

A HISTORY OF BADMINTON IN THE UNITED STATES  
FROM 1878 TO 1939

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THESIS: A HISTORY OF BADMINTON IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1878 TO 1939

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop a history of the sport of badminton in the United States between the year 1878, when the first badminton club was unofficially formed, and 1939, a year that marked the end of a major period of growth of badminton in this country.

Badminton's forerunner, the game of battledore shuttlecock, was played in early America. E. Langdon Wilks and Bayard Clarke were responsible for introducing the game of badminton to the United States in 1873. Wilks and Clarke established the first club in the United States, the Badminton Club of the City of New York, in 1878. In the United States, badminton began as a slow-paced, society game but evolved into a demanding sport.

While organized competitive contests were available for men before 1920, similar opportunities for women did not exist until the 1930's. The period of badminton's greatest growth in the United States was during the 1930's. Badminton professionals, especially Jess Willard, popularized the game in the United States.

The American Badminton Association, founded in 1935, provided a united front for the game. Two years after its founding, the American Badminton Association sponsored the first United States National Championships and Bert Barkhuff, Hamilton Law, Zoe Smith, and Walter Kramer were the first United States champions.

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The game of battledore shuttlecock (sometimes referred to as simply battledore or solely shuttlecock) is the forerunner of the modern game of badminton. Exactly where and when battledore shuttlecock began is still a mystery, though several countries claim it for their own. It is known that the game existed in the fourteenth century in England.<sup>1</sup>

Battledore shuttlecock required players to have feathered projectiles (shuttlecocks) and rackets (battledores), but not court boundaries and nets as does the modern game of badminton. It appears the game was played in a variety of forms.

According to S. Branch, the game was used as a means of divining the future. Individuals used a shuttlecock and a battledore or, in some cases, their hands. The number of times the shuttlecock was hit in one consecutive series would indicate how many years one had left to live, how many children one would have, or whatever the participant wished to discover. This game was often played by only one person.

Another form of this game was described by Eric Grenander as being one in which any number of players tried to keep the shuttlecock in the air as long as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Battledore shuttlecock could also be played as a game in which one attempted to reach the opponent to win the shuttlecock. Branch

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

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According to R. Brasch, the game was used as a means of divining the future. Individuals used a shuttlecock and a battledore or, in some cases, their hands. The number of times the shuttlecock was hit in one consecutive series would indicate how many years one had left to live, how many children one would have, or whatever the participant wished to discover. This game was often played by only one person.<sup>2</sup>

Another form of the game was described by Kate Greenaway as being one in which any number of players tried to keep the shuttlecock in the air as long as possible.<sup>3</sup>

Battledore shuttlecock could also be played as a game in which one attempted to cause the opponent to miss the shuttlecock. Brasch

claimed that when two people played the sport, a point was scored when one's opponent missed the shuttlecock.<sup>4</sup> Evidence to support Brasch can be found in a play written in 1609, during the reign of King James I of England, at which time the sport was popular.<sup>5</sup> In the play, Two Maids of Moreclacke, a reference to King James' son, Prince Henry, was made:

"His highness playing at shittle-cocke, with one farr taller than himself, and hittyng him by chance with the shittle-cock upon the forehead, 'This is,' quoth he, 'the encounter of David with Goliath.'"<sup>6</sup>

A reference to David and Goliath, even though perhaps made in jest, connoted a game involving competition rather than the joint effort described by Kate Greenaway in which everyone gently tapped the shuttlecock so it might remain airborne as long as possible.

Two variations of competitive battledore shuttlecock are mentioned in the American Boy's Book of Sports and Games, written in 1864. One game involved but two players, the loser being the one who allowed the shuttlecock to hit the ground. The other game involved five or six players who would number off 1,2,3,4,5, and 6. Numbers 1, 3, and 5 composed one team while numbers 2, 4, and 6 composed the other. The shuttlecock had to be hit in order by number 1, then number 2, number 3, and so on. The person who missed his/her turn would be out. The team which had one or more players left after all the other players on the opposing team were out was declared the winner.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that badminton could be an outgrowth of one of these competitive forms of battledore shuttlecock. When the shuttle hit the ground in the old game, it naturally would give cause to wonder which player was at fault. Did the last person who hit it not hit it hard enough, or did his opponent simply fail to reach it? Court boundaries



would provide an easy solution to this problem. It is believed that the more sophisticated game of badminton was created in this manner.

It is not surprising to discover evidence of the existence of battledore shuttlecock in early America, as the first English settlement was made in King James's time when the game was popular. However, exactly when the game appeared here and how well it was received has not been ascertained. Eggleston described battledore as being "very suitable to young ladies of leisure" in colonial times.<sup>8</sup> Jane Carson tried to find merchant orders for battledores and shuttlecocks and found only one in 1742 involving the London merchant John Gibson and Mrs. Ross of Annapolis: "You sent for shuttlecocks and no battledores, whether you intended to omit them I could not guess, but as they are used together, I sent them so, with variety, I hope tis not wrong."<sup>9</sup> Herbert Manchester found a 1766 New York advertisement for James Rivington indicating that he imported and sold battledores and shuttlecocks.<sup>10</sup> In the January 1824, issue of the National Intelligencer, an advertisement was run as follows:

The subscriber has just received imported direct from London to his order a few dozen pair of battledores and shuttlecocks, No. 1, 2,3 and 4, from the manufacturer Durley, said to be the only man in England who understands the manner of preparing the skin to cover the battledore so that it will not yield to the changes of weather, but remains inflexible till worn out by use. The birds are far superior in size and beauty to the ordinary kind.<sup>11</sup>

Equipment sales may not be the way to measure the popularity of battledore shuttlecock in early America as it is possible that the equipment was hand-made by some individuals rather than enduring the time and expense it took to receive battledores and shuttlecocks from England. As mentioned previously, Mrs. Ross of Annapolis ordered

shuttles and not battledores.<sup>12</sup> This possibility is an indication that a family member constructed the battledores. Though the following was written as late as 1864, it is not hard to imagine it could have applied earlier in America, perhaps substituting something for the cotton reel:

A good shuttlecock may be made, where there are no toy-shops to supply it, by cutting off the projecting ends of a common cotton-reel, trimming one end with a knife, and drilling holes in the flat surface left at the other, in which holes the feathers of quill pens are to be inserted. As for the battledores, we should think very little of the boy who could not, on an emergency, cut out a set from a bit of thin board, or the flat lid of a box, with the help of the big blade of his pocket-knife.<sup>13</sup>

Two interesting colonial pieces of art indicate the existence of battledore shuttlecock in early America. One is a painting by William Williams entitled "Portrait of Master Stephen Crossfield," exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. This painting depicts a proper young gentleman holding a large shuttlecock in one hand and a well-made battledore in the other. The painting was completed in America in the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The other piece of art is a fabric hanging in colonial Williamsburg showing childhood diversions. Two boys are depicted hitting a shuttlecock back and forth. This fabric was completed around 1790.<sup>15</sup>

Ewing confirmed the existence of battledore shuttlecock in colonial Williamsburg and described it as a "children's game quite similar to present-day badminton."<sup>16</sup>

Catherine Beecher described battledore and shuttlecock as a game acceptable for young ladies in 1857 America.

It necessitates various active movements of every part of the body and limbs, and will be found, if practiced daily, to have a very beneficial effect, not only upon the physical health, but also upon the spirits of the persons engaging therein.<sup>17</sup>

We know battledore shuttlecock was not exclusively a female pastime, however, as both art works previously mentioned<sup>18,19</sup> picture males participating in the sport. Also, the fact that the rules of battledore shuttlecock appeared in the 1864 edition of the American Boy's Book of Sports and Games indicates that males were indeed involved in battledore shuttlecock.

When and where battledore shuttlecock changed to require court boundaries as it evolved into the sport of badminton is not known. Herbert Scheele, England's "grand old man" of badminton and a much respected expert on the sport, writes "the actual birth date of the game will probably never be fixed."<sup>20</sup> It is known that the game appeared in both India and England at approximately the same time in the nineteenth century. Known as "poona" in India and "badminton" in England after it was played at the Duke of Beaufort's estate called "Badminton" in 1873,<sup>21</sup> the game was popular among English army officers who served in both countries around that time.<sup>22</sup>

How did badminton become established in the United States? What major changes occurred in the sport's first fifty years here? A brief look at badminton in New York in its early days might prove enlightening.

The men, clad in Prince Albert coats and top hats, escorted the long-gowned women to the hour-glass shaped court. The four-sided teams, each team member with racket in hand, took their positions. As a matter of course, the young society gentlemen saved the members of the fairer sex from the disagreeable effects of sweat and fatigue by stationing themselves in the backcourt while the women stayed in the

front to gracefully tap the shuttlecock if it came right to them. The game began when the first gentleman cried, "love all!" and served the shuttlecock underhand. This game of badminton was one of the few activities that was allowed during the Lenten season in 1887 New York. After twenty-five minutes of vigorous activity, the exhausted eight retired to the refreshment table for tea, sandwiches, and polite conversation with the day's hostesses, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt and Mrs. Oakley Rhinelanders.<sup>23</sup>

Fifty years later, the gallery at the first United States National Badminton Championships in Chicago applauded as Walter Kramer, seemingly pushed off balance by his opponent's deep clear to his backhand, recuperated in time to make a delicate cross-court drop shot to his opponent's backhand front corner. Hock Sim Ong, Kramer's opponent, awaiting a weak reply and corresponding smash, was sufficiently surprised that he came nowhere near the shuttle. Both men were breathing heavily as they ran, lunged, and twisted around the rectangular court in all directions, each trying to win the match and the first United States men's singles crown. While Mr. Kramer was winning the last few rallies, the women, Bert Barkhuff and Wanda Bergman, clad in shorts, were stretching out in a corner of the gym in preparation for their singles final. Mr. Kramer and Mrs. Barkhuff each had little time for anything but a quick change of clothes, some juice, and conversation about badminton between matches as each had three final matches that day: singles, doubles, and mixed doubles.<sup>24</sup>

Within fifty years from the time that the first badminton club was formed in the United States, there were many changes in costume,

nature of the players, and amount of vigor expended on the sport. The story of how all this came about is an exciting one indeed.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop a history of the sport of badminton in the United States between the year 1878, when the first badminton club was unofficially formed, and 1939, a year that marked the end of a major period of growth of badminton in this country.

### Scope and Delimitations

Major clubs, those of New York, Boston, Pasadena, and Seattle, are discussed. Influential personalities involved in badminton's rise, with emphasis on George "Jess" Willard's exhibitions and promotional enterprises, are included. The driving force for unification on the national level, Boston's "Big Four," and their creation of the American Badminton Association and the national championships are covered.

The clipping collections which were used were those of Mr. Hamilton Law, former national men's doubles champion of 1938 and 1939; those of Mr. George F. Willard, promoter and outstanding player in the country between 1921 and 1939; and the collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York.

The scope of this study encompasses major events, people, and clubs involved in badminton in the United States between 1878 and 1939.

### Limitations

This study was limited in that many individuals involved in

establishing badminton in this country have died and their records have been lost. Of those who saved materials, many neglected to date them. Many materials which were written by non-players for newspapers and magazines lacked detail. Minute books of the New York and Pasadena clubs were used. These books mention major events but lacked much detail. Interviews with Mr. Robert Ford, Mr. Gordon Cronkhite, and Mr. and Mrs. L. Winchester Jones were limited in that a forty-year span existed between the days these people were active in the club and the present. Materials could have been omitted due to this gulf.

#### Major Research Questions

- (1) Was there any form of badminton in the United States before the heretofore accepted 1878 date of establishment of the sport in the United States?
- (2) How did the sport evolve in terms of rules, regulations, and methods of play?
- (3) Who were some of the influential personalities in the development of the sport in the United States?
- (4) What types of people were interested in playing the sport?
- (5) What led to the founding of the American Badminton Association (now the United States Badminton Association)?
- (6) What was the nature of the first United States national championship tournament?
- (7) How was badminton organized on the club and ultimately the national level?

### Significance of the Study

History can add interest and a sense of tradition to one's life. A sense of tradition can lead to a sense of belonging and understanding of an aspect of one's life. This study will enable the present and future generations to see how and when badminton began in the United States and who was involved.

### Definition of Terms

Battledore: A racket of possibly varying sizes made of solid wood or, in the nineteenth century, solid wood or wood and cat gut.

Shuttlecock, bird, or shuttle: An object consisting of a base with feathers securely inserted in the top of the base made to fly through the air when struck.

Battledore shuttlecock: A game similar to badminton in terms of equipment, but different in that no boundaries were defined. Battledore shuttlecock could be played to divine the future, keep the shuttlecock in the air as long as possible, or to cause one's opponent to miss the shuttlecock.

Badminton: A sport requiring a racket, a shuttlecock, and court boundaries. The object of the game is to cause one's opponent to miss the shuttlecock while causing it to land inside the court boundaries.

Game: A badminton game is one which is played to 15 in all events except ladies singles, which is played to 11. In the early days of the sport in New York, women played to 15, however. Points can be

made only on the server's side.

Set Game: At 13-all, 14-all, or in ladies singles 9-all or 10-all, the receiver (person who obtained the common score first) has the choice of playing a regular game or extending the game into a "set" situation. At 13-all, the game may be set to 18. At 14-all, the game may be set to 17. At 9-all or 10-all in women's singles, the game may be set to 12.

Smash: A power shot contacted high and hit hard with a downward angle.

Drop: A gentle touch shot which falls close to and barely clears the net.

Drive: A shot which is hit hard as it barely clears the net while maintaining a flat angle (parallel to floor).

Clear: A shot in which the shuttle is struck causing it to travel high and deep in the court.

Cut shot: A shot which, when hit at net, causes the shuttle to tumble in such a manner that the feathers cross the net before the cork, making a good return difficult.

### Methods and Procedures

#### Preliminary Investigation

A brief mention of how badminton received its name appears in many books on badminton technique. However, no book was found on the history of badminton in the United States. A search of the literature showed no complete history of the sport in this country. The only attempt at such an endeavor was made by Samuel Boyce of George Peabody



College, who wrote a master's thesis entitled "The Development of Badminton,"<sup>25</sup> an incomplete study of the sport by one who was apparently a non-tournament player.

#### Avenues of Exploration

The author relied heavily on personal knowledge of the sport and the people derived through fifteen years of local, national, and international play in the sport of badminton for the investigation. Letters were written to several present and past players requesting information. A list of those contacted has been included in the appendix (Appendices A,B). Samples of the letters written are also included (Appendix C).

As a result of letters written to Mr. Devlin, Mr. Romaine, and Mrs. Rose, the collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York was made available. Mr. Hamilton Law responded by mailing his scrap-books which included clippings of badminton events primarily on the northeast coast in the late 1930s. Mr. Ron Deaver made the collection of Mr. George F. "Jess" Willard available and Mr. Stephen Edson told of a painting hanging in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art entitled "Master Stephen Crossfield"<sup>26</sup> which was of interest. Guy Reed wrote about the early years of the Pasadena Badminton Club. Mr. Donald Wilbur shed some light on the origins of the American Badminton Association. Mr. Herbert Scheele helped clarify some fine points on the evolution of the game. Bert Barkhuff Cunningham shared some information on the first United States national tournament.

Mr. Robert Ford, Mr. Gordon Cronkhite, and Mr. and Mrs. L. Winchester Jones had discarded their collections related to the Pasadena

Badminton Club, but all were interviewed. Mr. Ford and Mr. Cronkhite were interviewed by telephone, and Mr. and Mrs. Jones in person in Santa Barbara, California, on November 26, 1978. The letter written to Mr. Helen Tibbetts resulted in finding the addresses of the persons mentioned in this paragraph.

