of his strong traits, and he taught you with an eye to playing pro [professional] ball. Nat believed very strongly in five-man movement he called it five moving pivots."¹⁷²

The installment of this type of offense was attributed to the fact that City College teams were largely devoid of big men. A review of rosters from 1938-1948 discovered

¹⁷² Holzman 12.

that CCNY rarely had any players taller than six-foot-five. Six-foot-six Eddie Roman would be one of the tallest players to compete at CCNY along with teammate six-foot-seven Leroy Watkins, who played with Roman sparingly for a season. Ironically, Roman would become one of the most integral players on the 1949-50 championship team.¹⁷³

Nat Holman “had good theories about team defense, and I picked up a lot of insights in that area from him,” noted Holzman. “I also learned not to hold the ball. That was one of the things that Nat didn’t like. I guess much of my feeling for ball movement came from my association with him.” As a coach in the National Basketball Association (NBA), Holzman installed a two-way style of play that reflected how he learned the game under Holman.¹⁷⁴

Holzman was one of innovators of the offense-defense switch, which is the rapid and constant substitution of players to wear down the other team and control the tempo of the game. One of the players on the Knickerbocker roster versatile enough to play both ways and guard both shorter and taller players was Phillip (Phil) Douglass Jackson. Before he won eleven world-championships as a coach of the Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers, Jackson was a defensive stalwart whose long arms and 6’10 frame proved to be very effective during their two championship runs in 1970 and 1973. Holzman noted that Jackson was “ideal for my team. His long arms and intelligence” paid immense dividends. He added, “Phil welcomed his chance to slow down a hot offensive player”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ An analysis of the Microcosm, the City College of New York Yearbook from 1938-1948.

¹⁷⁴ Holzman 12.

¹⁷⁵ Holzman 64, 94.

Two days before winning his tenth championship title as coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, Phil Jackson reflected his inspiration and mentor as a coach. Red Holzman “is the reason why I am a coach.” He added, “He told me that you would be a great coach. He said ‘You see the game’ See the ball on defense and hit the open man on offense. But he also had a great feel for people and how to get them motivated.”¹⁷⁶

The bond between Holzman and Jackson was strong and rather unique. Red Holzman was assistant coach for the Knicks from 1958 until 1967 when he was extended the head coaching job. While an assistant coach (largely responsible for scouting and signing talent), Holzman was enamored with Jackson and drafted him in the fifth round of the 1967 draft. Jackson was a relatively unknown player who just completed his college career at University of North Dakota. Generally players drafted in the later rounds (four through seven) have a slim chance of earning a spot on a team roster but Jackson was an exception. Holzman however sensed something special in Jackson and flew out to Fargo, North Dakota to sign Jackson to a contract. “Red was one of those guys that took me immediately,” replied Jackson. “Here we are sitting there in a dorm room signing this contract and nobody knows it,” needless to say when Holzman assumed the coaching reins on December 28 of that year after the termination of Dick McGuire. Jackson’s role would become elevated and pivotal to their success.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Mitch Lawrence “Memory of Red Holzman serves as a motivator for Lakers’ Phil Jackson” New York Daily News, 10 June 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid Lawrence; Hahn 68.

As a former professional player, Holzman understood the difference and importance of establishing a rapport between an athlete and coach, particularly one that extends beyond the field of play. This was one of Holzman's greatest attributes as a coach; and conversely one area where Nat Holman, "Mr. Basketball," could have used some improvement. Holzman describes Holman attitude as a coach as "distant nearness." Nat was considered friendly and approachable but the boundaries between coach and player never blurred and some of the components that constitute a great coach which at times meant serving as a father figure, older brother or mentor was underdeveloped.¹⁷⁸

What Holman accomplished successfully was creating and fostering an environment that centered on basketball players and less individual persons playing basketball. If you can play and execute his plan without error then you were embraced. Holman placed more value on the success of the team as opposed to individual talent. However, it was players with advanced skillset, like an Eddie Roman, Edward Warner, Irwin Dambrot, Floyd Layne, etc. which enabled his team to finally win a national championship. At some point, a player's advanced individual skill set is more necessary than the system to which he is allowed to function. As great of coach Holman was, in order to win that elusive championship, he needed not players but championship caliber talent.

Holman's infatuation with his system over the needs of his student-athletes and beyond in essence fostered a culture of integration. For Holman it was about basketball, not about race and it's questionable if he was even conscious of the aesthetic differences

¹⁷⁸ Holzman13.

of players beyond basketball. When Holman used profanity in reaction to performance of a player or to motivate a player, evidence suggests that it was never through a racialized lens.

As an adolescent, Holman was introduced to the value of race when he was subjected to rocks being thrown at him (ironically returning from a basketball game) because he was Jewish and he transgressed the imagined and prescribed borders of his neighborhood. As a result, perhaps this inspired him to never acknowledge an individual and all the accouterments associated as such but focus on the conception of the collective identity which in his reality was basketball.

When elements of the social world intersected with basketball such as a December 1946 incident involving the University of Wyoming coach Ed Shelton, Holman became irate due in part because such bias had no place in the game and when he couldn't relate within the context of the game such as running up the score on the offender as punishment, this further agitated him. In 1950, when the University of Kentucky coach Adolf Rupp, cultivated a climate that infringed good sportsmanship, Holman's team exercised retribution on the court by handing Kentucky, and by extension Rupp, a thirty-nine point beating – punishment in many respects for not respecting the game and allowing it to function and organically serve itself.¹⁷⁹

Holman was dubbed “Mr. Basketball” because that was his life. Anything that obstructed the game was in part broaching his life and sensibilities. As a college coach for thirty-seven years he respected education and the academic standards of the college to

¹⁷⁹ Marsh, Irving T. “Views of Basketball,” New York Herald Tribune, 30 December 1946: 2; Morris, Everett B., “C.C.N.Y. Quintet Trounces Kentucky 89-50,” New York Herald Tribune, 15 March 1950: 25.

which he was employed. As a college coach he did tolerate and support the scholastic component but anything beyond that involving his players was dispensable. He was not privy to the misdeeds of his assistant and others with his players. But he was guilty for not being more involved in other facets of the program. He was guilty of not understanding and communicating effectively the needs and sensibilities of the young men he was instructed to lead and mentor. This was the aspect of the game he had little investment. But in many respects this is the variable that often requires as much attention as teaching his players how to pass the ball.

The racial background of his players was trivial to Holman but his approach ironically had an unintended consequence - one that served him well. For most his players who were from high schools that reflected the racial composition of that community which was largely segregated, basketball and the system that manages athletics in the New York City Public Schools, the (Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) sought to situate schools in conferences that served realistic geographical interests but as an unintended consequence it enabled student-athletes to venture into communities where they would under normal circumstances least likely to visit. Sports and in this case, basketball was a vehicle that provided mobility, discipline, competition, and sportsmanship. All of these lessons proved invaluable moving beyond the sport. And in many respects prepared these young men, fortunate enough to go to college and play basketball an opportunity to interact with men of varied ethnic, racial and religious persuasions. This was one of Holman's greatest contributions to the game of basketball. He let basketball function in its own context as a meritocracy and outside the purview of

trivial matters like race and ethnic persuasion. The next chapter transitions into the PSAL and their unintended consequences of preparing student-athletes for life beyond the game.

CHAPTER 3

THE P.S.A.L.: ADMINISTRATIVE GROWING PAINS

On June 6, 1913, Ten-thousand schoolboys wearing white shirts, black caps and knickerbockers, participated in a physical skills extravaganza in Central Park with former President and New York State Governor, Theodore Roosevelt in attendance. The event was a display of the athletic skills the pupils acquired during their daily program. The performance included a two-minute non-stop exercise followed by a footrace and a broad jump. This event sponsored by New York City Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) was also a lesson on etiquette and personal hygiene. A newspaper notice requested that all schoolboys participating in this event to bring their own paper drinking cups.¹⁸⁰

During the middle of the program, Roosevelt congratulated the PSAL brain trust and all involved for “making these boys good young Americans.” He further noted “Nothing could do more to show the loyalty, enthusiasm and democracy of the American people than these 10,000 boys of all races and creeds.” Theodore Roosevelt, who was inaugurated as honorary Vice-President in 1905 and a staunch proponent of physical conditioning which extended to good health, was associated with nationalism. As a result he argued that all American boys irrespective of their race should be in prime physical condition. Roosevelt understood the social, economic, and scholastic inequalities in

¹⁸⁰ Author unknown, “10,000 schoolboys at play take all by storm,” New York Times, 7 June 1913: 2; Author unknown “10,000 schoolboys in meet,” Brooklyn Eagle, 31 May 1913.

America but he thought that physical conditioning and to a certain point athletics could become an equalizer. He referred to the Black, White, and Puerto Rican boys as “Good Young Americans,” this is probably one of the few instances where black boys were treated, at least verbally, equally to their white counterparts. His praise also demonstrates how athletic activity and athletic competition could serve as a vehicle for addressing issues of social inequality and patriotism. During his tenure as President of United States, Roosevelt endorsed and supported the PSAL, which was founded in 1903.¹⁸¹

The primary function of the PSAL was to initiate and supervise physical education and interscholastic athletic program in all New York City public schools. The PSAL was modeled after the National Rifle Association, whose members were ardent supporters of the organization. One of the most popular interscholastic activities the league sponsored was rifle shooting. Roosevelt, a sportsman in his own right, expressed his joy in support of this endeavor. “I am particularly pleased to see that you gave a button, analogous to the marksman’s badge of the National Guard, to every boy who can make a prescribed record in certain simple exercises, so that you interest and appeal to the boys who cannot expect to win in competitions.”¹⁸²

The role of the PSAL was extremely important in serving a multitude of functions. Prior to World War II, high schools had student bodies from a broad swath of neighborhoods, and ethnic and racial backgrounds. Conspicuously, the PSAL served as way to unite students and cultivate a sense of school allegiance and pride. For the

¹⁸¹ “10,000 schoolboys at play take all by storm,” 2; Jane Gross, “The Brooklyn City’s Public School Athletics eroded by Years of Cutbacks,” *New York Times*, 15 February 1982: A1.

¹⁸² Theodore Roosevelt “President Roosevelt Approves of Public Schools Athletic League”, *Public School Athletic League Handbook* (New York, New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1906)16.

student-athletes it reflected an opportunity to build their spirit and develop them academically, emotionally, intellectually, and physically. It was part and parcel of the efforts to improve the health and well-being for urban children, especially the most economically disadvantaged who had limited alternatives. But it also cultivated and enforced conditions for interracial cooperation, particularly when other institutions were deficient. In essence, it prepared its student-athletes for a higher sense of education and served as the foundation for Nat Holman's teams at CCNY. Without the success of the PSAL, the challenge of coming together as a championship unit at CCNY would prove far more challenging.

In spite of President Roosevelt's enthusiasm, the focus of this chapter lies in the extra-curricular activities of the secondary schools¹⁸³ more specifically, the public high schools. The Board of Education (unified in 1896) required that time be set aside for physical training or exercise in the high schools for every student for two periods on a weekly basis throughout the term. The periods ranged from forty-five to fifty minutes in length. Prior to the founding of the PSAL, a number of schools offered physical education classes and recreational programs but many lacked adequate facilities. One of the PSAL's responsibilities was to enforce these requirements, locate facilities but establishing and maintaining the interscholastic program was its primary role.¹⁸⁴

The Board of Education in the City of New York was not centralized until 1896. Prior to that point each of the school boards in each borough operated independently and

¹⁸³ Some municipalities consider both middle and high schools at secondary schooling.

¹⁸⁴ Jessie Bancroft, "Physical training in the Public Schools of the City of New York," American Physical Education Review (March 1903): 8.

were self-governed. In March of 1898, William H. Maxwell, the superintendent of Brooklyn was selected as the chair of this restructured system that included some 457 schools, twelve-thousand teachers and more than 470,000 pupils. In 1896, the school Reform Law initiated the first steps of consolidating the City's public education system. The school system was now in control of professional educators who acted as superintendents responsible for managing this structure. One of their first acts was to organize city three public high schools. On November 18, 1896, the committee on High Schools requested, and was authorized a sum of \$75,000 in 1897 to establish and operate three schools. The schools established were Boys' High School in New York (prior to the formal naming of Manhattan) was renamed DeWitt Clinton, and the Girls High School was renamed Wadliegh High School. The third school located in the Bronx which served Boys and Girls was identified as mixed high school was named Peter Cooper before being renamed Morris High School after a new building opened in 1902.¹⁸⁵

Secondary public schools in New York City were rare but each borough did operate some under their jurisdiction. Most of the schools were private or parochial and largely Catholic. Each of the boroughs functioned as their own municipalities. It wasn't until January 1, 1898, when Kings County (Brooklyn), Queens and Richmond (Staten Island) counties officially formed into boroughs and became what is now known as New York City. Each of the boroughs operated their own school boards and assumingly any extra-curricular or scholastic activities. Queens had a unique system in which the county

¹⁸⁵ Author Unknown, "William Henry Maxwell," New York Times, 2 October 1898; Gary Hermalyn, Morris High School and the Creation of the New York City Public High School System, (Bronx, New York: Bronx County Historical Society, 1994) 22 - 24, 196.

was composed of twenty-nine towns that governed their own school board creating a more difficult transition to unification.¹⁸⁶

Later that March, Brooklyn superintendent William H. Maxwell, was elected superintendent for the board of education. An editorial in the *Educational Review* praised Maxwell “this act [election of William H. Maxwell] may fairly be said to mark the victorious end of the long and weary fight to redeem the schools of the metropolis of politics, sloth and low ideas.” The *New York Times* characterizes Maxwell as a crusader for education and educators. As the superintendent of Brooklyn, some of his efforts included “doing away with stated examinations for promotion from grade to grade in the Brooklyn schools and the revision and simplification of the course of study.” In other words, Maxwell was steadfast against instruction toward rote learning. Maxwell also supported “the introduction of sewing and manual training...an advocate of the establishment of kindergartens.” With all the city schools under his jurisdiction Maxwell was expected to expand these initiatives citywide. He also is in favor of establishing “a public kindergarten for children under six on every block in the closely settled parts of the city.” Maxwell also is a proponent of assuming control of granting licenses to teachers to make sure a high and uniform standard is met throughout the city and to prevent the appointment of incompetent teachers.¹⁸⁷

In order to implement these and other initiatives, Maxwell needed to centralize control of the school boards under his jurisdiction. In 1900, New York State Governor, Theodore Roosevelt (who would later endorse the PSAL as President two years later)

¹⁸⁶Hermalyn 22.

¹⁸⁷ Author Unknown, “William Henry Maxwell,” *New York Times*, 2 October 1898.

appointed a Charter revision commission to revise an earlier charter. The commission assigned the educational section of the charter into the hands of education reformers and supporters of Maxwell. In 1901, the revised charter effectively abolished the four borough school boards. What occurred afterwards was a centralized Board of Education, whose forty-six members representing all school districts throughout the borough were appointed by the mayor including its superintendent. This provided Maxwell control to implement numerous initiatives including the establishment of a citywide athletic league.¹⁸⁸

One of the problems facing the city was the growth of densely populated communities. The Lower East of Side of Manhattan was literally bursting at the seams. Overcrowded tenements filled with immigrants and recent arrivals reinforced less than ideal living conditions. For Children this became an increasingly unhealthy situation to their cognitive and social development. On May 6, 1898, a group of concerned citizens formed an organization called the Outdoor Recreation League whose primary objective was to “secure the recognition of recreation and physical exercise as necessary to the moral and physical welfare of the people, and to advocate the establishment in Greater New York of playgrounds and open-air gymnasiums.”¹⁸⁹

In an effort to get more schoolboys into better physical condition, the Board of Education under the leadership of Superintendent William Henry Maxwell, broached the idea of selecting someone to handle the responsibilities of physical training and athletic

¹⁸⁸ Hermalyn, 26.

¹⁸⁹ Author Unknown, “Outdoor Recreation League,” New York Times, 8 May 1898: 5.

competition. After several months of discussion, in January 1903, the committee selected, Dr. Luther H. Gulick, as the director of physical training.

Dr. Gulick was a central figure in athletic and physical education for many years. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, as the son of a missionary, Dr. Gulick studied at Oberlin College and the Sargent Normal School of Physical Training. He graduated from New York University medical school in 1889 while simultaneously holding an appointment as the superintendent of the Department of Physical training at the Young Men's Christian Association at Springfield, Massachusetts (a position he held for seventeen years). During his tenure, he was also involved with a number of periodicals. With his own resources, he founded a newspaper for the organization called the triangle in 1891; he also served as editor of Physical Education (1891-1896) and editor of Association Outlook (1897-1900).¹⁹⁰

As director, he supervised a number of instructors including; Amos Alonzo Stagg and James Naismith. Stagg, a theological student and All-American football player at Yale, would later serve as the football (1892-1932) and baseball coach (1893-1913) at the University of Chicago and football coach at the College of the Pacific (1933-1946). He was inducted in 1951 in the inaugural class in the college football hall of fame.¹⁹¹

Unlike Stagg, James Naismith remained employed at the Y.M.C.A. for a longer duration of time. Naismith, like Stagg, would become even more accomplished in his

¹⁹⁰ Author Unknown, "Dr. Luther H. Gulick is Dead" New York Times, 14 August 1918; Author Unknown, "Basketball as a College Sport," New York Times, 25 January 1903: 25; Author Unknown "Dr. Gulick's new position," New York Times, 29 January 1903: 6.

¹⁹¹ Associated Press, "Stagg Dies at 102, the Dean of Coaches" New York Times, 18 March 1965; Author unknown, Amos Alonzo Stagg, <http://athletics.uchicago.edu/about/history/amos_alonzo_stagg>; Sports Reference College Football, January 2013, <<http://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/coaches/amos-alonzo-stagg-1.html>>

own right as he was credited for inventing the game of basketball. Under Gulick's supervision, Naismith was instructed to create an indoor activity that would provide an "athletic distraction" for the young men who grew restless while remaining indoors during the unforgiving New England winter season. After attempting to incorporate vestiges of other sports to play indoors, such as football, soccer, and a modified version of baseball, Naismith designed a game that could be played in multiple environments but the indoor game is what garnered the most success. The invention was a success and Gulick in tandem with Naismith created rules to manage the game.¹⁹²

Basketball also served as an unofficial vehicle for assimilation and discipline for working-class youth in densely populated spaces. Springfield, Massachusetts had a large immigrant population migrating from Europe to the city during the mid-to-late 19th century that lived in largely homogenous communities defined by ethnicity. Since the game was designed to curb restless young men who were confined to indoors due to the inclement weather. This also suggests that they may have not gotten along.¹⁹³

When Gulick assumed the stewardship of physical training, one of the athletic endeavors he organized was basketball. Because of his intimate investment in the formation of the game and as well as its success in satisfying the need of negotiating energetic and sometimes mischievous young men in urban areas like Springfield (which also had a large number of immigrants), he knew continued expansion and the

¹⁹² Bernice Webb, The Basketball Man: James Naismith (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1973) 53.

¹⁹³ Michael F. Konig and Martin Kaufman, Springfield 1636 – 1986 (Springfield, Massachusetts: Springfield Library and Museums Associations, 1987) 144-145, 149.

organization of basketball in a city like New York with its massive size and diverse population could pay immense dividends in curbing transgressive behavior.

Basketball, in only twelve years of existence, was favored considerably by scores of young men. In New York City, its popularity was immense. Estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands of young men were playing the game. It's popularity coincided with playgrounds being erected across the city, many with makeshift baskets. The inaugural PSAL tournament in 1903, held in Madison Square Garden, drew more than a thousand young men who participated in a variety of events. However, it was basketball that seemed to get the most attention, the winner of the nine-team high school tournament would be the recipient of the silver cup (a value of \$300) a sponsorship courtesy of philanthropist and New York native, Cleveland Hadley Dodge. He also had high political connections as Dodge was a friend and Princeton classmate to future President Woodrow Wilson. He also served in an unofficial capacity as an adviser and financier to President Wilson. The favorability toward basketball was underscored by the fact it was the only sport advertised to which an actual sponsored trophy would be awarded to the victor. The basketball tournament even sponsored an elementary school division in which twenty-five schools participated.¹⁹⁴

The inaugural High School champion was Flushing High School in Flushing, Queens. However, since the tournament did not follow a conventional season or format, their accomplishment could be marginalized as the first PSAL basketball champion. This tournament was played in December as opposed to March at the conclusion of basketball

¹⁹⁴ Author Unknown, "Big school races To-Day" New York Times, 26 December 1903: 8; Author Unknown, "School athletics on a big scale" New York Times, 29 November 1903:15.

season. A champion was determined based upon season standings as opposed to a single title game or an elimination tournament (that currently exists) at the conclusion of the 1904-05 season. The final game on March 4, 1905 between DeWitt Clinton and Boys' High of Brooklyn, actually determined the champion. Clinton was victor and crowned the inaugural PSAL basketball champion.¹⁹⁵

In November 1903, several months after, Gulick assumed the position, the board of education outlined their plans for the PSAL, which was not formally recognized as a corporation by the State of New York until a few days later. The PSAL was largely managed by public officials even though its financial support, and the organization, was privately funded.

General George W. Wingate, President of the Board of Education, articulated the purpose of this enterprise which had yet to be recognized by the State of New York, "the problem all along has been how to make it possible, and also interesting, for the boys of our public schools to get the sort of exercise that would develop their bodies and bring them to manhood." I surmise that as the President of Education, Wingate's comment essentializes a variety of different intersections between athletics and education, such as the fact that education also involves physical fitness as part of its curriculum. Dr. Gulick would not only be responsible for managing interscholastic athletic competition but also incorporating Physical education into the curriculum. Secondly, Wingate links masculinity to physical and in many respects athletic prowess. This essentialization is

¹⁹⁵ Author Unknown, "Public School Athletic Triumph" *New York Times*, 27 December 1903: 8; Author Unknown "Miscellaneous Championships", *Public School Athletic League Handbook*, (New York, New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1906)135.

problematic because it potentially marginalizes scholastic achievement. In order to satisfy these qualifiers for manhood, a boy who is academically gifted but does not engage in physical activity could potentially be marginalized on the periphery of manhood.¹⁹⁶

Wingate noted activities for Girls would also be addressed but the primary focus was developing the character of boys. Such attitude is reminder that in a patriarchal culture, to which sport is an extension, the role of girls and women are not a necessity but an accessory. Dr. Gulick and Wingate supported physical activities for Girls but not to the same level of investment as boys. A Girl's branch of the PSAL was formed in 1904 under the direction of Catherine S. Leverwich but its mission was slightly different. City girls needed healthy exercise to protect them from the less than safe city streets that had yet develop playgrounds and other environments conducive to preserving innocent adolescence and the sanctity of womanhood.¹⁹⁷

Wingate's statement addresses the city culture to which the lure of the streets for boys to engage in mischief and transgressions of the law was strong and a destiny for many if this endeavor was not instituted. Gulick would address this issue a year later in his official plan of the PSAL. The statement also announced the inaugural PSAL games to be held on December 26, 1903, would follow the model of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). This one day event to be held at Madison Square Garden (which at the time was located on 26th street and Park Avenue) would feature a variety of athletic championships largely in track and field and basketball although the committee which

¹⁹⁶ Author Unknown, "School athletics on a big scale" New York Times, 29 November 1903: 15.

¹⁹⁷ Author Unknown, "Our Purpose", Public School Athletic League Handbook, (New York, New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1908) 10.

consisted of Board President General George W. Wingate, John Eustace Finley, President of the City College of New York,; Dr. William H. Maxwell, Superintendent of Schools; James E. Sullivan, secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union and Dr. Luther Gulick had yet to formally meet with district Superintendents, (Elementary and High School) and Principals to discuss the conditions [guidelines] of these events.¹⁹⁸

After taking office, Dr. Gulick issued a pamphlet that articulated his vision for the PSAL. He addressed the fact that the city was growing at a profound pace due to industrialization, migration, and immigration. With communities rapidly changing and bursting at the seams from overpopulation there was a need to ensure that children had safe spaces to engage in physical activity. The construction of playgrounds in the city en masse had just been initiated and many of them were already overcrowded. In addition to social elements he also addressed the economic conditions that have altered conventional ways of parenting. He noted:

“Physical training can no longer adequately come to children, either by the spontaneous natural games or by the more or less forced co-operation between children and parents in carrying on the activities of daily life...Children’s realization of their attitude to society, to work, to responsibility, can no longer be developed, as it has been in the past, largely by the boy co-operating with the father in his work and the girl co-operating with the mother. These are two of the reasons which account for the wonderful and evil development of the boys’ gang.”¹⁹⁹

In this passage, Gulick suggests that children of working class backgrounds can no longer function in their own context due to the economic demands of the family which forced mothers, the conventional primary caregivers, to spend hours outside the home

¹⁹⁸ Author Unknown, “School athletics on a big scale” New York Times, 29 November, 1903:15.

¹⁹⁹ Luther Gulick, Athletics for City Children (New York, New York: Public Schools Athletic League, 1904) 7.

working and away from their children. He also suggests that girls are also affected by this tide of responsibility but not necessarily in a productive fashion that contributes to the financial stability of the home but in a conventional and patriarchal context. Working class wives, particularly those with children are expected to subscribe to cultural norms and remain in the home tending to their children. Gulick's comments alludes to the fact that the girl is serving her mother but in a domestic space doing chores and the like which also subsequently pulls girls from participating in conventional forms of recreation.

Gulick continues his passion for intervention by essentializing his endeavors but also for the sake of children as if their lives depend on it. In a subtle way what Gulick is attempting to accomplish is the necessity for children to be in school to get an education and part of that edification is physical activity for not only their well-being but those of society. When boys demonstrate a commitment to their bodies and to athletics they will be less apt to engage in legal transgressive behavior. He notes:

“These are some of the conditions which have led to the organization of the Public Schools Athletic League. A hundred years ago athletics did not need to be provided for, because the interests of Children themselves were ample to overcome the obstacles in the way of such exercise...Are athletics worthwhile? One of the primary differences between athletics and gymnastics is the difference in their social requirements. Athletics involve intimate contact between individuals. Team work involves the subordination of self and loyalty to the team in a high degree.”²⁰⁰

He explicitly addresses the transgressive behavior by suggesting that anger and energy caused by excess time and a home absent of supervision could channeled into a productive way that instills pride, reinforces masculinity, while maintaining a Christian ethos of high moral character.

²⁰⁰ Gulick 7.

“As Jacob Riis and others have shown, the City Gang is one of the perils of the day. Boys in gangs on streets are not merely wasting their time, but are acquiring what is on the whole a vicious relation to society. Thus, to give boys of gang age interests, which make not only for that physical vigor and manliness, which the city boy is in danger of not getting but tends directly to change his social education from the vicious one of the street gang, to the wholesome one of the athletic team. The purposes of this Athletic league then are fully as much moral as they are physical.”²⁰¹

The overall tone of Gulick’s mission statement is that Children growing up in the city as a result of economic, social, and environmental forces have fewer options to participate in healthy unabated recreational activities that connects to his familiarity. He personalizes the message by referencing his upbringing and compares that to his own offspring:

“Average city boys can no longer go hunting with their parents; can no longer enjoy the thrilling delights of digging potatoes, or hoeing weeds from the corn. Even during the lifetime of persons here present conditions have materially changed. I paid my way through the high school largely by sawing wood with a buck saw. No such opportunity exists for my boy.”²⁰²

However, while their lives may not depend on engaging in regular healthy activity, it could prevent them from reaching their fullest potential. The future of the city (to which Children are essential participants) and in many respects the nation does depend on them reaching their fullest potential, so the push for engaging in regular activity is understandable and essential. In a passionate plea, Gulick argued that it was up to other agencies to step forward and initiate this task.

Gulick also expresses the complicated nature of galvanizing a city with this many schoolchildren, organizational structures and practices into a unitary system created a year earlier. He also explains the current model adopted in the first year in which several

²⁰¹Gulick 9.

²⁰²Gulick 7.

sporting events were held in one day under a single roof will more than likely be altered to a system more conducive to greater participation. He states, "It is obviously impossible to conduct a single set of games which can be participated in by the hundred thousand boys of the New York public schools, who are old enough for such sports."²⁰³

In the current system, individual districts are conducting their own league tournaments which are supported by local municipality representation and business interests need to be negotiated and redirected to this newly established governing board of athletics to which he is a director. Over the course of the next few years this shift of power was met with some resistance from local school boards and principals.

MONEY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The PSAL that was so instrumental in developing the athletic abilities, discipline, and improving the health of its participants almost failed to materialize. During its early years, a number of school administrators challenged the authority of the PSAL by violating the rules set forth. Further instigating the matter were student-athletes whom voluntarily jeopardized their amateur status and eligibility by violating the rules.

During the 1910-11 Basketball season, the Stuyvesant High School Peg Legs basketball team were in an excellent position to win the PSAL championship before the ruling on January 19, 1911 that stated A. Friedland, their star player who as recently scored 13 points in a 27-12 trouncing of Boys' High, was ruled ineligible for accepting monies to play professionally under an assumed name in the previous year. As a result of

²⁰³ Gulick 9.

the decision Stuyvesant was forced to forfeit all the games in which he competed, thus dropping the team from title contention.²⁰⁴

Unfortunately, Stuyvesant was not the only offender. A PSAL investigation uncovered a wide range of professionalism eligibility issues for players on several teams including Commerce²⁰⁵, Flushing, and Eastern District high schools. The entire team at Newtown high school in Queens was subject to suspension for gross and egregious disregard for the rules. The situation was so grim that the PSAL decided to void the 1910-1911 Championship season. This led to outrage by High School Games Committee, which was formed in 1906 and comprised of coaches, team managers, and/or representatives from each of the schools whose responsibility was to set and manage the guidelines over player eligibility. The board clashed for months with the PSAL in regards to eligibility of players and other rules violations including evidence of false certifications (including accusations of grade alterations).²⁰⁶

The general concern appeared to lie in the issue of authority. In some instances, the question of authority became overly present to the point it became a farce. In one instance, Peter Green who played baseball for Commerce high school, which had won the city championship in June of 1910, was accused of playing professionally under an assumed name. His actions under PSAL rules in accordance to Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) guidelines which governs all amateur athletics, would rule him ineligible and

²⁰⁴ Author Unknown, "Schoolboy a professional" New York Times, 19 January 1911:12.

²⁰⁵ Commerce was sometimes referred to as Commercial High School but it was officially known as Commerce High school. The term was used interchangeably. This author will use Commerce unless direct quotes state otherwise.

²⁰⁶ "Committee Reports" Journal of the Board of Education of the City of New York, 8 January 1908: 14; Author Unknown, "Basketball Muddle Ends" New York Times, 1 March 1911; Player eligibility refers to player oversight on academic requirements, age, etc.

Commerce High School would have to forfeit all their games in which he competed including the city championship. In his case it was unclear who initiated the accusation but in the interim, Commerce high school was not awarded the championship trophy until the matter was resolved. Six months later, in November that year, the High School Games committee, in charge of handling the matter, asked the executive board to handle the proceedings. It was then turned over to PSAL executives to render a decision on the case. When asked to present evidence against the young man's eligibility, the high school games committee refused to do so. According to W.S. Andrews, from Boys' high school in Brooklyn and a representative of the high school games committee, he and his colleagues "have been too busy to attend to any such proposition and would wait until next month before holding a meeting, when their time would be mainly concerned in deciding that the PSAL committee had nothing to do with the case." After months of wrangling, On December 23, two days for Christmas break, Wingate finally awarded Commercial High school the Spalding trophy for winning the 1910 PSAL baseball title. Each of ten team members was offered gold medals as prizes for their accomplishment.²⁰⁷

General George Wingate, President of the PSAL was perplexed as to why the subcommittee took no action and then questioned the position of executive board which ruled on the matter. He was equally disturbed by the fact that baseball championship trophy was sitting somewhere in an office instead of in possession of a team, six months after the season had concluded. In the meantime that same committee, refusing to hear the case or produce evidence, recently released next year's (1911) baseball schedule.

²⁰⁷ Author Unknown, "Insurgent methods in school circles" New York Times, 20 November 1910: C6; Author Unknown, "Commercial High Awarded Trophy" New York Times, 24 December 1910:12.

James E. Sullivan, Chairman of the PSAL, suggested that the high school games committee knew of rules infractions involving several teams and feared the punishment could be as severe as were cases involving academic and athletic fraud by principals. Those cases were handled by the Board of Education. Sullivan argued “they [the committee] became panic-stricken, and called in our committee to pore over thirteen or fourteen cases of professionalism.”²⁰⁸

Sullivan’s theory is supported by the fact that during a meeting on June 6, 1910, W.H. Andrews was called upon to investigate a member of his own baseball team at Boys’ High in Brooklyn. Tabor, an all-scholastic star player for two seasons, had been accused of playing professionally and those making the charge produced overwhelming evidence. As of late December, 1910 there was no mention about the progress of the case.²⁰⁹

The situation escalated further when members of the high school games committee (who were employed by their respective high schools) informed their superiors - the school principals –the PSAL committee overstepped their boundaries which led the High School Games committee threatening withdrawal from the PSAL under the advisement of their Principals. James E. Sullivan was livid. His response to their actions, “The most childish action I’ve ever seen by men who are supposed to be standing for everything which marks manliness of purpose, and who sponsors among school boys for all that is upright in athletics.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Author Unknown, “Commercial High Awarded Trophy” New York Times, 24 December 1910: 12.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Author Unknown, “Schoolboy Powers are up in arms” New York Times, 22 December 1910: 10.

W.S. Andrews, now identified as the Chairman of the High Schools Games Committee noted that his commission adhered to the decisions of the Principals Association, who in turn reported to the Board of Education. J.D. Dillingham, principal at Newtown High School in Queens, and secretary of the Principals' Association supported this theory in a memorandum distributed to the PSAL, High School Games Committee and the media:

Resolved that it is the sense of the High Schools Principals' Association that the representatives of the high schools derive their powers in high school athletics from their principals, and not from the Public Schools Athletic League.

Resolved. That it is the sense of the High Schools Principals' Association that the High Schools committee is not, and never has been a committee of the Public Schools Athletic league.

Resolved. That is the sense of the High Schools Principals' Association that the High School games committee was justified in assuming complete jurisdiction in the Green case, subject to the review of the Board of Education or its Committee on Athletics.

Resolved. That is the sense of the High Schools Principals' Association that the High School Games Committee was justified in deciding the Green case and awarding the championship.

Resolved. That a copy of the above resolution be sent to the President of the Public Schools Athletic League, the Chairman of the High School Games Committee, and the Chairman of the High School Committee of the Board of Education.²¹¹

A theory in regards to this matter suggests that there were some schools that were not happy with the PSAL being formed and the assumption they were assuming control

²¹¹ "Commercial High Awarded Trophy" New York Times, 24 December 1910: 12.

of their responsibilities but serving as their parent organization. The fact that guidelines are determined by forces outside of their jurisdiction seemed problematic and usurped their professional networks. Based on the investigations, whatever arrangements they had among each other in regards to the 'rules' prior to the PSAL, was in serious jeopardy. The chain of command for the high school games committee went through the principals. Essentially, everything remained insular. Any infractions were handled internally and the worst case scenario by the Board of Education.²¹²

The High School Games Committee regarded the PSAL as an intruder on their turf. The committee also appeared to exploit a loophole in the guidelines. The PSAL handbook contends that all business in regards to athletics falls under the jurisdiction of the PSAL. What did exist was confusion as to where the individual members (athletic personnel whom were also full-time teachers) loyalties were - the men who governed their jobs (the school principals) or those who governed their responsibilities (PSAL). An example of this confusion was a situation involving a boy from Richmond Hill high school in Queens. In 1910, a basketball game between DeWitt Clinton and Richmond Hill was ordered by the PSAL to be replayed because this young man whom competed for Richmond Hill was deemed ineligible by the PSAL because he played professional baseball last spring. He was disqualified from amateur competition immediately last spring but apparently, the games committee overlooked or ignored this very important detail. General Wingate and the PSAL executive board grew wary of these constant transgressions of the rules. As one follower of the situation whom remained anonymous noted "coaches in the high schools were willing to wink at violations of the amateur

²¹² "Commercial High Awarded Trophy" 12.

definition, and they seem to have been getting away with that line of action.” One question that arises from this dilemma is that does professionalism in one sport invalidates amateurism in another? Secondly, some schools in Queens might reserve some loyalty to the local boards in their respective communities that once governed them.²¹³

Members of the High School Games committee felt the PSAL was overstepping their authority and in effort to have their concerns met, the committee insisted that W.H. Andrews, serve as a representative of the games committee and on the board of directors. If not, they threatened to withdraw from the PSAL. Wingate, met with members of the High School Principals’ Association to discuss the developments with their athletic representatives. Unfortunately, that did not sit well with the games committee who had conducted several secret meetings with the members of the Board of Education to express their displeasure. Some of these schools were flirting with professionalism as much as amateurism.²¹⁴

The responsibility of the PSAL was to govern interscholastic sports which included running championship tournaments. One of the ways they were empowered is they had access to the funds which largely came from private sources to run these tournaments and provide the facilities to which the contests were held. General George Wingate was so fed up with these ‘insurgents’ and the potential destruction of the league’s financial support that on December 22, 1910, he issued a statement:

²¹³ “More Insurgency in schoolboy sport,” New York Times, 21 December 1910.

