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THE SPORT HERO CONCEPT AND LOUIS CYR

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THROUGH THE FACULTY OF HUMAN KINETICS

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF HUMAN KINETICS AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

BY



DAVID R. NORWOOD

B.P.H.E. UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR, 1971

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THE SPORT HERO CONCEPT AND LOUIS CYR

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the Canadian Sport Hero concept using Louis Cyr 1885 - 1912 as a case study. This analysis then by necessity required investigation of A) the sporting life of Louis Cyr, B) the Sport Hero concept, C) Canadian perceptions of Louis Cyr.

Twenty-one dates representing highlights of Louis Cyr's sporting career were established through secondary sources. A cross-Canada survey of 84 Canadian (French and English) newspapers was used to establish the newsworthiness of these twenty-one dates. It was assumed that newspapers effectively mirror the society from which they are drawn.

Through related literature the Sport Hero concept was delineated as a hierarchial continuum. To facilitate ease of discussion the ends of the continuum were designated Sport Figure and Sport Legend with the Sport Hero falling somewhere in between. The Sport Hero differs from the Figure and Legend by varying degrees of: need, prowess, transmission of information and myth.

Newspaper research established that Louis Cyr was a French-Canadian phenom and was not recognized by Canadians as a whole as anything other than a Sport Figure. In Montreal alone, on the other hand, Cyr was accepted as at least a Sport Hero and perhaps something more. The inculcation of power and strength used for good into the French-Canadian thinking lends itself to Cyr's acceptance as a Cultural Hero in Quebec.

This same research has shown the vast influence the media has had on sport in general and specifically the sport hero concept. This is especially true in Canada with its geographical limitations. In Canada's case this geographical limitation is both topographical and cultural.

The Sport Hero concept in Canada as elsewhere with its limiting temporal and geographical factors remains today in transition.

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CHAPTER I

The seed for this study was planted in a Sport History course taken as an undergraduate student at the University of Windsor. At this time, it was understood that Louis Cyr was an extremely powerful strongman. Not being familiar with any Canadian strongman, my curiosity surrounding this giant intensified. Only casual attempts were made, at this point, to find out more about this unheard of hero. The more that was read, the more perplexing the situation surrounding Cyr was found to be. Cyr appeared to be one of Canada's sporting heroes and yet so little was known about him. Concrete statements like the strongest man in the world, the strongest man that ever lived and Canada's strongest man appeared to be founded in non-referenced ambiguities.

The seed of Cyr germinated over a period of years intensifying my curiosity and interest. Considering Cyr a potential source for a Masters thesis, it was decided to investigate a little more thoroughly. The logical source of information on a Canadian Sport Hero was the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. My inquiries to the Hall of Fame requesting information on Cyr were returned stating they had no information on Cyr. It was with something more than mild bewilderment that Cyr was viewed as a Canadian Sports Hero, recognized by a National Sports Hall

of Fame, who had little or no background. The curator of the Hall of Fame did however suggest that since they had no information on Cyr, Ben Weider's book The Strongest Man in History "Amazing Canadian" should be read. Weider's book did provide interesting new insights into the career of Cyr through recounting incidents and performances. Unfortunately, and further perplexing was the lack of academic credibility that is afforded many historical works through use of footnotes and references. With my attention drawn to this glaring academic omission a response was requested of Mr. Weider through the mail. My inquiries were quickly followed by this reply:

As far as I know, this is all the information I have about Louis Cyr. I did research, I spoke to his descendants and did everything possible to make the book as complete as possible.¹

While this reply did little to enhance my research endeavours on this project, it did succeed in further piquing my interest and curiosity. As questions surrounding Cyr and his exploits increased at every turn, so too did questions regarding his place in the Canadian Sport Hero hierarchy as well as the more general questions regarding the Canadian Sport Hero.

It readily becomes apparent that understanding Louis Cyr, the Sport Hero, involves directly an understanding of Cyr, his athletic career and the Canadian Sports Hero concept. Since Cyr was purported to be a Canadian Sport Hero and was a member of the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, study of the two above mentioned areas seems inexorably entwined. At the same time

recognition must be given to the fact that what Cyr was acclaimed to be and what he actually was may be two totally different things. Only by researching Canadians perceptions of Cyr during this time period can conclusions be drawn regarding Cyr's position in the Sport Hero concept.

It is not possible then, to study the whole, without studying the three parts. The three parts in this instance being:

1. Sporting career of Louis Cyr
2. Sport hero concept
3. Canadian perceptions of Louis Cyr.

This results in three distinct focii. The first and most general focus is the opportunity to further enlighten a very sketchy and poorly referenced history of a 'great' Canadian. Of the books on Cyr by Jowett,² Mongin³ or Weider^{4,5,6} footnotes or references are nonexistent hence establishing little if any academic credibility. The Canadian Sports Hall of Fame while recognizing Cyr as a "Sport Hero" can provide only minimal background on this person. It is only infrequently that we find specific dates and places mentioned dealing with Cyr's life and then from a wide variety of sources. An interview with Dr. Gerald Aumont, Cyr's grandson, provided an opportunity to view Cyr's scrapbook listing numerous newspaper and magazine articles from a wide collection of newspaper sources. Unfortunately, this appears to be the only "complete" source of Cyr's exploits and his background.

The second focus of this paper deals with the concept of the Sports Hero. Underlying any understanding of this concept must be an understanding of a hero. As Hook states in The Hero

in History the concept of the hero is as old as history and:

The role of the great man in history is not only a practical problem but one of the most fascinating theoretical questions of historical analysis.

The fact that the hero concept is a very old concept would seem to infer that there is a need or a reason for the concept to exist. Fishwick in The Hero American Style states that "Heroes are mirrors of the times"⁸ and that

Every hero mirrors the time and place in which he lives. He must reflect men's innermost hopes and beliefs in a public way.⁹

Inherent in our understanding of the need for heroes is the understanding that needs change as the times change. Hence, the study of changing heroes necessarily illustrates the changing times. Several examples exist that clearly show the vastness of differing Hero roles and therefore illustrate differing times. Inherently, the change can be seen in the work of T. Carlyle, the renowned historian. Carlyle broke the concept of the hero into six specific types of heroes. They are as follows:

- The Hero as Divinity
- The Hero as Prophet
- The Hero as Poet
- The Hero as Priest
- The Hero as Man of Letters
- The Hero as King¹⁰.

More pointed in exemplification of changing needs and hence changing roles of the hero are Fishwick's words:

in classic times heroes were god-man; in the Middle Ages, God-men; in the Renaissance, universal men; in the eighteenth century gentlemen; in the nineteenth, self made men.¹¹

In addition, Ouimette in Reason Aflame Unamuno and the Heroic Will states that the hero, in pre-Homeric Greece referred principally

to the distinguished dead.¹²

Research of literature on the topic would tend to indicate that the hero existed for a specific reason or need. This reason or need would necessarily be controlled by the times and hence understanding of the need for a hero must be tempered with discernment of the times surrounding the hero.

Changing times may with varying degrees depending on those times, affect change in the reason or need for heroes. From a much larger perspective these same changing times may affect many different parts of the culture. The twentieth century has seen vast advancements in the fields of mass communication. This change did not necessarily occur just because the times changed but rather as a result of many interrelating causes. The beginning of the twentieth century saw heavy growth in urban areas, in industrialization and in sport. These may be only a few of the possible reasons for this change at this time.

Entwined with our understanding of the hero is the necessity to understand the transmission of information regarding these heroes. In primitive settings man would have transmitted information by sound, sign language or crude drawings. Later, he learned to communicate by word of mouth using song and story telling as vehicles to impart his information. As technology progressed modes of transmission progressed to include the written word and film. It can be readily recognized that the stage of growth of information transmission systems would then have a direct and immediate effect upon the hero concept. As more and more modern information transmission systems became devised and

implemented, communication systems became increasingly based in fact. This is not to infer that the information will necessarily be more accurate. With a greater number of information systems, increased numbers of potential heroes may be dealt with. The type of information revealed about these potential heroes to this increased clientele has its basis in statistical fact whether it be factual or somehow distorted. In addition, the concept of the modern hero has the increased capability of being transmitted over much larger and more diverse population settings. Earlier systems like word of mouth transmission because of high incidence of distortion and exaggeration, did create an aura of myth surrounding the person or incident in question. Kerenyi in The Heroes of the Greeks states that information relating to early heroes is very closely related to myths and hence part of history.¹³

Dumeyil expands on this when he states "A land that has no more legends, says the poet, is condemned to die of cold. This may be true. But a people without myths is already dead."¹⁴ Early methods of transmitting information while largely by word of mouth, would then be conducive to the distortion and exaggeration of fact and hence creation of myth.

The temporal aspect of the hero, as shown, has far reaching ramifications. Not only is the need for the hero altered over time, but the system of passing on information of the hero may change. If there is change in the communication system the results are the potential change in the mythical qualities surrounding the hero.

In considering this temporal limitation of the hero,

recognition must be given to the many and varied forms it may follow. This time limitation may run the gamut from minutes through years and on to centuries. The duration of a specific time limit follows no set pattern and hence may vary from incident to incident. The individual scoring the tie breaking goal in an overtime hockey game between Canada and Russia might just as easily be classified a hero as the individual scoring four thousand goals as a life time record. The need for an example of physical prowess of both of these individuals may be comparable as might the degree of transmission of information on both. The basic discrepancy, not to say there aren't others, is the temporal limitation. In one case the time line may be the duration of a series, perhaps 6 weeks long, while the other time line may cover a period of 10 years.

Adding to the complexity of this limitation is the fact that the time limitations used as examples above, may vary from one point in time to another. Responsible to a significant degree for the variation within variation is the degree of need, prowess, myth and information transmission. If those individuals who are capable of influencing decisions regarding acceptance or rejection as a hero feel strongly enough about the characteristics establishing the hero, the temporal limitation may be fluctuated accordingly. Heroes of a short temporal limitation are accordingly forgotten or dismissed after a short period of time. Conversely heroes of a long temporal limitation are generally remembered and held in esteem for longer periods of times. Even heroes of long temporal limitation diminish after a time if renewed efforts are not made

to transmit information of their exploits to the public. What initially appears as a straight forward temporal limitation readily presents itself as a multi-leveled limitation.

Equally simplistic upon cursory viewing and equally complex upon further perusal is the geographical limitation. The general need for this limitation can be founded in Otto Rank's statement that the glorification of heroes at a national level included Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Hindus, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Teutons.¹⁵ Hence, while geographical limitations upon the hero are generally interpreted nationalistically they may refer to many different types of settings. The size of the setting may be as small as a group of 4 or 5 people, or the size of a neighbourhood or city and ultimately as large as the world with infinite levels within these extremes. This geographical limitation may as it infers refer to nationalistic or political boundaries or boundaries established by the topography of the land. These divisions may also however, refer in some respect to some form of cultural diversity i.e. ethnicity, language. Interpretation of this limitation is to some degree effected by the changing temporal limitation.

Also similar to the temporal limitation is the ramifications of the geographical limitations upon transmission of information regarding the hero. Again, as above we must consider the interpretation of a geographical limitation in terms of communication. Nationalistic, political, topographical and cultural boundaries may all in their own way alter information systems. Naturally, the more expansive or diverse the nationalistic,

political, topographical and cultural boundaries the greater the possibility for limitation. At the same time, the special significance of the changing times must be realized as a critical variable in the geographical setting. In more modern times technological advancements in communication have made significant inroads in overcoming many geographical limitations.

Having established a somewhat broader base of understanding of the Hero, consideration should now be given to the Sport Hero. Simplistically stated, it can be said that the Sport Hero is basically nothing more than a Hero in the sporting arena. Increasingly however, this concept proves unsatisfactory.

It could be argued that a Hero was a cultural figure and therefore became a Cultural Hero. If an individual's area of expertise lay in sports he became primarily a Cultural Hero and secondly a Sport Hero. Sport was nothing more than one aspect of a person's culture or life. To some, it was an essential and important aspect of their life, while to others it maintained little significance. The result was a predominance of the cultural definition of the figure over the sport definition. Something occurred, however, prior to the turn of the twentieth century, which was to alter this perspective.

Industrial growth in Canada at this time provided one of the essential ingredients to the development of sport. This essential ingredient was leisure time which provided opportunity for recreation. Also significant was the growth of urbanization which was a natural extension of industrialization. With time to play and increased numbers to provide competition Sport took on

a new dimension within the culture. This dimension grew to the extent that it can justifiably be considered a sub-culture. As a sub-culture Sport grew rapidly and perhaps for the first time Sport Heroes truly developed. Logically, the growth of the Sport Hero was paralleled by growth of Sport, urbanization and industrialization. The Sport Hero in Canada can rightly be perceived as a relatively modern phenomenon. Resulting from this modern phenomenon is the plausibility of an established Sport Figure becoming primarily a Sport Hero and secondly a Cultural Hero. It is also quite conceivable that one individual could be perceived by some as only a Sport Hero and by others as only a Cultural Hero.