Reinforced Shuttlecocks Ltd. was written in an attempt to find the dates of establishment of the company in the United States and England and to determine if there were any records of their sending shuttlecocks to the Badminton Club of the City of New York in the early 1900s (Appendix B). The company sent the requested information and a pamphlet entitled "Badminton." A copy of the letter sent to the company is included (Appendix C).

Mr. Owen Willard and the editors of Badminton U.S.A. and World Badminton were written with requests for information (Appendices B,C). Mr. Willard responded with general information on his brother, George F. "Jess" Willard. The letter to the editor of B.U.S.A. was printed and resulted in the author's obtaining information on the Flint (Michigan), Wissahickon (Pennsylvania), Hollywood and Manhattan Beach (California) clubs. The letter to the editor of World Badminton resulted in the borrowing of Cavendish's book Badminton from the editor during a 1974 trip to London.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation were written with requests for prints of art works needed (Appendices B,C). Prints of both were received and used in the study.

The New York Historical Society was written with a request for a Xerox copy of the Minute Book of the Badminton Club of the City of

New York (Appendices B,C). The reply indicated the work could be purchased in microfilm form, which was done.

Two special services were used. One was the inter-library loan service at California State Polytechnic University, through which a master's thesis entitled "The Development of Badminton" was borrowed from George Peabody College. The other special service was a request that members of the Pasadena Historical Society search for any photographs or other records of the Pasadena Badminton Club from 1933 until 1939. This effort proved to be fruitless.

Libraries used were Honnold Library, Claremont, California; the Pasadena Public Library, Pasadena, California; the Library of the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; and the private badminton library of Mr. Jack Van Praag, 787 South Orange Grove, Unit 9, Pasadena, California.

The Minute Book of the Pasadena Badminton Club was already in the possession of the author, who serves an administrative post in the club.

#### Evaluation of Materials

It was found that historical reports changed with the years and frequently it was difficult to separate fact from fiction. For instance, Mr. E. K. Van Winkle, an influential member of the New York Club, pushed for and was successful in having the New York Club follow the badminton rules already established in England, rules which called for a more strenuous game. It was found that, as time passed, Mr. Van Winkle became a legend and was credited with more events than he was

actually responsible for, to the point that he was coined "the father" of badminton in the United States. Others, such as Jess Willard, were disliked by some who wrote articles on badminton history and were therefore omitted.

The minute books were the most factual materials used, though they lacked detail. Magazine and newspaper articles were often written by non-players who were so enthralled with the game that their articles were peppered with expletives and lacked depth. Persons interviewed either had allowed prejudices to become deeply entrenched or had mellowed with the years and forgotten much detail.

As noted, all materials accumulated were carefully evaluated in terms of their relevancy to the study and their factual content. Materials not meeting these criteria were discarded.

#### Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The beginnings of the sport of badminton in New York, including the nature of the game and people involved, are discussed in Chapter II. Badminton activity at the Caines Institute and the University Club in Boston as well as intercity matches between Boston and New York are covered. A brief description of the rise of competitive badminton for women at both clubs is also included.

Chapter III contains a development of the growth of clubs in the United States in the 1930's. Major centers of activity, New England, the metropolitan area, the Seattle area, and the Los Angeles area are covered.

Chapter IV deals with influential personalities who played

badminton in the 1930's, while Chapter V covers the creation of the American Badminton Association and the United States National Championships. Also included in this chapter are the personalities and events influencing the drive for unification, plus a description of the first national championships.

Chapter VI contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. Following the final chapter are the appendices and bibliography. Because of the large amount of source material utilized in developing this study, footnoting has been accomplished by means of chapter references. These references follow immediately after each chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *American Boy's Book of Sports and Games: A Repository of In- and-Out Door Amusements for Boys and Girls* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, Publishers, 1884), p. 463.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Eggleston, "Social Life in the Colonies," *Courier Magazine* (July 1897), p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> Jane Carver, *Colonial Virginiana at Play* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1963), p. 109. Cited from 26 January 1962, Gibson Heywood Papers, 1780-1782. Available on microfilm, Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Manchester, *First Centuries of Sport in America, 1490-1890* (New York: Doubleday Books, 1962), p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Jennie Bellison, *American Sports 1782-1811* (Dorham, NH: The Science Press, 1911), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Carver, p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> *American Boy's Book*, p. 463.

<sup>8</sup> William Williams (1717-1793), painting, "General Stephen Crossfield," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Negative 3-151309.

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- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.
- <sup>3</sup>Kate Greenaway, Kate Greenaway's Book of Games (New York: Viking Press, 1976), p. 23.
- <sup>4</sup>Brasch, p. 21.
- <sup>5</sup>Joseph Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, Including the Rural and Domestic Recreations, May Games, Mummeries, Shows, Processions, Pageants and Pompous Spectacles from the Earliest Period to the Present Time (London: Printed for T. T. J. Tegg, 73 Cheapside, 1833), p. 304.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid.
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- <sup>9</sup>Jane Carson, Colonial Virginians at Play (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), p. 189. Cited from 26 January 1742, Gibson Maynadier Papers, 1740-1752. Available on microfilm, Maryland Historical Society.
- <sup>10</sup>Herbert Manchester, Four Centuries of Sport in America 1490-1890 (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1968), p. 68.
- <sup>11</sup>Jennie Holliman, American Sports 1785-1835 (Durham, NC: The Seeman Press, 1931), p. 77.
- <sup>12</sup>Carson, p. 189.
- <sup>13</sup>American Boy's Book, p. 465.
- <sup>14</sup>William Williams (1727-1791), painting, "Master Stephen Crossfield," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Negative 3 182300.

<sup>15</sup>Fabric, 1790, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Negative 3 58DW1186.

<sup>16</sup>William C. Ewing, Sports of Colonial Williamsburg (Richmond, VA: The Dietz Press, 1937), p. 25.

<sup>17</sup>Catherine Beecher, "Home Exercises," Harper's Weekly 1 (1857): 436.

<sup>18</sup>Williams painting, "Master Stephen Crossfield."

<sup>19</sup>Fabric, Colonial Williamsburg.

<sup>20</sup>Herbert Scheele, "Badminton Was Slow to Develop," World Badminton 1 (July-August 1972):6.

<sup>21</sup>Frank Menke, Encyclopedia of Sports (New York: A. S. Barnes Co., 1960), p. 72.

<sup>22</sup>Brasch, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup>Walter R. Jones, "Badminton, An Informal History," Sword and Racquet (March 1932), pp. 14-16.

<sup>24</sup>Donald C. Vaughn, "First U.S. Badminton Championships," American Lawn Tennis (April 20, 1937), pp. 61-64.

<sup>25</sup>Samuel Eugene Boyce, "The Development of Badminton" (Master's thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1938).

<sup>26</sup>Williams painting, "Master Stephen Crossfield."

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNINGS: THE NEW YORK AND BOSTON BADMINTON CLUBS

Since the purpose of this study was to explore the history of badminton between 1878 and 1939 in the United States, a look at its very beginnings would seem necessary. The game of badminton first appeared in the United States as a slow-paced New York society game in the 1870's. Rules, equipment, and dress limited players to a casual style of game originally. Gradually there were changes in these fundamental factors affecting the sport of badminton and a more strenuous game evolved.

#### Rules and Equipment: Changes Affecting the Game

A close look at the club handbooks of the Badminton Club of the City of New York shows how the game of badminton began as an easy leisurely game and changed, as the rules changed, to a strenuous game. The club basically followed the badminton rules of India until 1905, when it began to follow the rules of the Badminton Association of England. Equipment and fashions also played a role in the evolution of the game.

#### The Court

The net varied in height from 5 1/2 feet<sup>1</sup> to 6 feet<sup>2</sup> before the badminton rules of England, which called for a 5-foot high net,<sup>3</sup> were established here. A higher net would have allowed drop shots to be in



flight longer, thereby giving the opponents more time to move to the bird. A higher net would have also made it difficult to get much angle on the smash. When the rules of badminton of England were established here, lowering the net height allowed for greater angle to be employed when executing both drop shots and smashes, an important factor in making badminton a faster game in the United States.

In 1888, the rules read: "the dimensions of the court must be decided in a great measure by the capabilities in which the room is played. The best size is one 28' by 20' broad."<sup>4</sup> This rule remained through 1905, when the rule book was changed to read: "the best size is one thirty-six feet long by sixteen feet broad."<sup>5</sup> By 1908, the court size changed to specific dimensions, 44' by 20' for doubles and 44' by 17' for singles.<sup>6</sup> Variety in court size made for a hit-and-miss operation in terms of shots and footwork. Uniform courts meant players could begin to refine their games. Also, the recommended court size of 28' by 20' in 1888 increased to a regulation 44' by 20' by 1908, making more area for players to cover.

The English also faced the problem of trying to play on varying court sizes until the rule was changed. Wrote S. M. Massey, an early English champion:

Well do I remember the look of anguish on the faces of the Guildford players when they first came to play on the Ealing Court, 60 feet by 30 feet! Well, too, do I remember the consternation on the faces of our players when they visited the Guildford Court, 44 feet by 20 feet!<sup>7</sup>

Not only did the court size change to a standard size, but the court shape also changed to a rectangular one from an hour-glass shape. A waist in the center of the court caused less running in the early days

of the game. This waist reportedly was a part of the court because the game, when played in a ballroom in either Karachi or the Duke of Beaufort's estate (both places claimed to be responsible for the waist-shaped badminton court), had to be played under annoying circumstances. The doors to the small room where badminton was played opened directly onto the center of the court. To remedy this, the players simply changed the court size, so the center area was of a smaller width than the rest of the court.<sup>8</sup> Herbert Scheele wrote that the waist "was a legacy of Victorian salons where the door was in the center of large rooms; the shape enabled the door to be opened without taking down the net."<sup>9</sup> In April 1901, General Shakespeare of the Southsea Club in England made a motion that the hour-glass shape be abolished<sup>10</sup> and the New York badminton enthusiasts followed suit by 1908.<sup>11</sup>

The hour-glass shaped court (Appendix D) required a neutral area, described as being 8' by 20' in the center of the court.<sup>12</sup> The net was placed in the center of the neutral area. Herbert Scheele, England's expert on badminton history, felt this neutral area was so defined because, with an hour-glass shaped court, players were not allowed to hit the shuttle around the post, even if it fell inside the court. Posts were supposed to be 12' high to help determine if the shuttle did indeed fly over the net or not. With this type of court, "side-line drives as we know them did therefore not exist."<sup>13</sup> When the court became rectangular in the early 1900s, a new shot, the side-line drive, was added to the game.

## The Shuttlecock

The construction of the shuttlecock changed with the years and introduced changes in the game. Cavendish described the typical shuttlecock of 1878:

The shuttlecocks usually are about 5 in. in height and weigh about 1 oz. . . .

The weight of the shuttlecock should be about 3/4 oz. It should have feathers 3 in. high. They should be well glued in at home, shop work seldom being good enough. Half-way up the feathers a strong white thread should be passed in and out, and tied, so as to obtain a diameter of 3 in. at the top.

For windy days the weight of the shuttlecock should be increased to about 1 oz. and the diameter at the top diminished to 2 3/4 in. . . .<sup>14</sup>

The 1888 rule book of the New York club read: "a shuttlecock is used instead of a ball, and may be large or small, according to the wishes of the players."<sup>15</sup> This rule remained the same through 1903.<sup>16</sup> Shuttlecock size was not mentioned in subsequent rule books, but a pamphlet on badminton written by Reinforced Shuttlecocks Limited of London gave a hint on the trends in shuttlecocks in the early 1900's:

About 1900, shuttlecocks became more standardized and the "barrel" shuttlecock, so called because its shape closely resembled a barrel, was the popular model of the day. This type was used for the first time in the All-England Championships in 1902 and regularly in the championships and other tournaments until 1908. Chicken feathers were commonly used and they were inserted in the cork with the flat side of the quill to the outside. The natural inward sweep of the feathers produced the curved barrel shape, which gave it its name. Most of these shuttlecocks had two stitchings, one just above the base and the other about one inch up the feathers. The cork was roughly domed and covered with white leather, which was secured by a brightly coloured silk band stitched around the dome and round the top of the cork. These shuttlecocks varied considerably in length of flight and it would appear from the result of actual speed tests made with them on the R.S.L. Shuttle Gun that on the average they were very much faster than the modern shuttlecock.<sup>17</sup>

Both Brasch<sup>18</sup> and Reinforced Shuttlecocks Limited<sup>19</sup> indicate that the standard size goose-feather shuttle (as we now know

shuttlecocks) was introduced in 1909. This shuttle, being of a slower speed than the barrel shuttle,<sup>20</sup> required more effort on the part of the players to hit it end-to-end, thereby contributing to making badminton a more strenuous game.

The new straight-feather shuttle was quite different from the shuttles described by Cavendish. According to measurements, the goose-feather shuttle weighed one-third as much as the shuttle Cavendish described. It was one and five-eighths inches shorter and one-half inch smaller in diameter (one-fourth inch smaller than the shuttle described for use on windy days by Cavendish). Cavendish wrote of the old style shuttle: "Cut must not be employed at Badminton. It only causes the shuttlecock to revolve and travel slowly."<sup>21</sup> The newer, lighter, smaller straight-feather shuttle could to cut which added new possibilities to the game. The new shuttle also tended to be durable and consistent during play,<sup>22</sup> which allowed further refinement of shot production in the game of badminton.

### The Racket

The rackets used in early badminton play were similar to those used in lawn tennis. They were of a wooden frame and were strung with gut, as pictured in a reprint of the May 4, 1874 Harper's Bazaar.<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note that the rackets pictured in the 1874 badminton game look strikingly similar to the short handled tennis rackets used in seventeenth century England and France as pictured in Lance Tingay's book, Tennis.<sup>24</sup>

Though the rules of 1888 stated "the racquets used in Badminton to be easily and quickly wielded should be lighter than those used in

Lawn Tennis,"<sup>25</sup> the badminton rackets pictured in the April 4, 1891 Harper's Weekly<sup>26</sup> look strikingly similar to the longer handled tennis rackets in use at the same time.<sup>27</sup> The rackets appeared to be heavy and would have required a slow-paced game.

The only mention of rackets in the literature of the early days of the Badminton Club of the City of New York, other than the rule books, is in the minute book. In the meeting of February 6, 1888, it was "proposed by Mr. Whitehouse and seconded by Mr. Carhart that the Committee purchase twenty racquets for the use of the Club to cost one dollar each."<sup>28</sup> At the meeting of February 23, 1888, it was "proposed by Mr. Wilks, seconded by Mr. Pell that Mr. Whitehouse be authorized to purchase twenty more racquets in price not to exceed \$26."<sup>29</sup>

At what point the rackets changed to the lighter (heavy by today's standards) wood racket used in the 1930s, described by Jack Purcell as being "strung with gut or silk, . . . [resembling] a long-necked banjo in shape, except that the handle is very slim,"<sup>30</sup> has not been determined. A picture of the then Secretary of War's (Patrick Hurley) children playing badminton in the early 1920's shows them playing with the more modern racket used in the 1930's,<sup>31</sup> thereby proving these rackets were manufactured in the twenties.

Badminton rackets began to be manufactured by the N. J. Magnan Corporation of North Attleboro, Massachusetts, in 1918.<sup>32</sup> It is conjectured that the lighter, more modern racket, requiring less wood for its construction than the heavier rackets of 1891, probably was the racket manufactured at this time. It is known that the lighter racket, which could be swung faster than the old fashioned one, was in use in

the early 1920's. This racket probably allowed the game to be played with greater speed.

As the game evolved and became more sophisticated and competitive, provisions for those who wished to cling to the old variations of the game were made in the rule books. These provisions existed at least until 1914 and made it legal to play with three or four on a side.<sup>33</sup> However, the literature available including lists of winners of club tournaments indicates that, from 1898, the game on the competitive level was confined to one (singles) or two (doubles) players on a side.