²¹⁴ “General Wingate scores school insurgency” New York Times, 23 December 1910: 15.

“I am a public school boy and I’m always anxious to do some good for youngsters in the schools today but I want to say, and I voice the sentiments of one the best friends of the PSAL, S.R. Guggenheim, the treasurer of the league, when I say that I am disgusted with the attitude taken by this minor committee. Mr. Guggenheim has given on average of \$10,000 a year to the league in various forms, to say nothing of his time, which is still more valuable, and yet this High Schools Games Committee threatens to disrupt all the good years with this ill-advised action.”²¹⁵

Information about the financial footing of the PSAL was also made public. In 1910, the league received more than \$11,692.14 and the year earlier \$9,604.68. 85% of those funds were utilized in running the respective athletic contests. Just two years earlier in 1908, the PSAL was financially in dire straits to which Wingate called upon men to respond to their situation. The league had more than \$2800 in debts that needed to be repaid. Wingate was able to procure some donations but it was suggested that an institutional membership fee of \$10 for a year be imposed in order to support a contingency line in the budget and act as a buffer to prevent such problems in the future.²¹⁶

By 1910 the league was on solid financial footing. The suggested membership fee was implemented and the PSAL had a total of 461 members; 310 were annual members, 82 life members and 69 were patrons. This and other financial information was made available for a couple of reasons, most notably to demonstrate the cost of running the PSAL, expenditures the high school committee and Board of Education would have to locate and absorb if they were to discontinue their membership and start their own league; secondly, to gather public support and sympathy for the PSAL. The question the public would ask dissent[er]s: Why would they be willing to forgo a system that works

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Author Unknown, “General Wingate scores school insurgency” New York Times, 23 December 1910: 15; Author Unknown, “School athletes in need of funds” New York Times, 14 January 1908: S3.

and to which an overwhelmingly majority of the public schools support at the elementary and middle school levels?²¹⁷

Unfortunately, the strategy was unsuccessful. Finally after a series of meetings, some confidential and heated, the High School Games Committee decided on March 3, 1911 to formally disassociate from the PSAL. The first indication of this reality occurred when the committee scheduled a swim meet outside of the purview of the league on March 10 at the City College. Beyond this event it is difficult to ascertain, the impact this had on PSAL games or other tournaments. It appears the break would initiate at the start of the 1912-13 academic calendar when the league was still responsible for resolving some entanglements that involved three different sports and four different high schools. The most prominent issue involved the location of the basketball championship game between DeWitt Clinton and Stuyvesant. Other unresolved matters include the unsanctioned swimming championship organized by high school games committee. Apparently, there was a tie in the overall score of a swim meet between DeWitt Clinton and Commerce. The committee ordered that each of the two boys whose scores were identical meet in a playoff at a later date – an order to which one of the participants had objected. Finally, there was a case involving eligibility. A young man who scored the deciding point for his team during the track championships, had apparently exceeded the age limit of 16 years. He admitted that he was over the age limit but when the young man's mother became privy to the matter she signed an affidavit stating that her son was

²¹⁷ Author Unknown, "General Wingate scores school insurgency" New York Times, 23 December 1910: 15.

not 16 at the time of competition. This case was left up to the league to resolve at the behest of the committee.²¹⁸

After four months of discord, the High Schools Principal Association and the PSAL committee mended fences at the behest of the Board of Education. Dr. John H. Denver, of Morris high school representing the Principals' Association and Colonel George Wingate resolved the issues. During the meeting it was revealed that emotional tensions were high and logical reasoning was low. Their primary concern was controlling the games of schools. The Principals objected to this, stating they were 'competent' to handle things themselves. The PSAL contends they never had any desire to control games; that responsibility fell upon the high school games committee. The PSAL retorted their responsibility is to serve the schools by determining eligibility and laws to which all members were binding. It was agreed that responsibility was fair and the issue was resolved. As a result, the PSAL amended the constitutional by-laws so that the High School games committee as opposed to the principals of member schools would have full authority to sanction contests (which include schedule approval) that involve New York City public high schools. Another provision was added that required the High School Games committee to investigate any matters related to the contests which include issues related to eligibility.²¹⁹

Adding to the intrigue, the following fall when assumingly the break with the PSAL was supposed to be in effect, the PSAL sponsored championships in soccer. Basketball games continued and were reported as PSAL sponsored events in the press.

²¹⁸ Author Unknown, "PSAL athletic muddles" New York Times, 20 March 1912: 11.

²¹⁹ Author Unknown, "School Athletic war is at an end" New York Times, 22 April 1911: 13.

The referees of the contests were identified as PSAL officials, so the impact of their disassociation is undetermined. However, the amount of press coverage of PSAL sponsored events for High Schools appears to have diminished.²²⁰

On December 15, 1914, the High School games committee elected Rowland A. Patterson, a PSAL inspector of athletics as secretary to the High School Games committee. His election was a step in mending relations between the committee and the PSAL. Since the split between the PSAL and the High School games committee, the plan of conducting high school athletics independent of the league did not have the success they intended. With the election of Patterson, this all but ensured that high school athletics will once again fall under the direction of the PSAL. Even though the PSAL was technically an independent organization (though many of its members were employed by the Board of Education, and other municipal agencies), the Board of Education extended the power and legitimacy of the league two weeks later by passing a resolution stating the organization through private funds are to exercise what the Board of Education desires to do with athletics but cannot with public funds.²²¹

PSAL AND MOBILITY

The growth of the PSAL largely relied on the advancement of two major components to its model. The first was money; the second was accessible rapid transit. During the mid-19th century, the population of New York City was growing at an astounding pace. The opening of the Erie Canal led to the boom in the city's ports.

²²⁰ Author Unknown, "High Schools Break from the PSAL" New York Times, 4 March 1911: 13.

²²¹ Author Unknown, "PSAL to rule sports" New York Times, 16 December 1914: 13.

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants came from Europe, and other parts of the Middle-Atlantic region for the sudden growth of jobs on the city docks. The city's population increased every decade throughout the century. The population doubled from 1820 to 1840, then doubled again from 1860 to 1890. By the end of the century, in 1900 the population of New York City numbered at 3,437,202 of that 1,270,080 or 36.9 percent were foreign born. 1,850,093 of those residents or 53.8 percent of the City's population resided in Manhattan. The city was poorly suited for this dramatic growth which caused overpopulation and made living in many neighborhoods almost unbearable.²²²

The solution to overcrowding was to create a rapid transit system that could transport people to other parts of the city. The immediate solution was the elevated railway which first opened on July 3, 1868 on a half-mile stretch of Greenwich Street from Dey Street to Cortland Street in lower Manhattan. After navigating through economic and political hurdles in which operations were temporarily ceased, the first corridor of the New York Elevated Railway which ran on Greenwich Street and nicknamed "the El" resumed operations in April 1871.²²³

The elevated railway, traveled about twelve miles an hour, greatly reduced travel time and made other parts of Manhattan more accessible. Unfortunately, a number of citizens viewed the elevated railway as a mixed blessing. Numerous New Yorkers complained the construction lowered the quality of life. The bulky columns and rails blocked sunlight and kept the streets in constant perpetual twilight. Also the El's were

²²² U.S. Census, "Total and foreign-born population: New York Metropolitan Region by Subregion and County, 1900-2000", August 2014 <www1.nyc.gov>.

²²³ Clifton Hood, 722 Miles: The Building of the subways and how they transformed New York (New York, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) 50; Author Unknown, "The New York Elevated Railroad" New York Times, 1 November, 1873: 3.

very dirty, loud and audibly intrusive. One neighborhood resident expressed his thoughts about the sixth avenue railway in a letter to the *New York Times*:²²⁴

“The noise made by the Metropolitan Railway is an invasion of the rights of property owners. No one knows what a nuisance the noise is until he has tried to sleep under its influence. From the hour when the trains commence to run in the morning good-by rest. To all the dwellers on the two blocks for half the distance on each side of the avenue the noise is an infliction which is simply unbearable.”²²⁵

In response to the noise complaints, engineers from the Metropolitan Railway tried to remedy the problem by placing wood guards and some rubber felting near the rails to reduce the vibration and sounds. This appears to have reduced the noise but the elevated railways were not a long-term solution to the city’s overcrowding. The capacity of trains did not meet the population demands and vehicle speed was insufficient.

Northern Manhattan, the area today known as Harlem, Vandewater (Morningside Heights – where Columbia University is situated), Hamilton and Washington Heights the areas that needed development, the topography of the land was hilly and impeded the elevated trains ability to reach the area. Not to mention to speed of the trains did not cover the cover the length of the Island which also hindered its development. By 1890 the trains were already overcrowded and discussions among city leaders about establishing an underground system powered by electricity. By 1894, Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company was in negotiations to provide the electrical equipment necessary to implement such an endeavor.²²⁶

²²⁴ Hood 54.

²²⁵ Author Unknown, “The elevated Railway’s critics” *New York Times*, 21 June 1878: 3.

²²⁶ Author Unknown, “Electricity for the elevated roads” *New York Times*, 27 December 1894: 7; Hood 55; Author Unknown, “Elevated railway noises” *New York Times*, 14 September 1878: 3; Author Unknown, “Elevated railway noises” *New York Times*, 15 July 1878: 5.

In 1903, when the Outdoor Recreation League sponsored its first competitive event, elevated railways made all of the parks in Manhattan accessible to the venue on Lower East Side. Three years in earlier in 1900, August Belmont, the son of German Jewish immigrants, signed a contract worth \$36.5 million with the municipality of New York to build, provide equipment, and operate the railway, known as *contract one*, for a period of fifty years. Upon signing the contract, Belmont created the Rapid Transit Subway Construction Company, the corporation that would be responsible for building the subway. In April 1902, he established the Interborough Rapid Transit Company (IRT). This corporation would be responsible for operating the facility. On October 27, 1904, Mayor George McClellan operated the first and ceremonial train from city hall and headed north for a tour of the new IRT subway. The El's and later subways were essential for not only children getting to school but was also a necessity for conducting varsity interscholastic competition. The likelihood of the PSAL having a central park extravaganza in 1913 with 10,000 schoolboys from across the city without the benefit of the railways would have been unlikely. A January 1908 interborough basketball game between Morris high school in the Bronx and Erasmus Hall in Flatbush Brooklyn on a school night would be farcical without a rapid transit system.²²⁷

FUNDING PSAL SPORTS

Since the PSAL was an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Board of Education and privately funded. Raising money to run the programs required membership fees from colleges but also donations from S.R. Guggenheim who also served as financial

²²⁷ Hood, 71, 91; Author Unknown, "Schoolboy basketball schedule" New York Times, 22 November 1907: 7.

secretary for the PSAL for a number of years. The finances of the PSAL were relatively stable until the arrival of several factors that altered their position. First, contributions to war funds from 1916 to 1921 greatly impacted the PSAL operating budget to the point where it was nearly in crisis mode. Secondly, between 1910 and 1920, New York City experienced one of its greatest population increases in the city's history as a result, the Board of Education opened 24 new high schools between 1917 and 1925. Most of these schools carried athletic programs and needed to be supported. The surge in population led to a series of fundraisers.²²⁸

On March 23, 1928 General George Wingate, the only man to ever preside over the PSAL, died at his home. His passing was the first step in the undoing of the PSAL as a privately-financed organization. Wingate a Civil War veteran was well-respected had the clout, to attract financial support to the organization. The following year on March 15th a \$1,000,000 memorial fundraising drive was initiated in his honor to support the Public Schools Athletic League. Unfortunately, six months later, the second nail to the financial independence of the league fell when the stock market crashed causing donations to dwindle and fall far short of their intended goal. The last published report indicated that \$133,888 dollars were raised and that plans to invest the money immediately were being made. \$25,000 of that sum was courtesy of S.R. Guggenheim, a dutiful sponsor of the PSAL since its inception.²²⁹

²²⁸ Gerard J. Pelisson and James Garvey, The Castle on the Parkway: the story of New York City's Dewitt Clinton High School and its extraordinary influence on American life (Scarsdale, New York: The Hutch Press, 2009) 37.

²²⁹ Author Unknown, "PSAL fund drive to start today" New York Times, 15 March 1929: 29; Author Unknown, "Fund for PSAL reaches \$133, 888" New York Times, 26 August 1929: 18.

Despite his generosity and from others, the financial crisis was too much to bear. Private contributions dwindled significantly and on June 1, 1932, the last hurrah for PSAL's financial independence called it a career, when S.R. Guggenheim resigned as treasurer, triggering the most egregious form of instability of the league for the first time in its history. The only option to maintain that stability seemed obvious. In 1933, four years after initiating a \$1,000,000 fund raising drive, Dr. A.K. Aldinger, secretary of the PSAL announced plans to halt all athletic activities immediately, including a huge track meet scheduled later in the month due to a lack of funding. Fortunately, that order was later rescinded and all scheduled events resumed while the PSAL and Board of Education executives would figure out some plan to disentangle this financial mess. The handwriting was on the wall. There was only one other option to save the PSAL. On November 10, 1936 after 33 years, it was decided that the Board of Education would assume control of the PSAL. No longer was the organization a privately run and financially self-supporting separate entity. The executive board members of the PSAL were present at the meeting and immediately relinquished control. They were thanked for their years of service to the schoolchildren and citizens of New York City but now it was time to move forward. Assuming control of the PSAL by the Board of Education meant financial stability and access to public funds that were limited as a private organization.²³⁰

²³⁰ Author Unknown, "PSAL facing cut in schedule" New York Times, 26 April 1933: 18; Author Unknown, "PSAL program will not be cut" New York Times, 3 May 1933: 20; Author Unknown, "Administration of PSAL activities is taken over by the Board of Education" New York Times, 11 November, 1936: 30.

In 1955, for the first time in PSAL history, the Board of Education provided \$85,000 in financial support in the form of grants for high school athletic programs. This was necessitated by dwindling attendance and revenue at basketball games since the 1930s. The first sport to receive these monies was basketball which was most popular in the form of school sponsorship. Sixty-four of the seventy participating PSAL high schools sponsored basketball. This is yet another example of how basketball was solidifying its position in New York City as the preferred game of youth, the city game, and the urban cultural ethos; far greater than baseball which was considered to be the national pastime.²³¹

The issue of financial support would continue to plague city schools and the PSAL for several decades. The budget of individual schools and the Board of Education was largely informed by the financial state of the city. The fiscal crises in the city led to a series of budget cuts in city agencies. It was issues related to funding that forced to the PSAL from a privately-operated organization before dissolving into a branch of the public education system in 1936. One of the reasons the PSAL ran into funding issues was attributed to the economy which reduced philanthropy; another issue was the growing population of the city. Less than a decade earlier more than two dozen new high schools opened to satisfy the population demands. Those schools also sponsored athletic programs which in many respects placed a strain on the league. The schools were responsible for the expenses of fielding a team (which include uniforms, equipment, and instruction) but the PSAL was responsible for scheduling, providing facilities if a host

²³¹ William J. Flynn, "Basketball teams to be the first to receive City's Grants-in-aid for athletics" New York Times, 18 October 1955: 51.

school did not have any, officials (umpires, referees, judges), setting up tournaments, providing trophies and various awards from athletic achievement. These responsibilities obviously and their costs placed a great deal of strain on both of the Board of Education and the PSAL.

CHAPTER 4

CULTIVATING A SPORTING CULTURE OF EQUALITY

On March 22, 1947, DeWitt Clinton defeated Abraham Lincoln High school 49-44 in the finals of the New York City PSAL (Public Schools Athletic League) Basketball tournament. With the victory, the Governors secured their twelfth championship title, the most of any New York City high school since the tournament was organized in 1905. More than 12,000 spectators witnessed this epic event at Madison Square Garden. The contest was notable for a variety of reasons; first, the distance of 28.5 miles featured the greatest geographical gap between two opponents in a championship game; secondly, it reaffirmed Clinton, a racially diverse high school, as the most dominant basketball program in the first half of the twentieth century; finally it served as a platform for Edward Warner, to demonstrate his skills as one of the most talented players in the city. Two years later, Warner would take his talents to CCNY and contribute significantly on that national championship team.²³²

DeWitt Clinton high school was named after the only man who would serve as mayor and governor of New York State (1817-1821, 1825-1828) who unsuccessfully ran for President against James Madison in 1812. Despite this blemish, Clinton was quite successful, his most notable accomplishments include reforming the New York City

²³² William Richardson, "Bronx Five Victor at Garden 49-44," New York Times, 23 March 1947: S3.

public educational system and serving as the architect of the Erie Canal. His first consideration of the Canal occurred in 1811 as mayor of New York City but it did not become a reality until his second term as governor in 1825. The canal served as a gateway to carrying goods and people from the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes, which in turn made New York City the commercial capital of the country greatly contributing to the prosperity and financial growth of Midwest states and territories. As a tribute to his vision, thirty-six states have towns named in his honor.²³³

Clinton was also a reformer of public school education. He was the principal organizer and first President of the Public School Society of New York City. As a young man whom graduated from Columbia College at seventeen and law school at twenty-one, Clinton was a staunch supporter of public education who worked tirelessly to ensure that all children had access to a high-quality education. In 1900, when the faculty and students decided to rename their school they chose the one individual who was instrumental in establishing the public school in New York City. After spirited debates and discussions, the Boys' High School of Manhattan and the Bronx, originally located on 13th Street (dubbed 'the barn' for its aesthetic exteriors), was renamed DeWitt Clinton High School.²³⁴

The school was established as an academy and a vehicle to a high-caliber, intellectually-enriched education for Boys. Throughout the years it would amass a list of accomplished alumni in a variety of fields rivaled by few high schools. Including: Among

²³³ Gerard J. Pelisson, The Castle on the Parkway: The Story of New York City's DeWitt Clinton High School and its extraordinary influence on American Life, (Scarsdale, New York; Hutch Press, 2009) 1.

²³⁴ Pelisson 5, 11.

them were Nate Archibald (professional Basketball player), Ira Berlin (historian), James Baldwin (novelist), Robert Hofstadter (Nobel Peace Prize in Physics), Ralph Lauren (fashion designer), Charles Rangel (U.S. Congressman), and Neil Simon (playwright). It also established five annexes shortly thereafter to help alleviate overcrowding. In 1906, Clinton high school would shift its location to West 59th street and Tenth Avenue, to a larger more central location to serve Bronx and Manhattan students before relocating again to its current home on Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx in 1929. At the time of relocation, the main building enrolled 6,275 students (even though its capacity was designed for 5,124) from the five boroughs of New York City. Multiple day sessions were created in order handle the overpopulation. Despite the overcrowding and concerns about safety, the school did not compromise the quality of education. On numerous occasions school publications boldly stated that “Students who are not planning to go to college will be asked to leave DeWitt Clinton High School.”²³⁵

DeWitt Clinton was also able to attract some of the most talented educators. For consideration, a faculty member had to score in top percentile on the city administered examination in their subject areas. In many respects, DeWitt Clinton bore a resemblance to CCNY when it came to quality of education, and the unlikely home of an athletic stalwart (which may be attributed to the school’s leadership). At the time of their twelfth championship title in forty-two years, the school Principal Dr. John Walsh, was a graduate of CCNY, which may account and justify for the parallels between the two institutions. Overcrowding was serious but unfortunately, that issue wasn’t resolved until the late 1930s when the Board of Education decided to construct Benjamin Franklin high

²³⁵ Pelisson 63.

school in East Harlem. Ironically, Franklin would become their cross-borough basketball rival attracting some of the most talented players in Harlem and the southern portion of the Bronx. Franklin would win four PSAL Championships in basketball between 1938 and 1946. The last championship interrupted what could have been for Clinton a three-year reign as champions.²³⁶

The geographical distance between DeWitt Clinton and Abraham Lincoln high school in the 1947 championship game was wide but it also signaled the popularity of the game across the city. By this time most neighborhoods in the fifties had playgrounds with basketball courts giving youngsters an opportunity to learn and develop their skills. The two schools drew from not only very different geographic regions of the city but also from communities that were made up of different racial groups. Abraham Lincoln was erected in 1929 and like many schools in New York City primarily served the communities of Coney Island, Gravesend, and Sheepshead Bay that were largely comprised of private residences as opposed to tenements and apartment complexes. The racial demographic was predominantly Caucasian and ethnic whites which include recent immigrants whom migrated from Manhattan. Though the racial demographic of school at that time unavailable, it should be noted its varsity teams reflected that narrative. By contrast, Clinton high school was more racially, and perhaps more social-economically diverse because it drew a broader population from multiple boroughs. Despite the racial compositions of each school both shared a passion for basketball.

²³⁶ Pelisson 66.

In 1903, basketball, in only twelve years of existence was favored considerably by scores of teens and adolescents. In New York City, its popularity was immense it was estimated that hundreds of thousands were playing the game. The popularity coincided with playgrounds being erected across the city many with makeshift baskets. In the inaugural PSAL tournament in Madison Square Garden, more than a thousand young men participated in a variety of athletic events. However, it was basketball that seemed to get the most attention. The winner of the nine-team high school tournament would be the recipient of the silver cup (a value of \$300) sponsored by philanthropist Cleveland Hadley Dodge. Aside from rifling, this was the only sport advertised to which an actual sponsored trophy would be awarded to the victor.²³⁷

The inaugural basketball tournament sponsored by the newly formed PSAL occurred in 1905 at the National Athletic Club in Brooklyn; eight of the sixteen member high schools entered teams representing a broad geographic range of the city with all the boroughs accounted for with the exception of Staten Island.²³⁸ The participating schools in that inaugural tournament were Flushing and Far Rockaway high school in Queens; Boys and Manual high school in Brooklyn; the Bronx was represented by its lone school Morris; Clinton, Stuyvesant, and Commerce high school represented Manhattan. The structure of the tournament, were two rounds of games that would ultimately produce a remainder of two teams that would compete in a championship game the following week. What made the slate of games interesting was the participation of the Queens schools.

²³⁷ Author Unknown, "Big School Races To-Day: Young Athletes meet at Madison Square Garden" New York Times, 26 December 1903: 8; Author Unknown, "School Athletics on a Big Scale" New York Times, 29 November 1903: 15.

²³⁸ Curtis High School, the first secondary school in Richmond opened in September 1905 but did not field a team in the tournament that year.

(Particularly Far Rockaway which had to endure the longest trip which was presumably by a suburban railway system that was still developing). A Queens' branch of the PSAL was established to encourage athletics among its student body because these schools were not as populous as their Brooklyn and Manhattan counterparts and would be at competitive disadvantage. This theory was supported by the fact that no school from Queens would win the basketball championship until 1927 when Newtown claimed the title. Newtown would win a second consecutive title the following year and again in 1931.²³⁹

The championship game between Boys' and Clinton high schools occurred a week later on March 4, 1905 at a neutral site at the Seventy-first Regiment Armory on fifty-ninth street and Madison Avenue. More than 4,000 spectators witnessed this championship contest and cheered for their respective teams. Despite the intentions for neutrality with its geographical location, Clinton high school located a few miles away on 13th Street between sixth and seventh avenue appeared to hold the advantage with fan support whose residences were scattered about Manhattan creating a more of a home advantage versus the Boys High team that was essentially a world-and-half away in Brooklyn. Clinton prevailed in a 28-22 victory to what is the inaugural PSAL basketball tournament.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Author Unknown, "Basket Ball Championship. Boys' High and DeWitt Clinton will meet in final match," New York Times, 26 February 1905: 11; "Miscellaneous Championships," Public School Athletic League Handbook (New York, New York: American Sports Publishing Company, 1906) 138; PSAL Basketball champions website from NBA.com, June 10, 2014 <http://hoopedia.nba.com/index.php?title=Public_Schools_Athletic_Leaguechampions>.

²⁴⁰ Author Unknown, "Basket Ball honors won by New York Boys: DeWitt Clinton takes Championship from Brooklyn team," New York Times, 5 March 1905: 11.

THE SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS DOMINATE

The vision of the PSAL involved more than just athletics, it also was about developing the character of young people. Physical exercise could help develop bodies and minds but organized athletic competition extended physical and intellectual development even further. Perhaps at no point in the history of the PSAL was this mission of balancing the two traits exemplified better than during the period of 1907-1912 when two of the most academically rigorous institutions in New York City dominated interscholastic basketball.²⁴¹

Participation in the basketball tournament was optional and in 1907, ten schools participated in the basketball tournament with Townsend Harris, becoming the most unlikely PSAL champions when they defeated Commerce in the final game of the season thus winning the city title. In 1909, Stuyvesant outlasted Boys' High to win the championship. Like their predecessor, Stuyvesant won consecutive titles and another in 1912. A dispute over eligibility issues in deference to professionalism involving their star player A. Friedland (which forced them to vacate the title) interrupted what would have been four consecutive titles and one of the most dominant teams in the history of PSAL.²⁴²

²⁴¹ DeWitt Clinton, was considered an academic rigorous school but their standards for admission was a step below Stuyvesant and Harris who would later formally administer entrance exams. Clinton also functioned as a neighborhood school. Which meant that they were bound to accept kids regardless of their academic prowess. Stuyvesant and Harris were not fully bound to such requirements and prior to administering exams would establish a weeding out process during the first semester of freshman year.

²⁴² Lincoln High school would win four consecutive titles from 2006-2010, however the last three titles (from 2007 onward) were earned after the PSAL restructured the A division, the highest the level of Basketball competition and created two divisions - A and AA – with AA now serving the highest level. For more information the two divisions see PSAL.org

Townsend Harris and Stuyvesant High Schools were classified as specialized schools that served some of the most academically gifted boys in the city.²⁴³ Harris was an academically rigorous school that offered three years of instruction as opposed to four. The intention of the school was to serve a feeder for the municipal college of New York City that was otherwise known as the Free Academy but later renamed the City College of New York.²⁴⁴

Originally, Harris was founded in 1892 as part of the sub-freshman year-long training course of the Free Academy. In 1900, the board of trustees voted to expand the curriculum to three years and become a preparatory school operating within the college which at the time was located on Lexington Avenue and 23rd street. In 1905, at the behest of the CCNY President John Finley, a new building was constructed at the new and present location of the college campus in Harlem that would be aptly named Townsend Harris Hall; a building that would eventually house the newly established school that operated under the jurisdiction of the college and not the Board of Education. The school known on campus as the ‘academic department’ was an excellent vehicle for providing the most academically talented and developed young men from working-class families an opportunity to attend an institution that for all intents and purposes served as a preparatory school for CCNY. Upon successful completion of their studies students would automatically be accepted into the College.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Townsend Harris and Stuyvesant did not accept women until the 1930s.

²⁴⁴ PSAL Basketball champions website; Eileen F. Lebow Bright Boys: A History of Townsend Harris High School, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000) 1.

²⁴⁵ Lebow 9, 11-14.

Interscholastic athletic competition was not a priority but it was encouraged as a way to build student pride. Unfortunately, between their studies, travel, and home responsibilities, participation ebb and flowed. As a result, teams would periodically disband. Because these young men (teenagers) were from various parts of the city travel time was a huge concern and factor in the extent of their extra-circular involvement. Prior to moving uptown to Harlem and the expansion of the curriculum to three years, athletic teams were known as “CCNY Prep” prior to the formal adoption of the name Townsend Harris. Most of these athletic teams were at a disadvantage as they were in many instances one or two years younger than their competitors who were members of freshmen and junior varsity college teams like those at Columbia University. When the subject of sports is addressed, alumni have characterized the reputation earned in interscholastic competition as reinforcing the stereotype that Harris athletes are “bookish, ineffectual athletes, better at chess or checkers than baseball.”²⁴⁶

In 1906, the PSAL accepted Harris into the basketball tournament which consisted of nine games versus teams from across the city, including Clinton, (the 1905 champions) their Manhattan rivals: Stuyvesant, Commercial and Commerce High Schools. The schedule appeared initially daunting but after seven games, with two remaining, Townsend Harris was in a three-way tie for first place with two of its Manhattan rivals - Commerce and Stuyvesant with their final game of the season versus Commerce looming.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Lebow16, 30.

²⁴⁷ Author Unknown, “Ten High School teams enter tourney,” New York Times, 28 October 1906: 11; Author Unknown, “Columbia Wins Basketball Game: High Schools tied at Basket Ball” New York Times, 22 February 1907: 10.

On March 2nd Townsend Harris defeated Commerce 12-11 in a physical game marred by fouls while Stuyvesant easily defeated Morris 24-12 setting a championship game between the two schools whom that would dominate for the next five seasons. Townsend Harris defeated Stuyvesant 13-11 to capture an improbable city championship. The following season, Harris finished with nine victories and one loss and successfully defended its title when its final opponent Manual High School of Brooklyn (4-5) refused to compete because mathematically they were eliminated from competing for the championship. As it turns out the PSAL adopted a tourney format that based a championship on whichever team finished in first place. If there was a tie as it was the previous season with Townsend Harris and Stuyvesant, then both teams would play a tie-breaker or one game playoff that would determine the city champion.²⁴⁸

The historical championship titles by Townsend Harris would become one of the high notes in the athletic history of the school. Harris would never win another basketball title, let alone place among the top ten in any given season. The perception of an academics-first institution would remain unscathed. The reign of the specialized schools would continue when Stuyvesant High School claimed the next three basketball titles with the third one ending in controversy. At the conclusion of the tournament Stuyvesant and DeWitt Clinton High schools had identical records - ten victories and one loss. As per PSAL rules, if there was a tie for the best record then a one –game playoff for the championship would have to be played.

²⁴⁸ Author Unknown, "Yale and Columbia Tie: Townsend Harris Breaks Tie," New York Times, 3 March 1907: 11; Author Unknown, "Entries for N.Y.A.C. Games: Townsend Harris Hall defeats Stuyvesant in Play-Off for Title," New York Times, 7 March 1907:10; Author Unknown, "Morristown gun club wins: High School Basketball (Townsend Harris Hall wins championship for second consecutive time)," New York Times, 15 March 1908: S2.

The basketball committee of the PSAL decided the game would be played at the City College of New York gymnasium. Stuyvesant refused to play at that venue on the grounds that the court was too small and the spectators would interfere with the game when the players needed to retrieve or throw the ball inbounds. They also argued the congested environment would cater favorably to Clinton's style of play. Officials made arrangements with CCNY to ensure there would be no less than ten feet separating the court and spectators. Stuyvesant officials refused that accommodation but agreed to play at any armory in the city. PSAL officials nixed that option as no armory would be available below a fee of \$100 – a cost not supported by the budget. There was also a suggestion that Stuyvesant was using this as a delay tactic to ensure their players were eligible and ready to play. Last season Stuyvesant was forced to forfeit games because its star player, A. Friedland was ruled ineligible as he played professionally under a pseudonym. As a result of the forfeits, Stuyvesant record dropped them out of first place and title contention. After a three-week stalemate, in which the league threatened forfeiture against Stuyvesant for refusing to compete, the schools agreed to play at City College with Stuyvesant winning easily by a 28-19 margin.²⁴⁹

Like Townsend Harris, Stuyvesant High School was an unlikely champion. The advanced requirements for admission placed academics over athletic ability. As a result, some of the most talented players in the City would have not been able to gain admission. Even though the school did not formally implement an entrance examination until 1934,

²⁴⁹ Author Unknown, "Basket Ball by default: Stuyvesant refuses to play final championship game with Clinton," New York Times, 10 March 1912: C8; Author Unknown, "Sun Shines at Marlin. Basket Ball Muddle Again: Stuyvesant will play DeWitt Clinton on any armory floor in City," New York Times, 12 March 1912: 10; Author Unknown, "Schoolboy a Professional: A Friedland of Stuyvesant Basket Ball team disqualified," New York Times, 19 January 1911: 12.

it did place an emphasis on mathematics and science. In 1908, following the full implementation of its new home on fifteenth street the school created a more expansive and rigorous academic culture than many of its peers. One contributing factor to its success in basketball was its new gymnasium and subsequently home court, which proved quite formidable for opposing teams. The team would capture another basketball title in 1915. Stuyvesant was able to continue its athletic success during the 1920s, in other sports, including city championships in track & field, football and baseball.

Unfortunately, like Townsend Harris it could not sustain success in basketball which was increasingly becoming popular with city kids. However, their successes did materialize the vision that Superintendent Maxwell and PSAL director, Luther Gulick envisioned that academic and athletic accomplishments were indeed possible. The Stuyvesant/Harris narrative is relevant because it demonstrated that athletic and academic success at the highest level was certainly possible. It also demonstrated that athletics trailed and not complimented the academic mission of these institutions. Prior to the commercialization and professionalization of amateur athletics in the 1920s.²⁵⁰

RACE, IDENTITY, ATHLETICS AND BASKETBALL

The 1920s ushered in one of the largest expansions of high schools in the history of the City. The contribution of high schools signaled that more children were attending secondary school and secondly, it reflected the increasing population from immigrants and migrants from the south. Though their numbers were relatively small, Puerto Rican

²⁵⁰ “Stuyvesant High School” New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission report, 20 May 1997: 27.

migrants were also increasing. This meant increased budgets by the Board of Education but also the PSAL.

Most Black migrants from the South arriving in New York City settled into neighborhoods that welcomed them. Most of these neighborhoods were Harlem in Manhattan, Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, and the Mott haven section of the Bronx. Most Blacks attended schools in these communities that largely reflected these populations and traveling to other neighborhoods that were not populated by them by whatever means - including the Subway - was collectively frowned upon; if at the very least questionable for doing so. Interracial cooperation much less interactions beyond employment exchanges were less frequent. However, interscholastic athletics, followed a slightly different narrative. Most of the schools reflected the communities they served and their athletic programs commensurated with that narrative.

Prior to the PSAL arranging schedules and facilitating basketball championship tournaments, schools arranged their own schedules. The dates for PSAL championship basketball tournaments seemed to fluctuate between December and March. In 1907, Morris high school, the lone one located in the Bronx, constructed an ambitious 18-game schedule with opponents from across the metropolitan region which included road games in Westchester (City of Mount Vernon) and Long Island (Garden City). For these young men, this was a great opportunity to travel and formulate new experiences and environments much different and certainly less-populated than their own.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Author Unknown, "SchoolBoy Basketball: Commerce, Harris, and Clinton arrange schedule for season," New York Times, 22 November 1907: 7.

When the PSAL seized control of scheduling, there was an overhaul in the number of contests played. Schools played a less ambitious schedule and focused more in developing inter-borough rivalries and easing the burden from student-athletes who were spending an exorbitant amount of time traveling. In 1918, Morris played only five games in a round robin tournament. That number increased as more schools were constructed and sponsored varsity programs. From 1905, until the opening of Evander Childs in 1914, Morris remained the only public high school in the Bronx, so it had no real geographic rival. As a result, it was combined in the same athletic conference with the Manhattan schools.²⁵²

On November 18, 1896, the Committee on High Schools requested, monies to fund three high schools. Two of the schools would be located in Manhattan and practice gender plural education and would be appropriately titled Boys high school (later renamed DeWitt Clinton) and Girls' high school (Wadliegh).

The Bronx was divided into two parts separated by the Bronx River. The upper and eastern half belonged to the county of Westchester, the southern and western portion belonged to the city of New York. In 1895, the final steps of the eastern half was annexed by the City of New York. At the conclusion of the deal, the population of the county rose expeditiously. In 1890, the population of the Bronx was 88,908; by 1900, that figure would double to more than 200,000 inhabitants.²⁵³

²⁵² Author Unknown, "School Fives in Action: Fourteen teams enter for annual P.S.A.L. Title," New York Times, 20 October 1918: 31; Author Unknown "Evander Childs a Committee for a School name," Brooklyn Eagle, 25 April 1912: 17.

²⁵³ Author Unknown, "The Extended City," New York Times, 9 June 1895: 4; U.S. Census: Total and Foreign-born Population New York Metropolitan Region by Sub region and County, 1900–2000.