Part of the technological advancements made as a result of industrialization was the development of better means of communication. Newspapers, especially of late, offer a much closer in-depth look at many who we have traditionally held in high esteem. The institutions controlling communication networks such as newspapers are unavoidably linked to humanistic qualities and therefore run the risk of not only communicating information but also of producing information to communicate. There appears many times to be mythical qualities surrounding heroes/sport heroes and perhaps it is the modern methods of investigation and communication that rip away this veneer of myth baring only ordinary people. This very idea is at the heart of Smith's article "The Sport Hero: An Endangered Species."¹⁶ In his article Smith states:

One hundred years ago when there was a paucity of mass communication, myth making was easy, for it was difficult to refute stories about athletic heroes. When mass communications started to cover sporting events, they continued to

preserve the sanctity of the athletic hero. Comments either written or spoken about athletes seldom were objective, they served only to patronize and glorify the athlete. Often the mass media created heroes out of athletes who were less than deserving. Babe Ruth, for example, was one of the most celebrated sports heroes of all time, but as Schecter (1970) observes, "Ruth had an undisciplined appetite for food, whisky and women [p. 119]." Schecter goes on to say that "little of this was available to the contemporary public. The Babe was thoroughly protected by the news media [p. 119]." 17

The present-day media system has the potential for in-depth, same day coverage of most incidents around the world. As a result, potential heroes are closely scrutinized and any possible faults highlighted and expanded upon.¹⁸ An example of such close scrutiny is a book review by Cecil Jennings called "Semi-Cannonization of a Sports Hero" which appeared in the Globe and Mail magazine section. The review indicates none too subtly that the reviewer has little sympathy for the author's attempts at establishing a sports spectacular where in fact there is none. The subject of the book is Rusty Staub of the Expos and attempts to catapult Staub into the Sport Hero classification.¹⁹ More important than this attempt to produce a sport hero is the admission that this was common practice in the past. Sport magazine editorialized this concept more clearly when it stated:

It is true that for many years "Sport" along with the rest of the world treated the big name athlete in a Frank Merriwell fashion. We were all content to dote on his statistics, on what he ate for breakfast, on his serene home life, on his virtues as a man. And we overlaid the portrait with a heavy helping of pancake makeup, lest any blemishes peek through.²⁰

At the heart of the Sport Hero are the same basic factors and limitations which govern the Hero. If however, hero concept

is looked at, as some do, in terms of death following battle then sport becomes a surrogate for war and battle. While certainly lacking the hero's finality, the Sport Hero serves a very similar function. Smith expresses this importance when he states:

As a child grows up he sees his older male models attending sporting events, watching games on television and reading about sports in magazines and newspapers. With so much attention devoted to sport the child soon learns that sport is important and worthwhile. This idea is further reinforced at school, as certain times are set aside for sports competitions and sport often becomes the focal point for student activity. The better athletes in the school are glorified and receive many rewards as a result of this status. Although only a few students actually can garner the rewards of heroic status, the rest receive vicarious pleasure²¹ through watching their athletic counterparts perform.

Keeping in mind that the need for the hero changes as the times change, Smith feels that while there is still the great need for the hero, the models that are available are becoming less and less exemplary.²² The results of this are what Klapp in Collective Search for Identity calls celebrated heroes. Klapp uses this definition for those people whom he says are not especially good "but only someone who realizes dreams for people that they cannot do for themselves."²³ What can be seen as a result, is that it is very difficult to establish who is something less than a hero, who is a hero and who is something more than a hero.

The terms hero and legend are used by many geographical, ethnic, social and professional groupings and have been for centuries. The results of widespread use have been many divergent definitions as to what these terms mean. It can also be found

that as the times change, so too do these definitions change, at least to some degree.

It has been the practice of the modern physical educators to view sport heroes and sport legends in terms of the hero and legend in sport. To these points, they have further embellished their definition depending upon their academic bent (psychology, sociology, history, philosophy, etc.). Hence the terms Sport Hero and Sport Legend have remained nebulous terms as have Heroes and Legends.

Our specific society places our heroes, sport heroes, legends and sport legends in very high esteem. Such high esteem in fact that a great deal of media coverage in all forms is permitted to transmit to the public the latest exploits of our honoured ones. The media plays such an active role in this transmission that some feel the role has changed from transmitter to producer.

In the case of an athletic personality, the sports section of newspapers and magazines is the instrumental tool in forming a hero. And more often than not, the image of a sports hero that a periodical forms is the one which is most compatible with its readers.

Obviously, the media is much more prevalent in our modern society, but to what degree it influences or determines our morals and values is increasingly being questioned. Some writers are inferring in their work that the quantity of heroes is decreasing and therefore a relationship may exist between this decrease and the increase in media communication. In discussing the apparent reasons for numerical reductions of Sport Heroes Smith states:

Another reason for the loss of interest in sports heroes is that there are just too many sports and too many teams for people to follow. The overall growth of sport has had a benumbing effect on fans. Who can keep the perpetually expanding and reorganizing leagues straight, let alone the athletes and the tidal wave of related statistics? A further consequence of sport expansion is that there are too many good performers. It is difficult to distinguish between the great player, the record holder and the good player.²⁵

We are presently in an era of specialization, where the media has microscopically focused on potential heroes and legends and have combined with specialized physical educators looking at athletes from a very narrow perspective. The results have provided the public with many questions regarding what in fact is a hero and what does one have to do to become one. This question becomes especially significant in terms of the Canadian Sports Hero.

If, as Smith²⁶ suggests, the number of heroes is declining, might we not infer that for some reason we do not need heroes any more and if this is true, why not. As with most historical research, one hopes that viewing the past and the present will show some direction as to future trends.

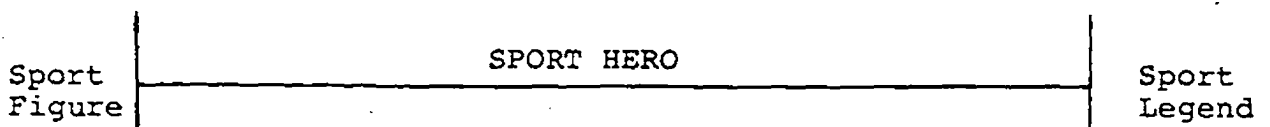
In terms of any Canadian Sport Hero consideration must be given to the uniqueness of Canada. Most obvious in its uniqueness is the vastness and diversity of its geographical setting. Equally important but perhaps not so obvious is the diversity of ethnicity. Most noticeable in this ethnic diversity is the existence of large English and French cultures. Since Canada has a large segment of French-speaking Canadians, their perceptions may be totally different from English-speaking Canadians. This may or may not stem directly from their or our

ancestral background and heritage. Much has been made of late of French-English discrepancies creating unfavourable feelings for both segments. Studying Cyr and the Sport Hero concept provides us with a unique opportunity to look at one such apparent discrepancy. What may on the surface appear to be a French-English difference may in fact prove to be a geographical or perhaps even socio-economic difference. If this is, in fact, the truth of the matter and if sport is a reflection of the society, then perhaps insight can be gained into what some in society view as a serious French-English problem.

In looking, in general, at the hero as a "mirror of the times" the opportunity arises to study the past through the lives of our heroes.

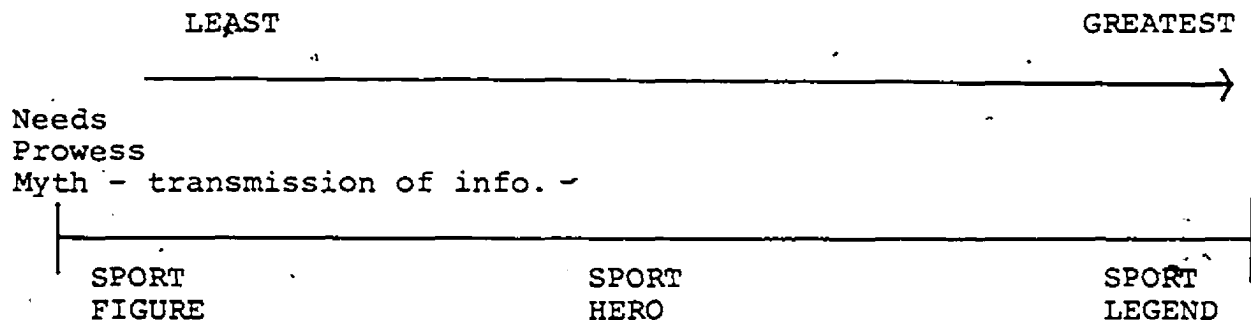
It can easily be seen that the major thrust of this paper involves the Hero/Sport Hero and the Hero/Sport Hero concept.

The Hero/Sport Hero concept is a natural outcome of the difficulty in establishing individual's status as a Hero/Sport Hero. This concept places individuals on a hierarchial continuum. In order to facilitate discussion and add dimension and definition the extremities of the continuum have been labeled Sport Figure and Sport Legend. The following represents a model of the concept.



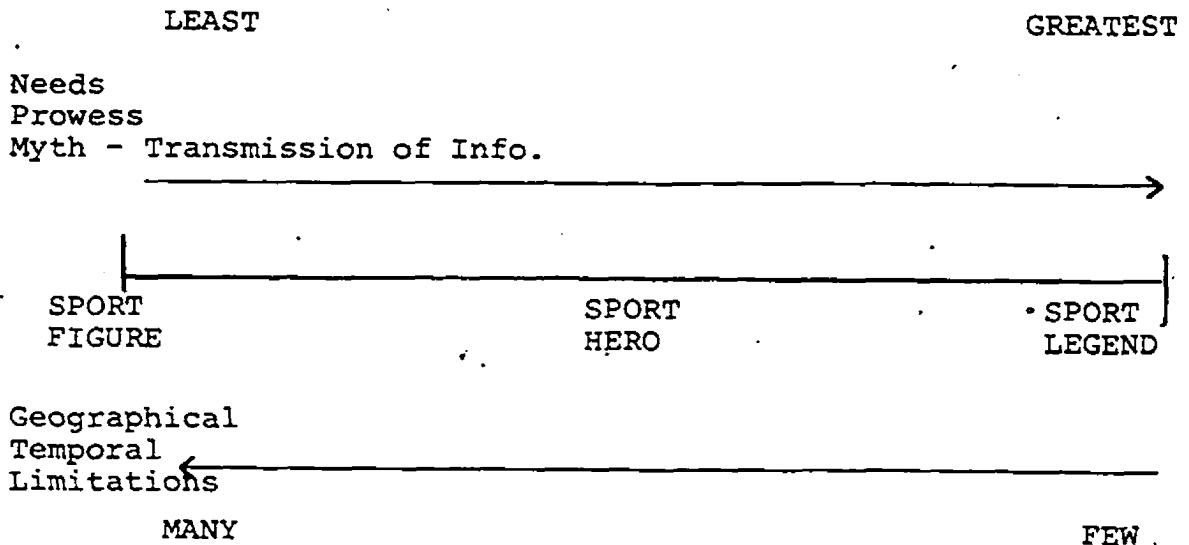
Central to all three of these classifications are: a need, a level of prowess, an aura of mythology and the transmission of

information regarding the hero. It is only the degree of each of these that enables distinction between them. The need for each classification by and large is generally dictated by groups within the society who exercise some degree of control over this society. The result of this need are characteristics which the populace may consistently identify. The level of prowess is provided solely by the participant. The aura of mythology deals not only with the kind of information, whether it be fact or fiction, but also the system over which the information is transmitted. All three of these characteristics may work independently of each other but more often than not they work together and parallel to the continuum.



Included in any consideration of research of this concept must be temporal and geographical limitations. It is as a result of these two essential limiting factors that a multitude of levels of study can occur. Generally speaking these two factors while paralleling the continuum work the reverse of the three main characteristics. In most instances the Sport Legend surpasses

much of the temporal and geographical limitations. The Sport Figure on the other hand generally is found in a very limited temporal and/or geographical setting.



Looking at individual parts of the continuum the most basic level is the Sport Figure. The Sport Figure is an individual who has achieved some degree of notoriety or success due to his/her prowess. There are generally many occurrences of Sport Figures and each occurrence is limited by very strict temporal and geographical limitations. The need for this persons prowess may be very immediate even to the extent of one special deed or performance. Classic, in a modern example, is the hockey player who scores a tie breaking goal to win the game. Because the basis for the attainment of this status is generally one incident, little opportunity arises for the creation of myth. This person may or may not be a sport hero.

The Sport Hero is the key to this concept with the Sport

Figure and Sport Legend being centred on an understanding of the hero/sport hero. The Sport Hero by necessity is also a Sport Figure but of much greater proportions. These proportions may be of such magnitude that they may encompass far greater temporal and geographical limitations. In order to encompass these two limitations to a greater extent increased transmission of information is required. To a large degree, the increase in transmission of information regarding the individual is directly proportional to the need of the populace. What generally results from this need is the development of a characteristic which becomes consistently identifiable across the temporal and geographical limitations. The increase in information communicated about the individual takes on a necessary mythical quality if transmitted by word of mouth. The identifiable characteristic, whether it be mythical, real or a little of both is generally transmitted over the life span of the hero and/or the life span of those who are aware of or have witnessed personally his/her exploits.

The Sport Legend is necessarily a Sport Hero and therefore automatically a Sport Figure. This individual has a consistently identifiable characteristic but does not appear to be as limited in its transmission across temporal and geographical limitations to the same degree as does the Sport Hero. The mythical aura surrounding this individual would be on a much higher plane than would the aura of the Sport Hero. Similar to the Sport Hero is the populace's need for Sport Legends. Quite dissimilar, however, is the degree or level of quality extracted

for inclusion into this rarified status of Legend.

Incorporation of the Sport Legend into this study would necessitate great research across a broad spectrum of time and geography and hence was deemed impractical in this instance. Since Louis Cyr is recognized by the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame as a Canadian Sport Hero the major thrust of this paper will be directed towards the Sport Hero.

At the third level of focus of this paper is the specific concern of Cyr as a Canadian Sport Hero. In looking at this concept we must examine the Canadian people's perceptions of Cyr across Canada. Cyr's claim to fame came from his exhibitions of strength. Could it equally be claimed that he was an entertainer and performer and not an athlete? Could his exhibitions of strength be questioned as sport? Cyr's followers were a complex grouping as Cyr was born in Quebec but moved to the United States. After several years Cyr and his family returned to Montreal but by this time he spoke better English than French. His performances to a large part appear to have been family performances which included his wife, his daughter and several of his brothers. It is not clear as to the ethnicity of his followers, but it is evident that he had strong backing from Montrealers. In looking at the authors of the books written solely on Cyr, it becomes apparent that all of them are directly or indirectly linked to Montreal. Many of the articles on Cyr appear to originate in Montreal or are written by Montrealers. It is obvious that Cyr toured extensively in Canada, the United States, England and Europe and was well received in most of the places he visited. Upon his

death however, the city of Montreal virtually closed while other areas of the country paid little recognition to this sad event. This discrepancy may be further heightened by Jowett's comment:

The death of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Canada's most brilliant statesman and the man acclaimed by the world as the most brilliant orator of this generation, did not receive the same homage as paid to all that was left mortal, of the great souled Louis Cyr. It was the greatest and most magnificent spectacle ever seen in Montreal where the magnitude of magnificence is outrivaled.²⁸

The picture that has been presented is one of Cyr, recognized by Montrealers as a giant. The question that is immediately raised is that if Cyr was of such enormous physical and social stature, why does he not appear to be equally recognized across the rest of Canada. The analysis of Canadian wide perceptions of Cyr may provide a solution to this perception problem.