#### Evolution of Dress

Fashions directly affected the freedom of movement of players and, therefore, directly affected the pace of the badminton game. The evolution of badminton costuming and resultant changes in play are directly related to the game's early history.

Dress in the early days of badminton in New York was quite formal. Men wore tuxedos, Prince Albert coats, and dancing shoes. Women wore the long dresses that were in vogue at the time.<sup>34,35</sup> Concerning attire, a reporter wrote in 1893:

In dress no great preparation is necessary for playing badminton. The exercise, not being violent, tennis flannels can be done away with, and even tennis shoes are not really needed. If they are worn those with the felt soles should be chosen. Women should wear loose gowns slightly shorter than the conventional walking gown and of some soft flexible material that will not interfere with rapid action.<sup>36</sup>

The gowns of the women, pictured in the April 4, 1891 Harper's Weekly, look uncomfortable and allowed little movement.<sup>37</sup> They are, however, a

slight improvement over the gowns worn by badminton players in 1874.<sup>38</sup>  
The men in both cases were playing badminton in tuxedos.

In the early 1900's, a transition was made to less formal clothing at the badminton club. The whole country was becoming more athletically inclined and competitive<sup>39</sup> and the club was not untouched by this trend. However, the dress code at the club did not change without a scandalous occurrence involving Lyle Evans Mahan. Mr. Mahan, a superb tennis player standing six feet seven inches tall, visited Miss Florence Clarke and her sisters in 1901. The Clarke sisters had donated the "Clarke Cup" to the badminton club in memory of their brother, Bayard, to be given to the club men's singles champion. If any person could win the club championship three times, the Clarke Cup would become his permanent possession. Goelet Gallatin had won the championship twice, and the Clarke sisters were hoping Mahan could be groomed to defeat Gallatin. Mahan was elected to the club and practiced hard so that he might win the club championship. In one practice session, he became so engrossed in a match that he decided to take off his coat. The patronesses promptly demanded that he apologize, but Mahan refused. Shortly thereafter, several of the men showed up at the club in tennis clothes, and the era of the tuxedo came to an end. The joke was on the Clarke sisters as Mahan not only successfully won the club championship in 1902, but also won it the following two years, thereby permanently capturing the Clarke Cup.<sup>40</sup>

It has been established that the male badminton players changed to playing in tennis clothes in the early 1900's. This attire, short or long sleeved white shirts, long white pants, and tennis shoes, was worn

by male tennis players as early as 1882.<sup>41</sup> Tingay's book on tennis history indicates the same basic attire was popular for some fifty years.<sup>42</sup> This clothing allowed a greater range of motion than did the tuxedos and dress shoes of the early New York badminton enthusiasts, but shorts were even one step better. Three out of ten Italian national tennis team members wore shorts in 1929.<sup>43</sup> A 1925 photograph of the English men's badminton team indicates that long white pants were still in vogue on the badminton court in 1925. None of the six players was pictured wearing shorts.<sup>44</sup>

By 1935, both long white trousers and shorts were evident on the badminton court though the long white trousers seemed to be the most popular. Dick Birch was pictured winning the Victoria Championships in 1935 wearing shorts.<sup>45</sup> Hamilton Law, Dick Yeager, and three other men were pictured wearing long white trousers and shirts in 1936.<sup>46</sup> Ken Davidson and Jack Purcell were similarly clad in another 1936 photograph.<sup>47</sup>

The changes in the dress code for the women were not discussed in depth in the literature of the Badminton Club of the City of New York. Because the male New York badminton players followed tennis fashions in the early 1900's, it seems safe to glance at women's tennis fashions to get an idea of what was being worn on the badminton court. In late nineteenth century New York, women played badminton in hats, long cumbersome dresses, and dress shoes.<sup>48,49</sup> Women tennis players' costumes were identical in the same era.<sup>50</sup> By 1910, women tennis players wore more casual short or long sleeved white skirts and ankle-high white skirts with a light-weight sport shoe.<sup>51</sup> This allowed more



movement though it certainly still must have been cumbersome. Between 1910 and 1914, some women still wore hats while others did not.<sup>52</sup> By 1920, the famous Suzanne Lenglen played tennis in pleated white skirts that fell just below her knees. She also wore casual short-sleeved or sleeveless tops with a scarf wrapped around her head and tennis shoes. Pictures of Miss Lenglen indicate she was able to pack much action into her style of play in her less cumbersome outfit.<sup>53</sup> Helen Wills was pictured wearing a short-sleeved white blouse, knee-length skirt, white stockings, tennis shoes, and a visor in 1930.<sup>54</sup> Her skirt appeared to allow much movement though it was not pleated as was Lenglen's.

At the first metropolitan championships for women in 1934, some of the members of the New York club recalled that in the old days women wore Gainsborough-style hats and high-necked dresses with wasp waists. Women in the old days were to stand still and tap the bird while their male partners ran around and did all the work. The new, more comfortable ladies' badminton attire, calf-length dresses, were modeled by Mrs. Henry Bultman and Mrs. Frank Ford, Jr. for the New York Sun.<sup>55</sup> Though the ladies had made much progress in the game and no longer was perspiration prohibited, it appears that their costumes were still somewhat inhibiting in 1934 New York.

Pictures of Seattle's top female badminton players in 1936 show all four wearing shorts,<sup>56</sup> thereby allowing comfort and freedom of movement. It seems not all women were sold on shorts, however, for an undated picture in the Hamilton Law collection showed the Washington State women's doubles finalists in the 1930's. Two of the women (the

winner) were wearing shorts and one losing opponent was clad in a mid-thigh skirt, while her partner was seen wearing a skirt that hung just a few inches above her ankle, very much like the tennis outfits of 1910.<sup>57</sup>

Having viewed early equipment and wearing apparel, it is time to investigate two of the groups most responsible for badminton's growth in the United States. The Badminton Club of the City of New York is the oldest badminton club in the United States, having been unofficially begun in 1878 and officially founded nine years later in 1887.<sup>58</sup> It was the only badminton club in the United States until 1908 when Dr. Richard Caines began a club in Boston.<sup>59</sup> New York and Boston were the only towns where one could find organized badminton until approximately 1930 when scores of new clubs began to surface. A study of these two badminton centers is a study of the beginnings of organized badminton in the United States.

#### Badminton Club of the City of New York

Three socialite New York gentlemen were exposed to the game of badminton overseas in the late 1870s. Bayard Clarke learned to play in India, while E. Langdon Wilks and J. Norman de R. Whitehouse learned to play in England.<sup>60</sup> Upon their return to the United States in 1878, Wilkes and Clarke joined forces with Oakley Rhinelanders to form a badminton club which met at the 71st Regiment Armory at the corner of 35th Street and Broadway, New York.<sup>61</sup> The sisters of two of the founding members, Lily Clarke, Katherine Wilks, and Alice Wilks, became three of the first members.<sup>62</sup> Mr. Whitehouse joined, as did three of

the most popular young men in New York society, John Aspinwall Hadden, Matthew Astor Wilks, and Alexander Hadden. These men, in turn, invited many of their friends to join, and the badminton club held its first meeting in 1878.<sup>63</sup> The club was basically a social gathering place for the elite with little emphasis on badminton as can be seen in the following description of the club's opening day:

The scene was one long to be remembered. The most popular debutantes of the season were present, flowers were everywhere, and tea was served by Sherry. Very little badminton was played, but then that was only the excuse for the occasion. Thus was started the Badminton Club of New York, which for the next twenty-five years was destined to be the leading social rendezvous in New York.<sup>64</sup>

The badminton club had no constitution or by-laws and was not considered an official organization. An indication that there was, however, some organization involved in the club can be found in the collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York in the form of a receipt for dues, which reads "The committee beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of M\_\_\_\_\_ subscription to the Badminton Club, for the season commencing Saturday, February 7, 1880."<sup>65</sup> The organizational processes were not firm and the "club lived from year to year or season to season as do dance classes."<sup>66</sup> No officers were elected though Bayard Clarke was considered the "head."<sup>67</sup>

Interest in the badminton club steadily grew until 1884, when the membership numbered 400.<sup>68</sup> The interest continued to be generated by the social factor rather than by badminton itself as can be seen in A. Growler's poem, "At the Badminton Club":

The Badminton Club is the best place for me  
Most restful of spots on this side of the sea  
From worries and troubles I ever am free  
At the Badminton Club.

There's so much to see there, there's so much to do  
 There's so much of interest that's novel and new,  
 The morn seems to last but a minute or two  
     At the Badminton Club.

There's only one drawback to it in my eyes,  
 And that is Badminton--a game I despise;  
 The noise of the rackets my patience sore tries  
     At the Badminton Club.

I'm fond of the chatting of chappies and dames  
 But think it the veriest shame of all shames  
 These people should lug in their nursery games  
     At the Badminton Club.<sup>69</sup>

Badminton was especially popular during the Lenten season as the theatre and dancing were not allowed at that time.<sup>70</sup> A drawing entitled "A Touching Sacrifice," which shows club members playing badminton, appeared in a publication titled Life. The caption read: "These pious souls, who think it wrong to dance in Lent, endure with Christian fortitude the tortures of badminton."<sup>71</sup>

After the club's year of growth in 1884, it seemed to disband in 1885. In 1886, a group of 75 people reorganized and governed themselves through a committee.<sup>72</sup> Still there were no constitution or by-laws and the badminton players decided it was time to amend the situation. In a letter written to Howland Pell, Amory Carhart, and T. J. Rhinelanders on April 9, 1887, the club members wrote:

The success of the Badminton Club during the past two or three years has been so marked, and the great pleasure and enjoyment which it has given to its members, has made many of them wish to see the club on a permanent basis, and with a fixed and limited membership.

We therefore . . . most earnestly request that you will now act as a Committee for the purpose of organizing "The Badminton Club of the City of New York," and associating two other gentlemen with you, will constitute yourselves a Committee for the purpose of drafting suitable Rules and By-Laws for the government of the Club and act as its Governing Committee for the first year.<sup>73</sup>

Oakley Rhineland and Amory Carhart composed a constitution for the club. At a meeting on June 17, 1887, the executive committee, Oakley Rhineland, Howland Pell, Norman de R. Whitehouse, and Amory Carhart (M. Wilks absent), approved the constitution and the Badminton Club of the City of New York was officially formed. The constitution clarified the duties of the officers, limited membership to 200, and defined the purpose of the club as being "to promote friendly intercourse among its members and encourage a taste for the game of badminton."<sup>74</sup>

The members of the first executive committee gave themselves (and future executive committees) absolute power to control all aspects of the club from filling membership rolls to amending the constitution.<sup>75</sup> Officers of the club were to be chosen from the executive committee. In this air of absolutism, the club's first officers were elected as follows: "proposed by Mr. Carhart, seconded by Mr. Pell, that Mr. Rhineland be elected President of the Club. Unanimously carried. . . ."<sup>76</sup> In the same manner, Mr. Pell became Treasurer, Mr. Carhart Secretary, and Mr. Wilks Second Vice President.<sup>77</sup>

The club remained a social one according to its early tradition. The patronesses of the club during its first year included some of society's giants, namely, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mrs. Elliot Roosevelt, Mrs. William Astor, Mrs. J. Muhlenberg Bailey, Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting, Mrs. Frederic Gallatin, Mrs. Frederic J. DePeyster, Mrs. William Rhineland, Mrs. Bradley Martin, Mrs. John Kane, and Mrs. Adrian Iselin.<sup>78</sup> Mrs. Robert Livingstone, Mrs. Elbridge Gerry, and

Mrs. Henry Parish were also asked to serve.<sup>79</sup>

A curious rule was instituted on December 17, 1887. Oakley Rhinelander suggested that "no married person shall be eligible to active membership except those who were members in 1887."<sup>80</sup> The executive committee unanimously approved. Reportedly this rule was put into effect because nearly every prominent debutante wanted to join the club. The waiting list was extremely lengthy and the executive committee was inundated with requests that certain girls be admitted. The club leaders finally decided to try to streamline the admission process by choosing the women members on the basis of looks only. They invited them to the club and took notes on them in a membership book. Pencil in after one girl's name one can still see the words "Not Much."<sup>81</sup>

The "no married person" rule caused problems for club members who became engaged to persons who were not club members. In order for them to become members, the engaged persons could not marry until their prospective mates had been admitted to the club while they were still single. One betrothed debutante proposed her beloved for membership. When she discovered there were but three openings and her fiance was 119th on the waiting list, she quit the club saying she could not wait that long to be married.<sup>82</sup>

The week-end games of the club in its early days were much the same in nature as a carnival. Different colored shuttlecocks were used on nine courts which were shared by 150 members in one afternoon. Pennants of red and gold, the club colors, decorated the poles which supported the nets. While resting, players snacked on tea, sandwiches, and cakes.<sup>83</sup>

The badminton club members enjoyed playing for prizes. Indeed, the major club expense was for prizes, as can be seen by the treasurer's report dated May 2, 1888:

Receipts to date	\$1288.00
Printing and postage	146.00
Supplies	115.89
Rent	175.00
Sundry expenses	42.00
Refreshments	75.30
Prizes	<u>629.24</u>
Balance	\$ 104.52 <sup>84</sup>

The awards generally were silver, such as trays, dishes, and picture frames.<sup>85</sup>

One prize was allowed per court and the court finishing first would have the choice of prizes. This encouraged a race of sorts between courts to see who could finish first. After partners and courts were assigned, "a bell rang and immediately a tremendous scramble was started, all the players rushing to their courts and starting play furiously."<sup>86</sup>

Several sources report that worthless United States Steel stock was given as a prize for the badminton matches one afternoon which caused great consternation among the players. However, an undated Cholly Knickerbocker column indicated that the worthless stock was given to the winners of a whist tournament held at the badminton club:

Miss Hopton Atternary, Miss Louise Hollins, Harry Montgomery and Theodore R. Pell were the victims on whom this gigantic joke was played. They protested that they had not won the booby prizes, but their protestations were unheeded. It has not yet been decided if they will resign in consequence of this extraordinary treatment.<sup>87</sup>

An intra-club competition for both men and women began in 1898. A list of winners can be seen in Appendix E.

The club began meeting at the armory in Herald Square in its earliest days. From there it moved to the Berkeley Lyceum on Forty-Fourth Street in 1898 and then to the Twelfth Regiment Armory. The club members had a rather cold time of it at the tennis building on 41st Street when they moved there in 1908 and then finally settled back at the 12th Regiment Armory in 1921.<sup>88,89</sup>

During the time the club was meeting at the tennis club, memberships dwindled for the first time in history. It was believed this was because the tennis club was too cold and because many members purchased the new automobile which could take them to out-of-town country clubs on weekends rather than to the badminton club.<sup>90</sup> When the club returned to the 12th Regimental Armory, memberships again were in demand. President Ashton De Peyster wrote the club members in 1924, saying,

Inasmuch as the membership of this Club has greatly increased, and the proportion of active members is very much greater than ever before . . . guests will be admitted to the club only on presentation of a card of invitation.<sup>91</sup>

Some club members seemed interested in preserving the game by encouraging junior players to join in the early 1920's. An amendment to the constitution of the club on May 23, 1921, paved the way for children 10 years of age and older to be eligible for membership.<sup>92</sup> By 1922, fifteen were junior members. Edward Van Winkle wrote the executive committee in January of 1924, requesting that the by-law setting age minimums for membership (20 for men, 17 for women) be changed to read age 17 for both men and women. "We all know that young men of 17 years and older are more efficient and more expert in the playing of games than older men," he wrote.<sup>93</sup> Apparently changing this rule was merely



a formality as the 18-year old boy of whom Van Winkle specifically spoke in his letter, Mr. Louis Watson, was elected to the club on November 15, 1923.<sup>94</sup> It was a necessary change, however, because up to that point, boys could legally belong to the club from ages 10 to 17; membership was then suspended until the young men reached age 21.