The high school north of the Harlem River that would serve the newly annexed borough would be referred to as the aptly named mixed high school. It was later named after Peter Cooper, the inventor of the steam locomotive but local residents expressed their displeasure for not naming the facility after a local person with a more prominent impact within the community. In 1902, after hearings and discussions, the Board of Education renamed the school Morris after the New York Governor who represented the area when it was part of part of Westchester County. Since Morris served the entire population of the Bronx, the mixed high school had a racially integrated student body with a significant number involved in a variety of clubs and organizations. Unfortunately, this diversity was initially not reflected in their varsity athletic programs.²⁵⁴

When the Morris High varsity teams competed against other schools they certainly encountered players of different ethnicities and racial groups. The inaugural PSAL track & Field extravaganza in 1903 at Madison Square Garden, drew more than 1,500 competitors from across the city and more than 9,000 spectators over the course of the afternoon and evening sessions. A reporter describes the event:

“The statement that the initial set of games of the Public School Athletic League of the City of New York, held yesterday afternoon and evening at Madison Square Garden, was the most important athletic meeting which has ever taken place in the United States would be an exaggeration...The youthful competitors turned out in all kinds of costumes an every style of indoor shoe. The variety of bath robes, sweaters, jerseys, and knickerbockers was furthered varied by an occasional pair of street trousers and in one case at least, a waistcoat.”²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Gary Hermalyn, Morris High School and the creation of the New York City Public High School System, (Bronx, New York; Bronx County Historical Society, 1995) 45, 71; U.S. Census: Total and Foreign-born Population New York Metropolitan Region by Sub region and County, 1900–2000. <<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/3651000>>

²⁵⁵ Author Unknown, “Public School Athletic Triumph: A Thousand lads keep Madison Square Garden lively...,” New York Times, 27 December 1903: 8.

The statement summarizes not only the anticipation but the energy and enthusiasm from student-athletes who were eager to compete and wore whatever they thought was appropriate or at their disposal. The reporter describes the camaraderie and support amongst the teammates without deference to race or ethnic identity.

“The spirit of the public school was everywhere manifest. Quite a few of the contestants were young negroes, whose white schoolmates whispered final instructions before the start and shouted words of encouragement throughout the race.”²⁵⁶

Track & field events reflect an athletic activity that relies on individual accomplishment but support from teammates and the student body is nonetheless important. Equally important is the mere participation of these athletes transgress economic, racial, and social barriers by integrating these cultural institutions thus moving toward a more egalitarian society. Their participation is important because, it notes they were deemed fit to compete by a coach or administrator from that school to represent that institution and in many respects that community. Individual performances within track & field that comprise team accomplishments such as track relay teams underscore both singular and collective accomplishment.

At the 1936 Penn Relay Carnival at Franklin Field in Philadelphia, the 10,000 fans in attendance were likely drawn to witnessing the performance of the Ohio State University star Jesse Owens, who dazzled spectators with his talents, providing a preview of what would be a record-setting and social-altering event four months later during the Summer XI Olympiad in Berlin. What the fans perhaps didn't expect is four young men (two black, one Jewish, and an Italian-American) from Evander Childs High School in

²⁵⁶ “Public School Athletic Triumph,” 8.

the Bronx to record a time of 42.9 seconds in 4x100 relay, the third fastest time in the carnival history.²⁵⁷

During that time, Evander Childs High School, located in the Northeast Bronx served primarily a neighborhood ethnic mix of Jewish, Irish, and Italian working-class immigrants north of the Bronx River before an influx of Blacks and Latinos created a demographic shift in the 1960s. This team is a reflection of the school and the community, so in some respects they also ran for integration. A few miles south in Manhattan an interracial basketball team at Benjamin Franklin High School won a then PSAL record 42 consecutive games which include city championships in 1940 and 1941. That team featured Joe Galiber, an African American playing at the center position who would later enroll at CCNY. Like Evander, Ben Franklin largely served an East Harlem neighborhood that was largely populated by Italian Americans, Jews, and Irish immigrants. Blacks resided in Central and west Harlem and over the next decade an influx of migrants from Puerto Rico would also impact the cultural landscape. Franklin was in many respects like Evander Childs but in regards to the racial demographics, they were closer to DeWitt Clinton High School which was now located in a new building in the Northwest Bronx and housed over 5,000 students. Benjamin Franklin for many years was the lone high school for boys north of central park and served pupils from East, Central, and West Harlem.

Located in East Harlem, Benjamin Franklin was a school, ripe with racial tensions from the surrounding community. Inside the school was far more harmonious as students

²⁵⁷ Author Unknown, "Negroes smash 3 Penn Relay Records," New York Amsterdam News, 2 May 1936: 14.

temporarily set aside their differences for their Benjays Basketball team that was quickly becoming a city powerhouse under Bill Spiegel who recently coached DeWitt Clinton to a city championship in 1937.

One writer described the Franklin team, unlike other squads from across the city a reflection of East Harlem's brief and tumultuous diversity. The writer also suggests their style of basketball is the preferred style that best reflects city life, city style and city artistry. Additionally, the writer also essentializes their style by suggesting their game is the way it should be played.

“ They play basketball at Franklin – the driving, fast-breaking kind of game and Italian, Jew, Negro, Spaniard, German and Irishman give everything in them to play winning basketball, under coach Spiegel...the court game has proved the happy medium in which racial differences are forgotten at Franklin and the students have developed a kind of fierce loyalty to their schools, surprising in a metropolitan area such as New York City.”²⁵⁸

By referencing their racial and ethnic identities the writer suggests intra-racial unity or cooperation outside of basketball remained something to be desired. But he indirectly infers that school spirit and winning which serves the entire community is a vehicle for unification. The loyalty element to schools was intriguing because so many kids resided in different neighborhoods that a deeper bond with their High School over their respective individual communities appeared rare.

Equally impressive of their unity is the fact that Franklin did not have a gymnasium or court to call home but still managed to finish the season undefeated twice and amass a forty-two game winning streak. Basketball was increasingly proving itself to

²⁵⁸ Daniel, “Reports on Sports,” New York Amsterdam News, 23 March 1940: 18.

be the city game and the PSAL invested in establishing this reputation. Baseball might have been the National pastime, enjoyed by city children, and drawing large crowds to its contests (including 20,000 to the 1913 grade school Brooklyn-Queens Championship) but it was basketball that was receiving the bulk of support from not only school administrators but the league itself. By the early 1930s several schools throughout the city opted not to field baseball teams due to a lack of adequate playing spaces, student interest and dwindling finances. One of those schools included DeWitt Clinton. Contributing to the declining interest of varsity competition was the lack of sponsorship and institutional control by numerous schools. From 1913 to 1916 the PSAL did not sponsor a citywide baseball championship largely because of eligibility issues, accusations of professionalism, scholastic enforcement, and a general disregard for the rules. When the PSAL decided to continue its sponsorship in 1917, only four of eight Brooklyn schools elected to field a team. This is notable because adequate playing space was less of an issue with the Brooklyn schools than those in Manhattan and the Bronx. All of the schools, however did field basketball teams during the 1917-18 academic year.²⁵⁹

While the culture of Basketball, Football, and Track was generally receptive to embracing all racial groups, some other sports were homogenized and less-receptive as prejudice and racist ideologies would occasionally surface. Track and field has been more receptive to diversity, but struggles remained for black referees and umpiring officials in

²⁵⁹ Author Unknown "Four Brooklyn Schools enter P.S.A.L. Tournament," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1 February 1917: 22; Kingsley Childs, "Schools planning intramural nines," *New York Times*, 5 January 1933: 25; Author Unknown "Schoolboys Battle on Baseball Field while 20,000 watch," *The Brooklyn Eagle*, 28 June 1913: 3; Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The People's Game*, (New York, New York; Oxford Press, 1990)78.

integrated contests. In 1932, the senior championships in track & field in Central Queens was the topic of controversy when the Jamaica High School track team, comprised of black and white athletes, was disqualified when an opposing white competitor tripped over the rope that divided the running lanes and fell. The officials claimed that Harold Brown, a Negro, pushed the young man even though he led the race from start to finish. Unfortunately, the clutches of racism prevailed because the white competitor admitted to the officials that he indeed tripped over the rope. Under normal circumstances, the judge at the finish line who witnessed the gaffe (and filed the claim) his word would render the final decision. Unfortunately, the judge, Frederic N. Crabb, a health education teacher at P.S. 40 in Brooklyn and the lone Negro official was overruled and the decision to disqualify the Jamaica team stood.²⁶⁰

A more blatant form of racism occurred five years later in 1927 during a Swim meet at the Ravenhall Bathing Park in Coney Island. Albert Nethersole, a member of the Haaren High School swim team in Manhattan was barred from participating in the finals of the fifty yard dash after placing first in the preliminary heats in order to qualify for this event. The young man was informed by a PSAL official that he couldn't compete in the event because "he was colored." This rule was apparently not of the PSAL's doing but from the manager of the facility. Two other athletes from Textile High School team were also prevented from competing. Patrick Quad, the swim coach at Haaren, strenuously objected to the decision and later filed a grievance with the PSAL who claimed they would investigate the matter. The outcome of the investigation was never disclosed

²⁶⁰ Author Unknown, "Schoolboys win again: Jamaica lads gave a good account of themselves in Queens Meet," New York Amsterdam News, 15 June 1932: 12.

publicly. However, research suggests that for an undetermined period of time, PSAL swim meets would no longer utilize this facility. Fortunately, for Albert Nethersole his swimming career ended on a positive note. He would become a PSAL two-time champion in the fifty-yard dash - Winning the title in 1938 and 1939. Both meets were held at Columbia University.²⁶¹

The early days of the public high schools were racially and ethnically integrated before gradually becoming segregated, DeWitt Clinton in Manhattan and later in the Bronx; Benjamin Franklin in East Harlem; Boys' high school in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Jamaica high school in the village of Jamaica, Queens all served multiple communities and diverse neighborhoods. However, once the racial demographics of the neighborhoods changed, ostensibly, so did the student body they served. For these schools and their integrated student bodies, basketball provided a vehicle for bringing their diverse student body, which in many respects was socially segregated, together. The schools that were racially homogenized like those that competed at the swim meet in Coney Island. The PSAL provided a vehicle to diversify a culture. That vehicle in accordance to the rules set forth, was to extend an invitation to the swimmers who achieved certain benchmarks in order to compete at this meet for the championship. The diversity were the different racial and ethnic identities of the competitors. The culture of swimming was largely homogenous and generally less-receptive to blacks. The PSAL for reasons that are unexplained failed in their due diligence to ensure the venue would be receptive to all

²⁶¹ Jessany Kenn, "Jim Crow School Star: School Swim meet probe is instituted," New York Amsterdam News, 19 June 1937:16; Kingsley Childs, "City Swim crown taken by Erasmus," New York Times, 28 January 1939:14; Kingsley Childs, "Three Swim Teams Finish in Tie for City P.S.A.L. Senior title," New York Times, 22 January 1938: 9.

competitors in this PSAL-sanctioned meet. With their failure to do so, they, by virtue of the association with the venue, performed a disservice to the student-athletes, their respective schools, parents, and to the betterment of society. Not to mention they failed to adhere to their mission to provide a safe space for these competitors to thrive and undermined the very premise of a meritocracy that athletic completion is intended by its very nature to provide.

Unfortunately, the culture of swimming was not like its basketball counterpart and these young men were denied opportunity (both Negro and white) from engaging in a meritorious activity that embodies competition and the possibility of social engagement afterwards or at the very least a demonstration of good sportsmanship. When the neighborhoods became racially homogenous and the schools followed suit the PSAL had a greater role in fostering interracial and intercultural athletic competition.

For Joe Galiber, Floyd Layne, and Ed Warner, these student-athletes who attended Benjamin Franklin and DeWitt Clinton High Schools that had racially diverse student bodies and basketball teams, the social transition to City College and ultimately the interracial team was fulfilled with greater ease than some of their white counterparts that were from racially homogenous communities, schools, and Basketball teams. There was interracial interaction on the court during competition but that is a huge transition from interracial interaction on your team. What that aspect of transition was like is unclear. The fact is these young men at the City College of New York had to make the transition from High School to college. They also had to transition to a great coach who was demanding and not very personable to his players. However, coach Holman did

employ a style of play to which they were familiar and enjoyed because it enabled them to utilize their athleticism and have fun.

The impact of basketball and its relevance in city and youth culture can be described by a young man enrolled at Benjamin Franklin High School (which initially was housed in an elementary school and later became the annex of DeWitt Clinton high school prior to its current home in the Bronx) prior to its new home on 116th street and Pleasant Avenue. “We have been promised a basketball team. In this building and at the seventy-ninth street annex there is not a proper court to practice on. One cannot call a downstairs yard a proper gymnasium.”²⁶²

The investment of the High Schools into basketball served as vehicle for fostering social integration at schools where diverse student-bodies existed. The issue of race tends to focus on paradigm that is largely black and white. However, migrants from Puerto Rico were starting to populate in various pockets of the city in the early twentieth century. According to the Porto Rican brotherhood of America, a Manhattan-based community organization, in 1925, there were roughly 100,000 Puerto Ricans residing in New York City with nearly three-quarters in Manhattan and the largest concentration in East Harlem. When Franklin High School opened in 1934, the cultural feel was there. While generally Puerto Ricans might have favored baseball, the gravitational pull of basketball – the city game - was strong. The rosters of high-profile teams were dotted with Latinos who were in all-likelihood of Puerto Rican descent. Jose Cestarom was member of 1940-41 Franklin city championship teams. Alfred Garcia and Vincent Healy

²⁶² Michael C. Johaneck, Leonard Covello and the making of Benjamin Franklin High School: education as citizenship mattered, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2007) 121.

of Franklin K. Lane were a scoring tandem with Garcia voted to the All-Brooklyn second team and Healy receiving honorable mention.²⁶³

From 1940 to 1942, Benjamin Franklin High School won 42 consecutive games which included two PSAL championships. The teams' success and their diverse makeup did not go unnoticed. *The Amsterdam News* noted:

“The East 104th Street club doesn't have a home gymnasium but uses other schools floors for its games as well as its practice sessions. This season the team is practicing at the Harlem Boys Club on West 134th Street. The candidates include Jewish, Russian, colored, Spanish, Irish and other nationalities.”²⁶⁴

Their accomplishment is even more astonishing considering they do not have a home court on the school premises, traveled a couple miles to practice after school which is impressive and requires quite a bit of resilience. Surprisingly, their plight was far from unusual, several high schools minus suitable gymnasiums were forced to find alternate venues to practice and play their ‘home’ games. In 1989, Mabel Dean Bacon High school, who five years earlier was an all-girls school, did not have a regulation court for their Boys' basketball team and had to play its home games away from the campus, which did not impede their ability to compete as they were crowned city champions in the B' division in only their fifth year of existence.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Author Unknown, “Brooklyn Eagle All-Brooklyn PSAL Basketball Teams,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 21 March 1940: 14; Virginia Sanchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: the history of Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1917-1948*, (Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press, 1983) 57.

²⁶⁴ Author Unknown, “Franklin High Quintet wins 40th cage contest in a row,” *New York Amsterdam News*, 20 December 1941: 17.

²⁶⁵ Author Unknown, “Bacon brought home the title,” *New York Newsday*, 3 December, 1989; Most of the schools without standardized basketball courts were largely all-coed schools in New York built during the 1920s and 30s. Since girls were not allowed to compete interscholastically, coupled with gender bias over the physical health and frailty of Girls, non-regulated or courts more suitable for their bodies were constructed. The B conference was initially created for vocational schools in 1934 but in 1947 was dissolved after the consolidation of the vocational and academic comprehensive high schools. In 1962, the

Nevertheless the PSAL served its purpose by fulfilling the mission of its founding fathers by supervising organized recreational contests and helping young boys and girls get in shape. It also sponsored interscholastic events that provided a source of individual triumph and school spirit for their supporters. Their model was emulated by other municipalities around the country. But the PSAL was merely one factor that contributed to building the national championship team at CCNY. The PSAL although a branch of a city agency the department of education needed cooperation from other city agencies like the New York City Parks department and the communities and neighborhoods in order to fulfill its goal. The PSAL merely orchestrated interscholastic athletic events it was up to the schools to provide the players and the playgrounds to develop them. The next chapter will examine these facilities and their roles in furthering the narrative of integration.

B league established in order to keep competitive balance. The schools were largely comprised of vocational and high schools with student bodies under 2,000.

CHAPTER 5

NEW YORK CITY YOUTH CULTURE: AN ETHOS FOR INTEGRATION

Wartime unity also played a role in the story of CCNY's historic championship with an interracial squad. The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, immediately called into being the need for national unity. Over the course of the next four years, as the United States went to war against the axis powers, national unity challenged long-standing forms of racial and ethnic discrimination and segregation. As Gary Gerstle and others have shown, soldiers' experiences as well as wartime culture began to acknowledge and valorize a multi-ethnic, multi-racial view of American life. For young people coming of age during the 1940s, this new view shaped their attitudes toward those different from themselves. In New York City, teenagers had many opportunities to interact with people from different backgrounds and in some high schools; students took advantage of these opportunities. However, for the young men who played high school basketball the opportunities for interracial interaction were expansive. During the season they would travel to different neighborhoods and compete against players of different ethnicities and racial groups. These opportunities were critical because it eased the social transition and enabled these young men at CCNY to get along and trust each other more fluidly.

The conclusion of World War II brought hope to Americans that the future was full of endless possibilities. The Great Depression was finally over and the war ignited manufacturing, creating jobs that led to prosperity. The United States could lay claim to being the world's greatest economic and military power. Many Americans, especially returning veterans imagined living the idealized lifestyle which included owning a home, a car, and variety of consumer products designed to make life more fulfilling.²⁶⁶

This new era of consumerism was initiated by the war reflected a variety of viewpoints and for Blacks it meant moving forward on a continuum of economic opportunities forged during the war under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Would President Truman continue these New Deal policies? For many industries, these new opportunities sowed the seeds to greater consumption and one demographic would receive more attention than ever before. Teenagers were targeted by companies seeking to expand in the postwar economy.

TEEN CULTURE

In 1940, according to the U.S. census the population of fifteen to nineteen year-olds (12,333,523) was at the highest number at any other time in U.S. History; as a result, this group of primarily high school students had greater visibility. The increased number

²⁶⁶ James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York, New York: Oxford Press, 1996) 3; [Times Square Website](http://www.timessquarenyc.org/index.aspx), 2014, 21 November 2014, Times Square Alliance, <<http://www.timessquarenyc.org/index.aspx>>

of teenagers was attributed to a variety of factors including improvements in public health, which led to the decline of infant and child mortality.²⁶⁷

Teens also had a higher rate of visibility because of the war. Most men over eighteen comprised a significant number of the seven million drafted into the military; with the young adult (18-24) and men up to age 30 removed from the daily public consciousness, teens became more perceptible. With more teens than ever before, healthy and living longer, teens as a group came into their own during the postwar period due in part to the mass media that exploited their sensibilities. Even during the war teens and their lifestyle became the source of attention. *Yank magazine*, published by the United States Military during World War II featured essays on teen life. One essay, in a condescending tone written by Private First Class Debs Myers summarizes a brewing sense of defiance (with esoteric jargon) and independence among this new generation of young people (even though most did acquiesce to the desires of their parents) that would become crystalized in Popular Culture in the 1950s. She notes: “Teen-agers are surprisingly like other people. Some of them are all right and some of them are jerks...some of today’s teen-agers-pleasantly not many-talk the strange new language of “sling swing.” She continues, “Despite this devotion to ritualistic incoherency, most of the teen-agers get good grades in English, which they read and sometimes speak. They want to know whose business it is if they prefer broken English.” On the heels of the media were advertisers and merchandisers looking to attract this new demographic, one

²⁶⁷ Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1996) 52; United States Census 1940; Regan Rhea, “Teen Obsessions: Competing images of Adolescence in American Culture 1945-1963” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008) 11.

that was not bound to adults by the standards or sensitivities of adults like their predecessors.²⁶⁸

In general, these young people celebrated the notion of being carefree, the term first coined to describe this growing demographic was “teeners,” “teensters,” and in 1941 “teenagers,” who were instrumental in creating an indigenous high school culture that involved fashion (such as bobby socks), dating, driving, and music. Although it would be several years (after world-war II) for the term teenager to become a staple in the popular lexicon, the marketing concept had already developed and was spreading rapidly.²⁶⁹

Post WWII teens had very different expectations of their rights and responsibilities which were largely tied to the economic prosperity their families now enjoyed. These lifestyles were courtesy of full employment and burgeoning economy, as a result a larger proportion of American Families could now afford to support their teenagers in style. In middle-class America and middle-America, mobility was symbolic in some respects of prosperity which came in the form of an automobile. The number of car registrations rose from 26 million in 1945 to 40 million in 1950. The sharp increase were attributed to a variety of factors including the lifting of rations on gasoline during the war (in which some car owners in New York City stopped driving all together) and

²⁶⁸ Palladino 52; John Savage, Teenager: The Creation of Youth Culture (New York, New York: Viking 2007) 445; Barrett McGurn, “Reporting the Greatest Generation,” Yank: The Army Weekly: 65; Pfc. Deb Myers “The Teen-agers Yank Magazine,” 6 April 1945:18.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

the legislation in New York State which lowered the age for unrestricted use of cars from 18 years-of-age to 16 in 1949.²⁷⁰

The more independent-minded teenage boy actually held down a part-time job after school and purchased his own car. Increasingly, teens were entering the workforce and consuming material goods at astonishing rates. According to government census data, in 1940, only four percent of teenagers were working after school; in 1947, it quadrupled to 17 percent. A study conducted by the bureau of Advertising reported that teens were buying the following items with their own money: Records, Fountain Pens, Jewelry, Shoes, and deodorants. To take advantage of this growing consumer base and corresponding lifestyle a number of magazines targeting this demographic were born. In 1948, *Hot Rod* magazine made its debut and contributed - and in many respects created - a culture that reinforced the exotic, speed, and other related symbols. Unfortunately, a great deal of these teens were enhancing the speed of their vehicles and driving excessively on the roads - some to speeds of more than 100-miles-per-hour. According to Irwin Porges, some of these young men were spending three times as much as their fathers were in the maintenance of their vehicles.²⁷¹

Teenage girls were at the epicenter of this consumption economy and several magazines founded in 1940s were targeted directly at them including *Movie Teen*, *American Teen*, and the most notable *Seventeen* in 1944. The aforementioned titles were specialty magazines in subtopics that were considered niche audiences; conversely,

²⁷⁰ Palladino 101; "10 Brooklynites Tell: When I intend to buy my first postwar car," Brooklyn Eagle, 9 September 1945; "16-Year-Olds Get Drivers' Licenses Under New Law in effect today," New York Times, 1 July 1949.

²⁷¹ Palladino 101; Irwin Porges, "Your Teenager is Big Business," American Mercury, July 1958: 95; Bert Pierce "Teen-agers ego held in road peril," New York Times, 19 Jun 1949: 39.

Seventeen appealed directly to the general concerns of teenage girls. Each month the magazine offered mini-courses in home economics with recipes, application of cosmetics, and the latest in fashion wear including situational appropriate attire.

The first edition of *Seventeen* sold 400,000 copies in two days, the second issue moved 500,000 copies in the same time frame. Within sixteen months, circulation eclipsed the one-million mark. *Seventeen* had a vested interest in aligning with the sensibilities of its readers. Valentine hired a market research team to survey their readers by soliciting their tastes, families, and products used. In another instance, there was a campaign to measure teenage opinions, tastes, buying habits and use that data to promote and convince advertising agencies and retailers that teenagers were capable, reliable potential customers who had vital interests in shopping and learning how to shop.²⁷²

Teenagers generally have commonalities that transcend racial and social-economic lines and those who grew up in New York City in the 1940s were no different. However, the densely populated landscape of the city provided a unique set of circumstances which not only informed the culture but their experience within. Some of those situations involve something rudimentary like access. Teenagers had access to mobility via public transportation and a front row seat to technological changes that would soon alter consumption and ultimately American culture.²⁷³

²⁷² Palladino 102.

²⁷³ The Oriole. (Yearbook) (Brooklyn, New York: Bushwick High School, 1947) 11.

SPORTS AND A SHIFTING CULTURE

This level of understanding and acceptance contributed to a culture that enabled standing traditions on race to be challenged. Indeed, on the eve of historic championships at CCNY, New Yorkers witnessed firsthand how wartime unity could find postwar expression in the arena of sports. On April 15, 1947, Jack Roosevelt Robinson assumed his position at first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers and the national pastime of Baseball was suddenly moving a step closer to functioning as a meritocracy and reflecting the US population.²⁷⁴

The climate of racial tolerance extended its reach beyond sports. The Subway which tens of thousands ride daily became ground zero for challenging customs on beauty, race, and gender. In 1941, a company called New York Subways Advertising sponsored a Miss Subways Contest. Every month a young lady was crowned and had her face, along with a blurb about her life, daubed in every car of the three Subway lines. Applicants, ranging from the mid-teens to thirty, all frequent subway riders, submitted their photos and Biographies. For the first seven years of the pageant all the winners were Caucasian or ethnic Whites. Finally in April 1948, Thelma Porter, a 20 year-old co-ed at Brooklyn College, who won various pageants and contests at Eastern District High School in Brooklyn, was selected as the first African American winner. The following

²⁷⁴ Jackie Reemes "Boro Looms As 'Home' For Robinson" New York Amsterdam News, 19 April 1947: 13.

year in 1949, Helen Lee, a student studying Chinese and voice at Columbia University, described as ‘exotic’ was the first woman of Asian descent to be crowned the victor.²⁷⁵

Most of the young women were in college, technical or trade school. Their profiles listed their interests, hobbies, and aspirations. One commonality that came up with great frequency in 1948-1949 was the appreciation for Bebop. Mildred Florio, Miss Subways December 1948, noted the “three B’s in her life are Ballet, Bebop and Beau,” a testament to the popularity of the music but her commitment to that culture.

MUSIC AND BEBOP

Popular music was shifting within urban youth culture. Swing (which bore out of jazz) and Jazz were considered pop music and certainly resonated among teens and the driving the bearings among youth culture. However, during the postwar period Bebop and ‘Pop’ ballads (which later became the precursor to doo-wop) was making its presence throughout the vessels of youth culture. Swing had gone mainstream away from its Jazz and its black roots in the mid-1930s due in part to Jewish band leaders such Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. Other non-black performers whom reached mainstream populace included Midwesterners Glenn Miller, Woody Herman and Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey (The Dorsey Brothers) two musicians who were largely known for their studio sessions with vocalist Frank Sinatra than as live performers. In the meantime black swing

²⁷⁵ Gersh Kuntzman, “A sign of the Times,” *New York Post*, 5 June 1995: 32; Kathy Peiss, Fiona Gardner (Photographer), *Meet Miss Subways: New York Beauty Queens 1941-1976* (Kittery, Maine: Seapoint Books, 2012) 267.

leaders such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Cab Calloway were regulated in many respects to the background.²⁷⁶

Bebop music was significantly different than its mainstream counterpart. First established in New York City in the early 1940s, Dizzy Gillespie is credited as the father of Bebop. However, Thomas Owens author of *Bebop: The Music and its players* identifies other musicians associated with the development of the music and are referred as the seven pioneers; which included: Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelomious Monk, Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke and Max Roach. The name Bebop originates from linguistically meaningless vocables used by jazz musicians. The name as the music itself is largely rhythmic, According to Owens, “bebop rhythm sections produce a more complex multilayered texture than their Swing era counterparts” The improvisation but rhythmic style of bebop certainly resonated with black audiences early on but its popularity among other racial groups was surprising.²⁷⁷

Bebop, the pre-cursor to other genres of music that warranted attention for the wrong reasons was largely viewed as a black auditory aesthetic which contributed to its classification and marginalization by adults and as a form of resistance to the establishment and the music which bears its fruit. James Lincoln Collier, a journalist and author who decries the automatic tendency our society has by identifying jazz with black culture, concedes to the black character of music and its subsequent revolution. He notes “Black musicians dominated bop in a way that they had not dominated other forms of jazz since the early days in New Orleans. Black musicians devised the music without any

²⁷⁶ Thomas Owens, *Bebop: the music and its players* (New York, New York: Oxford Press, 1995) 6.

²⁷⁷ “Profiles Dizzy’s Bebopping” *New York Amsterdam News*; 13 September 1947: 23; Owens 6.

help from whites, and they were its stars for a period thereafter.” This separation and association further marginalized not only the music but its fan base. Music generally fields a generation gap but the forces that fuel the opposition to Bebop is significantly racialized.²⁷⁸

America has a long history of adopting elements of black culture such as music as their own and Bebop was no different but unlike Jazz and Swing, the performers gaining attention and drawing admirers were predominately black. This was perhaps one of the reasons for such an institutionalized negative response from the media, who were racializing fashion, etiquette (or lack thereof) and unruly behavior with Bebop with underpinnings in some circles with black identities. In Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Archdiocese implemented a ban on all “be-boppers” and “be-bop gangs” from its 49 Roman Catholic schools. Juvenile delinquency was being associated with this genre of music and the progenitors of its culture. The order issued with the blessing of Archbishop Moses E. Kiley said “Be-boppers can be detected by their dress, freakish haircuts, gang threats and abuse. Unorthodox conduct and other marks of behavior...Any pupils who be-bop clothes or indulge in be-bop behavior will be barred from enrolling in other Catholic schools.” In this same published report, a police officer who specializes in curtailing juvenile delinquency stated that most “be-bop groups are harmless...and Be-bop itself is just a fad but some are like the zoot suit gangs you read about on the West Coast a few years back, although probably not as bad.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Scott Knowles DeVaux Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History (Berkeley, California: University of California Press)18; For more information about the social-cultural context of bebop and its racialization see Birth of Bebop by Scott DeVaux.

²⁷⁹ “Be-Boppers’ banned from R.C. Schools,” The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 12 November 1950: 1.

The response from law enforcement and the archdiocese of Milwaukee illustrate the gulf between the agencies in the perception of these young people. Law enforcement is able to rationalize most of these kids harmless who are going through a trend cycle while the institution entrusted with their education views them as disruptive thugs. However, their response is not surprising considering their position with the Catholic Church and their role informing spiritual and moral control. The culture aesthetically, regardless of behavior, invokes a perception that is anti-institution, anti-tradition, anti-authority and anti-Catholic. One would imagine that language (i.e. slang) indigenous to their experience might also be a factor. As Cora Daniels notes in *GhettoNation: Dispatches from America's Culture War*, language is an important element in youth culture because it puts people (in this case teens) at the center of their respective homo-social circles and in many cases does resemble a challenge to the previous generation's codes of conduct. The comments also demonstrate that for some teens, Bebop was more than just music it was a culture of revolution. It was black, it was different, it was urban and it was now.

A friendly debate between two Erasmus Hall high school students about their music preferences was played out in an opinion-editorial piece entitled *Jazz or Be-bop?* Phyllis Goldberg noted that she likes Jazz because of it is an expression of authentic feelings which bore out of the Delta. Her comments also reflect highbrow sensibilities. She continues "I like Jazz because it is intelligent, imaginative music." Conversely her counterpart, Peter Brodney²⁸⁰ argues that "Be-bop is jazz in a totally different and

²⁸⁰ Cora Daniels, *GhettoNation: A Journey into the Land of Bling and Shameless* (New York, New York: Doubleday) 6.

unconventional form. That follows the pattern of modern living.” Brodney suggests that Be-Bop is the postmodern response to Jazz. Bebop was not a byproduct of a vintage sound adjusted to modern sensibilities, instead modern sensibilities created a sound and voice of its own. The point is to illustrate how popular culture and its tenets (in this case music) during this time period was undertaking a drastic shift that due in part to teenage consumer which always existed but never directly targeted in mass. This transformation of culture was profound enough for young people to debate its impact and legacy.²⁸¹

Bebop in many respects represented the energy and life of the city, rapid motion, then stopping and starting on a whim before shifting directions. It was one of the earliest incarnations of postmodern music and its progenitors were largely black and that by itself is a marker of rebellion. While Bebop was turning heads and disrupting the status quo, another form of music was making an impact in youth culture – DooWop.

A 1949 survey of High School Editors from across the United States were asked to select their favorite music artists. In the category of groups, the Indianapolis-based Ink Spots finished far ahead of groups like the Andrews Sisters and the Mills Brothers. The success of the Ink spots indicated that mainstream America was willing to embrace black recording artists. But these artists were framed in the identity of white sensibilities. The harmonies and chords largely reflected Eurocentric styles.

MUSIC INDUSTRY

In 1949, *Billboard*, the amusement and recording industry magazine, at the behest of one its reporters, Jerry Wexler, retitled its euphemistic ‘race’ records chart to Rhythm

²⁸¹ “For Young Miss: Jazz or Be-bop – which will it be,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 27 February 1948: 4.

& Blues. Prior to the term race records, the chart listing the best-selling songs performed by Negro recording artists were called “sepia,” “ebony” and Harlem Hit Parade. Wexler argued that Rhythm & Blues was a more appropriate name to describe the music in this era of cultural enlightenment. The term used more infectiously known and utilized today in industry circles and beyond as simply R&B. As it turns out R&B would appease marketers who felt the previous terms would become a hindrance for meeting the sensibilities of an expanding consumer base. Unbeknownst to Wexler, a Jewish guy born and raised in the working-class ethnic-enclave neighborhood of Washington Heights, educated at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, would be credited for popularizing a term that would describe as an emerging sound and genre of music that would contribute handsomely to the foundation of Rock & Roll.²⁸²

Jerry Wexler was not a musician but he really enjoyed music and writing about it. His appreciation and understanding of music did mature until he left New York City and enrolled at Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science (known today as Kansas State University). It was there he was able to develop his appreciation for music and writing skills. But it was also where he understood that home; New York City was different than his present location and arguably the rest of the United States. Wexler would find some commonalities from the culture of home, some 114-miles away from campus in Kansas City, where the rhythms of Jazz and Blues both flowed in live

²⁸² Jerry Wexler and David Ritz, *Rhythm and the Blues: a life in American Music* (New York, New York: Knopf, 1993) 62; Jerry Wexler, “Rhythm & Blues in 1950” *Saturday Literature Review* 24 June 1950: 49.

performances and in jukeboxes. Prior to his arrival in Manhattan, Wexler attended the Townsend Harris high school and for two semesters the City College of New York.²⁸³

This narrative involving Wexler is significant because it shows how powerful the culture (in this case the Arts) of New York City can be conducive a mindset that embraces diversity. Inadvertently, growing up in an ethnically mixed community and attending academic institutions reflecting his upbringing made him more accepting of people and cultures that differed from his own. Though he never explicitly articulated this, Wexler grew up in a culture that allowed the possibility of integration. During the immediate post-war years from 1946 to 1949, teen culture in New York City would grow strong. Advances in technology that would shape youth culture were still a couple of years away. But even in its infancy stages the effects were abound.

RADIO AND HOLLYWOOD

In 1946, Radio was the primary technological household form of entertainment. According to a national sampling poll, 87 percent of people owned a working radio, listening to an average 5.23 hours per day. 5.9 for women and 4.6 for men. When it came to entertainment outside the home, the movies reign supreme. More people attended the movies that year than any previously to that point. Moviegoers attended an average of three films per month. Films like *The Postman Always Rings Twice* featuring Lana Turner, *Duel in the Sun* starring Gregory Peck and Jennifer Jones and *Best Years of Our Lives* (the Academy award winner for best picture) appealed to a variety of demographics

²⁸³ Wexler & Ritz 28-29.

and were all box-office successes; it seemed certainly the movie business was doing better than ever.²⁸⁴

Producing and marketing films exclusively to a teenage demographic had yet to occur. However movies that might have appealed to them were largely musicals such as *Til' the Clouds Roll By* featuring an appearance by teen heartthrob Frank Sinatra, whom two years earlier ushered a new era of teenage fandom. Multi-media star Bing Crosby was certainly a drawing card in *Blue Skies* which also featured Fred Astaire. Finally, there was the Alfred Hitchcock film *Notorious* featuring Cary Grant and Ingrid Berman. Andy Rooney portrayed a teenager named Andy Hardy in 17 films between 1937 and 1946. The character in these films often reflected high morals that championed the goodness of home, family and the American way. In the early 1940s, the Henry Aldrich films first portrayed by Jackie Cooper then Jimmy Lyndon also proved quite popular.²⁸⁵

In spite of these successful films, Hollywood was traversing through some challenging battles on the domestic front. Between 1939 and 1942 there were some entanglements with the Justice department over anti-trust violations, clashes with Congress over “un-American activities,” fights with labor unions over the workforce and battles between freelance talent versus independent producers for control of the filmmaking process. There were standoffs with theatre owners for control of distribution and censors boards over content.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Robert Sklar, Movie Made America: A Social History of American Movies (New York, New York: Random House, 1975) 270.

²⁸⁵ Thomas Schatz, Boom and Bust: The American Cinema in the 1940s: History of the American Cinema, Volume 6. (New York, New York: Scribner, 1997) 37.

²⁸⁶ Schatz 1.