The specific purpose of this study is to analyze the Canadian Sport Hero using Louis Cyr 1885-1912 as a case study. This analysis will be established largely by comparing what Louis Cyr did and was to how Canadians perceived him. Canadian perceptions of Cyr will be gleaned from (84) newspapers across Canada in both French and English. It is assumed that newspapers offer a mirror of societal or cultural perceptions and to some degree effect changes in perceptions in the area where the newspaper was published. It must be understood at the outset that the newspaper business is a financial framework and depends upon clients who sponsor the information that they print. If this information becomes extreme to the point that the public is distressed, then the newspaper will lose its clients.²⁹ Hence, through necessity the newspaper prints that information which the

public will accept. It can be extrapolated from this that information found in the newspaper is basically acceptable or in keeping with the public's morals and values. It should also be recognized that:

The communications media reflect most accurately the societal views of a given culture; and institutions within that society are accorded space and time in media in relation to the importance of those institutions to viewers and readers.³⁰

Also to be assumed is that the dates chosen for newspaper research from Cyr's career represent in part the highlights of Cyr's profession. These dates as delimited by this writer are as follows:

- 1883 - Toured Moncton, New Brunswick
- 1885 - March 17 in Quebec - Championship of America
 - Sept. 23 - Cyr captured 3 toughs while on the Montreal Police Force
- 1886 - contest against Richard Pennell
- 1888 - October 1 - Exhibition at Quebec. Platform lift.
- 1889 - January 19 - Royal Aquarium Theatre in London.
 - ↳ - November 2 - Exhibition at St. Henri de Montreal.
- 1890 - December 5 - New York
- 1891 - September 20 - At Sohmer Park, resisted pull of 4 horses
 - October 28 - Against Cyclops. Refused to compete against Cyr.
 - December 20 - At Sohmer Park, resisted pull of 4 horses
- 1892 - January 19 - Royal Aquarium Theatre before Prince of Wales
- 1893 - March 10 - In Windsor, Ont., resisted pull of 4 horses

- 1894 - Sohmer Park. Platform lift
- 1895 - May 27 - In Boston Museum of Austin and Stones
- 1896 - May 7 - In Chicago in St. Louis arena. 10 Records
- 1897 - Exhibition at Austin and Stones in Boston. Last record
- 1901 - March 25 - Challenged by Beaupre in a wrestling match
- 1906 - February 26 - Against Hector Decairie at Sohmer Park
- 1912 - November 10 - Died.

Only the newspaper perceptions acquired from the above dates will be considered for this study. Also a delimiting factor in the research of cross Canada newspapers is this researcher's limited working knowledge of the French language. It should be recognized at this juncture that certain elements within this study are beyond the control of this writer. First and foremost Dr. Gerald Aumont and his daughter, both of Montreal, are the only living relatives of Louis Cyr. Of significant consideration is the fact that very little documentation of Cyr and his exploits may exist. Equally important is the scarcity of any of the material that does exist.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this project can be viewed on three different levels. Firstly the establishment or delineation of Louis Cyr's sporting career. Secondly the establishment of factors affecting the Canadian people's perceptions of Sport figures and heroes and lastly the evaluation of these perceptions as to Cyr's inclusion as a sport figure and sport hero.

The establishment of twenty-one dates representing the highlights of Louis Cyr's career was obtained through both

primary and secondary sources on Cyr.

The substantiation of the determinants affecting people's perceptions of sport figures and sport heroes was accomplished through the perusal of material available on heroes, legends, sport heroes and sport legends.

The last and most complex level, dealing with Canadian perceptions of Cyr, was accomplished by a cross-Canada (French and English) newspaper survey of the dates established as highlights to Cyr's career. Following the complete survey the list of twenty-one (21) dates was narrowed to ten (10) confirmed and reliable dates. These ten (10) dates became the basis of analysis for the remainder of the study (Appendix A). Information gleaned from newspapers carrying news of Cyr's exploits on these dates will be called affirmative responses and were recorded on a specific survey sheet (Appendix B). One survey sheet was used for each date surveyed in each newspaper. In recognizing transmission time of information from the source of the exploit to the source of the newspaper, each survey was allowed a specific time structure. All weekly newspapers were surveyed two (2) full weeks after the date of the exploit. In the eventuality that the exploit fell on a newspaper night then this issue including the next two issues are surveyed. Daily newspapers were surveyed for eleven (11) full days following the date of the exploit. Each survey sheet was structured to record both qualitative and quantitative data from affirmative responses.

To qualify as a Sport Hero, Cyr must be in articles across the country containing an identifiable characteristic.

The characteristic may come out in an editorial comment on Cyr within an article.

To qualify as a Sport Figure, Cyr must show athletic prowess that is acceptable to the public across the country. This process can be best determined by his standing records and his newsworthiness. Newsworthiness will be measured quantitatively and lack of coverage may also be interpreted as a negative quantitative value. Quantitatively, perceptions will be evaluated on the following basis:

1. The existence or lack of articles

Qualitative perceptions will be evaluated on the following basis:

1. Length of the column of the article
2. Number of columns of the article
3. Position of article in the paper
4. Position of article on the page
5. Article on subject not related to area of specialization
6. Article accompanied by photo or sketch
7. Steps toward immortalization (statue, street, building, town).

Cyr's inclusion as a Sport Figure and Sport Hero will be based upon the analysis of newspaper perceptions of Cyr and his performances. The Canadian newspapers surveyed (Appendix C) provide cross-sectionalization of the three areas of concern:

1. French and English newspapers across Canada
2. French and English newspapers across Quebec
3. French and English newspapers across Montreal

The Uniterm System of Coordinate Index: a desk top information and retrieval system was used to facilitate information storage and retrieval.³¹

FOOTNOTES

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3. M. Mongins. La Legende de Louis Cyr. (Montreal: Edition Beauchemin, 1958).
4. Ben Weider. Les Hommes Forts Du Quebec. (Montreal: Editions du Jour, 1973).
5. Ben Weider. Louis Cyr, L'Homme Le Plus Fort Du Monde. (Montreal: Mediabec Inc., 1976).
6. Ben Weider. The Strongest Man in History "Amazing Canadian." (Newark, N.J.: Selco Inc., 1976).
7. Sidney Hook. The Hero in History. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1943), p. 14.
8. Marshall Fishwick. The Hero American Style. (New York: David McKay Co. Inc., 1969), p. 2.
9. Ibid., p. 9.
10. T. Carlyle. Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History. (New York: Scribner, Welford and Co., 1872), p. 1.
11. Fishwick. Hero American Style. p.5.
12. Victor Ouimette. Reason Aflame Unamuno and the Heroic Will. (London: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 1.
13. C. Kerényi. The Heroes of the Greeks. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1959), p. 1.
14. Georges Duménil. The Destiny of the Warrior. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 3.
15. Otto Rank. The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and other Writings. (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 1.
16. Gary Smith. "The Sport Hero: An Endangered Species," Quest, (1973).
17. Ibid., p. 69.
18. "On the Difficulty of Being a Contemporary Hero." Time, June 1966, p. 32.

19. "Semi-Canonization of A Sports Hero" Toronto Globe and Mail Magazine. 4 September 1971, p. 14.
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21. Ibid. p. 63.
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23. O. E. Klapp. Collective Search for Identity. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1969), p. 214.
24. R. Roberts. "Jack Dempsey: An American Hero in the 1920's" Sport Sociology: Contemporary Themes (Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1976), p. 45.
25. Smith. "The Sport Hero: An Endangered Species." p. 69.
26. Smith. "The Sport Hero: An Endangered Species." p. 69.
27. Interview with Dr. Gerald Aumont. Grandson of Louis Cyr. Montreal, Quebec, 29 August 1979.
28. Jowett. Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived." p. 164.
29. G. Smith and C. Blackman. Sport in the Mass Media. CAHPER Sociology of Sport Monography Series, (University of Calgary: 1978), p. 56.
30. B. Schrodt. "Changes in the Status of Women's Sports in Canada as Reflected by Newspaper Coverage." Unpublished paper (Edmonton: 1975), p. 1.
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CHAPTER II

The Life and Career of Louis Cyr

Louis Cyr was born Noe-Cyprien Cyr on October 10, 1863 in a small village outside Montreal called Saint Cyprien de Napierville (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY). So began the life of one of French Canada's most interesting and celebrated Canadians. Noe-Cyprien weighing eighteen (18) pounds at birth was the oldest of seventeen (17) children in a traditional French-Canadian family. Noe's father was a farmer-butcher of ordinary stature but his mother was a very large woman. Philomene Berger Verronneau, before marrying Noe's father, was over six (6) feet and weighed approximately two hundred and sixty-seven (267) pounds. It is said by many that Cyr obtained his stature as an inheritance from his mother. Mme. Cyr was not just large in stature but also very strong. She was reputed to have easily been able to "climb a barn ladder carrying a hundred-pound grain sack on each shoulder."² Being part of a large family Mme. Cyr was called on more than once to maintain discipline in the Cyr household. One such incident involved Pierre Cyr who was later to become a successful boxer. At age 20 and in his prime Pierre became involved in an argument with a close friend in the Cyr home. The argument came to be out of control and Pierre attempted to assault his friend. Mme. Cyr, fearing trouble, intervened on behalf of Pierre's friend.

The following transpired according to Pierre:

At that time I was very strong, said Pierre and other than Louis, there was not one man in the village I was afraid of. But when mother grabbed me by the shoulders and struck me against the wall, I was helpless . . . Moreover she not only had pinned me to the wall but raised me off the floor at the same time . . . I cried with rage but she held me anyway.³

Jowett in his book *The Strongest Man That Ever Lived* implies that Mme. Cyr was perhaps not a unique French-Canadian mother. His statements infer that Mme. Cyr was in fact typical of women at this time in French Canada. This idea comes out most clearly in his statement

Being women of steel fibre, they equaled their warrior husbands in withstanding hardships. Such was her race and, probably she was the last of her kind. Many a tree fell before the onslaught of her axe as the land was cleared and winter fuel brought in.⁴

While there is an obvious relationship and connection between Mme. Cyr's stature and strength and her sons, there is also to be considered Cyr's paternal heritage. Looking back at Noe-Cyprien Cyr's ancestors we are told his great grandfather was purported to be over six feet one inch (6'1") tall and that he lived to the age of one hundred and two (102). The grandfather of Cyr was purported to be six feet one inch (6'1") and the strongest man in the region. This grandfather in younger years had followed the tradition of the courier de bois and had been a trapper and hunter.⁵ Being a traditionally close French-Canadian family Cyr's grandfather was an important and influential member of the clan. Much of Cyr's early childhood was spent listening to his grandfather's tales reliving feats for which the grandfather was celebrated in the village. These tales were

always about high adventure and strength. As Cyr became older his grandfather took an increasingly active role in educating him. It was not uncommon for the two Cyrs to walk for hours with the grandfather telling story after story. With old age steadily creeping closer, the grandfather turned to the village blacksmith to illustrate to his grandson Noe-Cyprien what strength was all about. Many hours were spent near the forge with grandfather Cyr watching the powerful blacksmith work and perform.⁶ Needless to say a very close and lasting relationship developed between Noe-Cyprien and his grandfather. Whether conscious or not the grandfather was passing on to his grandson the tradition and heritage with which he was most familiar. This heritage appeared to be centered on strength and extending to areas such as eating habits in relation to strength and use of strength for goodness. This heritage may be summed up by grandfather Cyr's comment to young Noe-Cyprien, "If you are strong you are everything! If you are not strong, you are nothing."⁷ The death of his grandfather was coincidental with Noe-Cyprien's entrance to school both of which were considerable shocks to the youth. Young Noe-Cyprien soon learned that his grandfather had been his protector as well as his educator. His first day at school reminded him of this fact as he had to stand up for himself. Not only did he become the champion of classmates his own age but also of those much older than himself. His grandfather's training and advice had paid its first dividends. Of equal importance was his teacher's discovery of his "natural" ability in telling stories. This ability continued over his

life span and may be directly related to his grandfather's story telling.⁸ Interestingly enough Cyr's grandson, Dr. Gerald Aumont, recalled many sessions where he sat on his grandfather's (Louis Cyr) lap and was told stories.⁹

The economy of Quebec at this time was highly agrarian with work in lumber and pulp and paper very important. The French Canadian was then "basically a countryman."¹⁰ Wise in his article on French-Canadian class and sport states that "Among French Canadians feats of strength and endurance connected to the occupations of a rural people were prized."¹¹ When Wise analyzed the work by Massicotte on giants of the past, two threads ran throughout. These threads were:

a veneration for power, muscularity, and amazing feats of endurance, and a depiction of the characteristic Canadian folk-hero, who by demonstrations of immense strength or by the terror of his wrath (though calm, dignified, and slow to anger) abashes and dismays the bullies of another race,¹² thus testifying to the virtue and hardihood of his people.

Historically, the French Canadian has been negative towards education and this is partially due to his remaining "fettered by traditions rooted in medieval and even ancient folklores."¹³ It is obvious that these traditions and belief in folklores have shaped the way of life of the French Canadian.

In concluding a very cursory look at the French Canadian during this time period special significance is taken on by Wises' comments that

the values of fortitude, toughness, and endurance so central to the traditional popular culture of French Canada have a significance and merit an investigation - transcending the humble realm of sport.¹⁴

At age twelve (12) due mostly to financial need but also lack of interest in his studies Noe-Cyprien decided to quit school and go to work. Other than establishing himself as a champion at school, Noe-Cyprien had done nothing outstanding to establish himself. Weider relates an initial incident that was to be typical of many in Cyr's lifetime. Upon hearing that Noe-Cyprien was quitting school and going to work, his uncle Gedeon questioned him as to his physical ability to handle the work. The family in general agreed that he looked much larger than his age and in fact had hands only slightly smaller than his uncle Gedeon. When his uncle, who was of considerable strength, challenged Noe-Cyprien to a wrist-wrestling match, he accepted and comfortably defeated his uncle. Within the circle of relatives, neighbours and close friends news travelled quickly of the unbelievable strength of this twelve (12) year old. In addition as Weider explains, "The same story grows upon repetition."¹⁵ Word of mouth became the vehicle for stories about the young Cyr to be spread. Even at the outset then acceptance is given to the possibility of exaggeration of fact. Further example of this "exaggeration" is the acquisition of Cyr's first job.