The Badminton Club of the City of New York continued as a social club as the following action of 1923 indicated: "a resolution was passed prohibiting the smoking of pipes or cigars at the tea table."<sup>95</sup> However, there was more emphasis on the badminton than in the past. By 1930, the largest club expense was not for prizes or tea, but rather for badminton shuttlecocks.<sup>96</sup>

#### Badminton Clubs in Boston

Boston was the second town in the United States to support badminton activity. The sport was introduced to Boston in 1908 by Dr. Richard Caines who founded the Caines College of Physical Culture and headed a Badminton Health Club.<sup>97</sup> Badminton in Boston was not very popular until the 1920's when Dr. Caines's program gained momentum. In 1921, George "Jess" Willard was hired as an instructor at Caines where George Stafford taught him the game of badminton.<sup>98</sup> Willard became quite proficient and started promoting the game at Boston's University Club.<sup>99</sup>

Willard took up badminton primarily because he was interested "in physical development work and he believed that Badminton would provide an enjoyable form of exercise for men who were taking his course."<sup>100</sup> When Willard joined the University Club, there were two courts and

twenty-two players. He helped increase the number to 200 players and nine courts by the time he left Boston in the early 1930's.<sup>101</sup>

### Badminton Health Club

The Literary Digest reported in 1925, that there were 300 enthusiastic members of Dr. Caines's Badminton Health Club on the fourth floor of 32 Oliver Street. Many people were joining the club, founded in 1908,<sup>102</sup> including an athletic Christian Bishop, Charles Slattery.<sup>103</sup>

Unlike the New York club, the Boston clubs were formed with little thought for the social aspect and much thought about health improvement. Mrs. Fay Simmons liked badminton because it required the use of "every muscle and faculty."<sup>104</sup> Dr. Leroy Crandon wrote that eye injuries were fewer in badminton than other racket sports and that several of his patients lowered their blood pressure by taking up the game.<sup>105</sup> William Nutter claimed that badminton had helped him lose weight, tone his muscles, and increase his on-the-job efficiency. He told an interesting story:

A member of the club, one of the biggest men in mercantile life in Boston, came in about a quarter of six one night some two months ago. He was scheduled to make a speech in the Chamber of Commerce at 6:30 and he was fagged out, body and mind. He wanted to be put in shape and he was. They gave him five minutes of stretching and setting up stuff, then a ten minute game of Badminton, then a warm shower and a five minute rest. After that he got a thorough massage, followed by a cold shower and that chap went out of here with his eyes snapping and a spring in his step and his mind as clear and fresh as it had ever been. Now, cocktails might produce the appearance but not the effect of that healthy treatment, nor would they result in the speech he made that night. And that's why the fellows down here on the street have joined the Badminton Club.<sup>106</sup>

### University Club

The University Club opened up five new courts which cost the

club \$77,000 in 1930.<sup>107</sup> The club members hoped that the new badminton facility would enable the club to "lead the U.S. as Home of Badminton."<sup>108</sup> Where the club previously accommodated 125 players, it now could allow 400 to play. The courts were built to conform to requirements for national and international meets. Club members believed that "the game of Badminton is undoubtedly to become in a very short time the most popular indoor game in and about Boston and eventually New England."<sup>109</sup>

The new gym was opened with a celebration involving exhibition matches between University Club players A. M. Bond, C. R. Hutchinson, R. E. Tibbetts, Jess Willard, John Phelan, W. G. Mitchell, and G. W. Hurd against men from the Quebec, Canada, club.<sup>110</sup>

The Boston players ranged in age from 27 to 47 and were of a variety of occupations including teaching, insurance bonds, real estate, manufacturing, and law.<sup>111</sup> Some of them had switched from playing squash to playing badminton because, as Al Bond stated,

I used to play squash with Leigh Liggett. We were about evenly matched and we could bat the ball around for an hour and a half and still feel fairly fresh. In badminton, we frequently have found fifteen minutes of play all that we can stand.<sup>112</sup>

Ford Sawyer reported in the Boston Globe that Jess Willard was greatly responsible for the growth of badminton not only at the University Club, but also for its growth in all of New England. Regarding the University Club's new badminton facility, Mr. Sawyer wrote,

Three years ago, with but a handful of members playing the game and a small court, Jess declared that within a few years the quarters would not be sufficient to handle the players desiring to take up the game and that the Badminton devotees at the club would not be numbered on the fingers of the hand, but by the hundreds. A few months ago, when the University Club's new Badminton courts . . . were opened to the public, Jess' dream was realized.<sup>113</sup>

Mr. Willard's willingness to stage many exhibitions and offer instruction to potential players was considered a major factor in the growth of badminton in Boston.<sup>114</sup>

### Intercity Matches

The fact that badminton was more of a social event in New York as opposed to the mainly athletic nature of badminton in Boston did not show in the first intercity match held in the United States between the two towns on April 10, 1915. Two singles matches and one doubles match were played and New York won all three matches. The Boston players fared better in singles than in doubles. Boston's Dr. Richard Caines was able to collect 10 and 7 points from New York's Lyle Mahan and Dr. E. G. Cosby of Boston scored 10 and 11 points before bowing to R. E. Wigham. Caines and A. P. Rogers reportedly lacked good teamwork in doubles play and fell to R. E. Wigham and Edward K. Van Winkle 15-1, 15-8.<sup>115</sup>

There was a temporary halt of the intercity matches during World War I but the two rivals, New York and Boston, met again in the spring of 1919 for a series of matches.<sup>116</sup> The Boston team came to the fore in the first contest and defeated New York seven matches to three in New York. The gallery was packed and the audience was not disappointed as most matches proved to be close. The match which aroused the most interest was the singles contest between Edward K. Van Winkle, the New York champion, and B. C. Larrabee, the Boston champion. The match proved to be a strange one, however, as

the Boston man had a sharp forehand serve that carried the bird

across the net with unusual speed and flew past the local champion before he could get set to return it. Mr. Van Winkle was seldom able to put the bird into play, and there were consequently very few rallies.<sup>117</sup>

Reginald Wigham was the outstanding player for New York. He won his singles match against A. F. Curtis 15-12, 15-10, and then teamed with L. Gouveneur Morris to defeat Carl Stark and R. F. Kilthau 3-15, 18-13, and 15-9. The other New York win was a doubles match pitting New York's E. K. Van Winkle and G. O. Wagner against A. Curtis and R. C. Gidden with scores of 15-11, 11-15, and 15-13.<sup>118</sup>

The two badminton teams met again at Caines College on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston a few weeks later. This time the Boston team won seven matches to zero. The New Yorkers failed to win a single game, though a few were set.<sup>119</sup> At this point badminton had been in Boston but eleven years as opposed to New York's forty-one. The athletic nature of the New York club could have been one of the determining factors in the outcome of the contest. The Boston club had made great strides toward establishing good badminton play in its city in a short period while the New York club seemed to be undergoing a temporary stagnation. The fact that E. K. Van Winkle could win the club championship in the early 1900s (see Appendix F) and still make the club team in 1919 shows a lack of new young players interested in playing serious badminton.

The two clubs met again in 1920,<sup>120</sup> 1921,<sup>121</sup> 1922,<sup>122</sup> and 1928.<sup>123</sup> They may have played each other again before 1928, but if so, it was not mentioned in the New York Times.

Competitive Badminton for Women

Since the intercity matches described between New York and Boston involved only male players, a short description of the rise of serious badminton play for females needs to be mentioned. To help protect women from fatigue, a law was changed in 1907, which mandated that women play singles to 11 points rather than 15. The setting remained 5 and 3 points to conform with scoring in all other types of badminton games. However, in 1934, the set situation in women's singles was changed to 3 points (option at 9-all) and 2 points (option at 10-all).<sup>124</sup> Despite the belief that women were too frail to play as hard as men, women did begin to play the sport competitively.

Badminton in Boston became a means for men to gain or regain their health. Women, however, did not consider using badminton as a means of gaining strong bodies until the early 1930's at which time the Massachusetts Girl's League began meeting on Tuesday nights. Women in Dedham, Attleboro, and Milton also became enthusiastic players.<sup>125</sup>

Up to the time the new badminton facility was built at the University Club in Boston, women did not play there. With the opening of the new courts it was decided that the old court on the ground floor of the Stuart Street building would be bequeathed to interested female badminton players. It was also decided that at certain hours of the day the women could use the new facility for badminton.<sup>126</sup>

Majorie Morrill became the Boston district singles champion in March of 1930, while Hazel Wightman became mixed doubles champion with Walter Mitchell.<sup>127</sup>

By February 1931, it was reported that the University Club women won their first match in the newly formed women's league consisting of the University Club, Milton, Junior League, Chestnut Hill, Framingham, Hingham, Brookline, Lowell, and Westwood. The University Club Team defeated Hingham. The victors were Mrs. C. E. Poore, Mrs. W. Locke, Miss Elizabeth Smith, and Mrs. R. M. Fallon.<sup>128</sup>

Women played badminton at the Badminton Club of the City of New York in its early days. However, it was not until 1934 that the women of that club and other area clubs were playing seriously enough to establish the first Women's Metropolitan Badminton Championship. On February 4, 1934, Aloise Boker of the Badminton Club of the City of New York wrote Clarence Moore, president of the Metropolitan Badminton Association, asking permission to organize this first women's championship.<sup>129</sup> Permission was granted and plans went forth to hold a singles and doubles tournament on March 15 and 16 at the 212th Regiment Armory in New York City.

It was feared there would not be enough entrants in the new tournament. In February 1934, Miss Boker wrote Mrs. Pitkin of New Haven asking, "Now the question arises, supposing we do not get this many entries, reducing our receipts, how will we cover any deficit which may arise?"<sup>130</sup> The worry was a short-lived one, however. In a letter dated March 9, 1934, President Moore wrote Mrs. Pitkin stating:

However, in regard to the women's tournament I have talked several times on the telephone with Miss Boker and from the last report I had it looks as if the women's entry list will be much larger than the men's and I heartily congratulate you and your committee on what has been accomplished.<sup>131</sup>

Miss Boker arranged both on-court and off-court activities for

the entrants. She wrote Mrs. Pitkin:

We have 8 courts for play and two for warming up. We should plan to be through by 3:45 so we will definitely be off the courts by 4, when the men start. . . .

Will you find out from your players how many will be staying in New York Thursday and if they would like us to tell them about rooms somewhere. I am more than sorry that none of the New York apartments seem to have guest rooms. I am planning to have all those staying over, for dinner that night, probably at the Junior League, and perhaps some bridge. . . . I thought we would have dinner early enough so that if anyone would like to come for dinner and then go to the theatre they could. . . .<sup>132</sup>

The first Women's Metropolitan Badminton Championship was successfully run and resulted in listed rankings (see Appendices F and G).

Miss Boker reported:

There were 32 entries in the singles and 30 doubles pairs. Of the 12 clubs with women players, who are members of the Metropolitan Badminton Association we had 9 Clubs represented: Central, Hartford, Hewlett, Larchmont, New Haven, New Rochelle, New York, Scarsdale and Westport. The three clubs not sending players were Garden City, Greenwich and Rutgers, but these all expect to enter another year.<sup>133</sup>

Serious badminton play for women was on the rise in many other parts of the country in the 1930's. The events in Boston and New York are only a sampling of change for female players in the United States.

#### Summary

Badminton was a slow game when it first appeared in the United States in the 1870's. A fast shuttle was used, which required little effort on the part of the players in hitting it from end-to-end. An hour-glass shaped court made less area for players to cover. A higher net made it difficult to hit smashes and drop shots with good angle and rackets were somewhat cumbersome. The formal dress worn by players made it difficult to run and stretch.



The game began to be more athletic in nature in the early 1900's when players began wearing tennis clothes, which allowed more movement. Also, a slower speed shuttle (requiring more effort on the part of the players to hit it from end-to-end) was employed. The rules of the Badminton Association of England, which called for a standard-sized rectangular court, became the official rules followed by badminton enthusiasts in the United States in the early 1900's. A standard-sized court enabled players to refine their strokes and footwork.

The first two badminton clubs which appeared in the United States were the New York (1878) and Boston (1908) clubs. The New York club was a highly formal and social club while the Boston club was of a more athletic nature. The two clubs met for a series of intercity matches. At first, the newer Boston club was outclassed by the New York club, but Boston soon came to the fore in terms of excellence of play. Intercity matches involved men only, and serious competition for women did not emerge until the 1930's.

Badminton began as a slow game in the United States. By 1930, however, it was a sophisticated, demanding sport that appeared to have a promising future.

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### CHAPTER III

#### DEPRESSION YEARS: BADMINTON CLUBS

##### FOUNDED FROM COAST TO COAST

Badminton was an established competitive sport in the United States by 1930. Badminton enthusiasts no longer were solely confined to clubs in New York and Boston; it became possible to find clubs in almost any major city in the United States. The reasons for the tremendous growth of the sport of badminton during the depression years are discussed in this chapter. Major clubs which appeared in the East, Mid-West, and West are covered.

##### Badminton's Rapid Growth

During the depression years an increased emphasis on recreation occurred. The work-week was shortened in order to spread available work among the citizens, thereby providing increased leisure time.<sup>1</sup> Apparently this phenomenon was a great boon to badminton, for a common theme in the literature on the sport of the era was that badminton was the fastest growing sport in America and would soon share the spotlight with the major sports.<sup>2</sup> Badminton became so popular in the thirties that a beauty salon in New York installed a court on its rooftop to allow its customers "to get [their] exercise while [their] hair [was] setting."<sup>3</sup> Roger Birtwell wrote about badminton in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in

1932:

But grins and wisecracks failed to deter George Stephenson, Ted Rudd, George McQueston and other badminton addicts from keeping everlasting at it. In 1932 folks had a lot of time on their hands and the original players soon found that their "gang" was expanding.<sup>4</sup>

The increased interest in badminton in Marblehead seemed indicative of what was happening in the whole country. Samuel Boyce sent a questionnaire to fifty YMCA's in 1938, and received twenty-two replies from cities such as Los Angeles, Miami, Dallas, Seattle, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Boston.<sup>5</sup> In 1931, only two of the YMCA's offered badminton activity, but all twenty-two offered the sport by 1936. Boyce also sent questionnaires to fifty universities and colleges throughout the country and received twenty replies. Of the twenty, only one university offered badminton instruction in 1931, but all twenty had badminton programs by 1936.<sup>6</sup>

Sporting goods stores reported sales were up 400 percent "and gleefully anticipate that badminton will soon furnish the outlet for their biggest manufacturing investment in years."<sup>7</sup> Buckingham Sports of New York; Wilson Sporting Goods of Chicago; N. J. Magnan Corporation of Massachusetts; the Kenwel Sales Company of Utica, New York; and the Bauer Sporting Goods Company of Seattle, Washington, all reported a great increase in sales of badminton equipment between 1931 and 1936.<sup>8</sup> The Bauer Sporting Goods Company reported that they first supplied shuttles in 1930 and sold only twelve dozen that year. But by 1936, 1500 dozen were sold to new badminton enthusiasts.<sup>9</sup> It appeared that most of the new badminton players were playing outdoors, at least until 1937, for "the leading wholesale badminton house in this country

sold, during the past three years, more than three to four times the number of racquets and birds for outdoor use than it did for the indoor game."<sup>10</sup>

Many factors contributed to the growth of badminton in the thirties. The author of a magazine article written in 1936 felt that it was gaining popularity because it could be played most anywhere, was simple to learn, gave double the exercise a tennis match required in the same length of time, and was inexpensive to play.<sup>11</sup> "Complete [badminton] sets for beginners retail less than five dollars. Only a few clubs charge more than fifty dollars annual dues."<sup>12</sup>

Jack Purcell, the famous tennis and badminton professional of Canada, had these thoughts on the upward trend in the United States:

The big reason for this boom in badminton is that it filled a gap in the sports calendar that badly needed filling. And that's why it's here to stay. There are men and women in this country by the hundred thousand who are accustomed to some form of more or less strenuous exercise during the summer months. They like to keep fit the year round, but until they learned about badminton there was nothing they could do about it.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Rise of Badminton Clubs

"By 1930, nearly every section of the United States had become acquainted with the sport."<sup>14</sup> Many badminton players, several of whom went on to become national champions or good administrators, started their careers in the 1930s. A few examples follow.