During World War II, the attitude of the U.S. government toward Hollywood shifted in the interest of patriotism. Hollywood's control over every facet of the movie industry was an asset as movies became a source of distraction, information, and in many respects propaganda for both citizens and soldiers. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a supporter of the filmmaking industry, intervened on the clash with Congress and struck a deal that Hollywood to continue producing commercial films as long it cooperated in support of the war effort.²⁸⁷

Hollywood agreed to support the Government initiatives and it turned out to be a financial coup. Between 1942 and 1945, movie attendance soared to new heights. Going to the movies became a ritual for Americans and the military alike. To support the war effort (in their agreement with President Roosevelt) Hollywood made several films with patriotic themes. By late 1942, nearly a third of all films were directly related to the war. Nearly every genre of film carried or was refashioned to invoke a war theme. This included a variety of combat films including *Wake Island* (1942), *Bataan* (1943), *Sahara* (1943), *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* (1944), and *The Story of GI Joe* (1945). At the conclusion of the war, the relationship between Hollywood and the Government faded and quickly resumed to pre-war levels of discontent.²⁸⁸

The relationship between Hollywood and the United States Government wasn't the only thing on the decline. After 1946, movie attendance and box-office revenues nosedived for several reasons. A population surge to the suburbs and away from downtown movie theatres impacted business. The outbreak of the cold war also disrupted

²⁸⁷ Schatz 2.

²⁸⁸ Schatz 3.

trade between Hollywood and various markets. Also problematic was a surge of cultural nativism in the key European markets of Great Britain, France and Italy, who tried to promote their own film industries and limit Hollywood's domination. In addition to the aforementioned issues, The U.S. entered into a motion picture trade war with Great Britain – undercutting their biggest overseas market; secondly, the House UnAmerican Committee (HUAC) conducted a congressional investigation over Communist influence and infiltration of the movie industry which led to a series of blacklists. Also, the government forced studios to dissolve their monopoly over the movie theatres they owned. As a result, smaller independent theatres had to raise ticket prices in order to acquire first-run films from the studios thus causing inner-city moviegoers to use their entertainment dollars more discriminately.²⁸⁹

From 1946 to 1956, more than four-thousand “four-wall” theatres shuttered, in its place emerged the construction of drive-in theatres, however the construction of these theatres could not make-up for the shortfall of lost screens and equally important lost access for many city-dwellers. While this two-year transformation was taking place in 1947-1948, imperfections in the television that prevented its mass production and keeping costs down were being addressed. In 1947, less than one percent of American households owned a Television set, by 1949, the number had increased more than 1,000 percent to 1 million. A year later the number stood at 4 million, and by 1954 an astounding 32 million sets were in use. Simultaneously, the number of Television stations

²⁸⁹ Schatz 4; Sklar 270, 274.

rose from 7 (mostly in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles) to 517. Television replaced movies as the dominant leisure activity and Hollywood was forced to react quickly.²⁹⁰

When the United States entered WWII in 1941 there were an estimated 20,000 Television sets in use. According to *Broadcasting in America*, more than half of those sets were in New York City alone, the remaining in the urban Northeast, Chicago and Los Angeles. By 1945, that figure had doubled. Television sets were still priced at a premium to which only the most affluent could afford. Of course while the Television was still being refined physical and financially for mass consumption, teenagers in New York City in all likelihood were exposed to Televisions prior to teens in other parts of the country, though they probably did not realize how much this technological invention would not only alter their culture but also impact the American landscape. Television was growing quickly but for the young men who competed on the team at CCNY during the 1949 season that invention would have a greater impact on the younger generation.²⁹¹

Television and advertisers immediately jumped on the trend in youth culture by making connections with their product lines. A print ad by an appliance store in Brooklyn ran a headline that the General Electric Console Television set was the “Be-bop” of TV’s. It also featured underneath members of what is supposed to resemble a be-bop band.²⁹²

During the immediate post-war years from 1946 to 1949, teen culture in New York City would grow even stronger. Advances in technology that would shape youth

²⁹⁰ Tino Balio, *The American Film Industry* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) 401; Sidney Head, *Broadcasting in America: A Survey of Television and Radio*, 7th ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) 7.

²⁹¹ Balio 401.

²⁹² Advertisement, “Hi-Grade” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 3 February 1949: 4.

culture were still a couple of years away. But even during its infancy stages the effects were abound. Noir, a term coined by French critic Nino Frank in the mid-1940s, and later popularized by cinema scholars, described the dark and downbeat characteristics of American Films during that time period is more readily understood by characteristics than definition, as it intersects a variety of genres, styles, and time periods. If one could imagine a video store or a selection from an internet based entity such as Netflix or Amazon, such films might be categorized from “gothic horror and dystopian science fiction.” Its characteristics are largely associated with certain aesthetic and narrative traits such as such low-key black and white cinematography, wet city streets, dark alleys, men of ill-repute, and amorous relationships with unconventional character types and fetishizing of femme fatales. Noir reached its zenith between 1941 and 1958. The ‘genre’ (a term that should be used sparingly) accelerated in popularity at the end of WWII during the post-war period when anxiety, pessimism, and suspicion were in abundance. The cold war and the omnipresent threat of nuclear annihilation also contributed to the popularity of noir.²⁹³

A staple of these films were staged in the city and showcased the seedy side of city life. Violence (or the threat of), misogyny, unsentimental greed, and other moral failings drove many of these themes. There was also a strong undercurrent of moral

²⁹³ James Naremore, More than Night: Film Noir in its contexts (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998) 9; The term noir, coined and invented by French critic Nino Frank in the mid-1940s, first demonstrated sensibilities outside of cinema in Paris after World War II. Author Boris Vian, whom published the first murder novels under the pseudonym, “Vernon Sullivan,” works replicated the spirit of American authors like William Faulkner and Richard Wright. “Sullivan’s” work exhibited the trappings of film noir with visible sexual overtones and violence. Forgoing the details, Vian was clearly inspired by American culture. Coincidentally at the same time that “Vernon Sullivan” was composing his novel, writings on Hollywood noir appeared in French Film journals in August 1946.

conflict, purposelessness and a sense of injustice. These films were the antithesis to classic Hollywood cinema, where happy and optimistic endings became a routine formula. With the absence of restrictions for patrons, it was possible that many of these films drew the attention of New York City Teens and young adults in the late 1940s who wanted to experience something more edgy and beyond the limits of what would be considered permissible by their parents.

Racial conflict was also a ubiquitous theme in noir, though many that dealt with such a sensitive topic would not be produced until the mid-1950s. In 1950, Sidney Poitier made his debut in *No Way Out* in which he portrayed a young doctor assigned with the task to treat two racist white hooligans charged with robbing a gas station and shooting a police officer. When one of the men perishes in his care, Poitier begins to doubt his abilities, while law enforcement is forced to quell a riot in the predominately white working-class neighborhood overrun with gangs and moral decay. Richard Widmark, who portrays the one of the thugs, was the lead protagonist and given top billing. Widmark who played similar characters in other noir films such as *Kiss of Death* (1947) and *Street with No Name* (1948) certainly had a following and the drawing card among young theatregoers. The plight of Poitier provided a cinematic interpretation of racism and the plight of black professionals, especially those privileged to work in racially homogenous environments. It also demonstrated, how Hollywood in some instances, can be racially progressive and inform our culture what is socially permissible.

The Gentleman's Agreement (1947) starring Gregory Peck, though not considered noir aesthetically, but perhaps for its content, brought the attention of prejudice, if not

racism into the cinematic sphere. In this film directed by Elia Kazan, a reporter pretends to be Jewish in order to conduct a story on anti-Semitism. One of the subjects, John Garfield, recalls his experience at Columbia University where he felt compelled to pass as Anglo-Saxon in order to join a fraternity and navigate through a terrain of biases toward Jews at the University. Discrimination in this context would have certainly resonated more with teenagers in New York City with its high concentration of Jews (and with the memories of the Holocaust still fresh) than in other parts of the country.

RACIAL ADVOCATE AND SINATRA

Frances Albert Sinatra, the son of Italian Immigrants from Hoboken, New Jersey known professionally as Frank Sinatra became the mainstream poster boy for race relations. In 1945, the actor and singer won a special academy award for *The House I Live In*, a short film that extolled the power of race relations. In one sequence he told a group of kids that racial and religious differences “Make no difference except to a Nazi or somebody who's stupid.”²⁹⁴

Sinatra would be called upon to exercise those thoughts in person during a strain in race relations between Italian Americans, Blacks, and Puerto Ricans at Benjamin Franklin High school in East Harlem on October 23, 1945. That same year in Gary, Indiana, when a thousand whites threatened to withdraw from Frobel High School after 200 blacks were admitted, Sinatra spoke to a predominately white audience of 5,000 about racial intolerance, “believe me, I know something about the business of racial intolerance...’at eleven I was called a ‘dirty guinea.’... We’ve all done it. We’ve all used

²⁹⁴ [The House I live in](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhPwtnGviyg), dir. Mervyn LeRoy, 1945. 35mm. RKO Radio Pictures, 2014. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhPwtnGviyg>>

the words nigger, or kike, or mick, Pollack, or dago. Cut it out kids.” He proceeded to sing *the House I Live In* and then encouraged the students to say a pledge of tolerance. He then added “We will strive to work together to prove that the American way is only fair and democratic way of life.” Soon thereafter the Gary boycott ended.²⁹⁵

Between 1945 and 1949, Sinatra, the teenage heartthrob and advocate for civil rights elevated his profile even further by headlining in a series of films, mostly romantic comedy musicals. Sinatra an important figure during this time period because he was the central celebrity that contributed to the ushering of teen-age fandom in this modern era of consumption. A concert at New York City’s Paramount theatre drew more than 25,000 fans; a majority of them teenage girls that were referred to as bobbysoxers – a reference to the fashion trend in which women wore calf-length skirts with socks that were rolled covering the ankle. In a case of extreme but indicative behavior of this teen celebrity obsession, two sixteen-year-old girls who were identified as “bobbysoxer’s” as opposed to their real names (due to their age) went to the extreme to establish a bond with their idol by breaking into his Hasbrouck Heights home in New Jersey in an effort to steal some mementos as souvenirs. This extreme fan response to Sinatra and others demonstrated his popularity and contributed to the proliferation of a teenage consumer demographic. Certainly this demographic contributed to the success of the 1946 musical film *Til the clouds Roll By* featuring an ensemble cast including: Judy Garland, Dinah Shore, Dean Martin, Lena Horne and Frank Sinatra was the eighth highest grossing film of the year and one of the first motion picture films to have a soundtrack released

²⁹⁵ Robert J. Norell, *The House I live in: Race in the American Century*, (New York, New York: Oxford Press, 2005) 141.

accompanying the film – a decision informed by the cavalcade of stars mostly notably Sinatra.²⁹⁶

Sinatra was also selling tons of songs but by the late 1940s his idolatry among teens started to fade. Pop and youth culture celebrities were shifting for reasons beyond the cycle of trends. Advances in technology were growing and creating a new indigenous culture while serving as an advocate for those in existence. One component of youth culture that was being altered was music. Magnetic tape recordings, the vinyl microgroove record, and the stereophonic reproduction of sound (colloquially known as High-fidelity or Hi-fi) were all commercially introduced post World War II. However, it was vinyl microgroove record that would garner the most attention and ultimately lead to the “battle of music speeds.”²⁹⁷

VINYL TECHNOLOGY

The vinyl microgroove records were lighter, more durable, and sounded better than their predecessor, the shellac 78 Revolutions per Minute (RPM) records that were more susceptible to wear. In 1948, Columbia Records home to some of the most notable recording artists of the period (including Frank Sinatra) developed the 12-inch Long Playing (LP) at 33 1/3 RPM which allowed longer recordings and better sound on a single disc. 30 minutes of recordings could now be played on a single side which led to a broader range of possibilities for music. Due to wartime rations on shellac, the recording

²⁹⁶ Sinatra Fans Pose Two Police Problems and Not the less Serious Involves Truancy, New York Times, 13 October 1944: 21; Author Unknown Girls Rob Sinatra Home, New York Times, 17 May 1945: 21; The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer, dir. Irving Reis, perf. Cary Grant, 1947. DVD. RKO Pictures 1997.

²⁹⁷ Andre Mallard, America on Record: A History of Recorded Sound (New York, New York: Cambridge Press, 1995) 199.

industry was forced to make some adjustments on materials. In doing so they utilized vinyl as a substitute. These new vinyl discs were largely used during the war as transcription discs for radio.²⁹⁸

In response to Columbia, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) created the 7-inch 45 rpm microgroove record. The company even produced a small plastic turntable and pick-up unit that would only allow 45 RPM records to be played. What exacerbated the battle and made it more interesting is that both companies had rosters of recording artists whose works were used as bait to champion the sensibilities of consumers. 45 RPM records could only hold a limited time of music but the large opening compared to the pinhole of the 33 RPM record was more desirable for jukeboxes.²⁹⁹

This battle between the two largest recording companies and the four existing speeds (78, 33 1/3, 45 and 16) caused confusion among consumers resulting in a precipitous decline in sales. Further complicating matters were the recordings offered in the new formats were not compatible on the existing machines. This technological revolution arrived at the most opportune moment for the recording industry. In 1941, the year the U.S. entered the war an estimated 100 million discs were sold. By 1947, the number reached 325 million, the following year sales declined 23% to 250 million. New and improved technology certainly rejuvenate sales but unfortunately weathering the transition period proved challenging.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Mallard 204-205.

²⁹⁹ Mallard 207.

³⁰⁰ Mallard 201.

Fortunately, there were three developments that expedited the decisions of industry gatekeepers. The invention of the 3-speed phonograph, one of the major companies of jukebox manufacturing would support the 45 rpm format, and emerging forms of music such as bebop and doo-wop. In 1949, Webster-Chicago, one of the largest manufacturers of automatic record playing equipment announced they were developing a three-speed changer that could handle 78, 45 and 33 1/3 RPM platters. This announcement initiated the first step in establishing recording formats that would serve as a model for record consumption for the next several decades. Ultimately by 1960 two speeds (the 33 1/3 & 45 RPM) became the industry standard, though it was still possible to purchase 78 RPM recordings.³⁰¹

JUKEBOX

One staple of youth culture that would be defined by the coming decade was the jukebox. In 1950, the Seeburg Corporation, a maker of home amusements founded in 1902, introduced the M100B, the first Juke box to play only 45 rpm recordings. The first box held 50 45's or 100 selections (double-sided) before increasing to 80 and then 100. Jukeboxes were extremely important in the proliferation of music during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1939, jukeboxes consumed about 30 million records per year, while serving double duty of buyer and seller. Millions of records were purchased because they had been heard the night before on a box.³⁰²

The jukebox was an important element in Teen culture. By 1940, Teens were major customers of juke boxes. Unfortunately, the public viewed jukeboxes negatively.

³⁰¹ Author Unknown, "W-C Springs with 3-speed gadget for LP Record Biz," Billboard, 12 February 1949.

³⁰² "Seeburg Enters 'Home Music,'" Billboard, 20 July 1963.

However, it was later recognized that these jukeboxes could serve as a deterrent for Juvenile delinquency. An informal variable to this theory according to Kerry Seagrave occurred in 1939 in Clifton, New Jersey – a suburb of New York City. There were complaints from parents, educators, and clergy that sods shops were providing “hot” music to young patrons. In reality, the soda-shop owners said the teens could not go into Taverns and were kept out of trouble on soft drinks and “Sing phonograph music.”³⁰³

This situation unearthed a problem that young people did not have suitable places for Amusement. A remedy to this issue was establishing teen clubs with juke boxes serving as source of music. A number of cities such as Cleveland, Ohio and Kalamazoo, Michigan established teen clubs in which juke boxes would be the primary source of providing the soundtrack to the evening’s social activities.³⁰⁴

In 1945 19-year old Leonard Puzey, a Harlem resident performed on stage of the Apollo theatre in Harlem as part of Amateur Night. Puzey, decided to sing *There’s No you* which was made famous by Frank Sinatra. He was extremely nervous at the start but gained confidence as he continued through the song. Puzey was more concerned about finishing let alone winning but when he was declared the victor he was even more surprised by the whirlwind of attention moments after. An agent in audience that evening teamed him up with vocalists Warren Suttles and Tommy Ricks. They would later add Ollie James and formed a Harmony group called the Ravens. Little did they realize these

³⁰³ Kerry Seagrave, Jukeboxes: An American Social History (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2002) 142.

³⁰⁴ “Jukes Used in 5 Youth Clubs” Billboard, 6 November 1943; “Juke Boxes set stage for Teen-Age Night Clubs,” Billboard, 6 November 1943.

four young men would set a trend that would alter and reshape American Popular music.³⁰⁵

In 1946, the Ravens recorded half-dozen sides for the recently established-Independent label – Hub recording Company. The recordings were not big sellers (as hub lacked distribution) beyond New York City but the songs were hits on Harlem Jukeboxes and they were booked in local venues. The Ravens had developed a following in largely black communities and by fans of harmony groups. Black teens were more attuned to the Ravens and other harmonizing groups early on since the music not only bore out of these communities but also circulated in respective jukeboxes and during stage performances. Unfortunately, music distribution was still largely segregated and independent labels, were limited to the scope of distribution due financial constraints. However by 1948, the Ravens earned some crossover success when Cashbox magazine, the music industry journal declared them the most popular Harmony group in America, a position based on a ballot survey and in jukebox returns.³⁰⁶

The Ravens are one of the earliest doo-wop groups; their success paid the way for others to follow. The Ravens popularity reached their zenith while performing at the Apollo theater in Harlem from 1947 to 1950. At one point the group commanded \$7,500 a week for their services. The song “Count Every Star” with Ricks “doo, doo, doo, doo”

³⁰⁵ Tony Fletcher, All Hopped up and Ready to Go: Music from the Streets of New York 1927-1977 (New York, New York: W.W. Norton, 2009) 47.

³⁰⁶ “The Ravens Emerge as the top Harmony Quartette,” New York Amsterdam News, 3 July 1948: 25; Sides are the informal reference to individual recordings released on the 45RPM format.

vocal introduction, along with a phonetic accompaniment, gave birth to what would become later known as the doo-wop but at the time it was called “rhythm & blues”³⁰⁷

The Apollo theatre was the epic center for new and emerging talent but it was also a space where one could obtain popularity by connecting with the sound of the streets. Some of the Teens who attended DeWitt Clinton, Benjamin Franklin and James Madison high schools attended or heard about the sound that reverberated inside the hallowed halls through gossip and chatter.

³⁰⁷ Fletcher 51.

CHAPTER 6

VARYING ROADS TO INCLUSION: HIGH SCHOOL CULTURE

In December 1945, a group of students at James Madison High School in Brooklyn seized the reins of their music interests by organizing a Jazz club with aspirations that it would eventually be adopted into the school curriculum. The author presents his case in a statement published in the *Madison Highway* it noted jazz is a genre of music with truly American origins and the sound of contemporary popular music. The music was so popular that even conservative establishments such Carnegie hall featured Jazz performers including the revered New Orleans Pianist Jeri Smith, who was dubbed the “Mistress of the Piano” for blending the styles of “Chopin, Tchaikowskky, Beethoven and Ravel, in a tricky pattern of jazz, boogie-woogie and swing that sizzles.” The point of the statement is that music is changing and venues that were once unthinkable for these performances are now occurring with regularity and are also changing. The success of this club will hopefully send a message to the administrators to acknowledge our interests. Jazz became the soundtrack to the lives of many teens but bebop, a form of jazz indigenous to the pulse of New York City was quickly making its mark. And the debate for representation and tradition ensued. The arts provided the homogenous student body at Madison High School and opportunity to diversity its culture. The doors of Madison High School was open to any student who in the city. There were no residential or racial restrictions, though the black bodies were not physically there; the music and its

progenitors (who were largely black) were performing (through recordings) the soundtrack of these teens' lives. Music they called "truly American."³⁰⁸

On April 18, 1900, one of the most prominent bills to address the inequality in education was signed into law. New York State Governor Theodore Roosevelt signed a bill entitled, "the Consolidated school law," which barred the use of race or ethnicity as a marker for admission to New York State public schools. This bill repealed Section twenty-eight, article eleven, fifteen of chapter five hundred and fifty-six of 1894, that permitted local school boards to "establish a separate school or separate schools for instruction of children and youth of African descent, resident therein, and over five and under twenty-one years of age; and such school or schools supported therein for white children and they shall be subject to the same rules and regulations, and be furnished facilities for instruction equal to those white schools therein." The retraction of this law occurred at the time when New York State was in the middle of a forty-year population surge in which the number of residents increased from five to ten million. Ellis Island, the gateway to the United States had just opened less than a decade earlier in 1892 with many immigrants settling in New York City and causing a surge in city services.³⁰⁹

For six years, and a year prior to the Homer Plessy versus Ferguson case that would reaffirm and substantiate legalized segregation in the South, New York State briefly practiced legal segregation based on race in its public schools. The impact of this

law on

³⁰⁸ Nora Holt, "Jeri Smith in Carnegie Hall for Major Show," New York Amsterdam News, 3 February 1945: B4; "Jazz Comes to Madison," Madison Highway, James Madison High School, 21 December 1945: 2.

³⁰⁹ Laws of the State of New York, 123rd Session, Volume II, Albany, New York 1900, Chap. 492: 882; Roger Daniels, Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life (New York, New York: HarperCollins, 1990) 272.

Negro schoolchildren is unknown. Though this was state law and not every city and town and city enforced them. Prior to the consolidation of New York City in 1898, each of the boroughs operated their own school systems. Queens was operating differently than its counterparts. Each of the villages that comprised Queens operated its own school board and thus the right to exercise the state laws. In Flushing, Queens, “a committee of citizens” protested the law in 1911 after an incident in which a twelve-year old white girl was forced to dance with a Negro boy under the direction of her teacher as part of a waltz demonstration to the class. Before then there were few documented complaints – about the integrated schools in Flushing.³¹⁰

After the consolidation and unification of New York City it was the aim of Colonel Roosevelt to promote equality – especially in education. There was little publicity about the passage of the bill. In fact, there was no mention of the new law until after it had passed and after incidents such as the one in Flushing became publicized. Reversing this segregation law would later become one of notable highlights during Roosevelt’s two-year term as governor. Within a four year span, Theodore Roosevelt had a series of notable and virtually unparalleled accomplishments. In 1898, he became a celebrated war hero, organizing the first United States Volunteer Cavalry Regiment that was dubbed by the press as the “Roughriders” up San Juan and Kettle Hill in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. In 1899 he became the governor of New York State and in

³¹⁰ See Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805 – 1973: a History of the Public Schools as a Battlefield for Social Change* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1974); “To Demand Separate Schools for Negroes,” *New York Times*, 18 January 1911: 3; Author Unknown “Compelled to Dance with Negro She says,” *New York Times*, 17 January 1911; Queens prior to being incorporated into the City of New York, governed and functioned as its own county. Queens (identified legally as Queens County) still functions in a legal context as its own county and is managed under the authority of the City of New York.

1901 the Chief Executive of the United States. The signing of the bill permitted without restraint the acceptance of all students regardless of race at New York City high schools. DeWitt Clinton, then Boys' High was founded in 1896 on West 13th Street in New York City before opening several annexes and moving to a variety of locations prior to its current home on Mosholu Parkway in the Bronx.³¹¹

DeWitt Clinton, Benjamin Franklin, and James Madison are three New York City High schools that prepared its student body and its basketball players to succeed and make the transition to CCNY. Each of these schools embodied the mission of providing its students the best possible education while maintaining successful basketball programs. Each of these schools won at least two championships during the 1940s. Some of these players were talented enough to compete at the college level, and the most fortunate ended up at CCNY. Despite individual narratives all of them collectively contributed to a playground style of basketball that placed a premium on speed and athleticism. In many respects, CCNY's championships in 1950 validated the street game. The players' styles were not necessarily up-tempo but it was certainly the playground experience that enabled them to develop their individual skill sets.

Beyond successful basketball programs, the similarities end there. Each of these schools served very different communities and this fact was reflected in the student bodies. DeWitt Clinton was an academically rigorous all-boys school located in the Northwest Bronx. Benjamin Franklin was an experimental school, serving East and

³¹¹ Brands, William H. T.R.: *The Last Romantic* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1997) 356-357; *The World of 1898: The Spanish- American War*, The Hispanic Division Library of Congress <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/roughriders.html>>.

Central Harlem and dominated by an Italian American and black population. James Madison was an academic-comprehensive co-educational high school that served primarily a homogenous, financially-privileged, social-economic demographic in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn.³¹²

On October 3, 1947, six months after Jack Roosevelt Robinson integrated the national pastime of baseball. DeWitt Clinton high school initiated a petition that protested racial discrimination in educational institutions and would take the fight to Washington D.C. In doing so, it became one of the first schools to make such a bold and visible statement.

THE CLINTON COMMONWEALTH

The General Organization (G.O) School President Stan Langer was in discussion with other high school leaders inviting them to join DeWitt Clinton High School's fight for equal education or adopt similar initiatives. "We hope soon to have every New York City high school swamping Albany with petitions demanding that legislation be enacted to do away with racial, religious and regional discrimination in all New York colleges and universities."³¹³ This initiative reinforces Clinton High School as incubator for racial tolerance. The school's integrated student body reinforced a level of racial progression few schools in the City or Country could rival. These students understood the value of racially integrated settings and most importantly established friendships with persons of

³¹² Richard Thomkins, "School Will Help Adult Immigrants," New York Times, 23 February 1936: N7.

³¹³ "Clinton Fights Discrimination: First School to Begin parade of Petitions to State Capital" Clinton News (DeWitt Clinton High School) 3 October 3, 1947:1.

ethnic and racial backgrounds. DeWitt Clinton formerly known as Boys' High was just that type of institution that embraced similarities.

Three months later on Thursday, January 15, 1948, the student body elected Senior Pete Taylor, an African American, as the General Organization (G.O.) class President by a margin of 1340 votes over his closest rival. This turned out to become one of the largest margins of victory for class President in the school's history. It is unclear if Taylor is the first Negro School President. However, one thing is certain; his campaign promise printed in the school paper certainly resonated with students. "As a Presidential candidate, I will promise just one thing: a democratic government of students, actually functioning for the desires of all G.O. members."³¹⁴

At a glance his statement doesn't seem out of the ordinary, however, it does suggest there might have been issues of leadership with the previous administration in regards to servicing the needs of G.O. members versus the entire student body. A member of the student body must join the G.O. in order to participate in student clubs and organizations. Though unclear, the statement does note that in order to vote in G.O. executive elections one must be a member. With Taylor winning 56.3 percent of the ballots, he more than doubled the popular vote over the other two candidates by receiving 2189 out of a possible 3884 votes.³¹⁵

In a post-campaign interview, Taylor used athletics to push forward the notion of solidarity to win continued support for the G.O. He noted, "The G.O. supports every activity to the hilt. Last year for example we devoted \$3,300 to athletics." Taylor

³¹⁴ "Pete Taylor G.O. President Campaign Statement" Clinton News, 19 December 1947: 4.

³¹⁵ Clinton News, 20 January 1948.

continued, “We need the help of every student in this school if we’re to continue our work. A football team can’t be equipped without a large expenditure. Every organization requires funds. I feel that the least the students can do is support the G.O. We need everyone’s cooperation.”³¹⁶

Taylor also addresses the benefits of joining the G.O. but also brings into conversation Clinton’s legacy as means of spurring interest in joining. He notes that Clinton students have historically had one of the leading active G.O.’s in the city and emphasizes the need to continue that legacy. Taylor’s use of athletics is intelligent for a variety of reasons. First, even though he mentions football the basketball team was doing quite well and on its way to win another City Championship; secondly, in the previous season the football team did win the Bronx and City Championship and their star player Whitney Arceneaux, an African American, a Navy veteran originally from New Orleans was also voted second team All-City. These distinctions were undoubtedly still in the minds of the student body. Finally, the focus on athletics brings into conversation school pride, accomplishment, and the continuation of that legacy while drawing attention away from other unresolved issues or concerns to the student body.³¹⁷

Unfortunately, Taylor could not get the student body to support Baseball. Since 1934, DeWitt Clinton High School did not field a Baseball team. In the fall of 1947, a significant number of students made overtures to revive the sport. In order to field a team for the following spring, a minimum of 2,000 students had to make a pledge by

³¹⁶ Clinton News, 27 February 1948.

³¹⁷ Clinton News, 20 December 1946: 3; Clinton News 16 January 1948: 3; Clinton News 27 February 1948.

purchasing G.O. books that contained a special stub for baseball at fifty-cents each by the February 20th deadline. The monies would be used to purchase uniforms and equipment. The purchase would include a season ticket to the games and a free pass to a New York Giants Baseball game at the Polo Grounds. Overtures from Taylor, Vice-President Jay Kosman, other G.O. officers, and Newspaper editors unfortunately failed to stimulate the response needed from the student body. In the end, only 300 students responded. As a last-ditch effort, the deadline was extended another week. The lack of support for baseball in some respects demonstrates the sport was not as popular as basketball (which drew several hundred for each game) and students were not willing to financially extend themselves for this endeavor. If Basketball tickets to the New York Knickerbockers in the fledging Basketball Association of America league would have been offered instead the response should have certainly reached a more respectable goal. Even though their borough rivals at William H. Taft, Bronx Science, James Monroe, and Christopher Columbus high schools all fielded teams, baseball did not move the student body or the city in the same way as Basketball. Fourteen years without baseball further demonstrates that several classes of students (extend to another generation) were not drawn to the sport.³¹⁸

BLACK PRESENCE AT CLINTON HIGH SCHOOL

DeWitt Clinton high school formerly known as Boys' High School when it was located on 13th Street in Manhattan historically fostered a racially harmonious culture. The exact number of blacks enrolled are difficult to determine, because school records

³¹⁸ Clinton News, 19 March 1948; Clinton News 16 January 1948; Clinton News 27 February 1948:1; Clinton News 16 April 1948.

did not use race as an identifiable trait and yearbooks were not inclusive of the entire student body, and finally it is not always possible to identify someone's racial identity from photographs taken of large groups from a distance. Of the twenty-three young men who were in the inaugural class of 1900, all are believed to be white but one of them, William Anthony Aery, was at least committed to the ideal of equal education for all.³¹⁹

William Anthony Aery, served as professor and director of education at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for "Negroes and Indians," now Hampton University in Hampton, Virginia for 33 years before retiring in 1939. Aery graduated from Columbia College in 1904 and earned a Master's from Teachers College in 1906. Aery organized and directed the press bureau at the college, served as a local correspondent for the *New York Times*. He served as Booker T. Washington's press secretary during his tours of the South. For twenty years, Aery contributed articles on the education of the American Negro to the American Yearbook and served as editor of the *Southern Workman* monthly published by Hampton Institute. He made significant contributions in research on black life and education, however, his racial identity isn't clear since Hampton Institute had a number of faculty and administrators who were not of African descent.³²⁰

Several African-American students appeared in school publications during the first decade but none were distinctly identified. In 1905, Chester Jones, African American was identified with his senior class. However, the numbers of African Americans

³¹⁹ Gerard J. Pelisson and James Garvey, The Castle on the Parkway: the story of New York City's Dewitt Clinton High School and its extraordinary influence on American life (Scarsdale, New York: The Hutch Press, 2009) 39.

³²⁰ "William A. Aery, educator was 81," New York Times, 17 October 1963

appeared sporadically until the 1910's and 1920's. It must be noted that in 1900, African Americans comprised only 1.7 percent of the City's 3,437,202 population and that a High School education at the time was still considered a luxury. Nevertheless, the city's ethnic diversity was generally reflected. Before Immigration was severely restricted, half of New York City's (Manhattan) 1.5 million citizens in 1890 were Irish and German. In 1920, after the consolidation of the five counties into New York City, Jews (1.5 million) and Italians (about 800,000) comprised the two largest ethnic groups. Conversely the number of Blacks were a mere 152,000 or 2.7 percent of the population. The black population figured to be minute and invisible, even if their overall percentage was reflected in the demographic population of the school.³²¹

The student body at DeWitt Clinton closely reflected the ethnic diversity of the City, perhaps more than any other school. This also meant a variety of student clubs and organizations unrivaled by its peers. Jewish students who comprised more than half the population during the first half of the century started a variety of clubs including Agubah Club which discussed Jewish issues, the Hebrew Club to the immersion of the Hebrew language and Jewish History, and the Good English club, formed by foreign-born Jewish students who wanted to enhance their immersion into American culture and presumably improve their English.³²²

The Italian population in New York City numbered 400,000 but their representation at Clinton in 1920 was relatively low at 3.5 percent. However, thanks to

³²¹ Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805 – 1973: a History of the Public Schools as a Battlefield for Social Change* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1974) 174; New York City Historical Population census. <www.census.gov>.

³²² Pelisson 38.

individuals like Leonard Covello, an Italian immigrant and Spanish teacher who arrived at Clinton in 1913, the Italian population at Clinton rose to nearly ten percent by 1930. Covello, wanted to teach Italian but the language had not been recognized by the Board of Education for placement in the curriculum. In the interim, he started an Italian club for students interested in learning or preserving the culture which became extremely popular. Finally, in 1922, after nearly a decade, the Board relented and in the fall recognized Italian as a foreign language that could be offered in the city's public schools. Covello was appointed as chairman of the Italian department at Clinton a position he held until 1934 when he was selected as the principal at the newly constructed Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem. Covello was the first Italian-American principal of a New York City High School. He was so endeared by his former students at Clinton; they referred to him as Pop and dedicated the 1934 class yearbook in his honor.³²³

Clinton High School set the standard of equitable race relations in secondary schooling. In the 1920's and 1930's when the presence of African Americans was steadily increasing, rarely were there any published reports of any racial discord. Even though many clubs and organizations revolved around social and cultural identities and representation reflected as such, they did enforce a culture of cooperation and understanding established by the schools larger culture. For example, the Hebrew Society, the Newman Club, and the Frederick Douglass Society did hold joint meetings in the spirit of promoting brotherhood and tolerance.³²⁴

³²³ Pelisson 43; Clintonian, 1934, (The Bronx, New York: DeWitt Clinton High School, 1934) 8.

³²⁴ Pelisson 98.

The Clinton News also reinforced a culture of integration by publishing accomplishments of African American alumni, publicizing educational opportunities, and scribing editorials on racial discrimination. In 1940, during a joint meeting between the Jewish discussions club and the Frederick Douglass Society, Jack Baker a former editor of a Berlin newspaper gave a lecture on interracial hatred and how racism in America has been transmitted abroad and distorted images of blacks. He noted “Most Europeans have a distorted view of the Negro whom they consider in the light of bandleader, singer, or fit only for any type of menial labor. It was really Jews in Berlin who tried to understand the Negro as he actually was.” Mr. Baker concluded his oratory remarks by stating “Don’t condemn an entire minority because of the fault of the individual. Anti-Semitism and all other attacks on minorities are merely smoke-screens to hide economic battles and the gain of power and influence for the perpetrator. We must burrow deep to find the roots of evil.”³²⁵

Faculty was also influential in enforcing a culture of integration. Max Diamond, an art enthusiast of renaissance paintings and a fan of modern swing also served as the faculty advisor to the Douglass society and in many respects represents a bridge of values based on his interests of what might be perceived as highbrow meeting lowbrow culture, expressed his thoughts about racial discrimination. “I am very interested and concerned with the Negro boys in Clinton and have always been opposed to any sort of racial or religious discrimination. And I might add that this discrimination is most detrimental to a

³²⁵ “Editor attacks Race bigotry,” Clinton News, 8 March 1940: 1.

democracy. I think that our students should be proud of Clinton's tradition of freedom, liberalism, and lack of discrimination."³²⁶

Both Mr. Diamond and Mr. Baker present perspectives that counter negative perspectives about discrimination that defend blacks but do not address the demographic often situated at the root of these actions. I contend the reason for such a position is because so much of discrimination is systemic. Mr. Baker briefly alluded to this point when he suggested the benefits of such hatred lie in economic rewards that enrich the indicter and those who stand at the heads of such entities.

The culture of the school emphasized interracial cooperation and for students to conduct themselves like mature adults with the upmost respect to the Clinton commonwealth. Principal John Walsh even commended the student body for the extremely low number of disciplinary cases for which he and the rest of administrative staff were "gratified and even mystified" at the high level of cooperative conduct. However, in 1947 the principal wrote a letter in the *Clinton News* in regards to a letter he received from a man, who claimed his son and friend were attacked by a large group of boys from Clinton because the two attended Stuyvesant High School. A more severe incident making headlines occurred when 500 boys (from Clinton and Evander Childs high school) were involved in fist fights (which included weapons) that covered eight square blocks after Clinton defeated their northwest Bronx rival 26-0 in football. Order was restored after twenty-three persons were arrested on various charges. One Clinton student arrested claimed the incident was triggered by Evander students who were

³²⁶ "Mr. Diamond scores racial discrimination," *Clinton News*, 8 March 1940: 4.

throwing eggs at the Clinton players. The racial harmony inside the school was fractured when a riot occurred on the Mosholu Parkway IRT elevated station between white and black students for reasons unknown. However, word about the melee was received by Principal Clark who held an emergency assembly in the auditorium the very next day and “dressed down” [scolded] the participants for their transgressive behavior that undermined the expectations of a Clinton student. One student from the 1940s recalled there was never any [racial] trouble but each group, generally speaking “kept to itself.”