Robert L. Gowe in an authoritative article published in 1963, reports that young Cyr got his first job at twelve when he discovered a neighbouring farmer lying injured on a country road. Cyr, this story has it, lifted the man to his shoulder and carried him the two miles to his home. The farmer hired him on the spot. Another version has Cyr coming upon a broken down, heavily loaded wagon, and lifting it bodily from the ditch. In any case, before he reached his mid-teens young Louis was the talk of the paysage.¹⁶ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY).

In 1877, at the age of fourteen (14) Noe-Cyprien and his family moved to Lowell, Massachusetts. It was Noe-Cyprien who initiated this move as he felt it would help to financially improve their lot, but it was a family decision to move. Lowell, Massachusetts was a popular location for migrating French Canadians, perhaps because of the textile industry, and so became known as "Little Canada."¹⁷ Shortly after arriving in Lowell, Noe-Cyprien celebrated his fifteenth (15) birthday. In an Anglo-Saxon setting using mostly the English language, Noe-Cyprien felt his name left him at a disadvantage. It was decided by Noe-Cyprien and agreed by his family that he would change his name. The family decided a royal name would be best and since the last king of France had been named Louis then this would be Noe-Cyprien's new name.

At fifteen (15) with a new name and looking for a new job Louis Cyr approached the foreman of the Lowell textile factory. At first, Louis was quickly dismissed but he contrived an excuse to show the foreman some of his potential strength. Justifiably impressed, the foreman gave the young Louis the job. Unfortunately or fortunately, as the case may be, Louis took as a challenge every opportunity to use his strength and as often as possible in front of his fellow male and female workers. In displaying his natural ability in these impromptu lifting performances, Louis called upon his recollections of the powerful blacksmith of Saint Cyprien de Napierville. Many of the techniques or tricks the blacksmith used to show himself off to better advantage were copied by the young showman and

entertainer.¹⁸ Due to the persistence of the other workers watching Louis perform his feats of strength when they should have been doing their work, Louis became an annoyance to his employers.¹⁹ Whether it was due to a desire to get back to farming, a dislike of employer controls or his being let go from his job, Louis left work in the factory to work in the country. Similar to his past experiences people were not interested in hiring him until after he had the opportunity to show them how strong he was. Louis readily became employed at the farm of Dan Bawdy after a show of strength, and as time passed they became close friends. It was while working for Bawdy that a series of events occurred that were to result in major changes to Louis Cyr's life. Cyr's reputation as a strong person was already established throughout Lowell to a small degree but this was to change quickly. While working for Mr. Bawdy and while in his company Louis came across a neighbouring farmer who had managed to get his overloaded wagon stuck in the mud along one of the rained out roads of the area. With the distraught farmer whipping the horse and the horse unable to budge the wagon, Louis decided to take action himself. Placing himself under the back end of the wagon with his hands on his thighs he lifted the wagon out of the mud and onto firmer ground. Needless to say both Mr. Bawdy and his farmer neighbour were awestruck.²⁰ This farmer became one of Cyr's biggest fans and told this story wherever he went. At a later date this same farmer located Cyr at the house of Dan Bawdy and excitedly suggested Cyr go to Boston for the strongman championship that was held for

farmers in the region. After consultation with Mr. Bawdy and his family, Louis consented to give the competition a try. After making short work of his competition Louis return home to Lowell and a hero's welcome. That night he attended a ball where he was guest of honour. Little did he realize that the events that transpired that night would greatly affect the rest of his life.²¹ While at this dance, one young man attended with the idea of gaining the attention of one of the young ladies. His name was David Michaud and he was supposed to be the most powerful man in Canada. The young lady was Melina Comtois and on this specific night her interest was totally captivated by this new young strongman Louis Cyr. Louis was eighteen (18) years old at this time, standing five feet ten inches tall (5'10") and weighing two hundred and fifty (250) pounds. Melina Comtois was a slender girl and weighed less than one hundred (100) pounds.²² When the Comtois family decided to return to Quebec, Louis was not long in following his future wife. Having lived in Lowell for four (4) years Louis' English was very good. Louis' proficiency in English and in story-telling was to stand him in good stead in later years as a performer and entertainer. It is the contention of George Jowett in Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived" that Cyr met David Michaud, reigning King of Canadian Strongmen in 1881 and defeated him, to become Canadian Champion.²³ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCIES)

In the year 1882 Melina and Louis were married in Quebec.²⁴ Since it was winter time when they married Louis could not work on a farm and so turned to being a woodsman. Life

for a woodsman was physically taxing and Louis relished this opportunity to do hard labour and occasionally perform feats of strength for his fellow workers. Unfortunately, having left Melina so soon after making her his bride disturbed him greatly. In a very short time Louis had established himself and again his reputation spread quickly from story teller to story teller. Weider has an interesting comment regarding Cyr's effect on those he worked with at the lumber camp which shows a slightly different picture of Louis social status. Weider states, "His very presence in this community of men assured order and peace."²⁵

It is reputed, although not documented that in the year 1883 Louis Cyr toured Moncton, New Brunswick putting on performances of his ~~feats~~ of strength.²⁶ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCIES).

As Louis' reputation grew, so too did concern on the part of the "reigning" Canadian champion strongman David Michaud. Not only was Michaud upset by the stories he had heard about the new upstart Cyr, but he had a grudge to settle over the theft of Melina Comtois now, Mme. Cyr. A formal challenge went out to Cyr and he readily accepted. Unlike modern weight lifting competitions, meetings at this time took place in the country and rocks and boulders were often the vehicles. Both men lifted well but only Cyr lifted the last and heaviest boulder.²⁷ This last boulder was purported to have weighed four hundred and eighty (480) pounds.²⁸ Louis Cyr was now Champion Strongman of Canada in the year 1885 at the age of twenty-two (22). The year 1885 was to be a very full year for Cyr. In some respects it may have been one of his most celebrated years. Having established

himself as a champion, Cyr now went after new conquests in the strongman field. His reputation had only travelled so far by word of mouth, so Cyr, his wife, and some of the family started touring Quebec. The tour was a great success and both Louis' reputation and his pocketbook swelled. Melina who was pregnant by this time was having difficulty managing all the travelling. It was during the tour that Melina lost her newborn son. It had been a difficult time for Melina and Louis vowed it would not happen again. With Melina growing stronger daily another tour was decided upon and organized by the family, this one to be more closely supervised and controlled.²⁹ After a period of time Melina again became pregnant and the decision was made to curtail the tour until after the birth of their child. In waiting for the birth to occur the family moved back to Montreal. On June 24, 1885 Louis placed an ad in the Montreal Gazette challenging any strongman with a side bet of from \$100 to \$500. a side.³⁰ It can clearly be seen that Louis was attempting to make a career of strength at every opportunity. With no answers to his challenge he joined the Montreal Police Force. Louis' great strength and his stature had preceded him to the Police department and he was placed on patrol in the rough Sainte Cunegonde district of Montreal. On September 23, 1885, Cyr became involved in an altercation with several toughs. Louis' fellow officer, Constable Proulx, had been struck in the head with an axe and a large brawl ensued between the police and the agitators. As one story would have it Louis arrested three men, placing one under each arm and the third pinned between the first

two. With these men in custody he carried all three to the police station.³¹ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCIES). It was supposedly as a result of this incident that R. A. K. Fox, the famed editor of the Police Gazette, took an interest in Louis Cyr.³² On November 10, 1885 Cyr resigned from the Montreal Police Force after being instrumental in the dispersing of the criminal element of the area.³³ It was also at this time that Louis and Melina had their first child, a baby girl named Emiliana.³⁴ Having saved some money from their Quebec Tour, the Cyrs purchased a tavern called Carre Chaboillex. Not only was this a good investment but it offered Louis a more active avenue to promote his abilities. Initially, Louis' reputation had travelled solely by word of mouth, and then with his tour he himself spread the word. Now, with his tavern, Louis put on small performances and practiced feats all of which attracted new customers. Even while in a non-physical setting Louis was able to perform and entertain his guests. One such feat he practiced which continually amazed patrons occurred when Louis would reach over the counter and have Melina sit on his hand. Then, with very little exertion Louis would lift her up over the counter and set her down beside himself.³⁵ In 1886 Cyr met a forty (40) year old competitor named Richard Pennell who called himself the champion of the world. Typical of most dual meets each competitor chose a certain number of lifts and the winner was the individual who did the best on the majority of the lifts. This format was to be a thorn in the side of Cyr at a later date. Although Pennell was extremely powerful he was no match for the powerful Cyr.

It was a result of this match that Cyr learned a valuable lesson. Cyr's overall dominance of the match discouraged many potential challengers from even trying.³⁶ From this point onward Cyr was always to take care in his performances that he did not too greatly outdistance his competitors nor make his lifts look easy. Cyr continued his tour of the United States and Canada, and on October 1, 1888 at Berthierville in Quebec he was to make one of his most famous record lifts. Using only his legs and back Cyr lifted a platform laden with pigiron weighing a total of three thousand five hundred and thirty-six (3 536) pounds.³⁷ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY). On November 2, 1889 Cyr competed against Horace Barre at St. Henri de Montreal. It was at this performance that Cyr lifted to arms length with one hand two hundred and sixty-five (265) pounds. When Cyr made his back lift of two thousand three hundred and seventy-eight (2 378) pounds Barre conceded.³⁸ His best measurements at maturity as recorded by Jowett were:

height 5 feet 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; weight, stripped, 295 pounds; normal chest, 59 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; waist, 47 inches; biceps, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; forearm, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; thigh, 33 inches; calf, 28 inches.

Wise and Fisher in Canada's Sporting Heroes their Lives and Times suggest that on January 19, 1889 Cyr put on a performance in the presence of the Prince of Wales and a capacity crowd of 5,000 in the Royal Aquarium Theatre in London. The "official report" according to Wise and Fisher had Cyr lift 551 pounds with one finger, make a platform lift of 4,100 pounds, press with one hand 273 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and lift a barrel of cement weighing 314 pounds

to his shoulder with one hand.⁴⁰ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY). Clearly, Cyr was setting himself apart from others both with the amounts he lifted but also the types of lifts he incorporated into his performances. If spectators were not impressed by his appearance they were certainly impressed by his feats.

Having been approached earlier by Richard K. Fox, editor of the Police Gazette, Cyr visited the New York office of the Police Gazette on December 5, 1890. While at the office he put on a brief performance and issued a challenge to all strongmen.⁴¹ While sources disagree as to the exact extent of his feats at the Police Gazette offices, the Police Gazette newspaper has recorded that in addition to his back lift of 3,337 pounds, he lifted 480 pounds with one finger and 102 pounds with one hand and then held the weight horizontal from his body. Cyr's polish had become increasingly evident as he added a flare for the exciting to his large variety of lifts. An example of this was shown in the Police Gazette office before a select audience. Placing Mme. Cyr who weighed approximately 118 pounds at the top of a ladder Cyr proceeded to lift this ladder and balance it on his chin.⁴²

Cyr had been called the young Samson for some time now and it was to his liking. Not only was there a similarity in strength but Cyr like Samson wore his hair to his shoulders. During some of his performances he would use his long hair as part of his act. At some time during the performance Cyr would ask for three volunteers from the audience preferably grown men of equal weight. Once on stage, each would be instructed to

grab a handful of Louis' hair. With all three firmly affixed Louis would begin to twirl until all three men's feet were off the floor. While this was not in any way shape or form a legitimate lift it did entertain and please the crowds greatly. At the age of 27 Louis discovered he was rapidly losing his hair probably as a result of these "hair raising" feats. As a result Louis cut his hair to normal length and removed this part of his performance from his repertoire. Another promotional technique, which Cyr used to entertain and amuse as well as extend his reputation, was to dance with very large women. Whenever at a dance, Louis would always ask the largest women present to dance. Once on the floor, Louis would pick the woman up by the elbows lifting her feet from the floor and begin to move quickly around the floor.⁴³

The year 1891 was to be a very busy one for Louis Cyr. His first recorded performance of the year was on June 28, at Sohmer Park in Montreal where he supported a barrel of wet cement weighing 214 pounds with one arm, lifting it to his shoulder.⁴⁴ Again in Sohmer Park Louis resisted the pull of four horses on September 20, 1891.⁴⁵ A very strange happening occurred on October 28, 1891 according to Jowett. While Cyr was on tour in the United States, two strongmen named Cyclops and Sandowe arrived in Montreal boasting of their supremacy in the strongman world. They even went as far as saying that Cyr had run away upon hearing of their arrival in Canada. Hearing of their boasts, Cyr returned to Montreal and on the night of October 28, confronted the individuals. They claimed their feats could not

be duplicated but Cyr duplicated them all, easily. Still not satisfied Cyr returned the next night trying to force the two braggarts to try his feats. In both instances they refused.⁴⁶ In his last performance of the year Cyr again resisted the pull of four horses at Sohmer Park on December 20.⁴⁷ (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY).

On January 1, 1892 Cyr and Company was to be found in New York ready to start his tour of Europe.⁴⁸ Arriving in England, Cyr immediately put forward a challenge in the Sporting Life newspaper to all claimants as the strongest man in the world. On January 19, he put on a performance in the Royal Aquarium Theatre. In attendance that night were the Prince of Wales and strongmen Pennell and Sandow. It was during this lift that Cyr is credited with lifting 273½ pounds with one hand.⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter Cyr returned to Canada and began a North American tour. Contenders for world championship supremacy refused to meet each other due to dissimilarity of favourite feats. As most matches were based on both participants choosing a specified number of feats, no concensus could be achieved by many competitors. The problem with this system was that it made it difficult for one man to become acclaimed the worlds strongest man. On the other hand, the system ensured a lesser man, who had developed or mastered several stunts or tricks from ever being beaten and hence allowing him to continue calling himself the strongest man in the world. Obviously what was needed was some uniformity or rules regarding what constituted legitimate lifts. Unfortunately for Louis Cyr he was never to

see this uniformity in his lifetime. In order to salvage his European tour Louis did try to establish as many new records as he could.