Roy Wilcox Jordan, a Midwest and American Badminton Association member, began his badminton career in 1937, in St. Louis and led his children "to participate in backyard badminton, which is so prevalent in that area."<sup>15</sup>

The late Virginia Hill Mosdale, the 1947 United States mixed doubles champion and co-founder of the Southern California Badminton Association, began her career "chasing shuttles at Burbank High School in a group led by Roy Lockwood" in the thirties.<sup>16</sup>

In 1936, another co-founder of the Southern California Badminton Association, Robert Noble, started a family project which was building his own well-lit asphalt backyard badminton court. That summer the court was always full so Mr. Noble decided to organize the group into a club in Alhambra. "Acquiring the local basketball gym, 'Dad' painted lines on it, strung up the nets and provided all the racquets."<sup>17</sup>

With the increased number of people playing the sport, badminton clubs began to be organized, much as Noble organized the Alhambra club. Purcell noted tremendous support for badminton groups in 1936 in New England, New York, the middle west, and the entire west coast from Seattle to Los Angeles. He felt badminton was the most popular in Boston though there were more than 100 organized clubs in New England. In New York, there were about fifty organized clubs consisting of several thousand active players. There was much activity in Manhattan, New Jersey, and Long Island. Badminton players were found in great numbers in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and other states. In discussing his travels, Purcell remarked, "In the last few years I have played matches in large centers like Boston, Brooklyn, New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, Buffalo, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo, Flint, and Chicago."<sup>18</sup> Each time, claimed Purcell, the crowds grew larger and more appreciative while club memberships in each city were increasing by leaps and bounds.

There was badminton activity in Denver and the "whole Pacific coast is badminton conscious, from Seattle to Los Angeles."<sup>19</sup> The farther down the west coast he traveled, the more outdoor badminton courts he saw.<sup>20</sup>

It was also reported that clubs existed in Niagara Falls, Chicago, Portland, San Francisco, Cleveland, Augusta, and Palm Beach.<sup>21</sup> These clubs were divided into four sectional bodies--the Metropolitan, New England, Middle States, and Pacific Coast divisions--until the American Badminton Association was formed in 1935. The Literary Digest reported that a conservative estimate of the number of people playing badminton in the United States as of January 1936, was 25,000.<sup>22</sup> Some of the clubs which were active in the 1930's are discussed in the remainder of the chapter.

#### Eastern United States

As was previously stated, there was much badminton activity in the east coast area in the thirties. A club was formed in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in 1932, and was named "Gut'n Feathers."

Folks used to grin and point significantly at the side of their heads, when several Marblehead enthusiasts, back in 1932, used to play in a vacant garage. For badminton is a winter game, the garage was unheated and the players used to pursue their headless hummingbird (the shuttlecock) clad in overshoes. . . . There wasn't sufficient room for all to be playing at once and they soon found that idle players got chilblains.<sup>23</sup>

The club moved from Peabody's Garage to Lyceum Hall when its members decided to seek their own facilities in 1936. The Universalist Church was put up for auction and the badminton club was the only bidder.<sup>24</sup> The early members began a tradition of Friday night cocktails and pot luck dinners, followed by friendly badminton matches. This tradition

still holds at Gut'n Feathers.

### Greater New York Area

The increased activity in New York has briefly been mentioned. The officers of the Badminton Club of New York in 1931 were Frederick Ashton DePeyster, president; Francis Stoddard, vice president; Walter Rysam Jones, treasurer; William Bramwell, secretary; and Richard Mann, captain. Among the club players were Reginal Wigham, James McKinley Rose, E. K. Van Winkle and Mrs. Van Winkle, John Welles Arnold, Aloise Boker, Edith Handy, Mrs. F. R. Stoddard, Mrs. Christine Capehart, and Mrs. Richard Ford. The club champions that year were William Bramwell and John Arnold in men's doubles and William Bramwell in men's singles.<sup>25</sup>

The big event on the calendars of the club members was the New York Club invitation tournament. The winners in 1931 were Donald Vaughn, Fanny Curtis, and Kenneth Ridgeway. Other participants in the tournament who later became prominent in New York badminton circles were Mills Baker, Elliot Baker, Harry Gorgas, Harry Conlan, Wanda Bergman, and Lea Gustavson.<sup>26</sup>

In 1930, badminton was introduced to Jamaica, Long Island, by a Dr. Taylor. In the same year, a Dr. Wambold started a badminton group in the Central Presbyterian Church of Park Avenue in New York City. It was implied, though not directly stated by Mr. Gustavson (now deceased), that these two groups became two of the first clubs in New York besides, of course, the old Badminton Club of the City of New York, founded in 1878.<sup>27</sup>

The Metropolitan Association of New York was founded in 1932, and was composed of four clubs: Larchmont, Garden City, Great Neck, and

the Badminton Club of New York. This association grew to a membership of sixty-two clubs which competed among themselves for a two-foot high trophy cup. Garden City won this cup many times in the thirties.<sup>28</sup>

#### Connecticut and Massachusetts

In 1931, the Badminton Club of Westport was formed in Connecticut. The original six members, Sam Brown, Sid Saunders, Kenneth Littaver, George Goodspeed, Jock Fulton, and Lea Gustavson, helped the sport grow in Connecticut and soon four other clubs were organized, each of which joined the Metropolitan Association. A few years later, Westport contributed a trophy to be awarded to the winners of the women's team competition. Some prominent lady players emerged from Connecticut, among them Wanda Bergman, Cora Lindsay, Lu Gustavson and, in later years, Gil Carpenter and Helen Gibson.<sup>29</sup>

There was much activity in Boston in 1931. Besides Jess Willard, other players who were of note were Raynor Hutchinson, Walter Mitchell, M. Stanley Houghton, Donald and Philip Richardson, Mrs. Whitefield Painter, Mrs. H. C. Simmonds, Miss Priscilla Barol, Miss Fanny Curtis, and Miss Harriet Nichols. In 1931, the Greater Boston Badminton League was organized, consisting of fourteen clubs. The first officers, Robert S. Boyd of Hingham and John Burchard II of the University Club, saw the organization increase to twenty-one clubs. The league matches were divided into four divisions: "A," "B," "C," and "Southern." A separate league for women had been active for three years with eight teams involved. This group increased to twelve teams in 1932.<sup>30</sup>

Around 1930, the New England Badminton Association was formed.

This association ran a championship tournament for all New Englanders. The 1933 records show that the fourth annual New England Open Tournament started at the University Club on March 20, with the finals completed on April 1. Two of the early officers who helped run the first tournaments were George K. Briggs and Roger Morse.<sup>31</sup>

### Delaware Valley

Badminton became quite popular in the Delaware Valley in the thirties.

The Delaware Valley first awoke to the thrills of badminton in the early 1930's. One of the early tournaments was held in the ballroom of the Merion Cricket Club with several fiercely contested matches. The players had to contend with hazards of a low overhead and several ceiling lamps, but in spite of these handicaps everyone had a thoroughly good time.<sup>32</sup>

By 1936, several clubs had formed in this valley, including the Dilwyne Badminton Club, the Haverford Badminton Club, and the Wissahickon Badminton Club. Also, the Central YMCA, the Merion Cricket Club, and the Penn Athletic Club all had significant badminton groups. The club members paced out courts in gymnasiums, good-sized halls, church auditoriums, parish houses, and old barns.<sup>33</sup>

In the Delaware Valley, a league was formed and players were divided into "A" or "B" groups. Regular contests were held weekly. Each league match was usually limited to four singles and two doubles matches because of an apparent shortage of court space. Other coed and women's matches were held less frequently.<sup>34</sup>

The Delaware Valley Badminton Association was organized to sponsor and coordinate league matches.<sup>35</sup> Apparently this organization became one of the leaders in badminton activity in the country, for when



it came time to stage the second United States Championships in 1938, the organization volunteered to run the tournament at the Pennsylvania Athletic Club.

The national tournament sparked even more new interest in the Delaware Valley. So many individuals began playing that the league grew from just two divisions to four. This increased activity persisted until the United States entered World War II.<sup>36</sup>

### Pennsylvania

The Wissahickon Badminton Club was founded in the fall of 1933. Prior to that time, only two badminton courts existed in private residences in the town of Philadelphia. Mr. Griscom Bettle of Gladwyne and Mr. Pierce Archer of Ardmore owned their own courts. The ten founding members of the Wissahickon Badminton Club were Curtis Allen; Thomas Aspinwall; Edwin Benson; M. T. Cooke, Jr.; W. W. Frazier III; Samuel B. Irwin; William McLean, Jr.; Shippen Lewis; Mrs. Theodore S. Paul; and Mr. C. Lothrop Ritchie.<sup>37</sup> By 1934, a membership of thirty-seven men and forty-five women kept the four courts busy. Many important Delaware tournaments were moved to the Wissahickon Club from the Merion Cricket Club where the ceiling was a low twenty feet.<sup>38</sup>

The Wissahickon Badminton Club courts were housed in a building which was the stable for the old Wissahickon Inn. The inn was sold to the Chestnut Hill Academy who continued to rent the building to the badminton club until recent times.<sup>39</sup>

Wissahickon Badminton Club members played on dirt until 1936, when a wooden floor was installed along with a lounge. The court lighting was copied from the blueprints of the Montreal Badminton Club,

Quebec, Canada, which was considered to be the best lighted club of its time.<sup>40</sup>

### Mid-Western United States

During the depression, badminton not only gained in popularity on the East Coast, but it also was growing in many major cities of the mid-west. The emphasis in this section is on clubs which were formed in the Greater Chicago area.

The Flint, Michigan, Badminton Club was organized in 1931, as the "Presbyterian Badminton Club." The name "Presbyterian" was changed to "Flint" in 1935, and ever since the club has been meeting twice a week at a junior high school.<sup>41</sup>

### Greater Chicago Area

In the spring of 1934, the Chicago Herald Examiner reported that "a new sport called badminton is soaring to popularity in America."<sup>42</sup> The headquarters for badminton in the Middle West reportedly was established with the formation of the Oak Park and River Forest Badminton Club in Chicago which housed seven courts, making it the largest club in the country. The club, formed in 1934, was the fifth badminton club to emerge in the Chicago area. Oak Park and River Forest Club members planned the first formal midwestern badminton tournament in the fall of 1934.<sup>43</sup>

Fifteen clubs around Chicago made up the North Shore Badminton Association by 1936.<sup>44</sup> Within two short years, ten more clubs had appeared in the region. Some of these clubs were the Winnetka Community

Badminton Club, the Winnetka Badminton Club, the Badminton and Julep Club of Winnetka, the Ownetsia Club, the Skokie Badminton Club, the Geneva Badminton Club, and the Country Club of Evanston. The president of the North Shore Badminton Association at this time was Ward Starrett of the Skokie Badminton Club. Mr. Goodrich was vice president and Mr. Jacobs secretary treasurer. Directors of the association were Mr. Anderson, David McDougal of the Geneva Club, L. J. Youngren of the Country Club of Evanston, and W. Hamilton Walter of the Skokie Badminton Club.<sup>45</sup>

The North Shore Badminton Association's purpose was to organize informal games followed by small parties among the member clubs. Those who assisted the officers in planning the get-togethers were the Paul Chaces, the Louis Tildens, the Warners, the Frank Ketchams, the Eugene Hollands, the Robert Griers, the Scott Greenes, the Oren Smiths, the M. McWilliams Stones, and "Buster" Rogers.<sup>46</sup> The North Shore Badminton Association did not host formal tournaments. This was left to the Midwest Badminton Association which was comprised of clubs in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, and Arkansas.<sup>47</sup>

It is interesting to note that one member club of the North Shore Badminton Association, the Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest, was late in starting its season one year in the mid-thirties because "the wedding reception for Miss Gwendolyn Bowen and Jefferson D. Courier is being held there on Nov. 14, so the floor of the lounge cannot be marked for the court until after that date."<sup>48</sup>

Jess Willard became club pro at the Country Club of Evanston following his marriage to a Hawaiian princess in 1936.<sup>49</sup> He instructed

"in groups or individually according to the pocket book of the individual."<sup>50</sup> Willard also was given an honorary membership in the Chicago-Dearborn Club at the Lawson YMCA. Wrote Stuart McCutcheon, Chicago-Dearborn Club manager, "I wanted this done because of my appreciation for the service you have rendered us and because of my interest in the game and in your connection with it. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

Further evidence of the growth of badminton in the Chicago area was illustrated in Winnetka Talk.<sup>52</sup> A picture of twenty-nine juniors who played at the Community House in 1936 was on the same page as a picture of Jess Willard, who was soon to play an exhibition with William Martin (Chicago area professional), against Henry Sistrunk, Illinois state champion, and Jack Riday, North Shore champion. The paper also reported that badminton was increasing in popularity to the extent that the courts at the Community House were always overflowing.<sup>53</sup>

### West Coast

Badminton clubs appeared up and down the West Coast in the 1930s. Major cities where badminton was played were Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Club activity in Seattle and Pasadena, two prominent areas, is covered in this section. Some other clubs found in Washington state, California, and Oregon during the depression are briefly mentioned.

#### Washington State

Several Seattle badminton enthusiasts were among the best in the United States during the depression era. Kurt Louis Betz has been

given credit for starting the game in a serious and competitive manner in the town around 1927.<sup>54,55</sup> Betz belonged to the Seattle Tennis and Badminton Club.<sup>56</sup> He wrote to Royal Brougham from Germany in the late thirties:

Dear Mr. Brougham--Here in Berlin I recently read a copy of your newspaper. In the issue was an article about the remarkable growth of badminton in Seattle and the U.S.A. It brought me back long years to a day when I first approached you in your office with a little news about a new sport which a few of us were trying to inaugurate in Seattle. I think of the kidding remarks the writers made about the goose-feather game--I well recall when you named me as the "Father of Badminton." Remember? I have them all in my scrapbook. Well, today I have the satisfaction to see that the game I fought for is where it needs no more help. It is a part of America's athletics forever. . . .<sup>57</sup>

Though Betz started badminton in Seattle, it was reported in 1935 that "the appearance in the Northwest of Mr. Jess Willard, national professional champion from Pasadena, California, had considerable to do with the increased interest taken in Badminton during the past season."<sup>58</sup> Also, newspaper articles in the Hamilton Law collection show great enthusiasm for badminton in neighboring Victoria and Vancouver, Canada. This interest may have helped encourage more badminton play in Seattle.