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The comment suggests that Clinton students embraced and tolerated each other in accordance to school policy while on campus but for a minute few, when beyond the school grounds, their behavior differed greatly. But to a point articulated by Principal Clark, the percentage of disciplinary actions for a student body of this magnitude demonstrates that a majority of Clinton students understood and respected the halls where education was exercised. Clinton underscored its unofficial position as a model of intercultural and interscholastic cooperation when a trip sponsored by the Congregational Christian Committee on Church and Race and other organizations sent eight delegates from upstate New York to visit the high school. The purpose of the trip was to promote interracial relations. The group sat in history class discussion on wage-price inflation, toured various offices including the Library and Lunchroom. It was quite evident that Clinton high school, a school with a student body of more than 5,000 was doing as a good as job as a school can of cultivating a culture of intercultural and interscholastic

³²⁷ John V. Walsh, “A Clinton Disgrace,” *Clinton News*, 19 December 1947:1; “500 youths in riot after Bronx game,” *New York Times*, 1 October 1960: 8; Pelisson 98.

cooperation. This culture allowed Black boys to compete on championship Swimming and Tennis teams. These are just some varsity teams that require microscopic individual performances for team success.³²⁸

When social issues arose, it was student athletes who were leaned upon to serve as ambassadors to the cause. A senior drama class created a play entitled “Rowdyism” to address real-life issues affecting the campus. The intention of this production was to bring awareness of disruptive behavior and to offer solutions. Though the performances were performed by drama students, it was members of football and basketball team that initiated a discussion at the conclusion among each other about racy topics of crime prevention and “rowdyism.” Though details of their role are limited, they were probably chosen because of their maturity, level of visibility in the school, and the respect they commanded from their peers.³²⁹

One player bore from the Clinton mold of high expectations was Eddie ‘Leopard’ Warner, a six-foot-three forward on the basketball team. *The Clinton News* constantly identified him by his nickname of ‘Leopard’ Ed for his athleticism and keen sense of awareness on the court. Warner was identified as a player with the ability to rebound the basketball with such ferocity. A common chant at games among fans is “Leopard Ed nab that rebound.” Despite his skills, he surprisingly did not earn a varsity letter until his junior year. Nevertheless, Warner was an exceptional player who was offered athletic scholarships to LIU, NYU, and Fordham Universities. However, Warner had his sights

³²⁸ Weingart, “DWC halls Climax Tour of New York by Out-of-Towners,” *Clinton News*, 14 May 1948: 6.

³²⁹ Larry Shepard, “Senior Play Dramatizes Rowdyism,” *Clinton News*, 12 April 1940.

set on a career beyond athletics but was using these academic opportunities to improve his life and social-economic standing. It was in the DeWitt Clinton spirit that he set his sights on attending St. John's College (now University) because it would best prepare him for a career as a dentist. A number of circumstances rerouted Warner from St. John's (whom initially attended LIU first) to CCNY but what prepared him for the athletic, academic, and social challenges of playing on a racially integrated team during a time when very little in society was integrated was his experience at DeWitt Clinton and competing in the PSAL.³³⁰

DeWitt Clinton fostered a culture that prepared their student-athletes to pursue higher education. That higher component of education was immersing a student population into social settings and to interact with individuals from varied backgrounds and share, ideas, experiences, and personal narratives that many do not achieve until higher education. The Boys at Clinton seemed to be well-prepared to not only make their mark in a changing world but lead it.³³¹

DeWitt Clinton High School (particularly in the 1940s) reflected the culture of New York City, diverse, tolerant, accepting, and overcrowded (with more than 5,000 students). Between one's scholastic, social, and familial responsibilities (not to mention the bus and subway commute) these young men must likely had little time for anything otherwise. Hallways reflected Subway cars; students like commuters were merely passing through trying to get to their destination unabated and immediately as possible. For the students that meant weaving through a traffic of bodies, exchanging pleasantries,

³³⁰ "Introducing... Eddie (Leopard) Warner," Clinton News, 16 April 1948.

³³¹ Weingart 6.

gathering materials from lockers (if necessary) in seven or eight minutes. The environment that promotes the culture of the city in many respects reflect the culture of school. Unlike the neighborhood schools that served other areas of the city or the Bronx such as Evander Childs, William Howard Taft, and Morris High Schools to name a few, most of the students at Clinton wanted to be here and most importantly had an opportunity to be here. The culture of Clinton presented a sink-or-swim mentality that either you contributed to the betterment of the school or you departed. According to a five-year study by the National Academy of Sciences, DeWitt Clinton was fourth in the nation among public high school students that earned doctoral degrees. The three were ahead of Clinton in numerical order were Stuyvesant, the Bronx High School of Science (which was adjacent to Clinton) and Brooklyn Technical.³³²

In a statement published in the 1948 yearbook, G.O. President Peter Taylor, noted Clinton graduates received an education in scholarship and service. Teamwork across cultural and ethnic lines was not a necessity but a custom expected of her sons described as the “The Clinton Commonwealth.” This attitude of working together with like-minded men of different backgrounds to accomplish goals was expected to continue. He notes, “Now we must repeat our performance and collaborate with all peoples, regardless of race, color, or belief. The world is what men make it and Clinton men must make it a better world.” Taylor words speak to a senior class that arrived with the nation at war who lost its leader with the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1945 and moved forward (albeit slowly) in becoming a united nation. Institutions that practiced segregation were becoming dismantled. In 1946, professional football re-opened its doors to black players

³³² Robert Terte “Stuyvesant no. 1 in alumni Ph.D.’s,” New York Times, 28 November 1963: 49.

when Woody Strode and Kenny Washington were signed by the Los Angeles Rams. Closer to home in 1947, the Brooklyn Dodgers shattered the windows of the national pastime when Jack Roosevelt Robinson integrated major league baseball. A few weeks after commencement on July 26, President Truman would sign executive order 9981, officially desegregating the armed forces. The rest of the nation was lagging behind New York City and DeWitt Clinton High School and Taylor's address in many respects reminded them of that.³³³ Three players (Arthur Glass, Mike Wittlin, and Ed Warner) on the CCNY championship team attended DeWitt Clinton and won a city championship during their respective tenure. Their collective experience at Clinton prepared them for not only academic success but also athletic accomplishment. The Clinton commonwealth described earlier was certainly an arbiter in fostering that narrative. Equally important is that basketball provided them with an opportunity to travel to other schools and neighborhoods in the city and demonstrate how privileged they were at Clinton. They might have not fully realized this in the throes of their Clinton experience but perhaps their level of consciousness were raised once they were on the campus at City College where the level of racial diversity did not necessarily mirror their primary schooling.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

In another act of nobility with Basketball at its core, Clinton and its Northwest Bronx rival set aside their differences for a charitable cause. On January 11, 1945 Clinton played its first ever night game at home against its Northwest Bronx rival Evander Childs

³³³ Peter Taylor, "A Clinton Education," The Clintonian, 1948 (The Bronx, New York: DeWitt Clinton High School, 1948) 13.

high school. At the conclusion of the game was a dance that featured a live band in the gymnasium in which students from both schools attended. Clinton soundly defeated Evander 51-17 but most importantly were the two-thousand patrons in attendance and the \$750 raised - \$550 of the proceeds was donated to the Pawling A.A.F. Hospital. The crowd was the largest for a Clinton home game in four years and demonstrated how its successful basketball team (at the time Clinton was undefeated) could serve the community. Unlike Evander, Clinton wasn't designated to serve a particular neighborhood or what might be affectionately known as neighborhood school. Most of its students from the time the building was constructed at its Bronx location, traveled from Manhattan. A significant portion of the student body remained from outside the Bronx well through the 1940s. As a result, Clinton did not have the same connection to the immediate neighborhood like its peer institutions, psychologically through its student body or geographically from its location or its intended mission. As a result, community building was largely contained to the campus and the reporting of charitable causes usually involved pairing with other schools or organizations that served regional and national interests. So when Clinton was involved with a charitable cause it was usually prominent, garnered considerable attention, and fairly successful. During World War II, the Clinton community purchased more than \$196,000 in bonds and stamps used to fund a bomber plane to be named "The Spirit of Clinton" in addition to an Army jeep. This accomplishment by the Clinton community was notable and garnered regional attention by the *New York Sun*. The school also demonstrated leadership by raising funds for countless other charitable causes. During one collection for the United Nations Children

drive, a teacher noted that students' financial response in his section were low because they were perhaps exhausted from "the numerous collections made this term."³³⁴

While Clinton served as a model of interracial cooperation in New York City public high schools, Benjamin Franklin, the school in East Harlem constructed to ease overcrowding at Clinton, was not able to replicate the harmonious social situation. The ties between Clinton and Franklin were pronounced in administration, academics, and athletics. The two schools would become bitter rivals, largely because Bill Spiegel, the former Clinton basketball coach whom won several titles at the school was appointed coach at Franklin. Spiegel's impact was felt immediately when throngs of the most talented black basketball players from the Bronx and Harlem enrolled at Franklin. Under Spiegel's tutelage, Franklin would soon become one of the most dominant basketball programs in the city.³³⁵

BEN FRANKLIN AND A CHANGING EAST HARLEM

Similar to its Bronx rival, Benjamin Franklin had a diverse student body, a great basketball program, and was all-male but the similarities end there. Most of the students at Franklin were from Harlem, whereas at Clinton the students were from a broader geographical base. But the stark contrast between to the two is that Franklin was an experimental school located in a predominately working-class immigrant Italian-American neighborhood at the farthest end of East Harlem. The school was also supposed

³³⁴ Norman L. Viejo, "Hoopsters trounce Evander at First Basketball Dance," Clinton News, 12 January 1945; Herbert Hoffer, "Purchase of medium Bomber and Jeep become a reality as Clinton easily surpasses both quotas," Clinton News, 7 January 1944: 1; Ivan Smolen, "Clinton responds to UN Children Drive," Clinton News, 14 May 1948: 1; *Basketball games were usually played directly after school.

³³⁵ "Scholastic Sports: Negro Basketball Players are flocking to Benjamin Franklin High School," New York Amsterdam News, 15 February 1936: 15.

to serve Central Harlem (which did not have a high school for boys) and the communities to the east which were largely German, Jewish, and Puerto Rican.³³⁶

Unlike Clinton, Franklin would have to overcome a significant of challenges in preparing its students for life beyond high school. Two of those students, Joe Galiber and Floyd Layne also competed for the Franklin team, won a PSAL title and later were members of the CCNY championship team. In some respects these young men had an elevated status in high school as members of the racially integrated basketball team but some vocal members of the larger culture and community to which the school was located proved to be less-tolerant of cross-cultural alliances. With Italian-American, Puerto Rican, and Black basketball stars during its formative pre-war and post-war years, athletes – in particular basketball players were provided in some aspects an exemption from the tensions that the plagued neighborhood.

During World War II and immediately thereafter, large numbers of migrants from Puerto Rico relocated to East Harlem which ultimately became known as the Barrio or Spanish Harlem. With the Italian-American community wedged between the East river and the rapidly increasing Puerto Rican community tensions rose that often led to skirmishes in the immediate area of the school some as this narrative will illustrate with lethal results. Occasionally there was conflict inside the school but for the most there were few incidents of transgressive behavior. Despite the tensions in the community, the

³³⁶ “School Plan Helps Entire Community,” New York Times, 6 June 1937: 22; Richard Tompkins, “School will Help Adult Immigrants,” New York Times, 23 February 1936; Jeffrey Gurock, When Harlem Was Jewish: 1870 - 1930 (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) 139. Harlem did have Wadleigh high school for co-eds built in 1902 and was the first all-Girls high school in the city and remained that way until the school closed in 1954 (New York City Landmarks Commission report, Designation List 260 LP-240, July 26, 1994).

racially-integrated Franklin basketball team preserved with a tremendous amount of success which ultimately prepared its players for college at CCNY. The following narrative illustrates how Benjamin Franklin high school came into existence and how its Principal Leonard Covello tried to foster a harmonious culture in the school while the basketball team became a perennial powerhouse despite not having a home gymnasium.³³⁷

In September 1934, Benjamin Franklin high school opened its doors on East 108th street in a dilapidated building formerly occupied by public school 172. Simultaneously an annex on seventy-Ninth Street formerly occupied by Public School 53 opened. The inaugural enrollment listed 2,000 boys. However, within two years during the 1936-37 academic year, attendance surged nearly 30 percent to 2600 with an average daily enrollment of 2,482 students. Franklin was meant to serve East Harlem and Yorkville (Upper East Side) communities (which did not have a high school in the area but instead a Clinton H.S. annex) with a total population of 600,000 residents, 70% of whom were foreign-born. When the school opened in 1934, a majority of the population was Italian with small numbers of German, Irish, and Polish immigrants who were largely situated to the South in Yorkville and small sections of East Harlem. In the late 1930s and early 1940s small but increasing numbers of Puerto Rican students also appeared.³³⁸

Benjamin Franklin High School was an experiment of community-centered schools. This idea was the brainchild of its principal and former Italian language

³³⁷ Haslip-Viera, Gabriel, "The Evolution of the Latino Community in New York City," Latinos in New York: Communities in Transition (South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1996)11; "Franklin High Quintet Wins 40th Cage Contest in a Row," New York Amsterdam News 20 December 1941: 17.

³³⁸ Howard A. Shiebler, "A Boy's Own Curriculum: In City's New High School Student tastes," New York Times, 2 September 1934: 4.

instructor at Clinton, Leonard Covello. At Clinton, Covello fought tirelessly to have the Board of Education recognize Italian as a language fit for academic study. After the success of that endeavor, he set his sights on establishing a school in East Harlem that would meet the scholastic demands of that community that was largely Italian. His vision was that the facility would serve as a high school during the day and an adult education center in the evening. However, by 1936, a significant portion of the student body resided outside the immediate area. An educational report on the school estimated that 44 percent of the students resided in East Harlem, 22 percent in Yorkville to the South, 3 percent in West Harlem, 23 percent in the Bronx, 7 percent in lower Manhattan, and 1 percent combined from Brooklyn and Queens.³³⁹

The geographical diversity was the result of board of education insistence of serving a broader tract base than initially conceived. However, as the aforementioned report noted most of the students were from East Harlem. The building's facilities were substandard and certainly not conducive to constructing championship-caliber teams. As a former grammar school building meant to serve preadolescents, the facilities were insufficient for conducting a modern high school. One teacher remarked the physical discomfort (both cramped and dilapidated) of the space, and lack thereof was a distraction that contributed to student underachievement, "these buildings were not only unsuited to the requirements of our high school work from the standpoint of space and

³³⁹ Michael Jonanek and John L. Puckett, Leonard Covello and the making of Benjamin Franklin High School: education as if citizenship mattered, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2007) 120.

equipment but they are also unattractive.” The instructor added, “this very fact constituted a sort of damper on the enthusiasm of both students and teachers.”³⁴⁰

For some students, one of the most discouraging aspects of the facilities was the lack of a basketball team at the seventy-ninth street annex. The varsity basketball team operated at the main building on East 108th Street and was starting to come into its own in the late 1930s. Finally in 1942, after seven years of waiting a new building was constructed in East Harlem on 116th street and Mount pleasant avenue in the heart of an Italian enclave. At this point the student body was comprised primarily of East and Central Harlem residents who were Italian-American, Puerto Rican, and Black. However, a significant number of students, mostly blacks and Puerto Ricans commuted by bus or subway.³⁴¹

In the 1920s Harlem was the epicenter of an American cultural and artistic revolution known as the Harlem renaissance. Black migrants from the south flocked to Harlem in droves creating an energy that would be virtually unparalleled. Venues such as the Apollo theatre and the Savoy Ballroom were spaces where Black performers could demonstrate their talents. The racial demographic shift in Harlem was rapid and pronounced. In 1910, the black population in Harlem stood at 9.89%. Ten years later in 1920, it nearly tripled to 32.43%. By 1930, Harlem was more than 70% black with a majority residing in Central and West Harlem. The Board of Education moved slowly to meet the scholastic demands of this community leaving most schools overcrowded. At

³⁴⁰ Jonanek 121.

³⁴¹ Howard Shiebler “A Boy’s Own Curriculum,” New York Times, 2 September 1934: 4; Jonanek 120.

the secondary level, there was no high school to serve that area, forcing most teenagers to commute to other parts of Manhattan and the Bronx.³⁴²

For black students, Benjamin Franklin in many respects was the most viable option in terms of geographical proximity; however, it was daunting because it required commuting by bus outside of defacto cultural boundaries. The school on East 108th street was located in the middle of first and Second Avenue and firmly entrenched in a commercial area with establishments that catered to Italian Americans. Across the street stood the Verona Theatre (which screened Italian films), an Italian butcher shop, Italian grocery store, and Italian Shoemaker. South of the school was the Italian Language Service Bureau of the Italian Teachers Association, the Hispanic-American education bureau and an Italian bakery. A barber and the Italian Mutual Aid society stood to the north. Less than two blocks to the west in which students had to navigate was a community more ethnically diverse, populated by Jews, Puerto Ricans, and the Irish. However, that also increased the likelihood of intersecting with youth gangs from different nationalities.³⁴³

In 1933, the year before Franklin opened its doors, East and Central Harlem had some of the highest rates of juvenile delinquency in the city. An estimated 26 of 1,000 children (of court age) were classified as miscreants. Ironically, Washington Heights the community that rests above Harlem beginning at 155th street had one of the lowest rates of juvenile delinquency in the city with 5 of 1,000 children bearing that designation. Despite the increased levels of delinquency and propensity for gang activity in the

³⁴² Historical geographical Information System, compiled by Andrew A. Beveridge

³⁴³ East Harlem 1930 Residential Map, Johanek 110.

neighborhood. Little evidence suggests these actions involved the students of Benjamin Franklin high school.³⁴⁴

In 1942, Benjamin Franklin opened the doors to its new building on Pleasant Avenue and 116th Street. The location of its new home was further north of the old facility and right on the East river. But the school was also located further into a residential area of east Harlem neighborhood dominated by Italians. Principal Leonard Covello with a history of championing Italian American causes throughout his career wanted to build a school that could serve an under-represented community that was in many respects ignored by the Board of Education – that community by happenstance was largely Italian and could have seemingly dominated the school culture. This might have created or contributed to ethnic and racial divisions within the school. However, Covello demonstrated that the interests of the school were to serve everyone.

Initially students expressed optimism and excitement about the future and relocation to the new building. The opportunity to have a new building with all the modern amenities and to build memories was a message conveyed immediately to the student body. Two years before the official move, the 1940 class yearbook was “dedicated to the future, to the new community in general, and to the high school building in particular.”³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ J.B. Maller, “Juvenile Delinquency in New York City: A summary of a comprehensive report,” Journal of Psychology, (January 1937): 11; Postal code zip map <http://www.zipmap.net/New_York/New_York_County/Z_Washington_Heights.htm>; USPS zip code and neighborhood map <<http://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/10032/>>.

³⁴⁵ Benjamin Franklin yearbook 1940 (New York: New York; Benjamin Franklin High School, 1940) 3.

The essay also spoke to the trajectory of the community school as hub that will radiate progress and must lead and encourage interracial and national unity. The interracial component of his essay is self-explanatory; however, it is the sense of national unity that is most compelling. With a large number of students of Italian descent (Covello himself was immigrant from Italy) comprising the student body (with their parents more likely Italian immigrants) are more likely to identify with their culture and nationality as opposed to an American identity. It would be interesting to observe how Covello tried to develop and corral this American identity with the community and its sons. For Covello, adopting a national identity might be especially essential as the new building was further situated in an Italian enclave and students might be even more compelled to embrace the identity and nationality associated with their *Paeseani* thus fracturing the vision of a unified student body.³⁴⁶

Other students wrote essays reflecting their experiences about the old building and characteristics they learned to adjust and now appreciate (as demolition was on the horizon presumably after the move is completed). One spoke about the brotherhood and comradeships within the school, a feature that other (and more academically rigorous) schools were lacking. The strong sense of community was a feature not lost on the senior class.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Luciano J. Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello, *The Italian Americans*, Immigrant Heritage of America Series, 3rd edition, (New York, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971) 101; Paesani is Italian for people from the same village. Italian communities in America tended to live and form associations to where immigrants were raised. As a result people identified with their village as opposed to their nation. This led to segregation in many Italian American communities by hometown.

³⁴⁷ Franklin Yearbook 1940 5.

The 1939-40 Benjamin Franklin basketball team that won the PSAL championship was a reflection the possibilities of a culturally unified student body. Basketball was a cultural fixture in the school and brought many of these young men together. The team photo in the 1940 yearbook features ten young men from various ethnic and racial backgrounds donned with sweaters with a giant 'F' for Franklin on their left chest. Each of the men are smiling with their coach in the middle surrounding statue with two figurines in a running position under a sign that says 'Growth of American Democracy.' This image underscores the possibilities of a cohort of boys from different backgrounds coming together to accomplish a goal. And when all men are embraced equally in their context without prejudice, the possibilities for success are infinite.³⁴⁸

The promise of brotherhood and interracial cooperation in the school through athletics and other extra-curricular activities was certainly challenged outside the hallowed halls. Several riots occurred in Harlem between 1934 and 1943; one of the worst occurred during the summer of 1943. Between 1910 and 1940, the racial demographics in Harlem changed dramatically and so did tensions over the lack of opportunities. Many blacks expressed discontent with lack of employment, housing, and the lack of schools. U.S. entry into World War II seemed to fan the flames of angst.³⁴⁹

On September 27, 1944, there was a dispute between black and white pupils in the gymnasium at Benjamin Franklin High School. The incident appeared to be settled before the coach arrived; however in the locker room tensions resurfaced when the white student

³⁴⁸ Franklin Yearbook 1940 15.

³⁴⁹ Wendell Malliet, "School situation in Harlem in limelight," New York Amsterdam News, 7 February 1942: 5.

stated that he would see the black student “after school.” Apparently, the black boy did not interpret this as an exercise in homo-social comradery but a physical threat to his well-being. The word circulated around campus with racial undertones there was going to be a fight after school. After school at around 3:30, some black boys were boarding a bus heading eastbound into Harlem when they were attacked by a group of whites who were not students at Franklin but neighborhood thugs. The boys were attacked with clubs but fortunately none of them were seriously injured. Those group of boys seemed to be targeted (perhaps the black boy involved in the gymnasium incident was among them) because other black boys (who were students at Franklin) who did not board the bus walked down 116th Street from the school without incident. When the police arrived, the white youths had scattered before police could question the assailants. Blacks and the increasingly growing Puerto Rican population were subjected to attacks by Italian youth gangs who dominated the area including Jefferson Park which was next to the school to the South.³⁵⁰

Apparently, the black boys who boarded the bus decided that it would be unsafe for them to go to school henceforth separately without arming themselves. The next day on Friday, September 28th an estimated fifty-to seventy-five black students took the bus but departed on the corner of Lexington Avenue and 116th Street and decided to walk the remaining four city blocks to the school. Someone (either teachers who also commuted by bus) notified school officials about the large group of boys walking the duration of the trip alerted police who were waiting for them when they arrived at the school.

³⁵⁰ Report to the Mayor’s Committee on Unity, 1 November 1945, Robert Wagner archives at LaGuardia Community College; Johaneck 209.

Several of the boys were frisked and a number of weapons were found including a taped up razor, a bailing hook, a pocket knife and a bread knife. Eight boys were arrested – three juveniles and five adolescents. That afternoon a crowd of concerned mothers gathered because of rumors about a large racial fight was impending. There was no fight after school that day just large crowds of parents and students concerned about their well-being.³⁵¹

At the time of this incident, the racial makeup of the 1,162 students was 37 percent Italian American, 13 percent African American, 9 percent Puerto Rican and 41 percent were listed as “other,” which included a significant number of Jewish students. The black boys are minorities in a school populated by minorities, so their feelings of alienation and fear were pronounced when a crowd of Italian-Americans from the community gathered outside. Covello attempted to ensure their safety by allowing them to remain together in the library. Ironically a program in the auditorium that day involved boys from all racial groups proceeded as scheduled and without incident.³⁵²

With the large crowd gathered outside the school press reports painted a vastly different picture of what transpired. On Saturday the headline for the *New York Daily News* read “2,000 High [School] Students Battle in Race Riot,” by far the most fabricated reporting of this incident but significantly influential as the *News* had the largest circulation of any of the New York City tabloids. *The World-Telegram* reported in their article “street fighting broke out twice with five hundred white and negro students and their elders battling each other and eighty uniformed and plainclothes policemen;”

³⁵¹ Report to the Mayor’s Committee on Unity 3.

³⁵² Gerald Meyer, “When Frank Sinatra came to Harlem,” *Political Affairs*, 3 May 2010: 2.

shadowing this report was the *New York Times* front-page headline “Student Strikes Flare into Riots in Harlem Schools: Knives Flash in Street Fights as Elders Join Pupils in battling the Police: Coaches Row a Pretext.” Over the course of the next two months nearly eighty articles about the fabricated incident were published. For Covello this was catastrophic. This misreporting had potentially serious ramifications on a school whose enrollment was declining dramatically. At the conclusion of the 1941-42 academic year, Franklin had an enrollment of 1,743 students; 45 percent were Italian American, Blacks constituted the next largest group at 20 percent. By 1944, the student body was 1,162, a 66% decrease with Blacks comprising 30 percent of enrollment. Compounding the factor was East Harlem was rapidly shifting from ethnic whites to increased numbers of Puerto Ricans and Blacks, who made up 26% of the population by 1950.³⁵³

Covello reached out to members of the Italian-American community to ensure their children would be safe. For next several weeks Covello and his staff went into damage control. He even initiated the participation of the student body in the Columbus Day Parade. The students also voted to take part as a demonstration of American unity and Solidarity. The *Tribune* estimated that nearly six-hundred students participated marching behind a banner that proclaimed that they were “Americans All.” The Italian newspaper *Il Progresso*, printed the Franklin story under subheading “Every race, every faith.”³⁵⁴

The healing process from the over-publicized, fictional reporting from the media culminated with an unlikely guest making an appearance at Franklin. On October 23,

³⁵³ Johaneck 202.

³⁵⁴ Meyer 8.

1945, singer Frank Sinatra arrived at the school to articulate his thoughts about unity and solidarity across racial, national, and religious lines. Sinatra, an Italian-American who grew up in nearby Hoboken, New Jersey, made more than thirty appearances around the country speaking against prejudice. During his lecture he asked that the high school students serve as “neighborhood emissaries of racial good will.” Sinatra’s overtures appeared genuine as he reflected on his experiences of growing up in racially-fragmented Hoboken. “Where I was reared, the community was divided into racial and religious compartments. There were the Italian-Americans, the Irish-Americans, the Jewish people and the Negroes. Each had its own little section and carefully drawn boundary lines that marked off one group from the other.” Sinatra noted there were a lot of violent incidents when these borders were transgressed largely because people never really got to know one another. He recalled “it was bitter, violent, tough and lacking in love and security. But I survived and learned one great lesson: you can’t hate and live a wholesome life. Prejudice and good citizenship just don’t go together.” The genuineness of his feelings informed these adolescent experiences would be reflected in his music but also in his performance in the short film *The House I Live in*. Released in November 1945, Sinatra served as the voice of reason against religious and racial prejudice to a group of young boys. The film received an honorary academy award and a special Golden Globe award in 1946. The film also heightened Sinatra’s profile as an artist and a crusader for interracial cooperation.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Meyer 8; *The House I live in*, dir. Mervyn LeRoy, 1945. 35mm. RKO Radio Pictures, 2014. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhPwtnGviyg>>, Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0037792/?ref=fn_al_tt_2>, 18 September 2014. The film addressed religious prejudice but was devoid of systemic or individualistic bouts of racism; Frank Sinatra, “Musicians

While Covello and his subordinates were doing as much as they could to ease tensions in the school and community, the basketball team was getting ready to start the 1945-46 season, one that would culminate in winning their fourth PSAL championship in twelve years (since the founding of the school in 1934). Two players on that team would become college standouts. The first Emilio “Zeke” Sinicola, the son of Italian immigrants, was Franklin’s leading scorer. His fourteen points in the championship game versus Erasmus led all scorers. Sinicola would later become all-time leading scorer at Niagara University and become a Sporting News second team All-American. Sinicola was drafted with the fourth pick by the Fort Wayne Pistons in 1951. Another standout player on that team was an African American (of Bahamian descent) reserve sophomore guard Floyd Lane, who would later develop into a dynamic point guard for CCNY. Despite the social issues plaguing the school, the basketball team moved forward without a hitch.³⁵⁶

Franklin’s 1946 championship title signaled the ending of an era in PSAL Basketball. Franklin would not win another basketball title until 1982 (though it would appear in three championship games); secondly, the PSAL would dissolve the vocational school league in 1947 (though it would be re-established in 1962 as the B’ Division) and all the schools despite the size of their student body and academic mission competing in one league. During that time, the Brooklyn schools would become dominant winning 10

Must Fight Prejudice Music Journal, (February 1962): 45. Frank Sinatra penned an essay in 1962 that called upon musicians to join the fight against bigotry.

³⁵⁶ “PSAL Boys Basketball Champions” Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL), 18 September 2014, <www.psal.org> ; James J. Murphy, Franklin Rallies to Beat Erasmus For Cage Crown, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 24 March 1946: 25; Niagara University Staff “NU Great Emilio “Zeke” Sinicola passes away,” Niagara News Service, 8 June 2011; Vincent M. Mallozzi, “Zeke Sinicola, 82, Basketball All-American, is dead,” New York Times, 18 June 2011.

of the next 14 championship titles shifting the edge of power from the Bronx-Manhattan schools. Lastly, the migration of blacks and Puerto Ricans to New York City was a factor in whites migrating from the city and altering the racial demographic of many neighborhoods and their high schools. The White population would continuously decline in every decade in each of the five boroughs until 2010.³⁵⁷

The Franklin Championship team of 1945-46 much like DeWitt Clinton and CCNY represented a vision of interracial cooperation through basketball; though Franklin was operating under difficult and tense circumstances; even as the culture surrounding the school became fractured and less-hospitable for Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Over the years, Franklin continued to field racially integrated teams with much success but as the demographics of the neighborhood shifted, subsequently, so did the racial makeup of the team. The immediate area around the school was Italian American; however, beyond third avenue to the east (three city blocks), it was largely Puerto Rican and Black to northwest. Italian gangs had significant influence in the immediate area around the school frequently attacking blacks and Puerto Ricans. There was one incident where an Italian man was arrested trying to enter the home of black boy so that he could “cut off his head and place it on a pole to warn Niggers to stay away from our section.” Even Principal Covello felt powerless when it came to protecting his students for afterschool social activities. He discouraged black and Puerto Rican students from attending a canteen (social event) out of fear for their safety against the “hoodlums of Little Italy.”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ During the thirty-six year span Manhattan schools would win only 2 championships both by Commerce in 1950 and 1956.

³⁵⁸ “Warns Negroes to avoid Little Italy at Nights,” New York Amsterdam News, 6 Oct 1945: 1.

The ethno-cultural conflict contributed to the disproportionately low number of Puerto Ricans in the school. Dan Wakefield, author of *Island of the City*, noted that Italians maintained the high school as their turf, even though the surrounding neighborhoods were increasingly becoming Puerto Rican. Even as Italians migrated out of east Harlem, Franklin maintained its reputation as an ‘Italian school’ barring the enrollment of Puerto Ricans. One young man who lived in the immediate vicinity of Franklin and talented enough to earn a scholarship from a Midwestern college, attended Samuel Gompers High School several miles away in the Bronx. When asked why he didn’t attend Franklin he quickly replied “Because I’m Spanish.” Unfortunately, his narrative reflected the plight of countless numbers of Boricuas.³⁵⁹

Despite the external community conflict the basketball teams treaded forward in reaching the PSAL championship game twice in 1950 and 1954 (losing on both occasions) but never reached duplicated the success and dominance they once displayed. There was a constant cloud over the team as the schools’ academic performance and attendance declined. The Basketball program that was once dominant declined (which ironically coincided with the resurrection of DeWitt Clinton’s basketball program which suffered a talent drain in the 1950s). Covello’s vision of a center of community education at Benjamin Franklin High School was realized for only a short period of time. The interracial cooperation demonstrated in the school, through its educational programs, student organizations, and varsity athletic programs was ultimately undermined by

³⁵⁹ Johaneck 209; Dan Wakefield, *Island in the City: the World of Spanish Harlem* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1959) 181; Boricuas is Spanish for Puerto Rican.

shifting racial and ethnic demographics and a contingent of individuals reluctant to adjust.³⁶⁰

Nevertheless, despite these challenges Bill Spiegel, a coach who served as a mentor to many of his players would be instrumental in preparing them to compete at the next level athletic competition. Some of the most talented would play in college, including the academically-rigorous one situated on the hill overlooking Harlem below.

JAMES MADISON HIGH SCHOOL – A PREP FOR THE FAST TIME

In 1939, James Madison became only the third high school from Brooklyn and the first since Boys' high in 1917 to capture the PSAL basketball Championship. Madison duplicated their 1939 accomplishment by winning the title again in 1943. But unlike Clinton or Franklin, Madison was very different in many ways. First, it was a school meant to serve not one community but an entire region of south Brooklyn but ultimately becoming a neighborhood school; secondly, the student body based on the residential configuration of the neighborhood was middle and upper-working class (most lived in single-family dwellings instead of crowded tenements); thirdly the school served a co-educational student body and finally, the school was overwhelmingly homogenous and white.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Al Harvin, "First Title Since '46 is Last for Franklin," New York Times, 14 March 1982: S10; Al Harvin "Franklin Captures 'A' Title," New York Times, 29 March 1982: C9; Franklin would win its final PSAL Basketball Championship in 1982, then win its final game to claim the New York State Class A federation championship title with a 56-55 victory over Spring Valley High School, as the Board of Education decided to shutter the school doors in June.

³⁶¹ Franklin K. Lane High School won the PSAL Basketball title in 1930 but was considered a Queens school competing in a division against Brooklyn schools.

Despite this shortcoming, the experience of basketball players at Madison rivaled their peers at Clinton in the context of academic preparation for college. Madison was on an academic comprehensive high school with resources that adequately prepared its students for higher education. Though racially homogenous, the style of basketball exercised by their championship teams was reflective of the city style and certainly fit into the CCNY narrative. Two players on that CCNY championship team were reserves but we can assume during practice sessions were able to push the starting team to execute the game plan objectives with more precision. The diversity that Madison did not have through physical bodies was exercised through other areas where blackness was apparent through forms of music such as jazz and bebop. This certainly could have aided players for the racially integrated teams at CCNY.

MUSIC TAKING MADISON INTO CUSTODY

The phenomenon of bebop music was taking the country and youth culture by storm. The reaction to Bebop culture its fan and consumer base gave the impression the world as we know it was going to destruct. As described earlier, many of the consumers were characterized or stereotyped in a certain vein that was largely racialized and primitive. In essence, the chords of the music were more rhythmic and less-impulsive like its swing counterpart. The rhythm was a cadence filtered through a black aesthetic that was perceived as primitive, sexual, and ran counter to the narrative of civility that was transforming the white patrons of the music who were by in-large becoming part of the unruly bodies that was antithetical to proper etiquette and edification. As Thomas Owens notes Bebop “was primarily rhythmic; bebop rhythm sections produced a more complex,

multilayered texture than their swing-era counterparts.” This includes a “more varied rhythmic role of pianists.”³⁶² In essence Bebop was black and black music in its unaltered form was bad especially when it transgressed the real and the imagined borders of segregation. Unfortunately, this perception would ultimately plague Rock-N-Roll and serve as a wall of resistance for a number of years.

Nevertheless, Jazz and Bebop was becoming increasingly popular with city teens, though the tensions between fans of the two genres were quite evident. Some schools responded to the popularity of both genres of music by adding Jazz (which was referred to as popular music) to their music appreciation courses. The proliferation of this culture around the music aimed at teens was evident when magazines such as *Band Leaders*, regularly placed advertisements in the school paper in an effort to increase subscriptions and consumers. Students at some schools like James Madison went a step further with their infatuation and started Jazz appreciation clubs. Fort Hamilton High school whose racial and social-economic demographic mirrors Madison, raised their level of appreciation for popular music even further by adding a Jazz vs. Bebop club which suggested these musical narratives, identities, and compositions ran counter to one another and needed to be addressed and embraced separately. This heightened level of appreciation provided the foundation for a teen youth culture to whose music originated in a black aesthetic.³⁶³

³⁶³ “Jazz comes to Madison,” Madison Highway (James Madison High School), 21 December 1943: 2; Bandleaders Advertisement, Madison Highway, 7 December 1945.