One of the first stops on his new North American tour was at Windsor, Ontario on March 10, 1893. The highlight of his performance was attained when he resisted the pull of four horses in the fashion that he made famous. Back in Montreal Cyr went again to Sohmer Park in 1894 to perform his now famous platform lift.⁵¹ While on tour in Boston on May 27, 1895 Cyr broke his own record for the back lift by lifting 4,300 pounds. (see APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY). The Montreal Daily Star records on May 31, 1895 this same incident plus the fact that Cyr would be stopping shortly at Electric Park in Winnipeg where he was to put on a performance.⁵² The year 1896 was a very big year for Cyr in terms of setting new records. On May 7, 1896 Louis Cyr performed in the St. Louis Arena in Chicago and established the following ten (10) records:

1. right and left arm 188½ pounds
2. screwing with left shoulder using 1 hand 153½ pounds
3. iron cross - 97½ pounds in right hand - 88 pounds in left hand
4. 35 consecutive presses with right arm 162½ pounds
5. lifted with one (1) finger 552½ pounds
6. lifted with two (2) arms 189½ pounds
7. lifted with one (1) hand 987 pounds
8. without use of the knees lifted from the shoulder using right arm 433 pounds

9. restrain 4 horses (1200 pounds each) for 55 seconds
10. snatch 347 pounds.⁵³

It became apparent, at this time, that Emiliana, Louis' daughter was inordinately strong for her age and sex. On September 27, 1896 the Boston Globe reported that while the Cyr family was on tour in this city, Emiliana made some astonishing lifts. Most notable of these lifts was Emiliana's ability with one hand to pick up her mother weighing slightly over 125 pounds.⁵⁴ According to Andy O'Brien it was when Emiliana lifted 450 pounds that her parents put her in a convent rather than take a chance that she would stay in "the show world."⁵⁵ In the year 1897 Cyr is purported to have made his last record in Boston at the Austin and Stones museum. This record took the form of lifting with one arm from the shoulder with his body straight 350 pounds.⁵⁶ For a period of time during 1899 Cyr, his family and company toured with Ringling Brother Barnum and Bailey circuses.⁵⁷ Cyr's health was now not what it had always been and much of it can be attributed to his voracious appetite. With his close friends John L. Sullivan and Curé Labelle, Cyr would consume vast amounts of food and drink.⁵⁸ Cyr had continued to believe, as his grandfather told him, that his strength centred on eating large quantities of food. Even with his ill health, Louis' pride would not let him pass up an unusual challenge. Louis was challenged to a wrestling match against a wrestler named Beaupre who was 8 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 400 pounds. The match received quite a bit of interest as this lay outside

Cyr's area of "expertise." When Louis was finally able to grab hold of Beaupre, he put him in a bear hug and the match ended shortly thereafter.⁵⁹

About 1904 Cyr's health started to decline drastically. On February 26, 1906 Louis Cyr was to compete in his last competition. Against the wishes of his family, and his doctor Cyr felt he must honour young Hector Decarie's challenge. The match took place at Sohmer Park and the 42 year old Cyr, steeled himself for what he knew to be a major confrontation. Decarie at 30 was in peak condition. It was decided that the match would be decided upon the basis of four lifts chosen by each competitor. As the match progressed it became evident that Louis had lost much in the way of strength and vitality. Both competitors conceded lifts readily that they knew they could not handle. Upon completion of the eight lifts the score was tied with four points (lifts) being claimed by both sides. Using total weightage lifted, Cyr would have been proclaimed the victor but before any decision could be made, Cyr announced that he was retiring forever and he was turning his crown over to the younger strongman, Hector Decarie.⁶⁰

On November 10, 1912 at the age of 49 Louis Cyr died. Lengthy illnesses from asthma and heart ailments had left him weak and officially he died of Bright's disease. The latter part of his life had consisted of a diet solely of yogurt and all his nights were spent in a Morris chair. The funeral for Louis Cyr was conducted at St. Peter's church in Montreal and vast crowds turned out to pay their last respects.⁶¹

In steps to honour Louis Cyr since his death, the city of Montreal and surrounding area has officially named the following after him: Louis Cyr Park, Louis Cyr Street and Louis Cyr School. In addition a full bust monument of Cyr was erected in the City of Montreal. At a later date, a one-half hour film was produced on Louis Cyr, the French-Canadian strongman. It appears the French-Canadian people are not ready or willing to forget Louis Cyr.

In looking back at Louis Cyr's life and career, several things become readily apparent. Louis Cyr, from his beginning to his end, was a fine and polished entertainer and performer. Rather than call him a great athlete, it could more appropriately be said that he used strength as his vehicle to give great performances. Tragically, lack of competitors disallowed Cyr to claim the undisputed championship of the world. Even more tragic was the fact that Cyr actively sought out the claimants to this position of supremacy but only rarely succeeded in arranging a competition. There has never been a disclaimer that Louis Cyr was an extremely powerful man. Strength and power appeared to be at the centre of this huge man's being. His work, his play, his entertaining, his eating and his living all dealt inexorably with this phenomenon of strength. He was in fact strength personified. Even his stature, while not carrying the muscle delineation of the strongmen of the day, could only be described as formidable at the least and gargantuan at best. His veneration for strength and beneficial uses can only be the inculcation of his grandfather and hence

the French-Canadian tradition. Added to this veneration is the natural ability afforded him by his own ancestors and specifically by his mother. With his state of mind as it was and his physical state of being as it was, how much chance was there that Louis Cyr would not follow the path of strength, power and muscularity.

Louis Cyr's reputation like many similar to him prior to the twentieth century depended largely on communication by word of mouth. Cyr, again like many others, actively pursued the extension of this reputation. Cyr's reputation spread especially quickly in Quebec because strength and power were highly respected. Although still by word of mouth it served to enhance this French-Canadian concept of veneration for strength. Cyr and this concept grew upon themselves with the results being so great that the name Cyr became synonymous with strength and power. Classic in its example is the poem "Little Bateese" by Henry Drummond which states:

But see heem now lyin' dere in bed,
Look at de arm onderneat' hees head;
If he grew lak dat till he's twenty year
I bet he'll be stronger than Louis Cyr
An' be at all de voyageurs leevin' here, Leetle Bateese. 62

It has only been since the turn of the century that any concerted effort by the media was used to enhance Cyr's reputation. This is not say that the media did not concern itself with Cyr in his heyday but rather that media coverage was both sparse and sporadic at best. The newspaper, La Presse of Montreal, between February 8 and November 21, 1903 put out 33 articles on Cyr in the form of a non-academic serial, recounting

Cyr's life and career. Many might argue, that La Presse was attempting through a concerted media effort to create a Sport Hero. It can just as easily and logically be argued that La Presse was doing nothing more than expounding the mythical proportions around Louis Cyr the Sport Hero. Since La Presse was a local Montreal newspaper, it is unrealistic to think that this serial would affect much more than the immediate vicinity. In addition, it must be recognized that the timing of this serial was not coincidental with any of Cyr's career peaks nor even with his stepping down from active performing and retiring. The serial was in fact run two years after his retirement and four years before his death. The serial did little more for Cyr than rekindle some interest and remembrances.

It is interesting to note that accumulatively these 33 articles in La Presse represented greater quality and quantity than was found in the total newspaper survey across Canada from 1885 to 1912.

These lengthy articles may represent in fact the all-too-often realization of greatness after it is gone. There would then be the tribute to Louis Cyr the strongman who lived but was no more. While this later effort must have enhanced Cyr's reputation to some degree, it was in the era of word-of-mouth communication that Cyr's real reputation became entrenched. No doubt accompanying this transmission by word of mouth was some degree of exaggeration. It was during this time of fact and fiction that the myth surrounding Louis Cyr was born. It is this myth and whatever it encompasses that keeps the name Louis Cyr alive.

FOOTNOTES

1. Trent Frayne and P. Gzowski, Great Canadian Sports Stories (Toronto: Canadian Centennial Publishing Co., 1965), p. 108.
2. Ibid., p. 108.
3. Ben Weider, The Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian" (Newark, N.J.: Selco, Inc., 1976), p. 4.
4. George F. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived" (Philadelphia, P.A.: Milo Publishing Co. 1927), p. 15.
5. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 3.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Ibid., p. 13.
8. Ibid., p. 7.
9. Interview with Dr. Gerald Aumont, Montreal, Quebec, 29 August 1979.
10. Leon Gerin, "The French-Canadian Family--Its Strengths and Weaknesses" in French-Canadian Society, ed. M. Rioux and Y. Martin (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1964), p. 32.
11. S. F. Wise, "Sport and Class Values in Old Ontario and Quebec," In His Own Man, ed. W. H. Hucks and R. Graham (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974) p. 96.
12. Ibid., p. 96.
13. Gerin, "The French-Canadian Family--Its Strengths and Weaknesses," p. 52.
14. Wise, "Sport and Class Values in Old Ontario and Quebec," p. 96.
15. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 9.

16. Frayne, Great Canadian Sports Stories, p. 108.
17. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 18.
18. Ibid., p. 22-23.
19. Frayne, Great Canadian Sport Stories, p. 108.
20. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 27.
21. Ibid., p. 29-30.
22. Ibid., p. 31.
23. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived," p. 19.
24. Frayne, Great Canadian Sport Stories, p. 108.
25. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 34.
26. "Louis Cyr est Mort," Le Devoir (Montreal), 11 November 1912.
27. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived," p. 23-24.
28. S. F. Wise and Douglas Fisher, Canada's Sporting Heroes Their Lives and Times, (Don Mills, Ont.: General Publishing Co. Limited, 1974, p. 141.
29. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 52-53.
30. "To the Sporting Editor of the Gazette," Montreal Gazette, 24 June 1885.
31. Frayne, Great Canadian Sport Stories, p. 108.
32. Ibid., p. 108.
33. "Louis Cyr est Mort," Le Devoir (Montreal).
34. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 63.
35. Ibid., p. 64.
36. Ibid., p. 66-67.
37. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived," p. 43.

38. "Les Hommes Forts" La Presse (Montreal), 4 November 1889, p. 4.
39. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived," p. 48.
40. Wise, Canada's Sporting Heroes Their Lives and Times, p. 141.
41. "Cyr à New York" La Presse (Montreal), 5 December 1890, p. 3.
42. "Police Gazette Samson" The National Police Gazette (New York), 20 December 1890, p. 7.
43. Interview with Dr. Gerald Aumont, Montreal, Quebec, 29 August 1979.
44. "Louis Cyr est Mort," Le Devoir (Montreal).
45. "Cyr Plus Fort Que 4 Cheveaux" La Patrie (Montreal), 20 September 1891, p. 4.
46. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived," p. 68-80.
47. Ibid., p. 82.
48. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 75.
49. Ibid., p. 76.
50. "The Cyr Brothers" The Evening Record (Windsor), 10 March 1893, p. 2.
51. Frayne, Great Canadian Sport Stories, p. 106.
52. "Louis Cyr's Great Feat" Montreal Daily Star, 31 May 1895, p. 5.
53. Montreal Daily Star, 7 May 1896, p. 3.
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55. Andy O'Brien, "Canada's Fabulous Strong Man, How Would Louis Cyr Have Done at Tokyo?" Weekend Magazine, October 1964, p. 50.
56. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 85.
57. Encyclopedia Canadiana, 1977 ed., S. V. "Cyr, Louis."
58. "Quebec Muscleman" Montreal Star, 21 January 1956.
59. "Pin Falls" Globe and Mail (Toronto), 25 March 1901, p. 10.

60. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 90-93.
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CHAPTER III

Canadian Perceptions of Cyr

In looking at Canadian perceptions of Cyr through newspapers there are several concerns of which we must be aware. Firstly and most importantly the number of newspapers used in this survey was very limited. They are limited due to: 1) the number of newspapers published at this time which may vary from year to year, and 2) they are limited by these same newspapers present availability. Hence consistent perusal of data in one newspaper or for a specific time period is often impossible. While not readily researchable but certainly worthy of note is the presence of the Canadian Press Service at this time. As a result of this service, it was discovered that some articles on Cyr appear to be extremely repetitive. This is especially evident in the covering of Cyr's exploits and career at the time of his death. This point is mentioned in passing here because it may in a few instances negate this researcher's assumption that material in the press is a result of a local need or desire for information on a given topic. Of major significance to this study, is that any cross-Canada survey of newspapers attempt to incorporate to as great an extent as possible all newspapers available. In looking at table 1, itemizing volume of newspapers used by province, it is important to consider geographical growth at the time in question.

TABLE 1

Provincial Volumes of Newspapers Used

Provinces	Number of Newspapers Sampled	
	Potential No. Used	No. Used
Alberta	10	8
British Columbia	5	5
Manitoba	9	7
New Brunswick	12	12
Newfoundland	3	3
Nova Scotia	5	4
Ontario	25	14
Prince Edward Island	4	4
Quebec	23	20
Saskatchewan	8	7
	Total	<u>84</u>

Table 1 does clearly show that due to lack of growth in the west few papers are available. At the same time, the greatest volume of newspapers available falls predictably within central Canada. Of special note is the high volume of papers available in New Brunswick. This obviously indicates the strong influence of early growth and development. Table 1 also indicates that accumulatively, eighty-four (84) newspapers were used in this survey and that every part of Canada had some representation.

In looking at Canadian's perceptions, we are attempting to zero in on the two potential determinants of a hero, geography and ethnicity (French-English). In looking at these two determinants we are able to look at both the quantity of articles on Cyr (affirmative responses) and the lack of articles on Cyr (negative responses). At the same time the quality (volume and length) of articles can be compared for both geographical and ethnical determinants. The initial newspaper survey of this study using 84 newspapers produced 719 individual surveys. From these 719 individual surveys only 30 showed an affirmative response. Hence, in looking at 20 dates, supposedly significant to Cyr's career, using 84 newspapers, 30 affirmative and 689 negative responses were found. In analyzing this very poor response, it became apparent that a number of these 20 dates chosen and surveyed could not be confirmed (see Appendix A). Of the 20 starting dates, 10 dates could not be confirmed through this newspaper survey. Since the 20 initial dates arose from secondary source perusal, it suggests that the 10 dates in question may never have occurred. The fact, that in many instances several secondary sources itemized similar dates, tends to suggest that the incident did in fact occur but perhaps at a different date. In any case since there is some question as to the significance of analyzing Canadian's perceptions of incidents that may never have occurred, only 10 confirmed dates were used for perception analysis.