By 1935, there were twelve thriving badminton clubs in Washington, eight of which were in the immediate Seattle area.<sup>59</sup> The Olympic Badminton Club of Port Angeles, Washington, had a membership of fifteen players. The club champions were T. Hargreaves and Ed Simpson. The Spokane Badminton Club was active with a membership of seventy-five players. The YMCA of Seattle had twenty-five badminton enthusiasts. The Olympia YMCA reported having thirty members in its badminton division who played team matches against Port Angeles, Tacoma, Seattle, and Longview. The Hunt's Point Badminton Club was composed of twenty-six

members and was formed with the help of Mr. Burns Lindsey. The twenty-member Mercer Island Badminton Club reportedly was one of the oldest in the state. The Women's Athletic Club of Spokane boasted fifty active members, as did the Washington Athletic Club and the YWCA of Seattle. The Maple Leaf Badminton Club finished the 1935 season with twenty members.<sup>60</sup>

The two most active clubs in 1935 were the Seattle Badminton Club, the city's oldest, and the Badminton Club of Seattle, one of its newest. The Seattle Badminton Club's sixty members sponsored the eighth Seattle City Tournament which drew an entry of about 125 players. The Badminton Club of Seattle's 100 members sponsored the second Washington State Tournament.<sup>61</sup>

Seattle's eight clubs participated in league activity. In the 1934-35 season, all of the clubs entered the "B" league and the YWCA emerged the victor over runner-up Seattle Badminton Club. Four clubs entered the "A" division and the Seattle Badminton Club's team won the perpetual trophy.<sup>62</sup>

By 1938, two other clubs, the Fifth Avenue Badminton Club and the 146th Field Artillery joined league play and three divisional titles, "A," "B," and "C," were contested. In 1938-39, the first half of the league play occurred between October 30 and December 9; the second half came after the holidays.<sup>63</sup>

By 1937, there were a total of 2,000 serious badminton players in Seattle.<sup>64</sup> The Seattle Star reported twenty active clubs in the area by 1937.<sup>65</sup> Some of the newer clubs were the Washington Lakeside, Mt. Baker, First Christian Church, Mutual Savings, Evening College, and

North End clubs.<sup>66</sup>

Walter Grebb, "Windy" Langley, and Bert Barkhuff were mentioned as being among badminton's Seattle promoters in 1937.<sup>67</sup> Leading players in the area were Hamilton Law and Rupert Topp in singles and Charles Garbler and Dick Yeager in doubles. Barkhuff and Zoe Smith were Seattle's two top women players.<sup>68</sup> Mrs. Barkhuff and Mr. Law became the most famous of the Seattle players, winning many state, local, and national titles between them. Law won a total of forty-six such titles during his successful career of the 1930's.<sup>69</sup>

Seattle's top players promoted badminton. In December of 1938, Seattle's four national stars, Zoe Smith (former national women's doubles champion), Bert Barkhuff (national women's singles and mixed doubles champion), Hamilton Law (national men's doubles and mixed doubles champion), and Dick Yeager (national men's doubles champion) embarked on a tour of Portland, Tacoma, Spokane, and a few other Pacific Northwest cities to display their talents.<sup>70</sup>

After playing before a crowd of 250 at the Multnomah Athletic Club in Portland, on Saturday night, December 11, the foursome stopped at Oswego Lake Country Club where they were treated to dinner after soundly defeating local players Clinton Eastman, Jr.; Miles Murdock; Yvette Brassard; and Mrs. Murdock. The national champions also played amongst themselves.<sup>71</sup> The Multnomah Club painted a handball court light green to provide a good background for the shuttle for the exhibition. The club also had four other courts available to club members.<sup>72</sup>

Washington players were serious about badminton. Scores of newspaper articles (mostly undated) in the Hamilton Law collection

report on many tournaments held during the depression in the northern state. The Seattle Sunday Times printed large pictures of Dick Yeager, Hamilton Law, Windy Langley, Martha McGovern, Betty Bergman, Gene Gabler, Bert Barkhuff, and Walter Greb, who were preparing for a tournament in December of 1936.<sup>73</sup> The Seattle Star reported that Barkhuff was the star of the competitive 1938 Seattle City Tournament.

Mrs. Barkhuff was the dominant figure yesterday. After having trounced Miss Smith in the singles duel, she paired with Zoe to take the doubles crown, defeating Irene Church and Lois Beckman, 15-3, 15-2.

Bert then stepped upon the court for the third time, and paired with Charles Gabler in the open mixed doubles, traded smashes with Miss Smith and Yeager.

This was perhaps the outstanding match of the day, and in the first game there was never more than two points separating the two teams. Deadlocked at 12 all, the play for five points was decided, and the lead continued to be jockeyed until Miss Smith and Yeager finally won out. The second game wasn't quite as drawn out, but was more sensational, numerous long rallies featuring the set-to.<sup>74</sup>

The Spokesman Review gave the Annual Inland Empire Open Badminton Tournament top billing on the front page of its sports section in 1938. Law, Yeager, Barkhuff, and Margaret Taylor (Canada) were pictured and the paper reported that the tournament "has drawn a record number of the finest players of the Northwest, Canada and the United States."<sup>75</sup>

The American Tournament, an annual handicap tournament, was one of the Washington players' favorites. The Seattle Star reported that "the American tournament that is put on by the Badminton Club has proved to be a popular feature and members, divided into three sections, get a lot of spirited competition."<sup>76</sup> Players took the tournament seriously. Reg Hill, Seattle badminton pro, was hired to train referees for the tournament in order to be sure matches ran smoothly with minimal disputes concerning rules.



Though Washington players were highly competitive, they also seemed to enjoy social events. The Post Intelligencer reported that during tournament play on a Sunday in January 1935, "tea will be served--a custom which the Seattle badminton enthusiasts always follow even when there isn't a tournament going on."<sup>77</sup> It was also reported that an evening of cocktail parties and dancing was planned for the players following the same tournament.<sup>78</sup> Some of these parties were described in a newspaper clipping in the Hamilton Law Collection.

The John Davis Browns, who gave one of the cocktail parties for the visitors from Victoria, postponed it until yesterday since both Mr. and Mrs. Brown have been playing in the tournament. They gave it before the players left to take the boat home. Mr. and Mrs. Roland Christy gave a cocktail party at their apartment at the Marlborough Friday on the arrival of the Victoria group, and also entertained informally Saturday before the dance, as did Mr. and Mrs. Larry Skatteboe.

This dance, which honored all the visiting players, was held at Club Villa. The crowd, which had spent the afternoon in shorts or white flannels on the courts in Queen Anne Hall, gathered again in evening clothes and to the strains of dance music. Among the feminine badminton enthusiasts at the dance were Mrs. Del Barkhuff, who wore a gold satin tunic with black velvet skirt. . . . Mrs. John Davis Brown was there in black velvet with green fringed sash, and others among the dancers were Mrs. Corwin Eberting in white crepe, ostrich trimmed. . . .<sup>79</sup>

The Spokane Badminton Club concluded its 1938 Inland Empire Badminton Tournament with festivities at the Round-Up Room of the Desert Hotel, the "Athletic Round Table being host to the visiting players."<sup>80</sup>

A big dance was planned by the 1938 social committee of the American Tournament which was played at Queen Anne Hall in Seattle. The social committee, headed by Bee Brown and Lucille Ough, staged a dinner-dance at the Green Parrot Inn on Bothell Highway. Tickets were \$1.25 and were sold at all of the Seattle-area badminton clubs and sporting goods stores.<sup>81</sup>

Pasadena, California

The Pasadena Badminton Club was organized in March of 1933 and used the facilities of the National Guard Armory at 145 North Raymond Street where four badminton courts were available.<sup>82</sup> Robert Ford told of the tremendous interest in badminton in Pasadena that led to the formation of the club:

From 1925 on, everyone played badminton in Pasadena. The interest was colossal. There were badminton courts all along Orange Grove Avenue. Some of us tired of contending with the wind and decided to find a place where we could play indoors, which resulted in the formation of the Pasadena Badminton Club.<sup>83</sup>

Gordon Cronkhite, the first club secretary, indicated that the major driving force to form a club came from George McCook, who was described as being an easy-going person who was also an excellent player.<sup>84</sup> L. Winchester and Helen Sheark Jones, early members of the club, claim McCook constructed the second badminton court that appeared in Pasadena in his backyard. The first court was built at the home of Robert Ford's father, Freeman; and the third appeared in the home of Ned Tilt.<sup>85</sup> When asked what it was that aroused McCook's interest, the Joneses indicated that he "just heard about badminton somewhere and got some books on the sport."<sup>86</sup> Exactly what it was that initially sowed the seed of interest in badminton in Pasadena, whether it was a newspaper or magazine article or information obtained from someone from Boston, New York, England, or India, is unknown.

George McCook was considered to be "Mr. Badminton" in Pasadena.<sup>87</sup> He was described by Jones as being "one of the most likable people I knew. He was cheery and enthusiastic about his two great hobbies, which were guns and badminton." McCook, who lived on Bradford Street in

Pasadena, had an independent income though he sold real estate on occasion. He quit the club around 1940, because he was very much weakened by illness.<sup>88</sup>

The purpose of the Pasadena Badminton Club was described as being to "cultivate social intercourse among its members," and "to bring together in friendly and informal association persons who are interested in the enjoyment, development and advancement of the game of Badminton and kindred sports and contests."<sup>89</sup>

The ruling body of the club was designated as a Board of Directors, consisting of seven members elected by the members at large. The first seven directors were Herbert Henriques, Gordon Cronkhite, Goerge McCook, Frederick Hinrichs, Clark Millikan, Hubert Armfield, and Robert Ford.<sup>90</sup> Herbert Henriques, known as "Herbie," was described as being a good player with an "I'll-take-things-as-they-come" attitude.<sup>91</sup> He attended St. Paul's, a boys' school in Concord, New Hampshire, and was an attractive and fine athlete. Henriques' business was insurance. "Herbie's smile was famous. He just made you feel good," stated Helen Jones.<sup>92</sup>

Gordon Cronkhite was the type who would not "beat around the bush."<sup>93</sup> A good club secretary, he was the man behind the scenes along with L. Winchester Jones at the Pasadena tournaments in the thirties. Jones stated that Cronkhite was "the real organizer of tournaments and was very efficient. He did most of the work."<sup>94</sup> Cronkhite was in the securities business.<sup>95</sup> Robert Ford's good physical coordination helped him to be speedy on the court. A graduate of Polytechnic School in Pasadena and St. Paul's of Concord, he did not go to college but helped manage family securities.<sup>96</sup> Clark Millikan was an aeronautical engineer

at the California Institute of Technology and later became Director of the Guggenheim Laboratory.<sup>97</sup> Hubert "Mel" Armfield was a "nice, quite fellow who was involved in some type of business that allowed him to get by."<sup>98</sup> Mr. Armfield was described as being artistic and one of his hobbies was making scrap baskets.<sup>99</sup>

L. Winchester Jones, who became a director of the Pasadena Badminton Club with the first election, appeared to be a combination of sternness and humor which enabled him to be a wise and proficient administrator of the Pasadena club for seven years. For forty-one years he also served as an administrator at California Institute of Technology.

The Board of Directors of the Pasadena Badminton Club was given a fair amount of power, though not as much as the executive committee of the Badminton Club of the City of New York. Among these powers were setting the guidelines for membership, changing rules, borrowing money, and "to select, appoint and remove, at pleasure, all officers, agents and employees of this corporation, prescribe such duties for them and delegate such powers to them as may not be inconsistent with these by-laws, fix their compensation and require of or provide for their security for faithful service."<sup>100</sup> Unlike the New York club, however, vacancies on the Board of Directors were filled by a vote of the general membership rather than by a vote of the remaining directors. Also, a two-thirds vote of a general meeting could amend the by-laws of the Pasadena club whereas the executive committee in New York could veto any action undertaken by the members at large.<sup>101</sup>

The Pasadena Badminton Club had fifty-six members in the beginning,<sup>102</sup> at which time there was a limit on the membership of sixty

members.<sup>103</sup> This limit increased with time until April 1936, when ninety-one players were allowed to be members.<sup>104</sup> Cronkhite described the club members as having a variety of occupations from teaching to business.<sup>105</sup> The membership in the early days, however, was open only to members of the "white or Caucasian race of good moral character."<sup>106</sup> Guy Reed, the club professional who was hired in 1936, wrote of the exclusive nature of the club and how it changed after his arrival.

When I arrived I discovered that the Pasadena Club was a private club and it was very hard to get in as a member, and they had very few young players. The second year I got permission to teach non-members at the club, and by degrees they discarded their method of selecting club members and it was more or less thrown open!<sup>107</sup>

The Pasadena Badminton Club members joined mainly to play badminton rather than to enhance their social lives.<sup>108</sup> The club immediately became and remained a major badminton power in the United States. The first California state men's singles champion, Robert Ford, and the first California state men's doubles champions, George McCook and Bill Joyce, were Pasadena club members.<sup>109</sup> Ford also teamed with a Pasadena player, Mrs. C. D. (Lil) Jennison, to become the first California state mixed doubles champions.<sup>110</sup>

The state championships were held in Pasadena in 1934,<sup>111</sup> 1936,<sup>112</sup> 1938,<sup>113</sup> and 1939,<sup>114</sup> indicating the club was a leader in the sport. When the state tournament was held in San Francisco in 1935, the club paid the way for its top woman, Sally Cameron, to attend the tournament.<sup>115</sup>

The gradual acceptance of junior players in the Pasadena club helped promote the sport. On December 11, 1934, it was decided that "certain juniors be given privileges of the Club as paying guests for ninety days at One Dollar per month, all juniors to be nineteen years

old or under."<sup>116</sup> On December 30, 1935, children of club members under twenty-one years of age were given club privileges.<sup>117</sup> Juniors who wanted to join on their own paid a one-dollar initiation fee, as opposed to the ten-dollar charge for adult members.<sup>118</sup>

In 1938, Guy Reed began children's classes on Saturdays.<sup>119</sup> Two juniors who fell under his tutelage at this time eventually made their marks in badminton history. One was Helen Noble (now Tibbetts)<sup>120</sup> who won three national championships and who remains a leader in the administrative aspect of national and state organizations. The other was David G. Freeman,<sup>121</sup> who was described by the Saturday Evening Post as "the greatest badminton player in the world."<sup>122</sup> Dr. Freeman's hand-eye coordination apparently was unusually good. L. Winchester Jones recalled:

One week-end Dave played in a tennis tournament and a table tennis tournament along with the badminton tournament we were running. His brother stayed outside with the motor running on their car so he could get Dave places quickly. And do you know, Dave Freeman won all three of those tournaments!<sup>123</sup>

An indication that club members were preoccupied with improving their play can be seen by their interest in hiring a professional coach. At the June 5, 1935, club meeting,

the first business to come before the meeting was the advisability of hiring a professional coach to work at the Club for the next winter season and after discussion it was decided that the president or vice president be instructed to communicate further with Mr. Jack Purcell regarding the same.<sup>124</sup>

Basil Jones, Guy Reed, and Jess Willard were considered for the job as club professional as well as Jack Purcell.<sup>125</sup> Jess Willard was eliminated as a prospect when a letter was read to the directors from Mr. Leslie Nichols.<sup>126</sup> What the contents of the letter were was not

disclosed. However, Jones related that the general consensus was that Willard wanted to run the club. "We did not want to be run, we only wanted to be taught. We wanted to run the club ourselves."<sup>127</sup>

Charles Willson was hired as club professional in 1935. His fee was one dollar for one half-hour of singles instruction and one dollar and fifty cents for one half-hour of doubles instruction.<sup>128</sup> Willson was described as being likable but very young and had a hard time handling all the responsibilities involved. When the first tournament was held after his arrival, all were expecting his help, but Willson simply disappeared for the weekend.<sup>129</sup>

Guy Reed was hired as the club professional in 1936.<sup>130</sup> One of the best professionals in his native country, Canada, Reed was not in need of employment. However, he had a son who was ailing and needed to live in a warmer climate. The Pasadena job afforded this opportunity.<sup>131</sup> Reed recalled:

I think in regards to teaching, strokes, grip and footwork were the main things I had to contend with. You have to remember that most of them played tennis, so one had to change their stroking. They had to discover they had wrists to play with. The hardest thing to teach them was a backhand. . . .<sup>132</sup>

Reed seemed to be much liked by the club members. In 1938, his home was burglarized, and club members gave him a seventy-dollar radio to help make up for the loss.<sup>133</sup> At a 1939 club meeting, Reed "received prolonged applause for his work in the club and with the members."<sup>134</sup>