Music is important part of youth culture and Jazz was the preferred genre for many teens. The formation of a Jazz club was not only a reflection of their appreciation but also an attempt to have the music recognized by the establishment and integrated into the music appreciation curriculum. At the same time Bebop, a genre germane to New York City was also gaining popularity and as described earlier a source of tension between the traditional and the Avant-garde. At a culturally homogeneous school, Jazz and Bebop provided the integration of a broader American culture that was absent from the institution. In *Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball and Black Culture*, Caponi-Tabery juxtaposes the improvisation and the expressive element of jazz (notably swing) between the style of basketball played by blacks in the 1930s and 1940s. In many respects both Bebop and Jazz integrated basketball at Madison High school. If the players favored Jazz as the preferred music genre then it prepared them for integration at the City College of New York and conspired in the smooth transition that harmonized their ability to win the national championship. With Jazz and bebop as the music preference for the black, white, and Jewish players at CCNY, the transition to the up-tempo, free-flowing, expressive style that Coach Holman did not embrace at first was more fluid. This was evident when the seven freshmen players from Clinton, Erasmus Hall, Franklin, Taft and Madison high schools won the national championship in their first year of eligibility as sophomores. Despite its racially homogenous culture, Madison had other unique and distinctive ways of preparing its players for the transition to CCNY.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ Gena Caponi Tabery, *Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball & Black Culture in 1930's America* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008) 8.

YOUNG LADIES IN LEADERSHIP

The youth culture at Madison High school was different from its contemporaries highlighted in this analysis for the simple fact that it was co-ed but also it fostered organically a culture of gender equality. In 1936, a decade into the school's existence, history was unveiled when Helen Thayer, became the first female elected class President (over two male candidates). Underscoring the historical moment was the naming of Eva Bialeck as Vice-President and Louise Rishin as secretary creating the first all-female executive leadership in the history of the General Organization and possibly the first time ever in a New York City co-educational public high school. The historical significance was noted in the Kings County* periodical *the Brooklyn Eagle* with the headline "Madison High Co-eds upset Tradition by pushing All-feminine school Ticket,"³⁶⁵ The election of these women demonstrated that in some segments of the country, female candidates were viewed like their male counterparts when it came to political leadership. Perhaps they were inspired to run for office by Ruth Baker Pratt, an icon for Government reform, in New York City politics. In 1925, (the year Madison was founded) she was the first woman to serve as a member of the board of aldermen. In 1931, she became the first woman from New York State elected to the House of Representatives.³⁶⁶

The progressive steps toward gender equality continued when the female physical-education instructors started an intramural sports program for girls that featured Basketball and Volleyball. Baseball, tennis, and handball would later follow in the spring.

³⁶⁵ "Madison High Co-eds upset Tradition by pushing All-feminine school Ticket," Brooklyn Eagle 1 March 1936.

³⁶⁶ "Ruth Sears Baker Pratt," U.S. House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives, 14 December 2014, <<http://history.house.gov/>>; *Kings is the official State recognized name of what is known colloquy as Brooklyn which is recognized as a county in the City of New York.

A group called the “Honor Girls,” was the student club that seemed to spearhead this initiative. The requirement to join the club enveloped a highbrow-informed attitude and the spirit of the school’s academically rigorous attitude when it noted the organization was open to “girls who can demonstrate athletic ability as well as scholarship and character.”³⁶⁷

James Madison High School continued to establish a tradition of accomplished co-eds. Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg graduated in 1950, and the school’s law program dedicated a courtroom in her honor. Judith Susan Blum, known professionally as Judge “Judy” who earned her Juris Doctorate from New York Law School graduated from Madison in 1960 and both are featured on the Wall of Distinction. Judith Stein, whom earned a Ph.D. from Yale and is a distinguished Professor of History at CCNY also graduated that same year.³⁶⁸

THE FIVE W’S ABOUT MADISON

James Madison High School was established in 1925 in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn. The actual neighborhood where the school is situated, is called Madison, which was named after the High School. The school was built to meet the demands of a growing community. The area was still largely underdeveloped but was increasingly becoming more urbanized and accessible due in part to the construction of the rail line extending to Coney Island by Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company which made

³⁶⁷ “Girls Gym Department Develops Physical Fitness,” and “Teachers Express Interest in Students’ Athletic Prowess,” Madison Highway, 21 December 1948: 4; Intramural Sports Program Begins.

³⁶⁸ Ruth Bader Ginsberg Bio, U.S. Supreme Court Media, OYEZ, IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, 14 December 2014 <<http://www.oyez.org/>>; “Wall of Distinction,” James Madison Alumni Association at James Madison high school, <<http://www.jamesmadisonalumni.org/>>; “Judith Stein,” The CUNY Graduate Center <<http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Doctoral-Programs/History/Faculty-Bios/Judith-Stein>>.

Southeast Brooklyn more accessible for commuting to downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan. The rail line which travels down East 16th Street is a few blocks west of Ocean Avenue and to the east of Coney Island Avenue also served as a municipal gateway to other developing communities such as Midwood, Sheepshead Bay, Brighton Beach, and ultimately Coney Island. As these neighborhoods grew more populated so did the need for educational institutions. When Madison opened, enrollment overwhelmed the capacity to such an extent that in December 1925 less than four months of its opening, the Board of Superintendents commandeered twenty classrooms in the local public school to accommodate the overflow of students.³⁶⁹

Unlike DeWitt Clinton in the Bronx, and Benjamin Franklin in Manhattan, Madison high school served a different racial, social and economic demographic. Most of the students resided in designated communities that Madison intended to serve. Most of those communities were racially homogenous (predominantly Caucasian). Based on census tracts a significant number resided in homes as opposed to apartment and tenement dwellings. John Manbeck author of *The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn* writes “Madison is considered by some to be a suburb within Brooklyn...a highly desirable place to live.” Manbeck suggests Madison is not the normal (i.e. meeting the expectations) neighborhood for Brooklyn much less New York City. Madison high school was a reflection of that and for all intents and purposes was a neighborhood school though academically - an exceptional one. Karl Bernstein, a former junior high school

³⁶⁹ “Board Gives Annexes to Several Schools,” *New York Times*, 10 December 1925: 33; Spacious, Gracious and Close to School by Joyce Cohen, *New York Times*, 30 September 2001; Kenneth T. Jackson and John B. Manbeck, *Neighborhoods of Brooklyn, second ed.* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998).

principal who attended Madison in the late 1940s noted, “I lied about my address to go to James Madison High School.” His simple explanation underscored the desirability of the school and the lengths many kids and their parents would go to ensure their enrollment. “The kids were mostly children of doctors, teachers, and lawyers.” In many respects Madison High School was reflective of a well-endowed suburban school before suburbia existed and had a name.³⁷⁰

Because Madison was also co-educational, the culture of the school was certainly different from Clinton and Franklin. The student body was more than likely from affluent families and multiple generation immigrants. In other words, unlike Franklin whose students were largely immigrants or first-generation born. As Bernstein’s comments suggest Madison students were more likely multi-generation native-born students from privileged families. This was reflected in marketing of goods and services to the student body through the *Madison Highway* school paper. Numerous advertisements sell students opportunities to further their education, either through for-profit schools offering evening courses or trade schools. Like its Clinton counterpart, it was expected that students would further their education in some capacity. Countless ads featured service offered for private tutoring in math and science.

There were also numerous ads in the spirit of vocational training that were directly tied to the latest advancements in technology. In 1948, an advertisement from the Pierce School of Radio and Television targeted young men who were interested in careers in this recently established industry that would later transform intercollegiate and

³⁷⁰ Myrna Frommer and Harvey Frommer, *It Happened in Brooklyn: An Oral history of growing up in the borough in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s*, (New York, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993)180.

professional sports. But it also demonstrates the long-term vision many in the industry had in regards to this new invention.³⁷¹

In spite of the ads for business and trade schools, there was an initiative for pursuing higher education as a means to an end. This position is reinforced in the motto of the school derived from a quote by James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, “Education is the true foundation of civil liberty.” A series of editorials in the 1928 yearbook reminded students the value of an education. Gloria Kaiser wrote “In this age of machines manual labor is of secondary importance. Educated Men and Women are needed to meet the growing demand for supervision and efficient leadership. Competition in the matter of learning has grown so keen that even high school graduates find themselves unwanted in the business world. Education today, is necessary for self-support.” Like their DeWitt Clinton counterpart education and constant pursuit of it was encouraged among the leaders in these respective high schools.³⁷²

The social-economic privilege afforded to some students (or lack thereof) was documented through their writings. In 1947, Charles Neuhauser a junior wrote an essay about the plethora of Television sets in homes during a walk to school from Flatbush on Bedford Avenue – the street where Madison is located. He noted, “There are fifty-four television sets in the six blocks between Avenue I and Kings Highway on Bedford Avenue. I counted them. I saw four aerials in a row when I was walking along Bedford Avenue and I thought: how many sets are there on this block?...But I might have missed a

³⁷¹ “Television Offers New Opportunities,” Madison Highway, 24 May 1948: 3.

³⁷² James Madison High School entrance; The Log, 1928 (Brooklyn, New York: James Madison High School, 1928), 7.

few.” It’s important to note that less than one percent of all households in America owned a Television set – a number that would be unconvincing for Mr. Neuhauser who found himself immersed in a culture of privilege but also reflective of the social-economic status of his peers.³⁷³

Addressing the TV programming schedule from a newspaper, Neuhauser primarily identifies sporting events which in many respects reflect his own interests and those of his peers. He noted the inequities and privileges of owning a set to which he might have been on the periphery of that circle, he writes “groups of kids have been gathering outside the taverns in St. Louis, looking through the window at the television set, so much that the Y.M.C.A. had to install a television set in the Y.M.C.A. building” Neuhauser’s comments suggests that this new technological phenomenon working through the consciousness of our society was disrupting and in some cases dictating our lives and narratives – particularly those of adolescents. He also suggests the YMCA felt compelled in some capacity to adjust to emerging amusements to attract groups of kids from hanging around taverns and off the street. Secondly, television became a site where sports heroes could be seen as opposed to just heard on the radio. Millions of kids who would listen to Joe DiMaggio hit home runs over the radio could now actually see this accomplishment and that swing of the bat that provided literally a window to a whole new world of adolescent memories. Though not explicitly articulated, I suspect that

³⁷³ Charles Neuhauser, “Television,” The Madisonian, Volume 14. No. 1, (Spring 1948): 50; Tino Balio, The American Film Industry (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) 401.

Neuhauser was envious that so many people owned Television sets so they could watch the world in the comfort of their living rooms.³⁷⁴

The point of this narration is to demonstrate how Television was impacting the lives of young people during this fertile time period in the development of postmodern urban contemporary youth culture. Television was bringing groups of kids together to engage in this astonishing new technology that would forever impact socialization patterns in our society.

Finally, his essay underscores the social-economic culture of the neighborhood and the students attending James Madison high school. These were largely the sons of daughters of privilege and in some cases in excess of privilege. The one thing that Madison high did provide equally to its students was access to a privileged education. In 1949, Charles Neuhauser was offered a scholarship to Harvard designated for freshmen that were “high academic and personal promise.”³⁷⁵

HOMOGENOUS BUT DIVERSE

Madison High school during the post-war period was racially homogenous. An analysis of senior class photographs in the school yearbooks from 1943 to 1948 counted a total of 3 black students. In what seemed to fall beyond the parameters of news for a student paper, the *Madison Highway* did report news on the accomplishments and information pertaining to the interests of Negroes such as the sale of a silver commemorative half-dollar coin of Booker T. Washington in which the proceeds would be used to establish industrial training schools and interfaith Chapel in Franklin County,

³⁷⁴ Neuhauser 50; Balio 401.

³⁷⁵ “Author Unknown” Scholarship Lists Released, [the Harvard Crimson](#), 21 June 1949.

Virginia. In support of this cause, the student general organization had the coins available at their disposal for anyone who wanted to purchase them. This is not the first time Madison students have donated to charitable causes related to improving the education of Negro pupils. In 1947, the student body made a donation to the library endowment fund of the Piney Woods School in Mississippi. These charitable efforts for Negro education demonstrate that in many respects, the student body, viewed these underprivileged students like themselves and did not want to deny them access to education and secondly, they understood the value of education and were willing to solicit overtures to financially support causes that improved the resources for underserved American Children in their pursuit of education.³⁷⁶

In 1947, Madison played host to group of Negro performers at a showcase; one of the two featured actors included Gordon Heath, a CCNY graduate, who received critical praise for his performance in the 1945 play “Deep Are the Roots;” Directed by Elia Kazan, Mr. Heath portrayed a young black lieutenant whom returns from World War II to discover that attitudes toward race had not changed in the South and he cannot marry the white woman whom he loves. The other actor, Earl Jones, a former Mississippi sharecropper, a onetime sparring partner to prizefighting champion Joe Louis and father to famed actor James Earl Jones, recently performed in the Broadway theatrical productions of *Strange Fruit*, *The Hasty Heart* and the Oscar Micheaux film *Lying Lips* was also on hand with Heath to sing spirituals and perform visual interpretations of poetry by Langston Hughes. The performances delighted the crowd to which they enthusiastically applauded. It appears with all the concerts and performances, what

³⁷⁶ “New Coin to Honor Negro Educator,” Madison Highway, 8 March 1948: 4

Madison High School did not have in physical bodies to comprise diversity, tried to fill that void by diversifying and exposing its students to other narratives of American culture through the arts.³⁷⁷

Of the three high schools Madison was the most homogenous however administration did try and expose their students to elements of American culture and subsequently black culture in order to provide their students to the reality of the world that was around them even if then did not have direct contact with it.

A CHAMPIONSHIP STYLE EMERGES

Everything described to this juncture about James Madison High School might challenge the perception of its ability to churn out a two-time City championship Basketball team. James Madison was a neighborhood school drawing from a limited pool of kids, from a limited demographic with supposedly limited talent. How exactly did this happen? And how were they able to produce players talented enough to contribute to a national championship team at CCNY? The answer would involve a variety of factors but a short list should start with coaching.

Harry “Jammy” Moskowitz, the coach at James Madison High School, in 1939 was the only Basketball coach the school had ever known. Moskowitz, received the moniker ‘Jammy’ in high school because he had a reputation of eating Jam sandwiches before a game to settle his stomach, headed the program in the first season of its existence in 1925. Born and raised in Brownsville, to Russian immigrant-Jewish parents,

³⁷⁷ Broadway Stars Entertain Group, Madison highway, 14 March 1947: 1; “Gordon Heath, 72; Co-Starred in Play 'Deep are the Roots',” New York Times, 31 August 1991; Internet Movie Database (Imdb.com) Robert Earl Jones, 15 October 2014 <www.imdb.com>; “Robert Earl Jones, 96, Broadway Actor, Dies,” New York Times, 19 September 2006.

he attended Commercial High School, the Savage School of Physical Education and later New York University – literally shadowing the same scholastic narrative as Nat Holman.³⁷⁸

Moskowitz was a multi-sport athlete who competed in basketball, baseball, and football. He played basketball professionally with the New York Hookahs in the American Basketball League competing against some great players like Holman and Joe Lapchick (who would later be more influential on the sport as coaches). Moskowitz remained coach at Madison for 31 seasons coaching some great players including NBA five-time All-star Rudy LaRusso who played the bulk of his ten-year career for the Minneapolis/Los Angeles Lakers and his college ball at Dartmouth.³⁷⁹

Despite coaching at a neighborhood school, Moskowitz was able to churn out some pretty good basketball players. The team which he is probably most known for was the “wonder five,” (Larry Baxter, Fuzzy Levane, Harry and Lenny Rader, and Stanley Waxman) who won thirty-seven consecutive games from 1938 to 1940 and were crowned PSAL Champions in 1939. During that championship season of 1938-39, Madison averaged 41 points per game (the highest in the city); defeated Boys’ High by 30-points to win the Brooklyn title; dispatched Benjamin Franklin by 17-points in PSAL semi-finals before defeating Jamaica 44-32 in the title game. The New York State coaches association acknowledged that team was one of best ever in the State’s history.

³⁷⁸ Bernard Postal, Jesse Silver and Roy Silver, *Encyclopedia of Jews in Sports* (New York, New York: Bloch Publishing, 1965)104; Joel Stone, “Mr. Moskowitz, Madison Basketball Coach, Appraises Athletic Career,” *Madison Highway*, 28 March 1947: 3; Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 28.

³⁷⁹ Postal 104; “Mad About Madison,” Loriann Campbell, *Pompano Beach Sun-Sentinel*, 18 December 1988.

Moskowitz would win 541-games over the course of four-decades of coaching basketball, 475 of those victories occurred at Madison.³⁸⁰

The 1938-39 team was exceptional because Moskowitz changed his offensive philosophy from a defensive-oriented, pedestrian-like offense, of holding the ball that was the preference of coaches in the east versus the running style of the west. However before the start of the season, Moskowitz decided to play an open free-flowing shooting style that is described in a contemporary context as street ball but in a structured format (i.e. scholastic setting) it was known as “Western style,” where players would run and heave as many open-look shots as they could. This style was certainly frowned upon by the cognoscenti of basketball which was situated on the East Coast. Stanford and the University of Minnesota both defeated a talented Long Island University basketball team that would finish the 1938-39 season at 23-5 by 15-and-14 points respectively by employing the western style. The strategy for Clair Bee at LIU was to play them at their game and beat them sheer on talent. After the twice-failed drubbing in Madison Square Garden, a debate ensued whether east coast schools should adopt the style. As George Coleman of *Daily Eagle* noted the “Eastern style is just a question of brawn against brains and the sooner the New Yorkers return to the ‘smart’ game the better for themselves.” Coaches Nat Holman and Kansas University coaching legend Phog Allen would also express their thoughts and favor the style that held firm to geographical boundaries.³⁸¹

³⁸⁰ John Ross, “Madison Five Rates As School All-Timer,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 March 1939: 17; *New York State Basketball Hall of Fame*, <<http://www.nybasketballhalloffame.com>>

³⁸¹ John Ross, “Free-Shooting Game is Easy for Tall Team,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 3 January 1940: 14; George E. Coleman, “Western Style Basketball Fits West Players,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 11 January 1938: 12.

In 1940, University of Colorado won the NIT championship and the University of Wyoming behind Kenny Sailors and his uncanny style of shooting that came to be called and known as the “Jump Shot” were NCAA champions in 1943. So the style did have some success at the collegiate level. In 1938, after producing successful teams that would fizzle out against more talented teams during the PSAL playoffs. Moskowitz moved away from the established and preferred style to a more up-tempo if not explicit western-style of play. In preparation for implementing this new style, Moskowitz, moved away from formal organized workouts, taught his players some of these one-handed, jump shots and allowed them to make modifications in practice to fit their personal preference.³⁸²

His method, though questionable by his coaching peers, did break Madison’s playoff drought resulting in two PSAL championships but equally important it allowed players to develop their own basketball identity in the context of the game which was moving at a more rapid pace. By the time Larry ‘Licky’ Meyer and Arnold ‘Arnie’ Smith arrived at Madison in the mid-1940s the western style was starting to catch on and become favorable with some coaches, including Bill Spiegel at Benjamin Franklin and perhaps Bobby Sand, the assistant coach at CCNY.

This “Western” game at Madison arguably prepared Meyer and Smith, two key reserves on the 1949-50 CCNY team for the style that would result in national championship. These two players were expected to be ready at a moments’ notice and provide instant offense. In 1947, his senior year, Meyer was tied for fifth place in scoring

³⁸²John Christgau, The origins of the jump shot: eight men who shook the world of basketball (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 7.

with his teammate Milton Woolman. However, Meyer was named as first-team All-Brooklyn perhaps due to his diminutive height (5'8") but stout defense. Conversely Smith, who stood at 6'1" was described as a pure scorer with lightning speed. He once scored 22 points in a critical victory over Lafayette during his senior season in a divisional race to make the playoffs. Although his team was ultimately disqualified from post-season contention, he provided a glimpse of his potential. In his final interscholastic game, he tallied 18 points in a 62 -53 victory over Manual high further demonstrating his scoring prowess.³⁸³

For Meyer and Smith (both of whom were white – though Meyer might have been Jewish) playing basketball and their high school experience might have greatly differed than some of their peers at CCNY. These two young men attended a racially homogenous high school situated in an upwardly mobile middle-class neighborhood that reflected at the very least a portion of the student body. Meyer and Smith were above-average students that lived in close proximity to the school but were the beneficiaries of good school with a great coach.

The “western” style also gave Brooklyn a sense of identity and a space in the pantheon of high school basketball. The irony is that it was a school whose geographic position is closer to a buoy in the Atlantic Ocean than to downtown Brooklyn. Of all the schools it was the unlikeliest of champions. Boys’ high the dominant Brooklyn team, who won countless Brooklyn titles from 1930s and early 1940s would not win another

³⁸³ “PSAL Division 2 Scoring laurels Taken by Becker,” Brooklyn Eagle, 3, March 1947; James J. Murphy, “All-Boro Five dominated by division two,” Brooklyn Eagle, 5 April 1947; James J. Murphy, Madison gains 4th place tie by clouting Lafayette five, Brooklyn Eagle, 9 January 1948; James J. Murphy “Lincoln, Erasmus Fight for Crown,” Brooklyn Eagle, 24 February 1948.

city title until 1952. For the next twenty years thereafter Boys' high of Bedford-Stuyvesant would continue their dominance and carve their legacy as the premiere public high school basketball program but during the 1940s it was James Madison and their open-shooting style winning titles. The Boys' would have to wait.³⁸⁴

For Meyer and Smith, basketball and conversely the PSAL provided them with an opportunity to travel outside the neighborhood to different communities and interact with players from other racial backgrounds. This would prove to be integral to their indoctrination to not only life at the College, but to the CCNY team that essentially featured some exceptionally-talented players that could have easily resembled a New York City secondary-schooling All-Star team. The basketball experience and the mobility is important because it allowed them to travel out of neighborhood. They were neighborhood kids, who went to the neighborhood school. Their commute was at best a 5-minute Bus ride while interacting with kids who were also of similar means and backgrounds. In these neighborhoods and communities basketball matured on the playgrounds becomes an important element to fully understand how the culture of New York City with everything else going on functioned on a micro level during this time period.

³⁸⁴ [PSAL Champions Basketball Website](http://wilburcoach0.tripod.com/psalchamps.html), 12 February 2014
<<http://wilburcoach0.tripod.com/psalchamps.html>>

CHAPTER 7

HOOPS, HARLEM, AND THE INTEGRATION EXPERIMENT

Playgrounds are a crucial element in the social, intellectual, and language development of children. It is also where they develop physically through exercise and mature a positive mental health. Supervised and organized recreation accomplishes the objectives Dr. James Naismith envisioned when he invented the game of basketball. Although his conceptualization of basketball was an indoor activity played in gymnasiums during the cold winter months the popularity of the game made it necessary to accommodate the interests throughout the entire year.

It is hard to overstate the importance of New York City playgrounds for the development of basketball in twentieth century. For the young men at CCNY the playground was one their earliest introductions to the game. By the time they were adolescents in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the city of New York had numerous fully-constructed basketball courts in playgrounds and parks. It was in these spaces where many of them developed their skills and learned to play the up-tempo kinetic grandstanding style that has become synonymous with New York City hoops.

An important aspect in the development of the city style can be attributed to a surplus of players in many communities and not enough courts to accommodate them. Players were forced to accelerate the tempo of the game in order to maximize the time so that others could compete within the confines of the limited daylight or before personal

and park curfews were enforced. Nowhere were congested spaces more apparent than in Harlem and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. This narrative is important because it traces the development of municipally supported outdoor playgrounds and the basketball facilities that have accompanied them. One of the most renowned playgrounds in the United States was Rucker Park, located in Harlem.³⁸⁵

The development of municipal supported parks and playgrounds and their “gymnasia apparatus” (which also included basketball in its formative years) was not without struggle. City gatekeepers had to decide whether to provide a full-length basketball court that would only occupy a privileged few or provide gymnasia apparatus that could entertain considerably more adolescents (boys and girls) at a time. Tracking these origins is extremely important at this juncture because according to recent study by the Entertainment Sports Programming Network (ESPN) organic organized playground basketball is approaching extinction. Playgrounds are still popular for recreational use but increasingly more serious players are avoiding these asphalt surfaces because of safety and injury concerns as well as the commercialization of the sport at every level of competition. An example of this growing commercialization and declining value of the organic outdoor experience is reflected in Rucker Park. In 2014, this municipal-owned venue, with the support of corporate sponsors, installed a portable NBA-grade hardwood court adorned with street art on top of the park’s asphalt surface. This step, meant to

³⁸⁵ Floyd Layne (Author phone interview). 2 February 2013.

appease and attract the most talented players, underscores the diminishing value of the organic outdoor municipal venue.³⁸⁶

Basketball courts, a by-product of playgrounds, were the forerunner of interracial cooperation and the precursor to the success of the 1949-50 CCNY team. This chapter will demonstrate that basketball played in the city's playgrounds was an urban experience shared by young people of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Together, they forged a style of that would later impact the college game and took the first steps toward interracial cooperation.

THE BASKETBALL COURT MOVEMENT

From the outset basketball drew the attention of many kids who played as often as possible and several days a week. *The Brooklyn Eagle* reported “The most popular game with large boys and girls is basketball, and although they play against each other several times a week there have never been any evidences of any sentiment.” The fact that basketball (though a contact sport) relies on a universal, gender neutral, attainable skill such as the ability to dribble and to shoot the ball over other players accounts for its popularity and acceptance by both boys and girls.³⁸⁷

Paving the way for the establishment of basketball courts and playgrounds in New York City was a law passed on April 17, 1895, by the New York State legislature.

³⁸⁶ Myron Medcalf, “Playground basketball is Dying,” *ESPN*, 23 July 2014, 24 July 2014 < http://espn.go.com/espn/feature/story/_/id/11216972/playground-basketball-dying>; Trevor Kapp, Famed Rucker Park Returns with Significant Changes, *DNAinfo*, New York, 26 June 2013, 1 February 2016 < <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20130626/central-harlem/famed-rucker-park-tournament-returns-with-significant-changes>>.

³⁸⁷ “Vacation Playgrounds of Brooklyn schools are Popular,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 12 August 1900: 7.

Chapter 338, was a law designed to provide open-air playgrounds for children in New York City by connecting them directly to the construction of public schools. The law explicitly states, “Hereafter no school house shall be constructed in the City of New York without an open–air playground attached to or used in connection with the same.” This law is important because most of the basketball courts in the city were constructed in these spaces.³⁸⁸

School playgrounds were equipped with basketball courts at some point between 1896 and 1900, aside from this scenario the earliest record of a public outdoor basketball facility in what is now the City of New York was in 1897 when the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) requested a permit from the Parks Association and filed an application to have a basketball facility constructed in Prospect Park. The Parks department quickly complied with their request and cleared the necessary space immediately. The grand opening of the basketball court was even publicized in the press. On Saturday, April 24, 1897, before a large gathering, the YMCA Basketball team entertained an intrigued and engaged crowd of six-thousand with a practice and a series of drills that demonstrated their skills. However, their application to park authorities suggests there were no outdoor courts available to the public in this park or in its vicinity making their endeavors noteworthy in the construction of outdoor facilities.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Laws of the State of New York, 118th Session Vol II – Part I, (Albany, New York: the State of New York), 1895: 484.

³⁸⁹ “For Basket Ball Players,” Brooklyn Daily Eagle 23 April 23, 1897: 5; Until the 1914 Brooklyn commissioners’ report, I have not located any mention of funds specifically set aside for maintaining the facilities or for constructing new ones.

BUILDING PLAYGROUNDS IN HARLEM

The popularity of basketball was growing immensely around the country and nowhere was that reflected more than in New York City. In 1900, *the Brooklyn Eagle* reported how popular the games were with both boys and girls. In some cases, games were coed competitions. On the Lower East Side of Manhattan, basketball was especially popular and adolescent playground teams from the Seward Park neighborhood dominated. The Amateur Athletic Union was sponsoring championship games in New York City with regularity as early as 1901. Colleges were sponsoring teams even earlier. Bucknell and Yale Universities started competition as early as 1895. The University of Minnesota was the first to sponsor basketball (1896) in the Big Ten. Kansas started varsity competition in 1898, with the game's founder, James Naismith, serving as the inaugural coach.³⁹⁰

In New York City, Columbia was the first school to sponsor a varsity team in 1900, St. Francis College of Brooklyn in 1901; Fordham University in the Bronx followed a year later in 1902. CCNY inaugurated its basketball program in 1905, and St. John's in 1907. Long Island University in Brooklyn would wait until a year after the institution was founded in 1927 before they would commence competition.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ "Vacation Playgrounds of Brooklyn are Popular," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 12 August 1900; "Basketball Games in Flushing," *New York Times*, 6 February 1901; Bucknell University Athletic Department *Bucknell Men's Basketball 2015-16 Media Guide* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell Department of Athletics, 2015) 78; *Yale University Men's Basketball 2010-11 Media Guide* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale Athletic Department); *University of Kansas 2009-10 Men's Basketball Media Guide* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Department of Athletics) 128; *University of Minnesota 2015-16 Men's Basketball Media Guide*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Department of Athletics) 129.

³⁹¹ *Columbia University Men's Basketball 2010 Media Guide* (New York, New York: Columbia University Athletic Department) 100; *St. Francis College Men's Basketball 2011-12 Media Guide* (Brooklyn, New York: St. Francis College Department of Athletics) 44; *Fordham University Men's Basketball 2009-10 Media Guide* (The Bronx, New York: Fordham University Department of Athletics) 66; *St. John's University Men's Basketball 2010-11 Media Guide*, (Jamaica, New York: St. John's University Athletic Department)

Despite the popularity of basketball, not every child who wanted to play had access to a playground. In a 1914 report by the School Inquiry Committee entitled “What the City Should Do for Recreation,” outlined the financial challenges of not only providing a seat for every child in school much less establishing furnished playgrounds. The report explicitly states “It is impossible for the city to furnish separate playgrounds and equipment for the 700,000 children in the public schools leaving out of consideration all other persons who probably need proper recreation more than school children.” The report suggests that concessions need to be made for a city whose population had increased steadily over the last decade and is struggling to build its infrastructure and provide city services. In essence, playgrounds and their respective equipment was not high priority.³⁹²

The lack of funding continued for several years and in 1920, the City Recreation Committee of Community service petitioned the city to increase funds for maintenance and supplies. In some instances, there were playgrounds designated by the city bare of any equipment which were promptly ignored by those respective communities. In one such instance, a ‘playground’ on First Avenue and sixty-Seventh Street on the Upper East Side of Manhattan was virtually ignored by children (and presumably their parents) until swings were installed. Other areas of the city were less fortunate.³⁹³

One area vastly underserved of recreation space was Harlem. At the turn of the twentieth Century, Harlem was largely occupied by Irish, German, Italian, Dutch, and Jewish immigrants. During that era, Harlem was a study in contrast of class and social-

116; Long Island University Men’s Basketball 2007-08 Media Guide, (Brooklyn, New York: Long Island University Department of Athletics) 66.

³⁹² “Playgrounds for All Too Costly,” New York Times, 1 February 1914 5.

³⁹³ “Seeks more funds for playgrounds,” New York Times, 10 October 1920: 32.

economics. The area was home to extravagant mansions and modern apartment buildings to dilapidated shacks. The opening of the Interborough Rapid Transit subway in 1904 allowed easy access to Harlem with the rest of Manhattan which inspired speculators to raze the shacks occupied by Eastern European immigrants and construct several blocks of what was then overpriced row houses and tenements that failed to attract tenants. In the midst of national financial crisis, a black realtor, Phillip Payton, came up with the idea of renting apartments to Negroes. Over the next few years, as blacks moved to Harlem, it quickly transformed into the epicenter of the urban black cultural aesthetic.³⁹⁴

Despite the influx of residents, Harlem was vastly underserved when it came to recreational areas. There were few parks or playgrounds that children could patronize. By 1923, in the midst of what would be described as the Harlem Renaissance, the situation became grim and there were calls to local leaders to pressure city administrators to provide ‘breathing spaces’ much like other areas of the city. An article in the *Amsterdam news* posted the headline “Playgrounds Save Lives,” which underscored the large number of children in Harlem who utilized the streets as a makeshift playground which unfortunately resulted into a significant number of tragedies involving vehicles. The situation was so dire that various neighborhood and community organizations such as the

³⁹⁴ Gill, Jonathan, Harlem: The Four Hundred Year History From Dutch Village to Capital of Black America, (New York, New York; Grove Press) 171; Harlem is defined as the area designated from 110th street, north of Central park to one-hundred and 155th street with the East and Harlem River bordering its East and St. Nicholas avenue the marker to the west (south of 125th Street); “Real Estate Race War is started in Harlem,” New York Times, 17 December 1905; A Race Prejudice Mint for Profits in Realty, New York Times, 27 October 1906.

Harlem Federation of Recreational Activities was formed. The purpose of this organization was to pressure the city to create more parks and playgrounds.³⁹⁵

ROBERT MOSES (THE MASTER BUILDER OF RACIAL DETERMINATION)

In 1933, Fiorello LaGuardia, a reformer and member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York's 20th district was elected mayor of New York City. During his election campaign LaGuardia vowed to rid the city bureaucracy by unifying the transit system which operated under three separate entities, construct public housing developments, airports, reorganize the police force and vowed to address the disrepair and lack of city parks and playgrounds. One of his initial undertakings in addressing this issue was to create a commissioner position to supervise all of the city parks as opposed to each borough operating autonomously. The individual he appointed to this position was no other than Dr. Robert Moses.³⁹⁶

Moses, like his boss, served as a reformer when it came to his responsibilities. On January 18, 1934, when he assumed office, New York City had 119 playgrounds, when his term ended in 1960 there were 777. Even during the depression every park in the city was renovated in some capacity. Zoos, skating rinks, boathouses, bridle paths, tennis courts and golf courses were infused into city parks during his tenure. In his first eight

³⁹⁵ "Playgrounds Save Lives," New York Amsterdam News, 27 June 1923:12; "Harlem to Have Another Playfield," New York Amsterdam News, 11 July 1923: p. 7.

³⁹⁶ Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, New York Times, 11 February 1934.

months in office 23 playgrounds were opened and 18 basketball areas were constructed.³⁹⁷

Moses was a proponent of designing parks and playgrounds to satisfy the needs of how the respective community intended to utilize it. In one of his earliest interviews as commissioner he noted, “We must provide recreation for the poor,” conversely, Moses contended that “I am strong believer in offering different grades of facilities for different pocketbooks.” This is completely logical but conversely it also navigates into an area that essentializes the needs of a community based on its social-economic value to the city. By 1944, Moses had unprecedented power and control over how and where monies in regards to parks should be allocated. So he could easily exercise his ideology about serving communities based on their market value.³⁹⁸

Other questions arising from his statement: where is the information coming from that determines the needs of a community and how much of it is informed by its “pocketbook.” Does “different grades of facilities” mean lesser quality or the type of apparatus based on a scale of economic efficiency? In other words, will a community with a higher tax base be provided with sandboxes which inspire creativity, intellectualism, and higher maintenance be furnished in one community while another is furnished with a jungle gym that encourages a higher rate of mobility, physical exercise but less intellectual stimulation, and requires less maintenance? These questions bear legitimacy as to what kinds of apparatus are installed in certain neighborhoods and if

³⁹⁷ Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: New York, Knopf, 1974) 7; *Department of Parks Press Release*, New York, New York: New York City Parks Department, July 27, 1934, 2 February 2015; <<http://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/commissioners>>.

³⁹⁸ Caro 374.

these ideologies are informed by perceptions based on the racial, political, and social capital of a community.³⁹⁹

As the Commissioner of New York City Parks, Robert Moses provided the citizens of Harlem with large number of basketball courts due in part to its popularity while meeting budgetary constraints. However, Moses comments in regards to “different grades of facilities” also suggest the tax base and market value of Harlem would mirror the investment and respective budget in making these improvements.