In analyzing Table 2, dealing with the quantity of newspaper perceptions on Louis Cyr, we are presented with a

TABLE 2
 QUANTITY OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPER PERCEPTIONS OF LOUIS CYR

PROVINCES	SURVEY USING 20 DATES		SURVEY USING 10 CONFIRMED DATES		PERCENTAGE AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES OVER TOTAL RESPONSES USING 10 DATE SURVEY
	NO. OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES	NO. OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES	NO. OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES	NO. OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES	
ALBERTA	1	82	1	48	2.04%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	0	8	0	6	0%
MANITOBA	0	69	0	38	0%
NEW BRUNSWICK	3	110	3	51	5.55%
NEWFOUNDLAND	0	28	0	14	0%
NOVA SCOTIA	0	29	0	16	0%
ONTARIO	6	144	6	81	6.89%
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	0	28	0	15	0%
QUEBEC	20	112	20	57	25.97%
SASKATCHEWAN	0	79	0	47	0%
TOTAL	30	689	30	373	7.44%
TOTAL	719		403		

cumulative breakdown of both the 20 unconfirmed dates and the 10 confirmed dates. Analyzing the 10 confirmed date survey we find 373 negative and 30 affirmative responses were recorded in a total of 403 individual surveys done. Hence, only 7.44% of all confirmable responses were found to be affirmative. This very low response (7.44%) can only be interpreted as indicating that across Canada in general, Louis Cyr was not very well known and hence not considered necessarily newsworthy. When individual provincial totals are examined in Table 2, the highest ranking province is Quebec with 25.97% of all responses being affirmative. While this total is not highly affirmative, it does take on important significance when compared to the other provinces. Six of the remaining provinces had no responses that were affirmative and all others claimed an affirmative response rate of less than 7%. There does exist, then, a significant difference between Quebec with an affirmative response rate of 25.97% and its closest rival Ontario with a rate of 6.89%. At least quantitatively, it would appear that the newspapers of Quebec and hence the populace of Quebec find information on Cyr more newsworthy than in any other province of Canada. This can be confirmed from a different point of view by examining Canadian perceptions totally in terms of the geographical determinant. The geographical breakdown of the survey is shown in Table 3 and clearly shows that Central Canada in general and Quebec specifically show the highest level of affirmative response. Included in Table 3 is a further breakdown of Quebec into responses from Montreal and responses

TABLE 3
GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPER PERCEPTIONS OF LOUIS CYR

GEOGRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN	FREQUENCY OF AFFIRMATIVE CANADIAN RESPONSES USING 11 CONFIRMED DATES										GEOGRAPHICAL TOTALS		
	SEPT 23 1885	NOV 2 1889	DEC 5 1890	SEPT 20 1891	MAR 10 1893	MAY 27 1895	MAY 7 1896	MAR 25 1901	FEB 26 1906	NOV 10 1912	SUB TOTAL NO. 1	SUB TOTAL NO. 2	TOTAL
MARITIMES			1	1						1			3
ONTARIO	1				1			1		3		6	
MONTREAL	3	1	1	2		1	1	1	3	6	19		26
QUEBEC												20	
OTHER THAN MONTREAL									1		1		
WEST										1			1
CANADIAN TOTAL	4	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	4	10			30

from places in Quebec other than Montreal. It is quite evident, from the scores of 19 responses from Montreal and 1 response from places other than Montreal, that the affirmative responses and hence the interest is centred at Montreal.

The analysis in Table 4 dealing with the quality of the newspapers response serves only to confirm that seen in Table 3, that being that Montreal newspapers have the greatest volume of newsprint and that this volume appears to dissipate the farther distance one goes from Montreal.

In looking at ethnicity in Table 5, affirmative responses come predominantly from French-speaking Montreal newspapers. Interestingly, no French newspaper in Quebec outside of Montreal had even one affirmative response on Louis Cyr the great French-Canadian strongman. Also of significant interest is the fact that cross-Canada, Cyr received more affirmation from French newspapers than English newspapers (see Table 5). In looking at affirmative responses Canada wide, in Table 6 there appears to be some significance as to the ethnicity (French/English) of the newspaper surveyed.

TABLE 4

QUALITY (VOLUME AND LENGTH) OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPER PERCEPTIONS OF LOUIS CYR

PROVINCES,	VOLUME LENGTH	VOLUME* AND LENGTH** OF AFFIRMATIVE CANADIAN RESPONSES USING 10 CONFIRMED DATED										QUALITATIVE TOTALS	
		SEPT 23 1885	NOV 2 1889	DEC 5 1890	SEPT 20 1891	MAR 10 1893	MAY 27 1895	MAY 7 1896	MAR 25 1901	FEB 26 1906	NOV 10 1912	SUB TOTALS	
ALBERTA	VOLUME LENGTH										4 1/2	4 1/2	
BRITISH COLUMBIA	VOLUME LENGTH											0	
MANITOBA	VOLUME LENGTH											0	
NEW BRUNSWICK	VOLUME LENGTH			1 1/8	1 1/4						1 1/5	3 1/2	
NEWFOUNDLAND	VOLUME LENGTH											0	
NOVA SCOTIA	VOLUME LENGTH											0	
ONTARIO	VOLUME LENGTH	1 1/6				1 1/3			3 1/8		1,1,1 1/2, 1/5, 1/4	8 1/4	
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	VOLUME LENGTH												
MONTREAL ENGLISH	VOLUME LENGTH						1 1/8	2 1/4		1 1/3	1,2 1,1	7 2 3/4	34
QUEBEC MONTREAL FRENCH	VOLUME LENGTH	1,1,1 1/2, 1/8, 1/4	1 1/4	1 1/8	1,1 1/4, 1/5				1 1/4	4,1 1, 1/2	5,5,2,1 1/2, 1, 1/4	26 7 1/4	
OTHER THAN MONTREAL	VOLUME LENGTH									1 1/3		1 1/3	10 1/4

TABLE 5

ETHNICITY (ENGLISH AND FRENCH) OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPER PERCEPTIONS OF LOUIS CYR

PROVINCES	ETHNICITY		FREQUENCY OF AFFIRMATIVE CANADIAN RESPONSES USING 11 CONFIRMED DATES									ETHNIC (ENG/FR) TOTALS			
	ENGLISH	FRENCH	SEPT 23 1885	NOV 2 1889	DEC 5 1890	SEPT 20 1891	MAR 10 1893	MAY 27 1895	MAY 7 1896	MAR 25 1901	FEB 26 1906	NOV 10 1912	SUB TOTAL	ENGLISH FRENCH	PROV. TOTALS
ALBERTA	ENGLISH											0		0	1
	FRENCH											1		1	
BRITISH COLUMBIA	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
MANITOBA	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
NEW BRUNSWICK	ENGLISH			1	0							0		1	3
	FRENCH			0	1							1		2	
NEWFOUNDLAND	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
NOVA SCOTIA	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
ONTARIO	ENGLISH		1							1		3		6	6
	FRENCH		0							0		0		0	
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
QUEBEC	ENGLISH		1	0	0	0		1	1	0	1	2	6	19	7
	FRENCH		2	1	1	2		0	0	1	2	4	13		
OTHER THAN MONTREAL	ENGLISH												1	13	20
	FRENCH											0	0		
SASKATCHEWAN	ENGLISH														
	FRENCH														
CANADIAN	ENGLISH		2	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	5		14	
	FRENCH		2	1	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	6		16	
TOTALS	TOTALS BY DATE		4	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	4	11			30

TABLE 6

Affirmative Responses and Newspaper Ethnicity

Provinces	Newspapers Used			Affirmative Responses		
	French	English	Total	French	English	Total
Alberta	1	7	8	1	0	1
British Columbia	0	5	5	0	0	0
Manitoba	0	7	7	0	0	0
New Brunswick	3	9	12	2	1	3
Newfoundland	0	3	3	0	0	0
Nova Scotia	0	4	4	0	0	0
Ontario	0	14	14	0	6	6
Prince Edward Island	1	3	4	0	0	0
Quebec	12	8	20	13	7	20
Saskatchewan	0	7	7	0	0	0
Total	17	67	84	16	14	30

It can be seen that all provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, that had a French newspaper in the survey also supported affirmative responses in these same French newspapers. It is also worthy of note in Table 6, that while there were approximately four times as many English newspapers used as French newspapers, more affirmative responses appeared in French newspapers than in English newspapers.

Looking qualitatively (Table 4) at newspaper perceptions in terms of ethnicity we see, as in the quantitative analysis,

that French-speaking Montreal newspapers were much more affirmative in their perception of Cyr. It can be quite safely said that Quebec in general and Montreal specifically had a greater affinity to Cyr than any other place in Canada.

Equally significant, however is the fact that Ontario represented the area with the next greatest affirmation of Cyr both quantitatively (Table 2) and qualitatively (Table 4).

In looking at the content of the affirmative responses on Cyr there is a degree of inconsistency as to how Cyr is perceived. While some responses refer to Cyr as the strongest man in the world and others refer to him as Canada's strongman, most tend to allude to Cyr in terms of him being a "strongman."

In conclusion, the survey of Canadian newspaper perceptions of Cyr has shown specifically that the French population across Canada received Cyr far better than did the English population and that geographically Cyr's interest originated in Montreal and diminished the farther one got from Montreal. This survey has also shown that across Canada, Cyr was not well known or thought of as highly newsworthy.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions, Recommendations and Discussion

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to study the three underlying areas surrounding the topic Louis Cyr and the Sport Hero. These three underlying areas of concern are as follows: 1) the sporting career of Louis Cyr, 2) the concept of the Sport Hero and 3) Canadian Perceptions of Louis Cyr. Individual and separate analysis of each of these areas has provided important insights into each area. Greater insight may be provided by viewing each area, in terms of the other areas. In this instance, Canadian perceptions of Cyr will be viewed in terms of his sporting career and the Sport Hero concept.

In terms of Louis Cyr we can say that at best he was a Canadian Sport Figure. The same Louis Cyr however, was looked upon by Montreal as at the least a Sport Hero and perhaps even a Sport Legend. Cyr was without question a Montreal phenomenon but over and above this he was a cultural figure to most French Canadians. Like Cyr, most French Canadians of the time were inculcated with the importance and reverence surrounding strength and power. It should come as no surprise then that Cyr with his natural ability was thrust into the French-Canadian limelight. Cyr represented the old ways, those ways which valued a man's strength, power and honesty. These conclusions

are based on people's perceptions of Cyr during his life. The Canadian Sports Hall of Fame on the other hand, has taken figures from the past and evaluated them in terms of present-day criteria. Hence some reassessment should be made of the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

Essential to the establishment of a Hero is the transmission of information about the figure. This transmission of information is critically linked to the acquisition of the status of myth surrounding the Sports Hero. Myth therefore, is an integral part of the Hero concept and without some degree of myth there can be no hero.

The Canadian Sport Hero is a relatively modern phenomenon. This development is largely due to the growth of industrialization, urbanization and systems for transmission of information.

In Canada specifically, the elements of ethnicity and geography have a significant influence on the Canadian Sport Hero. These two elements, in Canada and in general, are entwined to the extent that they may have significant influence on each other.

Recommendations

The conclusions of this study suggest clearly three recommendations for future studies.

It is recommended that an in-depth evaluation of the Sport Hero conceptual model established in this study be carried out. It is further recommended that the area of

information transmission systems in relation to sport be investigated. Of special significance in this area is the exact role these information transmission systems have in the development of sport and sport heroes. The third area of future concern is the evaluation or re-evaluation of the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame.

Discussion

The crux of this paper centered around the interest in Louis Cyr and the inconsistencies surrounding how Canadians perceived him. There are many things that could be said of Cyr that cannot be substantiated. There can be no doubt of Cyr's extreme power and his adherence to the use of this power to make legitimate lifts rather than depending upon technique or trick lifting. The growth of Cyr's reputation and the establishment of his supremacy was hindered greatly by a lack of uniform rules and regulations governing the area of powerlifting. In a modern time and place there is no question in my mind that Cyr would have more clearly established both his reputation and his supremacy. During his lifetime, Cyr fulfilled a legitimate and necessary cultural need of the French-Canadian population. The lack of this cultural need by English-speaking Canadians is supported by the corresponding lack of recognition of Cyr by this segment of Canada. In the French-Canadian culture, Cyr like strength, was and is, continually being ingrained into their thinking. The result of this is the highly mythical qualities surrounding Cyr's existence. It is

when the mythical qualities overshadow or completely replace established accounts that the individual starts to attain legendary proportions.

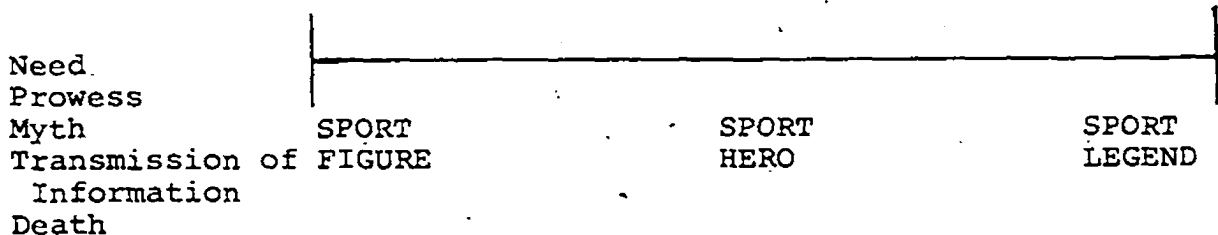
In that myth and mythical qualities are an essential part of the hero concept, the attachment of myth to the individual in question is of some importance. In modern times the media has been instrumental in attaching myth status to individuals. In some respects this statement is contradictory. On one hand the media has the ability to create heroes through fabrication and exaggeration of information. On the other hand the increase of in-depth documentation of individuals may effectively curtail the attachment of myth and hence the creation of a hero. The truth lies somewhere between these two statements and most probably ends in a subjective decision on the part of the media. This places the media in an influential and powerful position. Not only are media personnel in a position to influence our thinking regarding Sports and Sports Heroes, but in many instances they are responsible for the recommendations and/or selection of individuals to be Sport Heroes.