Interesting ramifications arose from the hiring of a club professional. It was decided by the Board of Directors in April 1936, that since the club had at its own expense imported a professional badminton teacher to coach and form a team of players to compete in various tournaments and as this coach had without expense to the

various players instructed them in the game, it was deemed against the best interest of the club for these players to obtain partners for tournaments outside the membership of the Club without permission of the tournament committee.<sup>135</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. L. Winchester Jones remembered this rule as not being strictly enforced, however. Mrs. Jones stated that she won both her state doubles titles (1936 and 1938) with Bert Barkhuff of Seattle and "I did not go through any special procedure to get permission to play with her."<sup>136</sup>

The Pasadena Badminton Club seemed to be at its peak in 1936, when ninety-two members made up the roster.<sup>137</sup> Players were divided into leagues with Robert Ford in charge of league "A," Frank Hamilton in charge of league "B," and Mr. Witmer in charge of league "C."<sup>138</sup> The club was so crowded that the Board of Directors banned guests from playing at any time except on weekends.<sup>139</sup> The club was open five nights a week for play and was heavily used.<sup>140</sup>

When the club first began in 1933, there were three doubles courts and one singles court in the armory. In May of 1935, President McCook approached the officers of the Armory Board and offered to share the cost of moving a staircase so a fourth doubles court would be made, which was done.<sup>141</sup> Despite the improvement, however, "We thought the ceiling was too low," stated Mrs. Jones, and other possible playing sites were considered. In March of 1936, the Board considered consolidating with the Annandale Country Club, but voted against such action.<sup>142</sup> Another idea which never materialized was to approach the city to discover if it would be possible to erect a building which would be used jointly by the badminton club and the Tournament of Roses Committee for



the construction of floats.<sup>143</sup>

The increase in military activity in 1939 caused the club to lose the Club Room and the ladies' room in the armory.<sup>144</sup> This loss, coupled with club members' dissatisfaction over the low ceiling in the armory, made seeking a new club building desirable. In April of 1939, L. Winchester Jones initiated the movement for the club to build its own building.<sup>145</sup> The original plan was to purchase land and build a building holding six courts. The O'Donnell Securities and Oil Company was contracted to build such a building on Raymond Avenue close to the Railway Express Office.<sup>146</sup> The building was built specifically for badminton play and still stands at 120 South Raymond in Pasadena, though it is no longer used as a badminton club.

Though the club was basically a "playing" club, there were some social events. In the club's early days, Robert Ford hosted a party for club members at his father's house on Loma Linda Drive at least once a year. "We had a hydraulic bar that would rise out of the floor. A good time was had by all," remembered Mr. Ford.<sup>147</sup> "Sometimes the parties were pretty raucus," recalled Mr. Jones.<sup>148</sup>

The "House" committee was changed to the "Social" committee in 1935 and was chaired by Karen Armfield.<sup>149</sup> Mrs. Armfield's duties, however, mainly concerned entertaining and housing out-of-town guests during Pasadena tournaments.<sup>150</sup>

Though many tournaments were held in Pasadena in the 1930's, information on them is scarce. Mention of the state tournaments held at the armory could not be found in the Pasadena Star News until the 1938 contest. Jones confirmed the lack of publicity in the club's early

days. He recalled that the club did not want much publicity, but did desire enough exposure so crowds would be at the tournaments. There was, however, great reluctance on the part of the Pasadena paper to cover the contests.<sup>151</sup>

There seemed to be two major problems confronted by the tournament committee in 1938. One was the seeding of the women's singles. Shirley Stuebgin of Berkeley was the defending state champion, Bert Barkhuff of Seattle was the national women's singles champion, and Twila Heath was a former state champion. It was decided to give the top seeding to Miss Stuebgin.<sup>152</sup>

Another problem encountered by players and officials in the 1938 state championships was a tremendous storm which hit Southern California the weekend of the tournament, causing flooding and collapsing of bridges in Pasadena. Mrs. Barkhuff beat the storm, but Shirley Stuebgin was stalled on the Ridge Route and barely made it to the Armory in time for her match.<sup>153</sup>

L. Winchester Jones recalled running tournaments as being a "nightmare."<sup>154</sup> He played in the tournaments as well as announcing all of the matches. Gordon Cronkhite often sat at the desk with him. "After three days of playing and announcing, I was absolutely exhausted. I must have walked ten miles a day talking about this and taking care of that. . . ." <sup>155</sup>

The first badminton tournaments in Southern California were held by the Pasadena Badminton Club in 1933, with George McCook in charge. Between 1932 and 1939, so much growth took place that it was not uncommon, by 1939, to see between three and four hundred entries in

Southern California tournaments. Santa Barbara began staging a tournament in 1936. There were sixty-five entries the first year, 107 entries in 1937, and 187 entries in 1938. The California State Championships in 1939 had 103 entrants in the men's singles event, sixty-two in the ladies' singles event, seventy-four mixed doubles teams, sixty-seven men's doubles teams, and forty-five ladies doubles teams. The major clubs which sent players to the state championships in San Francisco were San Diego; Pasadena; Los Angeles; Alhambra; Beverly Hills; Santa Monica; and, because it was an open championship, Seattle.<sup>156</sup> Despite all this activity in the thirties, the clubs in Southern California did not unite into one association until 1939, when the Southern California Badminton Association was formed with twelve member clubs.<sup>157</sup>

#### Summary

During the depression years, the popularity of badminton in the United States greatly increased. The population enjoyed increased leisure time and many used this time to play badminton. Badminton could be played almost anywhere, was simple to learn, was inexpensive to play, and provided vigorous exercise. The fact that it could be played indoors during the cold winter months was a factor in its increased popularity.

The increased badminton activity in the 1930's was indicated by an increase in equipment sales, an increase in number of YMCA's and educational institutions offering badminton programs, and a growth in the number of clubs in the country.

Clubs in New England, the metropolitan area, Delaware Valley,

Chicago area, Seattle area, and Los Angeles area were thriving in the 1930's and afforded opportunities for competitive badminton as well as social events for their members.

<sup>1</sup>Carlson Geppe Maclean, Badminton in American Life (Salt Lake, UT: Fadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1966), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Braven Dyer, "The Sports Parade—Growing Growth of Badminton Has Even Jess Willard and Bill Burley Greeting," Los Angeles Times, 4 February 1938, sec. 11, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Victorine Howard, "Badminton for Waistline, Rope Shipping for Legs," New York Sun, 27 April 1935.

<sup>4</sup>Roger Birtwell, "Gut's Feathers," Bird Chatter 7 (January-February 1950):4.

<sup>5</sup>Samuel Eugene Boyce, "The Development of Badminton," (Master's thesis, Georgia Wesleyan College for Teachers, 1938), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>7</sup>"Ancient Game of Speed Shows Rapid Growth," Literary Digest 121 (November 21, 1936):38.

<sup>8</sup>Boyce, "Badminton," p. 20.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>10</sup>"Long Live Badminton," Time 21 (May 1, 1937):38.

<sup>11</sup>"Ancient Game of Speed Shows Rapid Growth," p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>13</sup>Jack Percall, "The Boom in Badminton," Saturday Evening Post (February 24, 1936), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>"Historically Speaking," Bird Chatter 39 (March 1971):13.

<sup>15</sup>"Badminton Not Half Bad," Literary Digest 85 (April 18, 1925): 13.

<sup>16</sup>"Historically Speaking," p. 17.

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<sup>11</sup>"Ancient Game of Speed Shows Rapid Growth," p. 2.

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<sup>13</sup>Jack Purcell, "The Boom in Badminton," Saturday Evening Post (February 29, 1936), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>"Historically Speaking," Bird Chatter 30 (March 1971):13.

<sup>15</sup>"Badminton Not Half Bad," Literary Digest 85 (April 18, 1925):73.

<sup>16</sup>"Historically Speaking," p. 19.

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#### INFLUENTIAL BADMINTON PERSONALITIES OF THE 1930's

It appears that some of the interest in badminton in the 1930's was generated by professional badminton players, well-known athletes who enjoyed the sport, and several movie stars who played the game on their trips.

#### Professional Badminton Players

The groundwork for the growth in badminton was laid by professional players to a certain extent. The first four major professionals who toured the country staging exhibitions were George "Doc" Willard, Bill Hurley, Jack Purcell, and Ken Davidson. The effect these exhibitions had on audiences was indicated in a magazine article about the exhibiting match:

Last week the largest gallery that has ever seen a badminton match in New York City watched two players hit a ball about the length of a foot back and forth across a five foot net. Striking the ball furiously off the forehead and backhand, scissoring delicate drop shots over the net, Purcell and Davidson had the gallery roaringly agog.<sup>1</sup>

Ken Davidson was a well-known promoter of badminton. The investigator had occasion to view a film of his act, and can see why the following was written about his showmanship:

In a single exhibition game with Herbert Quigley, the local star and a cover, Ken Davidson, had 75 rallies in an hour. How some of his shots were made is difficult to describe, but many were

## CHAPTER IV

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#### Professional Badminton Players

The groundwork for the growth in badminton was laid by professionals to a certain extent. The first four major professionals who toured the country staging exhibitions were George "Jess" Willard, Bill Hurley, Jack Purcell, and Ken Davidson. The effect these exhibitions had on audiences was indicated in a magazine article about one exhibition match:

Last week the largest gallery that has ever seen a badminton match in New York City watched two players bat a ridiculous looking object back and forth across a five foot net. Stroking the bird furiously off the forehand and backhand, dribbling delicate drop shots over the net, Purcell and Davidson had the gallery constantly agog.<sup>1</sup>

Ken Davidson was a well-known promoter of badminton. The investigator had occasion to view a film of his act, and can see why the following was written about his showmanship:

In a singles exhibition game with Kenneth Quigley, the local star and a comer, Ken Davidson, had the building in an uproar. How some of his shots were made is difficult to describe, but many were

made with a nonchalance that hid their dexterity. He literally had everyone, players and nonplayers, standing on their feet, one moment gasping at his uncanny control, the other laughing at one of his amusing antics.<sup>2</sup>

### George "Jess" Willard

George "Jess" Willard was one of the key individuals who popularized badminton among the masses and the elite, helped found clubs, and was involved in the promotion of badminton country-wide in the 1930's. Willard, born in Boyd, Oregon, in 1900, moved to Leominster, Massachusetts, shortly after his birth. He spent his youth in Leominster where he became known for his athletic prowess as football captain and star baseball player on the high school team.<sup>3</sup> Jess played with the Boston Red Sox briefly during high school until an arm injury forced him to retire.<sup>4</sup>

Following his high school days, Willard worked as a fireman for the Boston and Maine Railroad. Soon after, he was hired at Caine's Institute of Physical Culture and then the University Club as a physical culture expert where he learned badminton and began promoting the game.<sup>5</sup>

Willard promoted badminton in a variety of ways. Staging exhibitions was one; informing the public about the demanding nature of the sport was another. When an uninformed wrestling fan wrote the Los Angeles Times and called badminton a sissy game, Willard answered by writing the following to the newspaper:

Some day, please catch one of those fellows for me and let me get him out on the court. Even money that providing they are proficient enough to even hit the bird and have any guts I can make them quit cold in ten minutes--run them right into the ground. This is an open invitation to any unbeliever who wants to accept.<sup>6</sup>

Willard also promoted the game by contacting newspapers. The

Seattle Call Bulletin reported that Jess Willard stopped by the office in 1934 and "before he left had converted us to badminton. . . . Mr. Willard posed for picture lessons and made his first radio talk with us. . . ."7

Jess Willard's determination and strong will, which allowed him to promote badminton to the extent that he would stand on street corners jumping around, smashing birds while yelling, "This is badminton!"8 also seemed to make him a controversial personality in the badminton world. L. Winchester Jones indicated such was the case.9 Nonetheless, there is no doubt that one of badminton's greatest friends and promoters in the 1920's and 1930's was Jess Willard, a dedicated individual who traveled around the country popularizing the game.

#### Jess Willard and Bill Hurley Tour

Fanchon and Marco, top stage promoters in the country in the 1930's, signed Jess Willard and Bill Hurley in 1936 to perform a series of badminton exhibitions in movie houses.10 It was common to see many vaudeville and other stage acts offered with a motion picture during this era. It was therefore not surprising to see the names "Willard and Hurley" next to those of Henry Fonda, Fred MacMurray, Sylvia Sidney, and others on movie marquees and in newspaper advertisements,11 especially after the reviews the badminton players received on their stage performances. The pre-war success of the Willard-Hurley act was indicated by a letter written to Willard by Harry Wallen, the managing director for Paramount Theatre, in April of 1936:

I thought that you would like to know that we feel an Innovation in the Entertainment Field had been accomplished. To think that

in a 3400 seat deluxe motion picture theatre, a rapidly growing sport would so hold the interest of patrons that not a single person left their seat during the Badminton Game--a period of some ten to twelve minutes--at neither of the four or five shows daily--This is something that only the "high spots" of the feature picture itself accomplishes! Besides this, as you know, during some of the rallies in the game, our audiences actually cheered!<sup>12</sup>

A rough draft of the planned procedure for exhibitions indicates that when playing for a theatre audience, Willard and Hurley would run on stage while the commentator gave a brief history of the game. The players would be introduced and would then proceed quickly to demonstrate various shots. Scoring would be explained and the match would begin.

The commentator's duties were the following:

- Bring out each spectacular play.
- Show enthusiasm whenever play allows.
- Emphasize Hurley's spectacular retrieves from forehand corner.
- Build up excitement on spills and dives.
- Remark on Willard's footwork frequently during the game, comparing him with a gazelle and ground gripping tractor.
- Whoop on Willard's backhand shots--stressing the difficulty of the shot and the ease with which he executes it.
- Excitement on fast rallies.<sup>13</sup>

Hurley and Willard ran to the microphone to thank the audience after the exhibition, but both were too breathless to say but a few words.<sup>14</sup>

It was reported that Hurley and Willard not only impressed the theatre-goers, but also got their fellow entertainers excited about the sport. Members of Al Lyons and his Coconut Grove Orchestra were described as being "ping pong sharks" by Braven Dyer until they met Hurley and Willard. "With the opening of the badminton exhibition, the boys went for the game in a big way, forgot their ping pong and now play badminton on a special court in the basement."<sup>15</sup>

Willard and Hurley staged exhibitions as part of the entertainment at the Roxy Theatre in New York, using the Gae Foster girls as



attention-getters. The females were decked out in bathing suits or transparent blouses, and sometimes were seen balancing on three-legged chairs throughout the exhibition.<sup>16,17,18</sup> Though the theatre owners apparently thought women in the background were necessary for gaining audience interest in badminton, they apparently were wrong:

The Eton Boys headline the new stage show at the Roxy, but, with all due respect to the lads' grand harmonizing, the greatest excitement is caused by the Badminton game, which has been held over again--even though everything else in the show has been changed. George F. "Jess" Willard, national champ, and Bill Hurley, Pacific Coast champ, are still pounding the bird over the net, and the crowd still goes nuts at some of the magnificent rallies. They blew the roof off as the showing caught Willard taking the game 15-9. Jack Negley announces.<sup>19</sup>

Willard and Hurley performed at the Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore, Maryland, following their successful showing at the Roxy Theatre in New York.<sup>20</sup> They helped many Baltimore residents become aware of the delicate intricacies and tremendous demands on players of the sport of badminton. A newspaper article stated that only a few of Baltimore's northside residents played badminton, but predicted the game would grow in the town as a result of the exhibition. Willard won the match in Baltimore described in the newspaper, though the crowd "... pulled for underdog Hurley and he repaid interest by showing willingness to take a couple of tumbles when trying to recover deft placements by opponent. Players worked up quite a sweat at conclusion and were rewarded by solid ovation."<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that the newspaper announcements for the Hippodrome Theatre used two-thirds of the space to advertise the movie and one-third of the space to advertise the badminton exhibition. Other vaudeville acts were given little mention.<sup>22</sup>

Willard and Hurley also performed at the Stanley Theatre in Pittsburgh and the Met in Boston. They received fair to good reviews at the Stanley.<sup>23</sup> However, at the Met, the badminton was described as a "pip of an act and customer comment at the break would indicate it easily swamped the balance of the show in popularity."<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the seriousness of the movie, To Mary with Love, with Myrna Loy,<sup>25</sup> helped the audience to enjoy the explosive joviality of the two badminton performers at the intermission.