With the demand for playgrounds and more facilities in Harlem increasing steadily, Moses and the city were forced to fill that demand on a grand scale. In 1944, nearly seven years after its initial proposal was approved by Mayor LaGuardia, the largest playground in Harlem to date covering six and one-half acres was opened. Located on Lenox Avenue between 143rd and 145th streets, the Colonel Charles Young playground was formally dedicated by Robert Moses. More than 2000 people were in attendance including Walter White, secretary of the NAACP and councilman Ben Davis. The recreational area featured four softball fields, a dedicated playground for children

³⁹⁹ Sandboxes are canvases for children in their cognitive, social, and creative development. This space is an area where toddlers and preschoolers can engage in cooperative and creative play spaces. In play therapy in which a child is demonstrating some behavioral difficulties, some child psychologists use carefully selected toys in a playroom which ideally include a sandbox in order for children to act out realistic life scenes and express a variety of emotions. In Harlem, and many other economically depressed communities, playgrounds were not equipped with sandboxes due in part to some of theories articulated by Robert Moses. As a result, many of these children are denied an important and safe space in their cognitive development. Instead, they are supplied with apparatus such as jungle gyms which is sufficient for mental stimulation but it revolves around physical play as opposed to creativity. For more information on the role of sandboxes see: Kaj Noschis, “Child Development Theory and Planning for Neighborhood Play,” *Children’s Environments*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1992:8; Dee C. Ray ed., *A Therapist’s Guide to Child Development: The Extraordinary Normal Years* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015) 39-40; Fergus P. Hughes, *Children, play, and development – 4th ed.* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2010) 102-103, 261-263.

and a comfort station. However, the most prominent feature were nine basketball courts. The recreational area was originally planned in 1937 and scheduled for construction in 1941 but was delayed because of the scarcity of labor and materials. Nine months before the scheduled opening, the city had still not acquired the property as it was still occupied by tenement buildings and garages. The delay demonstrates the complexity of acquiring any property particularly of this magnitude for public use. Even though the playground was sorely needed it was not centralized as it was located at the northeast area of Harlem. It was largely accessible to people who lived in the immediate vicinity. With the threat of gangs, some adolescents and teens might be reluctant to travel outside their neighborhood. The large numbers of basketball courts underscore the popularity of the game which ultimately became the training ground for many players to hone their skills that ultimately lead to athletic scholarships and a place on varsity rosters.⁴⁰⁰

Though softball fields were installed, however there were little open areas where other emerging athletic activities or free play could be developed. For the youth in Harlem, the message being sent by the municipal of New York was that we will provide spaces for a limited number of athletic endeavors. It was basketball or bust. Moses actions were fueled by economics and prejudice. The critics whom voiced their displeasure were distracted, along with the citizens of Harlem, by more important matters that seemed to be dividing and destroying the community such as job discrimination and juvenile delinquency. The basketball courts and subsequently organized leagues and tournaments were deterrents for mischief. So the lack of variety of recreation and

⁴⁰⁰ "Proposed Playgrounds for the Harlem Community," New York Amsterdam News, 11 Dec 1943:12A; "Playground opens for Harlem area," New York Amsterdam News, 23 September 1944: 1B.

activities may not have been high on their list of concerns. The benefits seemed to outweigh the cons and in retrospect the basketball courts did meet the demands for the majority of youth and contributed to the acceleration of its popularity and developing its pool of talent.⁴⁰¹

PATHWAYS FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPING TALENT

The City College of New York is situated on top of hill overlooking Harlem. Shepard Hall, a Neo-gothic structure constructed in 1907 is a stunning architectural masterpiece and the campus most prominent structure. The building resembles a castle and the steep hills directly leading to the campus serve as a metaphorical moat limiting access. Further complicating its relationship to the community below, the campus is not located in Harlem but instead situated in Hamilton Heights which is essentially the campus and the immediate vicinity heading north to 155th street. Due to its geographical position, CCNY is separated socially and psychologically from its Harlem neighbors below. Demarcated by St. Nicholas Park and the street that bears its name, the bridge linking the two communities is basketball. Harlem had some of the best basketball players and the City College of New York was the public institution that provided city residents tuition-free access to postsecondary education and an opportunity to improve their lives. However, admission to CCNY was probably out of reach for most Harlem residents due to its entrance requirements that required at least an 80 average in high school and passing its rigorous entrance examination.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Bromley 1934; Department of Parks Press Release, 1934.

⁴⁰² Aaron Seward, "In Detail Shepard Hall" The Architect's Newspaper, 27 March 2016, <<http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=4970#.Vvoe5UejBwY>>; "History of Open Admissions and

In Harlem, the popularity of basketball was intense despite limited playground space for competition. By the 1930s teams in the city would travel throughout the metropolitan area to compete in tournaments organized in Harlem. In 1931, twenty teams competed in a Harlem summer basketball tournament for adolescents that drew more than 1200 fans. Recreation centers such as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Abyssinia Baptist Church fielded teams along with several area public schools. One of the teams attempting to stake its claim for a shot at the championship game was Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) of the Bronx. This team, comprised of Jews, raised eyebrows when it defeated a predominantly black team from Brooklyn 15-8. Even more important than the score was the fact that an all-white team was willing to travel to Harlem in the spirit of sportsmanship and competition. Efforts like this further endeared blacks to basketball and suggested that basketball was an arbiter and the sport of racial equality. It was integration on the court that ultimately prepared these young men for integrated interscholastic level competition in High School and ultimately in college with CCNY standing in the forefront. Though the PSAL did not organize this tournament it was definitely in their spirit of brotherhood and sportsmanship with teams representing various public schools in competition and utilizing facilities that were under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.⁴⁰³

CCNY was able to attract talented student-athletes from Harlem but few were as talented as Edward Warner. His narrative is especially important to highlight because Warner was the first African American awarded the Most Valuable Player of the National

remedial education at the City University of New York," The Mayor's Advisory Task Force on the City University of New York (1999) 14, 27 March 2016. <<http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/rwg/cuny/>>.

⁴⁰³ "Harlem Playground Begins Summer Tourney before 1200 Rabid Fans," New York Amsterdam News, 26 August 1931: 12.

Invitational Tournament during CCNY's quest for the national championship in 1950. Considering the context of the time period and the bias so pervasive in U.S. society, Warner might have been the first African American to win any major national award at the intercollegiate level. Warner had been playing basketball since age ten. He first joined the church team at St. Philips before playing for the Harlem YMCA. At Frederick Douglass junior high school in Harlem, he led his team to a city championship before duplicating that feat at DeWitt Clinton high school in 1947.⁴⁰⁴

As for countless of other Harlem youth, basketball was an integral part of Warner's life and it was on the courts in Harlem where he developed his talents. Warner was the prodigal son of Harlem and New York basketball. Howie Evans, the longtime sports editor for *the New York Amsterdam News* described his game as "loud" and "commanded your eyes to follow his every move." He was ambidextrous and very aware of his talents and didn't mind providing a demonstration to his opponents. "Ed Warner was basketball's Mr. Excitement of the 1950s. The Julius Erving [Dr. J] of his time," replied Evans. His leaping ability was remarkable. Though he stood at 6'3", Warner was able to hold his own with much taller opponents. During CCNY's championship run, it was quite common for coach Holman to have him jump during tip-offs. Against Bradley in the championship game, Warner won five consecutive tip-offs against their 6'7" center.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Ed Warner had initially attended Long Island University for a duration of the fall 1948 semester before transferring to CCNY. Apparently he was enticed by Bobby Sand's overture on the prospect of playing for the 1952 Olympic basketball team. For more information, see: Stanley Cohen, *The Game They Played*, (New York, New York: Carroll & Graf, 2001) 157.

⁴⁰⁵ Howie Evans, "Family, teammates, friends, say goodbye to Ed Warner," *New York Amsterdam News*, 19-25 September 2002: 48; Howie Evans "Warner Tribute at CCNY," *New York Amsterdam News*, 28

Warner had a reputation that circulated throughout the area but Floyd Layne, also a member of that championship CCNY team, lived in the Bronx but also utilized the basketball courts of Harlem to develop his skills. Unlike Warner, Layne's first love was baseball, and he aspired to play professionally prior to Jackie Robinson, (who was also an all-around athlete who excelled at basketball and football) integrating Major League Baseball in 1947. Layne was a left-handed pitcher on the CCNY baseball team and was so talented that in 1948, the New York Cubans of the Negro League awarded him a trophy for being "the most outstanding pitcher in the Bronx Umpires Athletic League."⁴⁰⁶

But it was on the hardwood where his defense earned him a reputation as a "lockdown" defender known to suffocate the opposition. During his freshman year in high school, Layne also attended DeWitt Clinton but unfortunately, did not make the team. Layne noted on his experience at Clinton, "If you make the team at Clinton...you're somebody." Layne transferred to Benjamin Franklin in 1945 and played for Coach Bill Spiegel and was briefly a teammate of Emilio "Zeke" Sinacola who later played at Niagara University and became the program's first 1,000-point scorer. In 1946, Sinacola and Layne were teammates on the 1946 championship team that defeated Abraham Lincoln. "Zeke could do it all; he was just a tremendous all-around athlete," said Layne. After that successful season Layne's leadership abilities were recognized in

July 1984: 56; James J. Hicks, "Ed Warner, Choir singer hailed as Cage Champion," The Baltimore Afro-American, 25 March 1950: 1.

⁴⁰⁶ Lillian Scott, "Floyd Layne, CCNY cage star explains why he prefers baseball," The Chicago Defender, 22 April 1950: 18, col. 2.

the form of serving as team captain during his junior and senior seasons in 1947 and 1948.⁴⁰⁷

Basketball in many black urban communities served as part of the social fabric. Playgrounds where the game was played served as an experiment for social integration. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Harlem. Though some whites might have resisted the specter of young black males in their communities, there was little open disdain about whites entering black communities. Basketball could in many respects serve as a vehicle for acceptance and inclusion in respected social circles. In his column *This Hectic Harlem*, Roi Ottley suggests the controversy in the black community over whether a white male should be accepted into the black Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was based on whether he could play basketball or not - an area which the organization has not had success as of late. He continues to make points about the absurdity of bigotry and reverse discrimination. If one satisfies this and other criteria reflective of black life which include but not limited to: dancing, playing poker and paying taxes then the merits of his efforts should be respectfully granted without prejudice.⁴⁰⁸

In *White Boy, a memoir*, Mark Naison addressed his experience of bonding with members of Omega Psi Phi fraternity during a summer stint in the Project Double Discovery program at Columbia University in the 1960s. Many of his white contemporaries were visibly uncomfortable with these burly black men (some who were members of the Columbia football team), Naison who stands at 6'4" overheard one of

⁴⁰⁷ Maroon & Orange, 1948 (New York, New York: Benjamin Franklin High School, June 1948) 57; The Benjamin Franklin High School Yearbook did not initially have an official name in earlier cited versions; Vincent Mallozzi, "Zeke Sinicola, 82 basketball All-American, is dead," New York Times, 18 June 2011; Cohen 42.

⁴⁰⁸ Roi Ottley, "This Hectic Harlem: That Color Line," New York Amsterdam News, 26 May 1934: 9.

their discussions about sports and chimed in about professional and schoolyard basketball. When he started highlighting some of the “African American players I had seen growing up in Brooklyn, they became noticeably more comfortable in my presence,” Naison noted. The second time he sat with them, they invited him to play basketball with them in Riverside Park (which is situated a few blocks south of Columbia). For the rest of summer, he spent a great deal of time with this cohort of black men and got to understand their world and experiences in greater detail. The meeting ground for them, socially and intellectually revolved around basketball.⁴⁰⁹

In 1937, what turned out to be another step in advancement for an integrated society centered on basketball was a benefit game featuring the New York Police Department versus the Omega Psi Phi fraternity that was co-sponsored by neighborhood councils and the Juvenile Aid Bureau of the Police Department. For the first time, the Police Department team featured a racially-integrated squad with two black players competing for the general public. The proceeds of the game would be used to purchase athletic equipment and other materials for Harlem Youth.⁴¹⁰

The Harlem community also enthusiastically supported girls’ basketball. During the 1944-1945 season, the Mysterious Girls AC basketball team sponsored by the Reverend Marsden Burnell featured local players that competed in interracial contests. During a 1945 game they annihilated the white Brooklyn champions, the Prospect Y.M. and Y.W. Girls Big Five 37-17 at the Harlem YMCA. Leading the team to victory with

⁴⁰⁹ Mark Naison, White Boy: A Memoir (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2002) 76-77.

⁴¹⁰ “Police Five in Benefit Game: Two Negroes playing on team which meets Omega,” New York Amsterdam News, 6 March 1937: 16.

14-points was none other than a lanky 5'9," 16-year old forward named Althea Gibson. She was praised in the press for being the fastest player on the team, and possessing a quick release jump shot. Since the PSAL did not sponsor interscholastic varsity athletics for girls, competition through the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and community sponsored teams was their only recourse.⁴¹¹

These examples illustrate how basketball served as a vehicle for social integration. In many respects, the culture of the game prepared and preceded the championship team at CCNY. One of the famous basketball tournaments in Harlem which served as a showcase and training ground for many CCNY players including Edward Warner was the result of a community initiative aimed at curbing juvenile delinquency.

ANGEL OF HARLEM: BUILDING A HOOPS LEGACY

In 1948, a group of citizens concerned about the lack of play spaces for children in Harlem and the Bronx created an organization called the Lot Playground Association. Their objective of serving the recreational needs for children was similar to the Outdoor Recreation League formed 50 years earlier with some notable differences. First, most of these citizens either lived or did business in these communities. Secondly, they were not as affluent and relied on philanthropic efforts of businesses and those with significant means. Notably, this group was an interracial coalition that resorted to grassroots efforts that included raising funds through various social networks including card parties and dances. The group had immediate success, in their first year they were able to secure four

⁴¹¹ "Mysterious Girls AC Feature Teamwork Above Anything Else," New York Amsterdam News, 22 January 1944: 17; "Mysterious Girls Victors 37-17," New York Amsterdam News, 20 January 1945: 7.

properties in Central Harlem designated for play spaces. The fundraisers involved cleaning up these areas and furnishing them with various apparatus for children. Their efforts along with the influence of others prompted the Board of Education to publicize the production of its first vacation school guide to parents. The brochure contained information about the Board of Education (BOE) facilities available for schoolchildren through the duration of the summer. The BOE boasted that 370 playgrounds and a variety of other related facilities would be within walking distance of the home of every child in the City of New York.⁴¹²

Houses of worship were also involved in creating playgrounds for children in Harlem but one particular church was significantly involved in the play spaces movement that would set the foundation of organized basketball in Harlem and in the process become an icon and destination for players across the nation. Unfortunately, it would be precipitated by a tragedy that underscored some of the problems facing youth across the nation, especially those in densely populated areas like Harlem.

On May 9, 1944, just before noon, Nine-year-old Margaret Patton was sitting on a bench in the schoolyard of P.S. 119 at 237 West 133rd Street when she was confronted by two girls wearing black Halloween masks. Without an exchange of words Madeline Kirkland, 11 drew a paper knife and stabbed Margaret once in the chest striking her heart while Arlene Foster, 12, held her from behind. The two girls walked through the school yard, where four teachers and more than a hundred children were exercising. Margaret, bleeding profusely was taken to a hospital where she was soon pronounced dead.

⁴¹² Allan McMillian, "Playgrounds Planned for Harlem Children," New York Amsterdam News 25 June 1949: 17.

Kirkland and Foster exercised this brazen act of murder in broad daylight in retaliation for Patton informing her teacher that the two girls had stolen some records (documents) that belonged to the school Principal which they tried to destroy in a bonfire in the backyard of Foster's building.⁴¹³

The news of this unfortunate crime circulated across the world as far away as Australia. The Harlem community was outraged over this senseless act of violence and the escalating levels of juvenile delinquency. More than 2,000 people attended her funeral with thousands more turning out to pay their respects. In all an estimated 15,000 people, including her former playmates turned out to wish her farewell.⁴¹⁴

One person who vowed to make a contribution to curb juvenile delinquency was Father Shelton Hale Bishop, a DeWitt Clinton High School graduate and rector of St. Phillips Church on W. 133rd Street between seventh and eighth avenues which is right down the street where Margaret Patton was killed. The St. Phillips's Parish founded in 1818 in lower Manhattan, was the first home of New York City's African American congregation of Protestant Episcopalians. The Church's current home was built in 1910 and reflected the residential patterns of its African American congregation. St. Phillips like other religious denomination houses of worship addressed not only the spiritual needs of its parishioners but also provided a longstanding history of social programs.⁴¹⁵

In the spirit and history of serving the needs of the community, Father Bishop in consultation with neighborhood leaders created the "Fun Center," a place where teens

⁴¹³ Carolyn Dixon, "Neglected Children, Principals in murder of Girl, 9 in Yard at P.S. 119," New York Amsterdam News 13 May 1944: 1A; "2 Masked Girls Murder Lass, 9," Spokesman-Review 10 May 1944.

⁴¹⁴ Dixon 1A; Lawrence, Carl Dunbar, 15,000 See Body of Slain Girl, New York Amsterdam News, 20 May, 1944: 1A: "Let's Kill Somebody," The Mail (Adelaide, South Australia), 15 July 1944.

⁴¹⁵ "St. Phillips Protestant Episcopal Church," Landmarks Preservation Commission Report, (New York, New York: Borough of Manhattan of the City of New York) 13 July 1993.

and adolescents in the community could engage in variety of supervised recreational activities that will keep them out of mischief and off the street. One the men hired by the Church was Holcombe Rucker, a WWII Army Veteran and CCNY alumnus employed by the Parks department as a recreational director while also teaching English at Junior High School 139 in Harlem. Rucker was responsible for coaching basketball at the Parish Community Center. During his tenure he created a basketball tournament that featured divisions based on age groups. The purpose of this tournament was to forward the mission of the Fun Center and keep kids out of mischief and off the streets.⁴¹⁶

One of the young men who participated in these organized basketball tournaments was none other than Ed Warner. Orphaned as a child, Warner grew up in west Harlem in the heart of the St. Philips parish where trouble was constantly looking for companionship. On occasion, the two found the company of one another. Warner was reportedly a member of the Sabers, one of the most notable youth gangs in Harlem. In 1945, Warner found himself in juvenile court for his involvement in a street confrontation with a member of a rival gang. Fortunately, before Warner could descend into more serious transgressions of the law, organized basketball tournaments served as a respite from the temptation of mischief and juvenile delinquency that was becoming ubiquitous and synonymous with countless numbers young people.⁴¹⁷

The tournament grew so popular that it was moved in 1949 to a playground on 128th Street and Seventh Avenue, near the site of the soon to be erected St. Nicholas Housing development, the first public housing project under the new Federal Housing

⁴¹⁶ James Boffman, "Fun Center Helps Delinquency," New York Times, 22 July 1944: A5; Vincent Mallozzi, Asphalt Gods: An Oral History of the Rucker Tournament (New York, New York: Doubleday, 2003) 8.

⁴¹⁷ Cohen 205.

Program. The tournament which bears his name became extremely popular as a showcase for the most talented players in the city and soon word began to spread throughout the eastern seaboard. Teams would travel from New Jersey, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. to Harlem to compete in the playground version of Madison Square Garden. Still despite the growing popularity of his tournament which began to draw thousands, the New York City parks department would not provide any special accommodations.⁴¹⁸

It wasn't until 1965, the last year of Rucker's life, when the Parks department finally complied with his request to a supervisory transfer to a more expansive playground. First, he was moved to 151st Street and Harlem River Drive and then ultimately to 155th Street and Eighth Avenue, across from what is known today as the Polo Grounds public housing development. When Rucker was reassigned to manage a different location he basically took the tournament with him. Over the course of decades, the tournament served as a showcase for a number of talented individuals, some like Julius Erving and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar would have stellar careers in the National Basketball Association. Countless others such as Joe Hammond, Pee Wee Kirkland, and Earl "the Goat" Manigault would carve reputations and careers that did not extend much farther than the streets. Some like Ed Warner from DeWitt Clinton high school would earn a varsity letter in college and win the national championship as he did at CCNY. It was in spaces like these where Warner and his contemporaries would not only hone their skills but develop relationships with players across ethnic and racial lines that prepared him for the success he experienced at CCNY.⁴¹⁹ Ernie Morris, who played on

⁴¹⁸ Mallozzi 8, 18; "St. Nicholas Houses First under U.S. Program," New York Amsterdam News, 30 July 1949: 8.

⁴¹⁹ Mallozzi 74.

those early Rucker teams, recalled competing against talented kids from all over the city. “We played against black kids from the Bronx, Irish and Italian kids from Hell’s Kitchen, anyone who wanted to give us a game.” Morris’s comments further illustrate how basketball served as a vehicle for enabling others to cross cultural and geographical borders. Kids from Hell’s Kitchen whom under normal circumstances would be reluctant to set foot in what was a predominately African American Harlem in the late 1940s and early 1950s would do to showcase their skills with the most talented players in the city. But the draw of showcasing your talents through the game of basketball was a challenge that few could ignore.⁴²⁰

A 1950 report noted that youth gangs in the city had declined three percent from the previous year; a small decline but huge considering how calamitous the situation appeared a year earlier when ten schoolboys were killed as a result of gang-related activity. The decline was largely attributed to a number of organizations and commissions such as the New Youth City Youth Board. Created in 1947, the aim of the board was to work with other organizations on creating programs aimed at youth such as the Play Streets program, a partnership between the Police Athletic League that operated during the summer, in which city streets were blocked from vehicular traffic and turned into temporary playgrounds equipped with portable basketball apparatus. A majority of these ‘play streets’ operated in communities like Harlem and the Bronx (various locales) that had limited access to playgrounds.⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Mallozzi 11.

⁴²¹ Charles Grutzner, “Youth gangs decreasing in city,” New York Times, 12 May 1960.

Just as James Naismith intended, basketball was an indoor recreational activity that provided restless and energetic youth an opportunity to transfer that energy into healthy physical athletic competition as opposed to engaging in mischief. Though these programs claimed certain amount of success, they could not satisfy the insatiable appetite that New York adolescents have with basketball.

With limited access to playgrounds, New York adolescents resorted to makeshift basketball areas, including crude markings on the side building walls that served as a hoop. Those who were fortunate with access to a court, had to modify the rules, in order to meet the demand. This in many respects informed the up-tempo style that would largely attribute to what would become known as the city game. For the next several decades the city would consistently struggle in meeting the recreational demands of basketball aficionados, but the beneficiary of this was the unintended result of contributing to style of play that became synonymous with New Yorkers that ultimately reached the pinnacle of amateur athletic competition with CCNY's 1950 championship.

Basketball was formed as an inclusive indoor activity, so it appears destined that an institution that prided itself on those same values would be the first racially-integrated team to achieve this historical accomplishment. But their success would be beset with more challenges if it were not for the open-minded spirit of the game and the culture which coalesced together in the 1930s when scores of players from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to other neighborhoods and communities were looking for competition. Unbeknownst to its participants, basketball was an unlikely site for social integration.

CHAPTER 8

A SCANDAL AND A SHIPMENT OF TALENT TO EL PASO

On February 18, 1951, the future of the CCNY basketball program was altered dramatically when three players were arrested for the violation of New York State penal code 382 which prohibited persons from offering bribes to athletes or for athletes to accept them. The details of the investigation noted in earlier chapters do not fully articulate the breadth of the impact of these transgressions not only on CCNY but for college basketball in New York City. The impact would not only affect the game but the politics associated with basketball and what generally sports represented. For starters, the gambling scandal erased the contribution the team made as a model for interracial cooperation based on a visible meritocracy. The ideal successful interracial team would not be fully realized again until 1963 when the Loyola University Ramblers started four black players and defeated the heavily favored (a 100-1 underdog) University of Cincinnati Bearcats to become the team with lowest odds in the history of the NCAA tournament to win the national championship. Even that moment was overshadowed by clouds of suspicion from the gambling scandals that occurred two years earlier. It wasn't

until 1966 when Texas Western College of Mines defeated the University of Kentucky that society paid close attention to the power of integration.⁴²²

The scandal impacted college basketball in New York City in myriad of ways. First, it undermined the promise of interracial cooperation in basketball. It also led to exodus of talented players leaving the city to mostly schools in the Midwest and Pacific. Unfortunately, it also reinforced racial stereotypes of blacks as morally deficient which led to more scrutiny. Finally, the most notable response was it contributed to a series of rules changes over the next decade to meet the demands of contrasting styles of play.

Basketball organically embraced gender and racial diversity. It was an activity in which competitors from different racial and social-economic backgrounds were embraced. CCNY's accomplishment underscored that narrative. Journalists who covered the scandal ignored this important accomplishment thus undermining a democratic merit-based system. Of all the team sports, basketball has historically been more inclusive than others but unfortunately, CCNY's accomplishment which reflects that narrative, is lost in gambling scandal.

As noted in previous chapters basketball and its culture provided mobility, motivation, and more opportunities for young men and women to attend college and improve their own lives. The racial democracy of the sport provided a space for interracial socialization. A person who could play competitive basketball was generally accepted by other players. As a result, players were able to cross imagined racial

⁴²² "More on Basketball," New York Times, 4 March 1951:138; Marvin Kalb, "College Suspends Trio; Phone-Tap Breaks Case," The Campus, 20 February 1951: 1; Peter C. Bjarkman, Hoopla: A Century of College Basketball, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Master's Press) 153.

boundaries in the spirit of competition and appreciation for the game. Evidence suggests that basketball was quite popular among New York City youth, which meant participation was at the center of interracial cooperation that could influence other aspects of society as these teens move into adulthood. Examples of these individual narratives can be found at the tail end of this chapter.

After the scandal, author Stanley Cohen argues that college teams were reluctant to recruit black players due in part to perceived moral flaws that were grounded in racial stereotypes. He suggests that college coaches were not willing to take the risk on black players because they were more susceptible to transgressive behavior even though most of the perpetrators involved in the scandal were white and it was a black player, Junius Kellogg of Manhattan College that reported to authorities that he had been approached to alter the outcome of games which led to the uncovering of the gambling scandal. Cohen presents an interesting argument but that claim is not substantiated when it comes to examining the rosters of teams that won national titles.⁴²³

After CCNY won the title in 1950, and prior to Texas Western's victory in 1966, fourteen teams were crowned national champions and ten of them featured racially-integrated squads. In 1951, LaVannes Squires from Wichita, Kansas, became the first African American to play for the University of Kansas Jayhawks. That same year, Solly Walker of Boys' high school began his sophomore year on the varsity squad at St. John's. When the two schools met in the 1952 NCAA championship game in Seattle, Washington, it was the first time in NCAA history two racially integrated teams

⁴²³ Cohen, 34.

competed for the national championship; and the first time, two pioneering black players of two programs faced off against one another in a title game. Kansas defeated St. John's 80-63.⁴²⁴

Three of the six (Kentucky 1951 & 1958 and North Carolina 1957) championship teams were from the segregated South which wouldn't have recruited black players to begin with. The other remaining teams: Indiana (1953), LaSalle (1954) and the University of California-Berkeley (1959) were already recruiting black players but through sheer coincidence they did not have any on the roster during their championship seasons. At the very least, the scandal slowed integration to urban schools, where gamblers were more likely to have access and approach student-athletes. Colleges in less densely-populated areas seem to greatly benefit from this new well of talent.

John Crawford, a 6-foot-5 forward from New York City, landed in Ames, Iowa, in 1954 and ended his career at Iowa State University as the second-leading scorer in school history. Carl Cain, was one of several black players on the University of Iowa team that dominated the Big Ten for three seasons. Between 1953-1956 Cain and the Hawkeyes would win 56 of 74 regular season games for a .756 winning percentage. For his efforts Cain would secure a spot on the 1956 Olympic team where he would win a gold medal in Melbourne, Australia. Two of his contemporaries on the Olympic Team, K.C. Jones and Bill Russell, played for the University of San Francisco which won the national championship earlier that year defeating Cain's Iowa team 83-71. In 1955, Wilt

⁴²⁴ University of Kansas, 2009-10 Media Guide 134; "College Break is denied by St. John's: Walker will be the first Tan foe in Kentucky," New York Amsterdam News, 9 June 1951: 15; Phillip, Newman "Once upon a time fiery St. John's Redmen almost captured NCAA crown," Queens Times-Ledger, 14 March 2002, 31 March 2015 <<http://www.timesledger.com/stories/2002/11/20020314-archive1062.html>> .

Chamberlain left Philadelphia to play for Phog Allen and the University of Kansas for two seasons before leaving school and playing with the Harlem Globetrotters and later enjoying a fourteen year career in the National Basketball Association for the Philadelphia/San Francisco Warriors, Philadelphia 76ers, and Los Angeles Lakers.⁴²⁵

Black student-athletes, especially those migrating from the northeast metropolitan areas were being recruited and impacting the success of schools in the Midwest and California. Coaches, who were willing to assess the merits of individual players as opposed to leaning on perceptions and invectives from others, reaped the rewards of their decisions. This was one of the instructive narratives from the CCNY team. Due in part to the media exposure of their accomplishment and location in New York City, the process of racial integration started churning at many schools. If anything because of the immediate scandal thereafter, some coaches moved more carefully when recruiting potential student-athletes.

RACIAL STEREOTYPES

The aftermath of the scandal may have reinforced racial stereotypes that might have deterred some white coaches from recruiting black players. According to Clarence Gaines, a basketball Hall-of-Famer who coached at the historically-black Winston-Salem State College in North Carolina for 47 seasons, noted that white coaches and college presidents assumed the problem was the defiant and independent-minded “sassy attitude

⁴²⁵ “John Crawford, Hall of Fame Class of 2006,” [Iowa State University](http://www.cyclones.com), 12 September 2006 <www.cyclones.com>; [University of Iowa Hardwood a Digital Basketball History](http://www.iowalum.com/hardwood/) <<http://www.iowalum.com/hardwood/>>; [Iowa Basketball 2014-15 Media Guide](http://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/players/wilt-chamberlain-1.html) (Iowa City, Iowa: Iowa University Athletic Department) 154; [Wilt Chamberlain profile](http://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/players/wilt-chamberlain-1.html) <<http://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/players/wilt-chamberlain-1.html>>; Phog Allen never coached Chamberlain at Kansas because Freshmen were not allowed to compete and Allen had retired from coaching when Chamberlain became eligible in 1956.

of the fast-breaking street-ball players.” Gaines suggests that white coaches were hesitant to recruit black players because of the perceived racial stereotypes that are tied to their cerebral abilities and inability to adapt to a structured system. Gaines addresses the situation more bluntly, “the white schools decided that since these black playground teenagers had little respect for the old way of playing basketball by standing in one place, passing the ball to teammates, and then taking carefully aimed shots at the basket, they must be more likely to get involved in gambling.” The players who were involved with the scandal largely reflected their economic situation more than their race.⁴²⁶

But the fundamental issue drove them to stray from their core values were that this was easy money and from their perspective, no one was being harmed. Some players, aware of the revenue generated by games that drew capacity crowds, resented the fact that they received no compensation for their performance. Such resentment transcended racial difference.

In some cases, the color line stood firm in other ways and outside the Jim Crow South. At one point the Big Ten (which represented schools in the Midwest such as Illinois, Ohio State and Michigan) employed a “gentleman’s agreement” which eliminated or limited the number of blacks each varsity team could have on their roster. As a result of these biases, historically Black colleges and Universities (HBCU) used this to their advantage and moved to the forefront in recruiting talented black players from urban areas. With northern white colleges scaling back on the recruitment of black players, African American high-school athletes had few options beyond the HBCU’s.

⁴²⁶ Clarence E. Gaines, They Call me Big House (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: John Blair:) 116.

The scandal forced athletes to consider schools in places they never heard of and in geographical regions of the country like the Jim Crow South with a history and at that time a distinct culture that was openly hostile and could lead to deadly consequences for those who did not submit to its customs. Although high school students had nothing to do with the scandal and did not deserve to be punished or subjected to racial stereotypes, they nevertheless experienced such consequences. As a result these practices, the line of segregation grew wider and continued to undermine the model of interracial equality fostered at CCNY.⁴²⁷

Gaines noted, “I would say the point-shaving scandal delayed integration of black athletes into mainstream of college education by at least a decade.” His Winston-Salem program was one of the biggest beneficiaries of this new de facto segregated-mindset. In the years immediately afterward, he estimated more than half of his players were from New York City or the metropolitan area including Newark, New Jersey and Southern Connecticut. The list of players from the city include: playground legend Jack Dafaes and Carl Green both of whom played at Benjamin Franklin. Other notable New York City players include: Bobby Brown, Ernest Brown, Charles Riley, Wilfred John and center Willis Johnson who captained the 1953 team to its first Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association title (CIAA). In all, Gaines estimates he recruited dozens of players from the New York region. Originally from Paducah, Kentucky, Gaines spent his collegiate years at Morgan State University in Baltimore on a Football scholarship. His experience as a student-athlete in a city that closely resembles the northeast was

⁴²⁷ Dan Parker, “How Democratic is Sport?” *Sport* September 1949: 41; Gaines 117.

instrumental to his achieving a comfort level sufficient to navigate the urban terrain and connect with potential recruits.⁴²⁸

Not all white coaches turned away from black players after the scandal, those who recruited them such as Iowa State's Bill Strannigan, made out like bandits. Born in Dairy, Scotland, and raised in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where he played college basketball at the University of Wyoming, Strannigan appeared to have no problem not only recruiting black players but also serving as a mentor. John Crawford, who played at the New York High School for Printing in Manhattan, attended Iowa State because of his relationship with the coach. Strannigan, who is described as "personable" and "effervescent," used these personal traits to recruit other black players from New York City including Hank Whitney a 6'7" forward from the High School Fashion Industries in 1958 and Vinnie Brewer a 6'2" guard from William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens. These young men formed a nucleus that would become one of the most successful teams in Iowa State basketball history. Between 1955 and 1959, the Cyclones would compile a 70-45 won-loss record for a 60.9 winning percentage earning coach Strannigan an induction into the Iowa State Basketball hall of fame. After the 1958-59 season, Strannigan left Iowa State to coach at his alma mater where he continued his success and was later inducted in 1994 to the Wyoming Hall of Fame.⁴²⁹

Over the next several decades, Iowa State would continue to draw New York City players including Don Smith (Zaid Abdul-Aziz), who played at John Jay High School in

⁴²⁸ Gaines 118 – 119.

⁴²⁹ "Bill Strannigan, Hall of Fame Class of 2005," [Iowa State University](http://www.cyclones.com), 12 September 2006 <www.cyclones.com>; John Crawford, Hall of Fame Class of 2006, Black History Month: Vince Brewer, Black History Month: Hank Whitney: Cyclone Trailblazer, <www.cyclones.com>.

Brooklyn and nine seasons in the NBA. Smith ceased playing professionally due to a conflict between his religious beliefs and demands of the profession. Bill Cain a 6'6" forward from White Plains, N.Y. (30 minutes north of New York City) became one of the greatest rebounders in Iowa State history with a career average of 12.4 per game (a school record that still stands). Jamaal Tinsley, a 6'3" guard from Samuel Tilden High School in Brooklyn, who played more than eleven years in the NBA, mostly with the Indiana Pacers also found his way to Ames, Iowa.⁴³⁰

RULES CHANGES

After CCNY won the national championship in 1950, the NCAA implemented more rules changes over the next decade than through any time period in history. It is probably no accident that the changes in the rules coincided with the increased visibility of black players on the rosters of historically white institutions. Over the course of the next ten years the rules of the game would be altered fourteen times. From 1950 to 1955, most of the rule changes were in response to excessive fouling that tended to stall the pace of the game which inadvertently allowed one team to have control over the tempo and ultimately the scoring. The direct consequence of these rules also appear to enhance excitement toward the conclusion of games such as the 1952 rule which teams could no longer waive free throws (which placed pressure on the player to make them under duress) in favor of taking the ball out of bounds. This rule forced the team with possession to shoot the free throws as opposed to inbound the ball and taking time off

⁴³⁰ "Bill Cain, Hall of Fame Class of 2002," [Iowa State University](http://www.cyclones.com), 12 September 2006 <www.cyclones.com>; Burton, Austin L. "Former NBA star Zaid Abdul-Aziz found sunlight after darkness," 3 April 2014, 14 March 2014 [Ummah Sports, Where Sports and Islam Unite](http://UmmahSports.net) <<https://ummahsports.net/2014/04/03/former-nba-star-zaid-abdul-aziz-found-sunlight-after-darkness/>>.

the clock thus preventing the opponent from having more time to score a basket. Other rules appeared to be directly in response to the growing athletic prowess of players, some of whom were black and visible. In 1955, the NCAA passed a rule that widened the free-throw lane from 6 feet to 12 feet. This appeared to be a response to the dominant play of Bill Russell, a six-foot-ten center for the University of San Francisco who was known as a defensive stalwart averaging 21.4 points and 20.5 rebounds a game. The rule was unofficially called by rival coaches as the “Russell-rule.” Other rules such as the ban of offensive goaltending in which no player could make contact with the ball once it is above the cylinder was in response to players like Wilt Chamberlin, a 7’2” dominant center for the University of Kansas who was a known to impose his will on the opposition.⁴³¹

EXODUS OF TALENT LEAVING THE CITY

Another impact of the gambling scandal is that it provided players with another reason to leave the city. Black players were not the only ones leaving, white players also followed suit. White players had a broader list of options because they were not hampered by racial restrictions. One such player was Al Bianchi who was a standout at Long Island City High school in Queens. After graduation in 1950, Bianchi continued his career and education at Bowling Green State University in Ohio where he averaged 19.1 points per game and finished his career as the third highest scorer in school history with 1,487 points. Bianchi would spend ten years in the NBA playing for the Syracuse

⁴³¹ “Playing Rules History,” *NCAA Official 2007 Men’s Basketball Records Book*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: NCAA Publications) 247; James Johnson, *The Dandy Dons: Bill Russell and the One of College Basketball’s Greatest and Most Innovative Teams* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Bison Books, 2009) 124.