In addition the media, in many instances, alters the focus of peoples' perceptions of sports in general. Where at one time media coverage was geared to sport we now find sport geared to media presentation. Classic in its example is the necessary time-out in a football game in order that television stations break for a word from their sponsors. The increasingly cosmetic appearance of teams, cheerleaders and gala half-time entertainment spectacles causes some concern as to the primary

focus of the presentation. One could easily assume that the role of sport has changed from competition to entertainment. Accepting this change causes further confusion as to the role of the Sport Hero.

To lessen the whole problem of media intervention, Sports Heroes could be recommended only after their deaths and upon evaluation of peoples' perceptions of them during their sporting life. During their lifetime, individuals would only attain Sport Figure status but would be recognized as performing heroic deeds. This process would not eliminate the production of a hero but would prevent heroes from being established by the media or others in terms of modern criteria.

Adoption of this concept would require the addition of the essential criteria of death to the already established set of criteria. Hence the conceptual model for the Sport Hero would appear as follows:



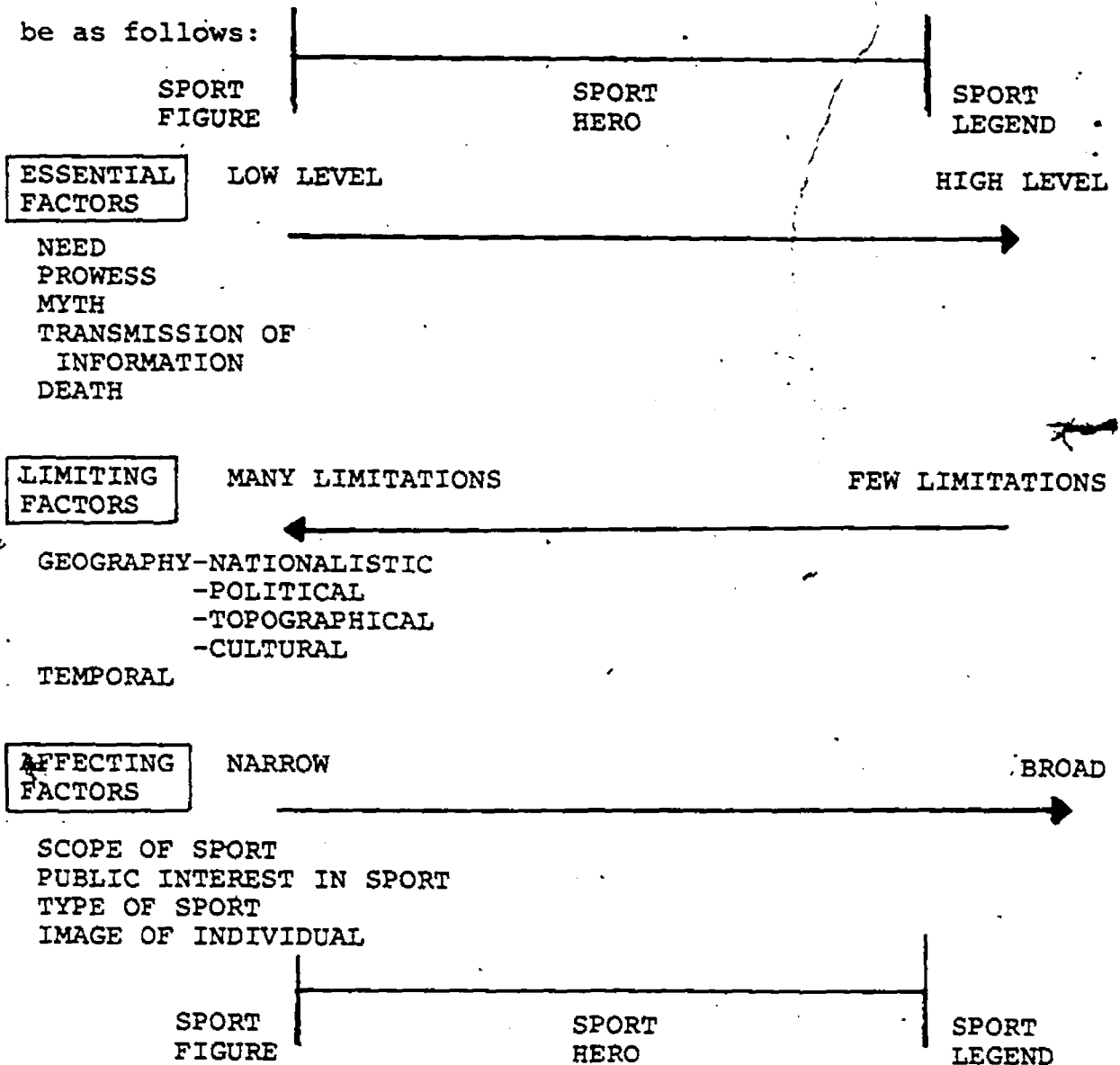
In looking at this conceptual model, in light of this study, there are four additional ingredients, which although not essential, must be considered in an overall model. These ingredients are as follows:

1. Scope of the Sport
2. Public Interest in the Sport
3. Type of Sport
4. Image of the Individual

In establishing a Sport Hero the scope of the sport that he is involved in may have considerable impact upon his status. An individual competing in a sport that is understood and followed by many countries around the world may be better recognized than if the individual were competing in a sport that only one community understood and followed. Similarly, the public's present interest in the specific sport may effect the individual's chances for recognition and therefore media coverage. With the multitude of sports available to the public, many spectators may develop an attachment for a specific type of sport. The recreational jogger may more easily associate or empathize with individual sports as compared to team sports. Contact as compared to non-contact sports may effect peoples' perceptions of the individual partaking in this type of sport. The individual sports of darts, badminton and archery have never received the same media coverage as have team sports such as football, baseball and basketball. Hence heroic individuals in some types of sports rarely surface if in fact they do exist. The last ingredient is the image that the individual has either developed or has been typecast with. An individual provided with all the essential criteria may never become a hero if his image is extremely negative. This negative image may as an example be as a result of poor or even abusive player/public relations.

It can be seen that the above mentioned four ingredients are very closely related to the essential criteria established in the conceptual model. Like the conceptual model as a whole these factors are totally entwined and affect all other parts of the model.

The modified conceptual model of the Sport Hero would be as follows:



The definition of the Sport Hero as always will remain in constant transition. The conceptual model provided will assist in the development of this nebulous definition.

DATE CONFIRMATION AFTER SURVEY

PROVINCES	20 DATES PRE-SURVEY																				
	1883	MAR 17 1885	SEPT 23 1885	1886	OCT 1 1888	JAN 19 1889	NOV 2 1889	DEC 5 1890	SEPT 20 1891	OCT 28 1891	DEC 20 1891	JAN 19 1892	MAR 10 1893	1894	MAY 27 1895	MAY 7 1896	1897	MAR 25 1901	FEB 26 1906	NOV 10 1912	
ALBERTA																				✓	
BRITISH COLUMBIA																					
MANITOBA																					
NEW BRUNSWICK							✓	✓												✓	
NEWFOUNDLAND																					
NOVA SCOTIA																					
ONTARIO			✓										✓					✓		✓✓✓	
PRINCE EDWARD IS.																					
QUEBEC			✓✓✓			✓	✓	✓✓							✓	✓		✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	
SASKATCHEWAN																					
TOTAL DATE CONFIRMATION	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	4	10	
	10 DATES POST-SURVEY																				
			SEPTEMBER 23, 1885				NOVEMBER 2, 1889	DECEMBER 5, 1890	SEPTEMBER 20, 1891				MARCH 10, 1893		MAY 27, 1895	MAY 7, 1896		MARCH 25, 1901	FEBRUARY 26, 1906	NOVEMBER 10, 1912	

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

NAME OF PAPER _____ DATE _____

CITY _____ PROVINCE _____

PAGE # _____ LANGUAGE English French

TOPIC OF ARTICLE: 1. Bibliography 2. Performance 3.P.R. 4. Obit. 5. _____

COLUMN: No. of columns in paper 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No. of the column of this article 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No. of columns this article 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Length of column Pg 1/2Pg 1/3Pg 1/4Pg 1/5Pg 1/6Pg 1/7Pg 1/8Pg

LOCATION OF ARTICLE: 1. Front Page
2. First Page of a section
3. First Page of sport section
4. Sports Page but not first page

No. of pages in paper _____ No. of pages in sport section _____

Photograph or drawing of Cyr included: YES _____ NO _____

PHOTOGRAPH 1. Face _____ DRAWING 1. Face _____
2. Full Body _____ 2. Full Body _____
3. Family _____ 3. Family _____
4. Performance _____ 4. Performance _____
5. Friends _____ 5. Friends _____
6. Awards _____ 6. Awards _____
7. Equipment _____ 7. Equipment _____
8. Location _____ 8. Location _____

No. of photographs or drawings on page
Size of image: (by column) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(length by page) 1/2 1/4 1/8 1/16

CONTENT: _____

DATE _____

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APPENDIX C

Newspapers

Alberta

Albertan - English

Bulletin

Eye Opener

Fort MacLeod Gazette

Lethbridge News

Medicine Hat News

Herald

Le Courrier de l'Ouest - French

British Columbia

British Columbia Magazine - English

British Columbia Monthly

Daily Advertiser

Daily Province

Inland Sentinel

Manitoba

Brandon Mail - English

Brandon Weekly Sun

Commercial

Daily Sun

Manitoba Liberal

Winnipeg Daily Times

Winnipeg Free Press

New Brunswick

Bay Pilot - English

The Capital

Daily Evening News

Daily Sun

Morning Freeman

New Brunswick Reporter

Royal Gazette

Times

Transcript

Courrier Des Provinces Maritimes - French

L'Evangeline

Le Moniteur Acadien

Newfoundland

Evening Telegram - English

Newfoundlander

Times and General Commercial Gazette

Nova Scotia

Digby Courrier and Digby Record - English

The Halifax Herald

The Morning Herald

Wesleyan

Ontario,

Beacon Herald - English

Canadian Statesman

Daily Courrier

Daily Mail and Empire

Evening Palladium

Farmers Sun

Globe

Guide

London Advertiser

London Free Press

Ottawa Citizen

The Sarnia Observer

Saturday Night

The Week

Windsor Daily Star

Prince Edward Island

Examiner - English

The Guardian

Patriot

L'Impartial - French

Quebec

Canadian Gleaner - English

Dominion Illustrated Monthly

Granby Leader

The Montreal Daily Star

The Montreal Gazette

Sherbrooke Daily Record

Sherbrooke Gazette

Stanstead Journal

Le Canada - French

Le Canadien

Le Canard

Le Courrier de Saint Hyacinthe

Les Debats

Le Devoir

Le Nouveau Monde

La Patrie

La Presse

Le Quebec -

L'Union Des Courriers de L'Est

La Violon

La Verite

Saskatchewan

Leader Post - English

Moose Jaw Times Herald

Prince Albert Times

Qu'Appelle Progress

Qu'Appelle Vidette

Regina Standard

Saskatchewan Herald

APPENDIX D - DISCREPANCY

There appears to be substantial discrepancy between many of the sources of data available upon Cyr, his life and career. In some instance these discrepancies are minor in nature and consequence, while others have considerable significance. What must be discussed initially are the different possible reasons why these discrepancies occurred. Probably the most logical and common reason for discrepancy lies in error in communicating information from a primary to a secondary source. Inherent, at least to some degree, in this process is the possibility of conscious or more likely unconscious exaggeration of the facts. Also a likely candidate for explicating discrepancy is the error accompanying transcription of primary and/or secondary information. Any time the newspaper media is used, this aspect comes heavily into play. Not only is it possible for the reporter or printer to make mistakes but the difficulty of reading old, faded and perhaps partially missing newspaper makes error highly conceivable on the part of the researcher. Probably the least likely source of data discrepancy is the conscious distortion of fact for whatever reason.

The remainder of this Appendix will endeavour to deal point by point with discrepancies raised in chapter 2 of this study. Where ever possible, solutions or at best logical conclusions will be provided for each situation.

The first situation which presents us with a discrepancy is, unlikely as it may seem, the date of Cyr's birth. It is generally accepted that Cyr was born on October 10, 1863 by most secondary sources as well as by Dr. Gerald Aumont, Cyr's grandson. George Jowett states quite specifically in his book that Cyr was born on the "eleventh of October, 1863."¹ Initially, one would attribute this error, considering the accepted date as the 10th and the proximity of Jowett's date,

to an editorial or printing slip. The fact, however, that the day of birth was written in long form would tend to indicate a more concerted effort by Jowett in establishing this day as being fact. Little can be said on this discrepancy other than to note the true date as the 10th and the 11th as in error. Since the significance of this discrepancy is very minute, no further time will be taken to discuss it.

The second area of discrepancy surrounds the procurement of Louis' first job at the age of 12. As noted in Chapter two, two different stories predominate the telling of this situation. In one case, Cyr finds a neighbouring farmer in the woods with a severe injury and proceeds to carry the man either to his wagon or to his farm depending on which version one hears. In the second instance, the young Cyr comes across a farmer in an over-loaded wagon stuck in the mud. Getting under the back end of the wagon he lifted it on to dry ground and was rewarded with the job. In neither instance are primary sources available to substantiate the facts. The second case is supported by Jowett in his book as being fact.² Weider in his book The Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian" contends that Cyr received his first job as a result of the version related in case one.³ Weider goes on to say that the version related in case two occurred at the age of 15 when Cyr was living in Lowell, Mass.⁴ Since both versions tend to be supportive of Weider's relating of the incident, there is a strong inclination to believe his accounting of the facts.

On November 11, 1912, the Montreal newspaper, Le Devoir, in giving a somewhat detailed account of Cyr's life upon his death, recounted that Cyr toured Moncton, New Brunswick in 1883 and put on performances.⁵ In surveying seven newspapers from New Brunswick, three newspapers from Newfoundland, two from Prince Edward Island and one from Nova Scotia for the year 1883 no reference could be found for this tour ever having taken place. It is likely, that since only one secondary source has ever mentioned this date and incident, either it did not happen or if it did an error exists in the date. It is possible,

although highly unlikely, that the incident occurred and was not carried in any of the newspapers surveyed or mentioned in any of the secondary sources relating Cyr's exploits. There is no logical explanation for this error or omission and it must be viewed simply as a discrepancy.

In the year 1885 Louis Cyr joined the Montreal Police Force and was used for the express purpose of helping to clean up the tough Sainte-Cunigonde district. On the evening of September 23 an incident occurred while Louis was on patrol, the publicity from which supposedly caught the attention and interest of R. K. Fox, the editor of the National Police Gazette. Several different discrepancies, in fact, surround this one incident. It is Weider's contention that two incidents took place with the second and more serious incident occurring on September 23. In the first incident, according to Weider, Cyr was used as a decoy by the police to entrap the criminal element. The brawl that ensued is purported to have seen Cyr subdue "a dozen of them single-handed."⁶ This second incident saw Officer Proulx being struck on the head with an axe and eventually dying. Cyr while cut on the arm with a knife was able to grab one assailant by the waist and one by the collar and use them as battering rams against the remaining toughs.⁷ In Jowett's version, Cyr by himself, broke up a fight between two men and ended up taking both men to the police station, one tucked under each arm.⁸ One further modification is made in this incident according to Frayne and Gzowski. In their rendition, Cyr arrested three not two toughs and escorted them to the police station by "taking one under each arm and carrying the other in a vice-like grip in front of him . . . with all three prisoners off the ground."⁹ What makes the variations of these discrepancies especially interesting is that upon surveying four newspapers which carried news of the incident at that time very little similarity is established with prior recountings. All four newspapers appear to be very similar in their version. As related by the Montreal Daily Star,¹⁰ Ottawa Citizen,¹¹ La Patrie,¹² (Montreal) and La Presse¹³ (Montreal),

constables Cyr and Proulx were assaulted in the Sainte-Cunegonde district of Montreal. Constable Proulx was hit on the head with an axe and subsequently died. Constable Cyr was hit in the temple with a stone and then was struck twice. After being struck Constable Cyr said he thought he was going to die.¹⁴ Very little coverage was afforded this incident at this time, especially not enough to attract the attention of the Police Gazette editor Fox. Because of the similarity of the newspaper coverage and the dissimilarity of the book and magazine coverage, a logical conclusion is drawn in support of the newspaper as fact. All other reports of the incident while based in fact appear to be exaggeration of the details in one way or another and to a small degree. The effect of this minor exaggeration is to heighten the myth surrounding this man of strength.

The next discrepancy while extremely minor in nature does illustrate the potential for error during the process of transcription of data. All sources readily agree that on October 1, 1888 Cyr performed a record back lift at Berthierville in Quebec. Almost all sources agree that the lift consisted of weights totalling 3,536 pounds. Frayne and Gzowski however establish Cyr's lift as being 3,526 pounds hence a discrepancy of 10 pounds. While the value of the discrepancy is almost inconsequential, there is the realization that errors of this sort when dealing with areas of dates or figures could be of much greater significance. Case in point is the fact that no newspaper across Canada can substantiate this occurrence on this date. If an error in transcribing this date (i.e. the date being October 1, 1889 and not October 1, 1888) were made, then any substantiation would be impossible.

The last discrepancy is probably the most complicated to unravel and deals with Cyr's tour of England. On October 28, 1891 as has been stated in Chapter II, Cyr returned to Montreal to defend his claim, as the strongest man in the world, against Cyclops. Cyr is purported to have beaten him on the 28th of October and then returned on the 29th of October to challenge

Cyclops again. Cyclops at this time refused to compete. Several secondary sources reiterate these events as being chronologically correct. Following this both Weider and Jowett contend that Cyr performed at Sohmer Park on the night of December 20, 1891 and then left for New York. Cyr and his family were to leave for England from New York on January 1, 1892. An article titled "Cyr part pour l'Europe" appeared in La Presse on October 29, 1891 and revealed that Cyr was leaving aboard the S.S. Vancouver for Liverpool on the following Saturday.¹⁵ This may or may not have negated the fact that the match between Cyr and Cyclops on the 28th and 29th of October took place. In fact, it would definitely negate the fact that Cyr performed in Sohmer Park on December 20 of this year. The cross Canada survey of newspapers on these two dates can provide no substantiation that either of them in fact did take place. Further proof is provided by the Calgary Herald which relates on December 24, 1891 that Cyr's English rival had injured himself and then discussed Cyr's performance "on Saturday" at the South London Music Hall.¹⁶ Lastly and most conclusively the Liverpool Football Echo on December 26, 1891 discusses the performances put on by Cyr in London over the past five weeks.¹⁷ It can be said with complete certainty that Cyr did not put on a performance in Sohmer Park Montreal on December 20, 1891. This discrepancy may have been simply the confusing of September 20, 1891 when Cyr did perform in Sohmer Park for December 20, 1891. In any case Cyr did not perform in Canada on December 20, 1891. The second part of this tour that is veiled in discrepancy is the night of January 19, 1892 where Cyr was supposed to have performed to a capacity crowd of 5000 at the Royal Aquarium Theatre in London. In the audience was none other than the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). Initially this fact is contested by Ferguson's Who's Who in Canadian Sport where he states that Cyr's Western European tour highlighted in 1889 at London's Royal Aquarium Theatre.¹⁸ Wise and Fisher appear to support this in their rendition of the incident but add that the incident took place on January 19, 1889 at the Royal

Aquarium Theatre in London before a capacity crowd of 5000 and in the presence of the Prince of Wales.¹⁹ The similarity, between these two incidents on the two different dates is too close to be coincidental. What becomes obvious is that an error was made in regards to one of the two dates. No fewer than eight secondary sources recount in varying degrees the night of January 19, 1892 which would tend to verify this date as the factual date in question. In addition no mention is made, by any but the two previously mentioned sources, of Cyr touring England or Europe during the year 1889. To further confuse matters, The Sporting Life newspaper from London, England states on Tuesday, January 26, 1892 that Cyr was returning to London after an absence of one month in the provinces. The article goes on to say that upon returning Cyr put on a performance on January 25, 1891 at the Royal Albert Hall.²⁰ This article from The Sporting Life newspaper could negate any occurrence of Cyr at the Royal Aquarium Theatre on January 19, 1891. It can be shown from the February 20, 1892 issue of The Sporting Life newspaper that Cyr did in fact put on a performance at the Royal Aquarium Theatre on February 18, 1892.²¹ Unfortunately, this does little to confirm or deny the reality of the night of January 19, 1892 being factually a highlight of Cyr's career. Added to this is the fact January 19, 1892 could not be confirmed by one newspaper source throughout the cross-Canada newspaper survey. Because of the quantity and depth of description surrounding this date by secondary sources, it would seem logical that there must be at least a grain of truth in the whole incident. Finding that grain of truth may be a task so heavy that even the great Louis Cyr could not have handled it. It is especially incidents like this last one that lend an air of uncertainty and/or myth to the career of Louis Cyr.

FOOTNOTES


1. George F. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived" (Philadelphia, P.A.: Milo Publishing Co., 1927), p.14.
2. Ibid., p. 15-16.
3. Ben Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian" (Newark N.J.:Selco Inc., 1976), p. 10-11.
4. Ibid., p. 27-28.
5. "Louis Cyr est Mort," Le Devoir (Montreal), 11 November 1912.
6. Weider, Strongest Man in History Louis Cyr "Amazing Canadian," p. 60-61.
7. Ibid., p. 62.
8. Jowett, Louis Cyr "The Strongest Man That Ever Lived,"p.30.
9. Trent Frayne and P. Gzowski, Great Canadian Sports Stories, (Toronto: Canadian Centennial Publishing Co., 1965), p. 108.
10. "Another Constable Assaulted" Montreal Daily Star, 23 September 1885.
11. "Struck With An Axe" Ottawa Citizen, 24 September 1885, p. 1.
12. La Patrie (Montreal), 25 September 1885, p. 4.
13. "L'Affaire De Sainte-Cunegonde" La Presse (Montreal), 24 September 1885, p. 4.
14. Ibid., p. 4.
15. "Cyr part pour l'Europe" La Presse (Montreal), 29 October 1891.
16. "Canada's Strongman" Calgary Herald, 24 December 1891.
17. "A Strong Man" Football Echo (Liverpool) 26 December 1891.
18. Bob Ferguson, Who's Who in Canadian Sport (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall, 1977), p. 62.
19. S.F. Wise and D. Fisher, Canada's Sporting Heroes Their Lives and Times, (Don Mills, Ontario: General Publishing Co. Ltd. 1974), p. 141.
20. Sporting Life (London), 26 January 1892.
21. Sporting Life (London), 20 February, 1892.

APPENDIX E

SELECTION REGULATIONS

-- For ELECTION to --

CANADA'S SPORTS HALL OF FAME



EXHIBITION PLACE
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Revised: April 1979

1. REGULATIONS OF SELECTION ESTABLISHED

These Selection Regulations are promulgated by the Board of Governors of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. The Board of Governors has power to amend these provisions and Board's interpretation of these provisions shall be final.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERS

There shall be two classes of Membership in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame - ATHLETES and BUILDERS. For the purposes of selection, all members other than Athlete including referees, coaches, etc., shall be considered as Builders and shall be included as Builders.

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR ELECTION

- (a) Any person who is, or has been distinguished as an Athlete or as an executive or coach shall be eligible for election as an Honoured Member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, provided he or she was a Canadian Citizen at the time of the achievement which is the basis for his or her consideration.
- (b) Only human candidates shall be considered for election.
- (c) Athlete or Athlete/Builder candidates, shall not normally be considered until after a three-year waiting period following:
 - (1) retirement from major championship competition, or
 - (2) the performance of a particularly outstanding achievement that warrants special recognition.
- (d) Builder candidates may be either active or inactive at the time of their consideration.
- (e) Members of the Board of Governors and of the Selection Committee are eligible for election as Honoured Members.
- (f) Any candidate whose nomination has been considered by the Selection Committee at three annual meetings and has not been elected shall not be eligible for further consideration until the third annual meeting of the Committee thereafter.
- (g) All properly endorsed nominations which are unsuccessful in their first presentation be automatically re-submitted for the next two years, for consideration by the Selection Committee.
- (h) There shall be an annual review of world and Olympic championships won by Canadians who are not Honoured Members of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

4. SELECTION COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

- (a) The Board of Governors shall appoint a Selection Committee consisting of a membership sufficient to represent all regions of Canada, the total of which is not to exceed 15 members, including the chairman.
- (b) Members of the Selection Committee shall be selected because of their knowledge in the history, traditions and skills of sport in Canada and whose prestige, judgment and integrity are most likely to insure the fair impartial assessment of the qualities of the candidates submitted for their consideration and to assure the maintenance of a high standard of excellence in the selections made by them.
- (c) Appointments to the Selection Committee shall be on an annual basis but they shall be made with the object of securing maximum continuity of composition of the Committee.
- (d) Appointments to the Committee may be made at any time to fill vacancies occasioned by resignation, death or unavailability. In the event that a member of the Committee is temporarily unavailable, a substitute may be appointed by the Chairman of the Board on an ad hoc basis.
- (e) The Curator of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame shall be, ex-officio, the secretary of the Selection Committee, unless another person is designated to fill that position. The secretary shall not have a vote.
- (f) Each Committee member, including the chairman, shall have one vote on each ballot of election proceedings.

5. NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

- (a) Each Member of the Selection Committee may not make more than three nominations for each election proceedings.
- (b) Nominations shall be made in writing and must be filed with the secretary except under extraordinary circumstances as decided by the Committee.
- (c) NOMINATIONS SHALL CONTAIN THE FULLEST POSSIBLE DATA CONCERNING THE RECORD AND THE MERITS OF EACH CANDIDATE NOMINATED.
- (d) Recommendations for candidates may be made by persons other than Committee members by complying with the provisions of the Regulations. However, no such recommendation shall be considered by the Selection Committee unless it is endorsed by at least one member of the Committee and is included as one of his personal nominations.
- (e) Closing deadline for nominations in any calendar year shall be January 15th. The Secretary shall provide each Committee member and each member of the Board of Governors, by the following January 31st, a complete list of nominees, and by February 10th, the dossiers on each nominee together with the names of their respective nominators.

6. METHOD OF ELECTION

A - ATHLETES AND BUILDER CANDIDATES

- (a) The election of candidates shall take place at least once in each year and additional elections may be conducted with the approval of the Board of Governors at such place and time as it shall determine.
- (b) The regular annual election proceedings will, where possible, be held in the first three months of each calendar year and in the absence of a specific directive from the Board of Governors, the normal quota on athlete candidates for each year will be of three (3) and for builders, a maximum of two (2).
- (c) Not less than thirty days before the date of the meeting, the secretary shall send to each member of the Committee, a notice convening the meeting and designating the date, time, and place thereof. Each member shall promptly report to the secretary his availability to attend or otherwise.
- (d) The Chairman shall preside and the following order of business shall be observed, so far as is possible:
 - 1) Announcement of the quota of candidates to be elected.
 - 2) Submission of roster of candidates certified by the secretary as having been duly nominated in accordance with Section Five of these Regulations and that they are eligible for election under Section Three of these Regulations. No other candidates shall be considered without unanimous consent of the Committee members present.
 - 3) The chairman will report any objections filed to any candidate by the Board of Governors or any member thereof.
 - 4) Consideration of candidates and supporting materials.

5) BALLOTING

- i) Secret ballot shall be used and each member shall be entitled to vote for the number of candidates established by the quota.
 - ii) Any candidate receiving a favourable vote of at least 75% of the members present shall be declared elected.
- 6) Declaration of the ballot results.
 - 7) Other business.

7. CERTIFICATION

When a person is elected as an Honoured Member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, the name of such person shall be duly certified by the Chairman of the Board for official enrolment in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame and all necessary actions shall be taken for inclusion of the records, souvenirs and other mementos concerning such elected candidates for display in Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

Each newly-elected Member shall be presented with the insignia of membership.

8. PUBLICATION OF ELECTIONS

The Chairman of the Board of Governors - or failing him - Chairman of the Selection Committee - or failing him - a member of the Board of Governors specifically designated for the purpose shall release the Election results for general publication.

9. PROCEEDINGS CONFIDENTIAL

No member of the Board of of the Committee shall divulge or disclose the results or other particulars of the balloting in advance of the official release provided in Section Eight, nor shall he disclose the vote of any member at any time.

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