Nationals and later the Philadelphia 76ers. After retirement he spent 18 years as an ABA (American Basketball Association) and NBA coach before serving as general manager of the New York Knicks from 1987 to 1991. Most importantly, Bianchi's decision to play at Bowling Green University appeared to initiate a post-scandal exodus of talented players leaving New York City. Other players who left New York City for greener pastures in the 1950s include Sihugo "Si" Green from Boys High School in Brooklyn before playing collegiately at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Other notable players include Reginald Ayala (1951) and Al Ferrari (1951) of Brooklyn Technical High School whom both played at Michigan State; Brendan McCann (1953) of Brooklyn Manual (now John Jay High School) competed at St. Bonaventure; Rudy LaRusso (1955) of Madison starred at Dartmouth and Lenny Wilkens one of the most talented players to ever come out of the city, from Boys high attended Providence College.⁴³²

The aforementioned narratives demonstrate the talent pool in New York City was not lost on schools in the Midwest. Numerous schools in the Big Twelve (formerly Big Eight) and Big Ten conferences courted players but it appears those recruitment efforts were unsuccessful prior to the scandal. Dolph Schayes, who honed his skills on the playgrounds of the Bronx and starred at DeWitt Clinton High School and NYU in the 1940s, noted that Purdue University tried to recruit his entire team but neither he nor any of his teammates wanted to leave town.⁴³³

⁴³² 2011-12 Bowling Green University Men's Basketball Media Guide (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Department of Athletics, 2011) 76-78; "Monroe Conquers Textile Five, 61-45," New York Times, 8 March, 1950: 35; "Rickey Ayala: Basketball Pioneer and Business Success," Michigan State University Athletics, 12 February 2007, 28 March 2015 <<http://www.msuspartans.com/genrel/021207aab.html>>

⁴³³ Benjamin Hoffman "An Elaborate Tale of Broken Rims and Moxie," New York Times 7 February 2015.

After 1951, many players believed that leaving town was the best option. However, with LIU suspending its athletic operations for seven years and CCNY deemphasizing its program, the competition for the most talented players grew at least locally less-intense. In a rather intriguing irony all of the schools (with the exception of NYU) posted winning records for the next four seasons. Despite its struggles during that period, NYU scored a coup when it landed Tom “Satch” Sanders from Seward Park High School in Manhattan in 1956. Satch Sanders reinvigorated the program during his tenure which culminated with a 22-5 record in his senior season and a 15-point victory over Duke in 1960. Satch played professionally for thirteen seasons with the Boston Celtics winning eight national championships.⁴³⁴

However, throughout the 1960s and 1970s some of the most talented New York City players continued to leave the city in droves. Some ended up in the most unusual of places. Dave Odums and James “Fly” Williams from Brooklyn are two examples. Odums a 6’3” guard from Erasmus Hall High School in Flatbush and Williams a 6’5” guard who played at James Madison had a reputation as a dynamic and flashy scorer. With their talent, it was rather odd the two would end up in Clarksville, Tennessee, playing for Austin Peay University. The two were recruited in 1972 by assistant coach Leonard Hamilton, one the school’s earliest black coaches. The two started as freshmen and were part of a tandem that scored a combined average 39.6 points per game. However, it was Williams who was the star attraction. On two occasions he scored 51-points a game, the

⁴³⁴ New York University Men’s Basketball History & Records, 31 March 2015 (New York, New York: New York University Athletics, 2015) 23, <http://www.gonyuathletics.com/documents/2013/10/31MBasketball_2013-14_.pdf>. <<http://www.gonyuathletics.com/index.aspx?path=mbball>>.

first against Georgia Southern in December and the second, twenty-one days later versus Tennessee Tech. He was such an exciting player that students created the chant “The Fly is open, Let’s go Peay!” – A reference to his nickname and the surname of the University. In two seasons, Williams would score 1,541 points for a stunning career average of 28.5 points per game. Unfortunately, his college career ended before his junior season and he was declared ineligible for a variety of reasons which revolve around academics. Williams briefly played professionally in the now-defunct Continental Basketball Association (CBA) and with a team in Israel but never in the NBA. Over the next couple of decades, Williams would leave his mark on the New York City playgrounds where he became an urban legend.⁴³⁵

Aside from the decline of basketball prestige, players were departing New York City for other logical reasons. An essay in the *New York Amsterdam News* noted that kids were leaving because they would have to commute to class which meant riding the subway or taking a bus to get to campus since most schools did not have residence halls. Returning in the late evening from a game or from campus also meant dealing with the elements of commuting at night or negotiating transportation rides with friends or University personnel. Case in point: after 129 years in operation, St. John’s University, the most high-profile basketball program in the city after the scandal, added residence halls for the first time in 1999. Before then students including athletes commuted (albeit

⁴³⁵ Rick Telander, “The Fly Who Came in from the Cold,” *Sports Illustrated*, 9 February 2009: 14; “Austin Peay 1972-1973 Season Team Statistics,” *Sports-Reference/College-Basketball* <<http://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/schools/austin-peay/1973.html>>; Petty Glenn, “Fly is open, Let’s go Peay!,” *The Bleacher Report*, 10 February 2009, <<http://bleacherreport.com/articles/122438-fly-is-open-lets-go-peay>>; Angel Diaz & Rafael Canton “The 20 Greatest Basketball Players to Never Play in the NBA,” *Complex*, 9 November 2012, <<http://www.complex.com/sports/2012/11/the-20-greatest-players-who-never-played-in-the-nba/>>.

from a short distance) from off-campus housing. Other issues for players was the desire to exercise their independence, financial inducements and the promise of cars or some other accouterments that stem from being a sought-after player.⁴³⁶

Another critical issue raised in the *New York Amsterdam News* essay lies in the role of high school coaches in the decision process of student-athletes. Some coaches “are slipped money underneath the table to help influence a kid,”⁴³⁷ this is yet another variable as to why city schools are unable to land the most talented athletes. Large State Universities have grander budgets and boosters that can entice a recruit with material goods. Many of these schools also have high-profile football programs which help bring in revenue that supplement the athletic budget and indirectly to other intercollegiate sports – including basketball. In *College Football and the American Culture in the Cold War Era* Edward Kemper notes that during the Cold War era in the 1950s, the government began funneling unprecedented amounts of money into American Universities and Colleges to combat the growth of Soviet Union technological advances. Twenty schools received 79 percent of all federal monies – a majority of them public institutions. This enabled schools to subsidize budgets in a number of outlets – including those in athletics. Most of these monies went toward football but eventually shifted to other sports – including basketball. Awash with cash, for many of these schools it was time to shop for players.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Howie Evans, “Why New York Schoolboy Stars Go Elsewhere to Play Basketball” *New York Amsterdam News*, 26 February 1977; Winnie Hu, “After 129 Years, St. John’s Adds Dormitories,” *New York Times*, 5 September 1999: 29.

⁴³⁷ Evans 1977.

⁴³⁸ Evans 1977; Kurt Edward Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era*, (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009)15.

The success of CCNY and the scandal that decimated the program contributed to a process that integrated college and university basketball programs. In some parts of the country, the presence of black players – especially the most talented – forced homogenously white colleges and universities to think about race and race relations in a direct way. This is an extremely important, and often overlooked aspect of CCNY's legacy.

THE DEMISE OF NYC HOOPS PROGRAMS AND RISE OF THE MIDWEST AND BIRTH OF THE SOUTH

On January 9, 1953, the NCAA basketball rules and tournament committee made a decision that would change the landscape of college basketball. The committee voted to bar teams selected for the NCAA tournament from competing in the NIT. Previously teams could compete in both with the NCAA tournament starting at the conclusion of the NIT. This decision was enormous because it elevated the balance of power from the NIT tournament to the NCAA since the NCAA tournament did not begin until the NIT had concluded. The NCAA also expanded the field by seven teams from 15 to 22, this gave more opportunities for smaller and non-conference schools to get an opportunity to compete for a national title. The rules committee seemed to be motivated in part by the gambling scandal in which the agitators and operations were based in New York City. This combined with the fact that during the investigation it was discovered that Ralph Beard, Alex Groza, and Dale Barnstable (three players for the University of Kentucky) accepted bribes of \$1,500 each to throw a NIT first-round tournament game against Loyola of Chicago in 1949. Kentucky was ranked number one in the nation and was an overwhelming favorite but lost handily by a score of 67-56. This 'fix' was the most

egregious because of the magnitude of the game whereas other games that were compromised were mostly regular-season contests. Certainly disgusted and embarrassed by the affair, the NCAA perhaps wanted to extinguish the NIT from existence or at the very least make it less desirable for its member institutions. So with the expansion of the tournament field that season, the NCAA, decided to add five “at-large” berths for all non-conference teams east of the Mississippi river. This was an attempt to lure some of the top teams on the eastern seaboard to accept NCAA bids over the NIT. As a result of this move, most of the participants in the NIT were small eastern catholic schools that dominated from 1952 to 1957.

The NIT was able to salvage its relevancy by drawing local schools in order to sustain interest but its reputation suffered dramatically. Also, in an unofficial capacity to distance itself from New York City, the NCAA no longer held any of its tournament games at the Madison Square Garden. This was clearly a direct response to the scandal. It was announced in November 2014 that Barclay’s Center in Brooklyn would host the East regional site for the first time in history; and this would be the first time since 1950, that New York City would serve as host.⁴³⁹

As a result of the NCAA tournament expansion, CCNY’s accomplishment of winning both championships in the same season becomes furthered entrenched in obscurity along with the individual accolades. Ed Warner, the most valuable player of the 1950 NIT was the first African American to win a major college sports award remains

⁴³⁹ Sheehan, Joseph M. “NCAA votes overwhelmingly for continued curbs on Football,” New York Times, 10 January 1953: 20; “NIT May be Saved by Luck of Irish,” Newsday, 5 February 1953: 72; Ray Floriani The National Invitational Tournament (New York, New York: Arcadia, 2005) 21-22; Stanley Teitelbaum, Sports Heroes, Fallen Idols (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2005) 81.

absent on lists of African American accomplishments. With the NCAA tournament emerging as a force and with televised athletic contests lurking, and increased subsidies for athletes, larger schools became even more desirable destinations.⁴⁴⁰

The exodus of players leaving the City was an issue in 1951 and remains so today. However, in 1979, the Big East conference, with its headquarters in Providence, Rhode Island, ushered in a new era of college basketball to the point where at least the New York schools could regain their stature and keep the city kids closer to home. In 1976, Dave Gavitt, athletic director and former basketball coach at Providence College, sat with St. John's basketball coach Lou Carnesecca in a Milan, Italy restaurant to discuss the shifting tide of college basketball that was threatening the survival of the basketball programs that did not have a strong conference affiliation. The Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC), an organization of over 200 colleges and universities with various sizes of student bodies, philosophies and athletic budgets was too large to meet the financial realities of college basketball.⁴⁴¹

The ECAC at the behest of the National Collegiate Athletic Association was now requiring that schools employ a formal regular-season schedule that included home and away games with opponents in the same region if they desired to receive an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. That meant the strongest programs with strong local rivalries would be pressed to drastically alter their schedule. Rather than comply with the ECAC, Gavitt thought it would be wise for these programs in major metropolitan areas to form

⁴⁴⁰ Dana Mozley, "Beavers NIT champs beat Bradley, 69-61," New York Daily News, 19 March 1950: 104.

⁴⁴¹ Malcolm Moran, the Making of College Conference, New York Times, 7 February 1982: S1.

their own conference. This was necessary for not only the new NCAA legislation but also the economic realities that television, particularly cable was going to become a major source of revenue and marketing was essential. In May 1978, an official meeting included St. John's, Providence College, and Georgetown University representatives. After getting support of those programs, a meeting with Syracuse followed, subsequently discussions with Boston College, the University of Connecticut and Seton Hall followed. With seven schools committed in major markets of the northeast from Boston to Washington D.C. shored up, the league commenced operations in May 1979.⁴⁴²

One of the selling points to potential institutions was creating a conference that consisted of schools in cities that would draw interest to the most-heralded recruits that wanted to stay close to home but also compete at the highest level of college basketball with a recognizable tradition of sorts. The exodus of talented players leaving New York City since the gambling scandals continued to flow with regularity. In the late 1970s players such as Calvin Murphy and Mike Gminiski who attended Niagara and Duke Universities respectively could be remedied with the presence of a high-profile conference. After the commitments were secured Gavitt and his assistant Mike Tranghese were negotiating a deal with the recently founded Entertainment Sports Programming Network (ESPN) an all-sports cable outlet to broadcast the games. On Friday, September 7, 1979, at 7PM, ESPN made its debut as a 24-hour sports network and for the Big East the timing could not be more perfect.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² Moran S1.

⁴⁴³ Alexander Wolff, "Pearl, in the lane, with the kiss," *Sports Illustrated*, 18 March 2013; ESPN Founder "How it started," ed. Bill Rasmussen, 17 March 2015, <http://www.espnfounder.com/how_it_started.htm>.

The formative years of the Big East were quite successful in serving its objectives. Some of the top recruits in the Northeast decided to stay within the region. In 1981, The Georgetown Hoyas signed the 7-foot Patrick Ewing out of Boston Latin High School. Chris Mullin from Xaverian high school in Brooklyn signed with St. John's. Also that year Villanova University in suburban Philadelphia signed Ed Pinckney out of Adlai Stevenson high school in the Bronx. In 1982, St. John's would sign point guard Mark Jackson from Bishop Loughlin high school in Brooklyn. During the 1981-1982 signing period the league signed 10 of the top 13 high school seniors in Northeast. Lou Carnesecca, who was skeptical of joining the conference initially and playing a more grueling schedule changed his position and admitted he was shortsighted on Dave Gavitt's vision. "That move catapulted us," he replied. Without the league and the television deal, Chris Mullin would have probably gone to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and other key players from the 1984-85 team that went to the final four such as Walter Berry from Benjamin Franklin high school and Bill Wennington from Long Island Lutheran would have surely left the metropolitan area.⁴⁴⁴

With the NCAA legislation looming that required schools to play home and away games against common opponents, several smaller schools on the northeast partnered and formed the ECAC-Metro conference in 1981 shortly after the Big East initiated operations. The charter members included five New York schools (LIU, Marist College in Poughkeepsie, Siena College in Loudonville, St. Francis College of Brooklyn and Wagner College of Staten Island), three Maryland schools (University of Baltimore,

⁴⁴⁴ Alexander Wolff 2013; Michael Wilbon, "An Issue That Follows the NBA Like a White Shadow," The Washington Post, 19 February 2006 < <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/18/AR2006021801482.html>>.

Loyola of Baltimore and Towson State), two Pennsylvania institutions (Robert Morris and Saint Francis), and one from New Jersey (Farleigh-Dickinson). In 1988, the conference changed its name to the Northeast Conference.⁴⁴⁵

The Big East Conference had immediate success with Georgetown reaching the NCAA championship game versus North Carolina in 1982. Two years later in 1984 Georgetown would win the NCAA championship and Villanova would follow a year later. Despite their successes, recruiting top tier homegrown talent was still a challenge for St. John's as many players opted for large public institutions awash in resources that would certainly draw more interest from players. For example: In 1994, The Georgia Institute for Technology (Georgia Tech) recruited highly touted New York City point guard Stephon Marbury by spending \$5,000 on a private lear jet for him and his family to spend a weekend visiting the school's campus in Atlanta. \$500 was spent for lodging and another \$1,350 in meals. Some additional miscellaneous items brought the total expenditure for his visit to \$7605.⁴⁴⁶

In spite of what may seem as excess for a player, other coaches interviewed argued that this is the norm for the top tier basketball programs in the country. One unidentified assistant coach noted "things like the jet are common...if you are going against the North Carolinas and Kentuckys a move like that is understandable...It's a great job in recruiting." Even more importantly it falls within the boundaries of what the NCAA is considered permissible. David Berst, the NCAA assistant executive director for

⁴⁴⁵ Ralph Ventre, "back to the Beginning" The NEC Celebrates 30 Years, September 2011, 24 February 2015 <www.northeastconference.org>.

⁴⁴⁶ Dick Weiss, "Marbury Goes High tech No Violation on Plane Trip" New York Daily News, 14 November 1995.

enforcement noted, “A university can spend as much as it wants on things like that (a lear jet)...An expenditure like that flight or dinner when the prospect visits the campus, if it was the institution’s expense, that is OK.”⁴⁴⁷

This ubiquitous demonstration of such opulence certainly might have played a huge role in his decision to attend the school as well as other highly touted players from New York City such as Kenny Anderson who preceded Marbury at Georgia Tech and followed by Kevin Morris. The wealth accumulated by large state Universities and their private contemporaries contribute to their athletic budgets, along with the accouterments such as state-of-the-art practice facilities, locker rooms, lounge suites, first-class air travel and accommodations, situates them at an advantage to which only a handful of schools can afford to extend such luxuries to recruit players and certainly very few schools, if any, in New York City, possess those kind of budgets. Also working against these schools is the NCAA rule that states it is not permissible to take a prospect and his family out to dinner in their hometown. None of the New York City Colleges could entice local prospects in the same fashion their out-of-town competitors could. This further underscores the exodus of players leaving the city and what was lost in the aftermath of the game-fixing scandal not to mention the changes in NCAA recruiting guidelines.⁴⁴⁸

THE PROMISE OF INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

If anything, the Texas Western victory over Kentucky accelerated the integration of basketball in the South (which was never the sport of preference and second to

⁴⁴⁷ Weiss 1995.

⁴⁴⁸ Weiss 1995; “Bylaw, Article 13- Recruiting” NCAA Division I Manual 2014-2015 (Indianapolis, Indiana: NCAA Publications, 2014) 91.

football) and redirected the exodus of New York City players to that region, further underscoring what was lost during the scandal. As a junior Willie Worsley had just led DeWitt Clinton to a PSAL championship in 1963 interrupting the string of titles by Boys' high school in Brooklyn. A year later, when it was time to go to college, Worsley, a 5'6" guard had few offers but one of them was 2,000 miles away in El Paso, Texas. He had decided to attend Texas Western College because a couple of his buddies, Willie Cager, and Nevil Shed (also from the Bronx) were there and seemed to be enjoying their experience. Worsley decided that after a phone conversation with the coach Don Haskins he would follow suit.⁴⁴⁹

Hilton White, a recreation director for the Department of Parks was a central figure in the teleporting of New York players to El Paso. In the army, White was stationed in El Paso and during his tenure in this Texas town situated at the far left end of the state. He noticed the racial climate was more hospitable to blacks and thought this would be a great place to live full-time, raise a family, and even go to college. El Paso was a place where blacks could live and be treated as equals to whites. So his experience led to recommendations for players that El Paso would be great place to play. New York City or its colleges could not compete with the beautiful year-round weather of West Texas. His encouragement led Cager and Shed to Texas Western and their recommendations led to other black players including Worsley, Nate "Tiny" Archibald

⁴⁴⁹ Frank Fitzpatrick, And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game that Changed American Sports (Lincoln, Nebraska: The University of Nebraska Press, 1999) 105; Albert J. Figone, Cheating the Spread: Gamblers, Point Shavers and Game Fixers in College Football and Basketball (Champaign-Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 104-108; For more information on the gambling scandal of 1961, refer to Albert J. Figone, "Cheating the Spread," and Rosen, Charley "Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of College Basketball," (New York, New York: Seven Stories Press) 2002.

and a list of other New Yorkers to the campus. The positive experiences drew black players from other cities including Bobby Joe Hill from Detroit; Orsten Artis and Harry Flournoy from Gary, Indiana. David Lattin, who hailed from Houston was the lone black player on the roster from the South. The demise of college basketball in New York wasn't just about the schools but also the lifestyle and environment where the players lived and grew up. The mental aspect of getting away is second to only the physical move to someplace else without all the distractions.⁴⁵⁰

In the fall of 1966, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recruited their first black player. Charlie Scott attended Stuyvesant for a year before transferring to Laurinburg Institute in Laurinburg, North Carolina. Laurinburg is an African American preparatory school founded in 1904 at the behest of Booker T. Washington. During the 1960s and 1970s the school would serve as a home and in many respects a conduit to college for some of the most talented players from New York City. Charlie Davis, who would attend Brooklyn Technical high school prior to Laurinburg, became the first African American to win Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year in 1971 while at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. Earl "the Goat" Manigault attended Benjamin Franklin high school would compete at the school for a season before attending Johnson C. Smith College in 1964 eschewing interest from all such places as North Carolina, Duke, and Indiana Universities. Manigault at 6'1" is best remembered as a streetball

⁴⁵⁰ Fitzpatrick 105.

player with a 48-52 inch vertical leap who could retrieve a quarter from the top of a backboard.⁴⁵¹

Basketball was conceptualized and executed as a physical activity to keep restless young men from engaging in mischief while they sought refuge indoors during the long New England winters in Springfield, Massachusetts. The game was organically urban from the outset though it obviously had broader appeal beyond densely populated areas. The game from the outset seemed to embrace interracial cooperation. Connie Hawkins, who grew up poverty-stricken and lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant the 1950s, insisted that basketball was his vehicle for mobility and leaving an environment which so many of his contemporaries could not. “We’d go over to Manhattan Beach, where a lot of white kids were,” noted Connie’s brother Earl who often played with him. Manhattan Beach, located in Brooklyn is at the far end of a peninsula surrounded by Sheepshead Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, was virtually a world away from the congested Bed-Stuy where the Hawkins brothers would go looking for a game in an area that could closely resemble paradise.⁴⁵²

On other occasions Hawkins and his friend Billy Cannon who was white would often travel around the more suburban part of Brooklyn looking for pick-up games where he would play against some of the best white players including Billy Cunningham, Anton

⁴⁵¹ Vincent M. Mallozzi, “Earl Manigault, 53 New York City Basketball Legend, Dies,” New York Times, 16 May 1998; Greg Logan, “Charles Scott recalls his journey with Dean Smith to desegregate ACC,” New York Newsday, 8 February 2015; “History of Laurinburg Institute,” 27 March 2015 <<http://laurinburginstitute.org/history/>>; James T. Wooten, “Negro Basketball Star a Hero To Many North Carolina Whites,” New York Times, 22 March 1969: 20; “Wake Forest Sports Hall of Fame 1984 Inductees,” Wake Forest 2011 Men’s Basketball Media Guide (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Wake Forest Department of Athletics, 2011); Streetball is a term to describe the style of play on city playgrounds in which the rules forgo the parameters of the American Amateur Union and professional rule guidelines.

⁴⁵² David Wolf, Foul! The Connie Hawkins Story (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) 31.

Meuhlbauer, and Billy Galantai. The 6'7" Cunningham was by far the most talented. He would lead Erasmus Hall to the PSAL championship in 1961 before heading south to play his college ball at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Galantai after shoring up some academic issues would soon follow. Meuhlbauer competed at North Carolina State in Raleigh. His career tarnished for his role in the 1961 gambling scandal. In regards to his relationship with Cannon, Hawkins noted, "I like Cannon we were friends for years. But I learned we couldn't ever be real close. He was white-and you never know what his friends would do." Hawkins suggests that the social mores of others would determine the depth of his relationship with his white friends.⁴⁵³

Basketball was able to bring people together and cultivate relationships but there were some limitations. The plight of Chris Mullin from Brooklyn, who played collegiately at St. John's underscores the promise of what the game afforded. As an adolescent he studied the moves of two black players, Walt Frazier and Earl Monroe of the New York Knicks. When he got older in the late 1970s, Mullin admittedly traveled when he was fourteen from his home in Flatbush via subway to Harlem and/or the Bronx to compete with the best players in the city who were increasingly becoming Black. Initially, he was viewed like a fish out of water but he let his performance dictate his identity which transgressed racial lines and formed bonds that may not have existed if wasn't for the game and if he didn't have 'game.' Soon thereafter Mullin would hear praise from players saying, "Get that kid back here next week."⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ Wolf 31; Art Chansky, Light Blue Reign: how a quiet Kansas and a Mountain Man built College Basketball's longest running dynasty (New York, New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009) 227.

⁴⁵⁴ Wilbon, 2006; 'Game' is a homonym for talent level within the game of basketball.

The CCNY championship team of 1949-50 was so significant to college basketball because it aesthetically demonstrated that a merit system and interracial cooperation can work and accomplish success at the highest level of competition. In order to demonstrate that to the rest of the country it required homegrown kids from Harlem, the Bronx, and Brooklyn who were part of a culture and system that prepared them for racial and ethnic tolerance. This is what also makes this national accomplishment such a New York City and American story. James Naismith, Theodore Roosevelt, Luther Halsey Gulick, Nat Holman, Jackie Robinson and a cast of others were all instruments in creating this culture that paved the way for this historical accomplishment. All of them brought into a system of change which required a vision that went beyond their respective time period. As a society we should be grateful to them but we owe an even deeper gratitude to Herb Cohen, Irwin Dambrot, Artie Glass, Joe Galiber, Floyd Layne, Seymour Levy, Norm Mager, Larry Meyer, Ronnie Nadell, Ed Roman, Al Roth, Arnie Smith, Ed Warner, Leroy Watkins, and Mike Wittlin for investing in the effort and setting an example of cooperation in the most famous arena and on the biggest stage in college basketball and accomplishing it twice.



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DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

Kay, Philip "'Guttersnipes' and 'Eliterates':City College in the Popular Imagination." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2011.

Rhea, Regan "Teen Obsessions: Competing images of Adolescence in American Culture 1945-1963." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008.

Sciar, Arieh. "A Sport at Which Jews Excel': Jewish Basketball in American Society, 1900-1951." Ph.D. dissertation, Stony Brook University, 2008.

Singleton, Rhonda J. "The Effect assistant coaches have on the success or failure of a Universities woman's basketball Program" Master's Thesis, Seton Hall University, 2003.

SECONDARY SOURCES

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- DeVeaux, Scott Knowles. *Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997.

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Norell, Robert J. *The House I live in: Race in the American Century*. New York, New York: Oxford Press, 2005.

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Thomas, Ron. *They Cleared the Lane: the NBA's Black Pioneers*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

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Tricard, Louise Mead. *American Women's Track and Field*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1996.

Trolander, Judith A. *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975.

Wakefield, Dan. *Island in the City: the World of Spanish Harlem*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1959.

Webb, Bernice Larson. *The Basketball Man: James Naismith*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1973.

Wexler, Jerry and David Ritz. *Rhythm and the Blues: a life in American Music*. New York, New York: Knopf, 1993.

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Wolff, Alexander. *The Audacity of Hoop: Basketball and the Age of Obama*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2016.

Yep, Kathleen S. *Outside the Paint*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2009.

VITA

Arthur Banton

Dissertation Fellow
 Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University
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 Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132
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EDUCATION

Purdue University, West Lafayette (Successfully defended: May 2016)
Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies

Research Fields: United States History since 1865; African American History;
 Urban History and Culture; Sport History and Culture.

Dissertation: Running for Integration: *CCNY and the promise of interracial cooperation through basketball.*

Chair: Susan Curtis (History)

Committee: William Harper (Health & Kinesiology), Cheryl Cooky (Sport Studies), and
 Ronald J. Stephens (African American Studies).

The City College of New York (CUNY)

Master of Arts, History

Research Fields: United States History since 1865; African American History since: 1865;
 Urban History and Sport History.

Master of Fine Arts, Media Arts

Research Fields: Race and Ethnicity in Film; Urban Culture; Documentary Studies

Herbert H. Lehman College of the City University of New York (CUNY)

Bachelor of Arts, Communications

PUBLICATIONS

Encyclopedia Entries:

“Gail Fisher.” *African American National Biography*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks
 Higginbotham. Oxford Press, 2008.

“Wyomia Tyus.” *African American National Biography*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks
 Higginbotham. Oxford Press, 2008.

GRANTS & AWARDS

Fellowships:

- 2015 Minority Dissertation Fellowship, Middle Tennessee State University
 2013 Brooklyn Arts Council Research Fellowship

Grants:

- 2016 PROMISE Award for Excellence in Scholarship (\$750)
 2014 Chester E. Eisinger Research Award (\$500)
 2012 Chester E. Eisinger Research Award (\$1000)
 2001 Brooklyn Council for the Arts; Regrant recipient (\$1500) for documentary:
"Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch."
 (originally titled *Brooklyn to Buffalo*)

Awards:

- 2016 Diversity Scholarship (Honorable Mention) - North American Society for Sport Historians
 2014 The Johnny E. Brown BGSA Membership Award
 2013 The Johnny E. Brown BGSA Membership Award
 2012 Center for Instructional Education – Graduate Teaching Certificate
 Graduate Student Association Membership Award
 2008 College of Liberal Arts Photo Contest – Purdue University
 2007 Angelo B. Proto award
 (Most outstanding graduate assistant in the City University of New York)
 2007 Latino Heritage Month Committee
 Recognition for outstanding contribution, Baruch College
 2007 Women's History Month Committee
 Recognition for outstanding contribution, Baruch College
 2002 Audience award best documentary - Black Hollywood Film Festival
Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee Activities:

- | | | |
|------|---|----------|
| 2015 | Journal of Race & Ethnicity
Reviewer | External |
|------|---|----------|

University Service:

- | | | |
|---------|--|-------------------|
| 2012-14 | Undergraduate Liaison & Historian, APAC ⁴⁵⁵ | Purdue University |
| 2012-14 | Tutor, Intercollegiate Athletics | Purdue University |
| 2011-13 | Undergraduate Outreach Coordinator, BGSA | Purdue University |
| 2009-11 | Historian, Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) | Purdue University |
| 2005-07 | Student Leader Supervisor, Freshman Seminar | Baruch College |
| 2004-07 | Graduate Assistant, Office of Student Life | Baruch College |

⁴⁵⁵ Asian-Pacific American Caucus

Professional Memberships:

American Historical Association
 American Studies Association
 Association of Black Women Historians
 Association for the Study of African American Life and History
 North American Society for Sport History
 Organization for American Historians
 Society for Media and Cinema Studies
 Urban History Association

TEACHING

Undergraduate Courses Taught:

U.S. History Since 1877	Middle Tennessee State	Fall 2015-Spring 2016
History of the American Teenager	Purdue University	Summer 2015
Urban Contemporary Culture	Purdue University	Spring 2015
The African American Athlete	Purdue University	Fall 2013/Summer 2012
African American Popular Culture	Purdue University	Fall 2010 - Spring 2014
Intro. to African American Studies	Purdue University	Fall 2012
African American Cinema	Purdue University	Spring 2010
Freshman Seminar Course	Baruch College	2005-07

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Colloquia & Panel Presentations:

2016

“The street game arrives at the top of mountain” North American Society for Sport Historians
 May 30, 2016, Atlanta, Georgia.

2015

“Basketball, Books, and Brotherhood” paper presented at African American Study of Life and
 History September 25, 2015 Atlanta, Georgia.

2014

“Marketing Multiculturalism” invited speaker, Race and Society,
 Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; April 7, 2014. Monica Trieu, Ph.D.

“Asian Americans in Hip-Hop Culture” invited speaker, Introduction to Asian American Studies,
 Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; February 9, 2014. H. Lee.

2013

“Marketing Multiculturalism” invited speaker, Race and Society, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; November 21, 2013. Monica Trieu, Ph.D.

“Asian Americans in Urban Contemporary Culture” invited speaker, Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association, Morton Community Center, West Lafayette, Indiana; October 22, 2013.

“Where the Girls At: Women and Hip-Hop” invited speaker, University of Indianapolis, Indiana; May 9, 2013. Jamal Ratchford, Ph.D.

2012

“Marketing Multiculturalism” invited speaker, Race and Society, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; November 27, 2012. Monica Trieu, Ph.D.

“Asian Americans in Hip-Hop Culture” invited speaker, Introduction to Asian American Studies, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; November 7, 2012. H. Lee.

“Cultural History of Women in Sports” invited speaker, (WALLA), Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association, Morton Community Center, West Lafayette, Indiana; March 27, 2012.

“Looking for ♥ from the Spectator: Tyler Perry & the Search of Amorous Relationships in Urban Contemporary Cinema” National Council for Black Studies, Atlanta, Georgia; March 8, 2012

“Finding a Home for Asian Americans in American Popular Music” invited speaker, Introduction to Asian American Studies, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; February 16, 2012. H. Lee, Ph.D.

2011

“Tracking Asian Americans in American Popular Music” invited speaker. Introduction to Asian American Studies, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; October 21, 2011.

“Tracking Asian Americans in American Popular Music” invited speaker, Introduction to Asian American Studies, Purdue Univ., West Lafayette, Indiana; April 5, 2011. Lisa Hanasono, Ph.D.

“Marketing Multiculturalism” invited speaker, (WALLA), Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association, Morton Community Center, West Lafayette, Indiana; March 31, 2011.

“A Minefield in the Midwest: Revelations of a New Yorker using Cinema as a vehicle for a discourse on Race”. Paper presented at the State of African American and African Diaspora Studies: Methodology, Pedagogy, and Research; New York, N.Y.; January 7, 2011.

2010

“Asian American Identities in Popular Music” invited speaker, Introduction to Asian American Studies at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; October 26, 2010. Kate Agathon, Ph.D.

“History of African American Cinema” invited speaker, (WALLA), Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association, Morton Community Center, West Lafayette, Indiana; April 5, 2010.

2009

“How She Move: A Snapshot of the History of Women in Sports” presentation at the Women’s Studies Department Lunchtime Lecture Series at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; January 28, 2009.

“The Cover Girls are Black: The Mrs. Michelle Obama Factor and the Reemergence of Black Women in Popular Culture” paper presented at Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Associations meeting, February 28, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

“Play Days to the Olympic Stage: The Ascent of Women’s Track & Field 1896 – 1928” presented at the Popular Culture/American Culture Association Conference, April 8-11, New Orleans, Louisiana.

2007

“The Cultural Politics of Sports” Invited Panelist, Black Cultural Center, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

2005

“Deconstructing Title IX,” *Presentation on Women and Sports*, Lehman College, November 21, Bedford Park, NY.

“Race and Hip-Hop” *panel discussion moderator at the Hip-Hop Music Conference*, Lehman College, October 21, Bedford Park, NY.

“Deconstructing Title IX,” *Presentation on Women and Sports*, Baruch College, March 17, New York, NY,

“Reflections of Latinos in American Cinema.” presentation at the Multicultural Film Series at Baruch College, February 11, New York, NY.

“*Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch.*” Documentary presented at the Multicultural Film Series at Baruch College, February, New York, NY.

“A Question of Color” *moderator with filmmaker Kathe Sandler* presented at the Multicultural Film Series at Baruch College, February, New York, NY.

2004

Challenges of Interracial Dating. Panelist, Columbia University, March, New York, NY.

2003

Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch.

Documentary and presentation on multiracial images in cinema presented at Syracuse University, April, Syracuse, NY.

Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch.

Documentary and lecture presented at Tufts University, March, Boston, MA.

2002

“Fitting into film/Mixing up the Music: Multiracial Images in American ‘Popular’ culture”
Pan-collegiate conference on the mixed-race experience at Cornell University, March, Ithaca, NY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Film Related (Non-Academic):

Producer/Director	“Mixing it up”	1998-2001
Research Assistant	“Citizen King”	2003-04
Independent Producer/Sound designer	Various Film Projects	2003-2006
Film Festival Coordinator	“She Calls the Shots” (Baruch College)	2007

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

2001 Damio, Christi. “Instilling pride for both sides, raising your biracial child.”
Today’s Child, Fall/Winter 2001 p. 43-45

DOCUMENTARIES

2013 Banton, Arthur, Producer, Director *Transgressing Borders and Rethinking Identity*.
AMP Productions, West Lafayette, IN

2011 Banton, Arthur, Producer, Director *Black Graduation Association*
10 year Anniversary Reflection Video. AMP Productions, West Lafayette, IN

2003 Bagwell, Orlando, Producer; Banton, Arthur, Research Assistant.
Citizen King WBGH, Boston, MA

2002 Banton, Arthur, Producer, Director
Mixing it Up: Deconstructing Skin Complexion and Race on the Casting Couch.
AMP Productions, New York, NY