One of the most impressive reviews of the Willard-Hurley act appeared in the Chicago American. Ashton Stevens wrote half of his review of the vaudeville performance at the Chicago Theatre on badminton. "This exhibition of the sporting brutalities of badminton is the only stage attraction in my experience which ever got a Chicago Theatre audience on its feet without sending it home."<sup>26</sup> The movie playing at the Chicago Theatre was the "White Angel" with Kay Francis as Florence Nightingale.<sup>27</sup> The performance at the Chicago Theatre led the two badminton aces to sign contracts to star in shows at the College Inn,<sup>28</sup> the Gold Coast Room of the Drake Hotel,<sup>29</sup> and the 1937 Ford V-8 Spring Frolics at Chicago Stadium.<sup>30</sup>

Badminton's performing duo, Hurley and Willard, thrilled the crowds at the Palace Theatre in Cleveland in August of 1936. Glenn Pullen of the Cleveland Plain Dealer devoted nearly half of his Saturday column to the badminton performance.

. . . You have to admire their great agility and finesse when one of them lofts an uncanny short drop, the ball floating over the net light as a feather. Or when Hurley craftily wears down his opponent with rapid, finely placed cross-court shots. In a rally the furious exchange of shots has the same dramatic effect as two

boxers slamming upper-cuts at each other's chin. There's the kind of thrill you find on a baseball field when Hurley runs back to make a seemingly impossible return, deftly hitting it over his shoulder. . . .

Yesterday's audience took to the game as enthusiastically as they accept baseball. . . .<sup>31</sup>

In November of 1936, 1200 people at the University of Illinois New Gym were thrilled with the Willard-Hurley show. The exhibition ended with Willard taking on the man who had taught him badminton in Boston many years before, George Stafford. "Mr. Stafford, although he was outclassed, proved that he had a few tricks up his sleeve, and kept the crowd in a continuous uproar by his witty remarks as the game progressed."<sup>32</sup>

The next stop on the tour in November 1936, was South Bend, Indiana, where Blanche Hurley and Beatrice Willard accompanied their husbands so a mixed doubles match could be played. The exhibition was a benefit for the South Bend YMCA.<sup>33</sup> The foursome also played at the Milwaukee Country Day School in the same month.<sup>34</sup> The following summer, Hurley and Willard performed at Detroit's Fox Theatre.<sup>35</sup>

Willard and Hurley's success at the Paramount Theatre in Los Angeles has already been mentioned. In 1938, they also were successful in thrilling people at Los Angeles' Trocadero. Jimmy Starr wrote in the Evening Herald and Express:

Packed to the rafters with a star-studded audience, the Trocadero Sunday night frolic was a whizz! Bert Frohman was nothing short of sensational in a warbling sort of way, while Jess Willard and Bill Hurley staged a terrific badminton game on the dance floor. . . . Among the ringsiders were Jack Benny, the James Bryants, the Al Ritzes, the Charley Feldmans, Glenda Farrell with Harvey Priester, . . . the Sam Rudolphs, . . . Milton Berle and mama, . . . the Gene Manns and many more. . . .<sup>36</sup>

Willard and Hurley introduced badminton to the Hollywood crowd in this

manner.

Jess Willard and Bill Hurley returned to Los Angeles in February of 1938, following their country-wide tour which lasted almost two years. During their tour, they helped the Roxy Theatre in New York keep the galleries full for six weeks and, on one occasion, played five shows, one night after the other, in front of an average audience of 4000 people. In Chicago, they played in front of 25,000 people at the Ford Show. During their travels, Willard and Hurley performed in "every major city in the Midwest and East."<sup>37</sup> Willard spoke of the tour:

We've had a great time and the steadily increasing interest in badminton far exceeds anything we had anticipated. We played in all kinds of places and averaged at least three shows a day. . . .<sup>38</sup>

Professional badminton players toured the United States in the 1930's, demonstrating a sport involving speed, agility, and endurance. Many individuals were impressed by these professionals, including top athletes in other sports. Several of these athletes began playing the sport of badminton during the depression era.

#### Famous Athletes and Badminton

It was reported in the 1930's that several tennis stars found three sets of badminton more exhausting than five sets of tennis. Two of these stars were Vincent Richards and Sidney B. Wood, Jr.<sup>39</sup> Sidney Wood described his entry into the badminton world:

I always felt what I needed to become a really good tennis player was stamina. I talked to Gene Tunney about my inability to keep going at top speed. He advised me to see Artie McGovern, who has handled all kinds of athletes. I went to Artie. He put me through the same stiff routine that a boxer goes through, getting ready for a bout. Just before leaving New York I asked him if it would do me any good to play badminton while I was out

there. He didn't know what the game was all about until I took him with me one night to watch a couple of experts play. Artie was amazed. "You play all the badminton you can," he advised me afterward. I've been playing out here every morning. It sharpens your footwork and improves your wind. It takes speed, skill and stamina to play the game. Believe me, if the United States wants to take the Davis Cup from England, the officials would do a lot worse than place the entire team under the wing of Jess Willard. You can bet we'd have a tough outfit.<sup>40</sup>

In the same article, Purcell described how he walked into the New York badminton club and saw two vaguely familiar faces on the badminton court. They turned out to be Gilbert Hall and Berkely Bell, two other top United States tennis players. Hall claimed he played badminton every day in the winter and Bell told how he liked badminton because it helped him with his footwork, stamina, and quickness of eye. Bell had just turned professional with the Tilden troupe and had begun his training by playing badminton.<sup>41</sup>

Male tennis stars were not the only famous athletes to use badminton as a physical conditioner in the thirties. When the Chicago Cubs trained in Catalina Island in 1937, one of the sluggers, Larry French, became so proficient at badminton that he gained the nickname "Shuttlecock."<sup>42</sup> Freddie Hutchinson, the darling of the Seattle Rainiers baseball team, entered his first badminton tournament in 1938. He played doubles with veteran Bob Hesketh in the Seattle Star's Third Annual Handicap Badminton Tournament.<sup>43</sup>

A large picture of a badminton match involving USC football coach Howard Jones; Ernie Nevers, who gained fame while playing football for Stanford; Jess Willard; and Bill Hurley appeared in the Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express in 1934.<sup>44</sup> It was reported on an Al Jolson radio show that "Mrs. Wightman, one of our foremost sportswomen,

says that two or three rallies in Badminton wear her out more than a whole set of tennis."<sup>45</sup> And Ben Hogan, catcher for the Boston Braves in 1933, played badminton to reduce his "prominent, bulging waistline."<sup>46</sup>

Professional badminton players brought badminton into public view in the 1930's. Top athletes who developed interest in badminton also helped publicize the sport. Hollywood stars became interested in badminton and extolled the sport's beneficial attributes. A discussion of badminton play within the film colony follows.

#### Badminton and Hollywood Stars

Time magazine reported that "badminton's current status on the U.S. scene is largely a tribute to the power of the cinema."<sup>47</sup> Jess Willard of Boston visited Hollywood around 1934 and members of the film colony were impressed. Warner Brothers immediately produced a short one-reel film entitled Good Badminton.<sup>48</sup> Walt Disney reportedly visited the Pasadena club to watch tournaments<sup>49</sup> and, in 1937, he considered making a cartoon in which Mickey Mouse would play Donald Duck in a game of badminton. Several actors and actresses began to play badminton for recreation and weight control and, perhaps, for a new pose for the cameramen. Sonja Henie, Glenda Farrell, Joan Crawford, Anita Louise, Simone Simone, Pat O'Brien, Warren Williams, Lyle Talbot, Robert Montgomery, and Harold Lloyd all were badminton enthusiasts in the thirties. Claudette Colbert, Bette Davis, Ann Dvorak, Joan Blondell, and Douglas Fairbanks also played.<sup>50,51</sup> John (Tarzan) Weismuller,<sup>52</sup> Hugh Hubert, Lew Ayres, Andy Devine, Allen Jenkins, Frank McHugh,<sup>53</sup> Dick Powell, Carole Lombard, and Ginger Rogers<sup>54</sup> all chased the shuttle. Other

badminton enthusiasts from the Hollywood film colony included Fay Wray, John "Monk" Saunders, Monte Blue, Gertrude Michaels, Frank Borzage, Loretta Young, Richard Arlen, Henry Blanke, Sidney Blackmer, Mae Clarke, Charles Farrell, Ralph Bellamy, Nick Stuart, Boris Karloff, James Cagney, Lionel Atwill, John Davis Lodge, Jack Holt, and Richard Dix.<sup>55</sup>

Most of these stars practiced outdoors, although several also played at clubs and public gymnasiums. Because the wind blew the shuttle, making a control game difficult outdoors, Douglas Fairbanks decided to have a heavier shuttle and a heavier racket made. He called the modified game of badminton "Doug."<sup>56</sup>

Jess Willard gave instructions to many of the 1930's filmland greats. He also taught four of Bing Crosby's children, who "gave me the toughest job I ever had,"<sup>57</sup> he recalled in later years. Many of Hollywood's stars played on Willard's courts at the Los Angeles Badminton Club and some invited him to their homes for a game.<sup>58</sup>

It was reported in a 1937 Chicago Daily News that badminton was becoming so popular in Hollywood that "almost every back yard has been converted into a badminton court, even to the gradual extinction of that traditional symbol of movie-land opulence, the swimming pool."<sup>59</sup> Playing badminton was the smart thing to do in Hollywood according to Dorothy Deere.<sup>60</sup> Further evidence of its popularity is shown in an undated clipping from the Willard collection:

Movieland has become so badminton conscious that a one-reel picture explaining the game and showing how champions play it is being made by Henry Blake, whose wife says he'd get up in the middle of the night to smack the feathered pellet.<sup>61</sup>

Pat O'Brien was reported to be the best player of the male stars, and he often teamed with Willard against Bill Hurley and Lew Ayres. Patricia Ellis reportedly tried hard but needed much practice while Barbara Stanwyck, Cecilia Parker, and Gracie Bradley were termed "rabid racket wielders."<sup>62</sup> Joan Crawford reportedly was such a badminton addict that even rain would not keep her from playing outdoor badminton. When it rained, she donned a bathing suit and played, as usual, against Franchot Tone.<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting to note that Jess Willard and Bill Hurley performed at the Earle Theatre during the intermission of the movie Speed, starring James Stewart and Una Merkel,<sup>64</sup> for the Los Angeles Examiner reported that "badminton is taking up most of Una Merkel's time."<sup>65</sup>

Badminton parties were held by members of the film colony. One such party, held at Arrowhead Hot Springs in July 1934, gave cause for a large picture to be printed in the Los Angeles Examiner. Pictured were hosts Mr. and Mrs. Frank Borzage and party-goers Dan Borzage; Suzanne Kaaron; Marie Levenhagen; John Gates, Jr.; Cliff Sawyer; Patrick Echols; Nancy Echols; K. C. Steele; and Jess Willard.<sup>66</sup>

Badminton was followed so closely by some movie stars by 1935, that when Jess Willard played Jack Purcell for the world professional title in Los Angeles, many were in attendance at the cost of \$35 a box seat.<sup>67</sup> Marilyn Felix, Harold Lloyd, Frank Borzage, Pat O'Brien, Dick Powell, and others observed the contest, which was won by Purcell.<sup>68</sup>

Another who played badminton was Dodie O'Doe. Though not a cinema star, Miss O'Doe, a resident of San Francisco, was an heiress to catsup millions. Owen Merrick wrote:



There was quite a society gathering at the O'Doe mansion the other day when Dodie suggested that we have a game of good old badminton. A word from her is a command. She had some rackets around, but none of those whachacallits. Someone went out to find a chicken, and with the aid of feathers and a few champagne corks of which there is always an abundance around the O'Doe mansion, we started to play. . . . It's no game for weaklings. . . . Tennis and handball will wear you down, but get out on that badminton floor some day and you get a real workout. . . . Dodie O'Doe startled the gathering by her great play. . . .<sup>69</sup>

Merrick continued by remarking about the thrill he had with Miss O'Doe in watching Jess Willard and Bill Hurley play at San Francisco's Francis Badminton Club.<sup>70</sup> It can be seen that badminton was the sport of the stars and much interest was evident during the era.

#### Summary

Badminton underwent a period of growth in the 1930's. Thousands of supporters nationwide, rich and poor, were extolling the virtues of the sport. Willard, Hurley, Davidson, and Purcell, badminton professionals, toured the United States in the 1930's, thrilling audiences with their fine net shots, explosive smashes and fleetness of foot. Willard and Hurley signed with Fanchon and Marco and performed at movie houses as a vaudeville act.

Several athletes who had gained fame in other sports began playing badminton during this period. Sidney Wood, Gilbert Hall, Berkely Bell, and Hazel Wightman of tennis fame found badminton to be a good conditioning sport. Baseball players Larry French (Chicago Cubs), Freddie Hutchinson (Seattle Rainiers), and Ben Hogan (Boston Braves) also played.

Badminton was popular in Hollywood also. Many stars, including Sonja Henie, Harold Lloyd, Robert Montgomery, Bette Davis, Loretta

Young, Boris Karloff, Ralph Bellamy, and others, were enthusiastic shuttle chasers. Joan Crawford was known to play even when it rained.

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## CHAPTER V

### THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN BADMINTON ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The tremendous growth of the sport of badminton in the 1930's led some to feel the establishment of a national organization was in order. Donald Wilbur, first president of the American Badminton Association, wrote about the purpose of such a national organization:

It [American Badminton Association] was not started primarily for the purpose of running National competitions, but rather, to gather the various regional groups together to form a united front for the game.

There were at that time various groups in New York, in Massachusetts, in Chicago and on the West Coast, each with their own plans and programs. It was felt that there should be one voice to talk with the Canadian Association, with the advertisers of equipment, and for public relations purposes. . . .

After this was completed, with a Board of Directors representing these various areas, we decided to arrange a National Competition.  
. . . .<sup>1</sup>

#### Formation of the American Badminton Association

The four men who initiated the movement toward national unification were the twins, Donald and Philip Richardson, Donald Wilbur, and Robert McMillan. These four were fraternity brothers at Brookline High School in Massachusetts in their younger days. Donald Wilbur was the chosen leader of the foursome. His first action was to contact Donald Vaughn, president of the active Metropolitan Badminton Association in New York, to see if the organization would support national unification.

Wilbur was pleased to find an enthusiastic group of supporters in Vaughn's group.<sup>2</sup>

In the fall of 1935, an Ad-Hoc Committee of New England Badminton Association members was formed to further solidify plans for the formation of a national organization. Donald Wilbur was the chosen chairman. The Ad-Hoc Committee paved the way for the more all-encompassing National Badminton Committee created by Wilbur to help organize the American Badminton Association. Members were Donald Vaughn, Sr. of New York; Wes Frazier of Philadelphia; William Ferguson of Seattle; W. Hamilton Walter of Chicago; Curt Mosher of Boston; and Robert McMillan of Boston.<sup>3</sup> Other people who helped create a national organization have been listed in the appendix (see Appendix H).

Robert McMillan wrote that choosing Donald Wilbur as leader in the American Badminton Association's formative years was wise as he was an organized, hard-driving individual whose business required him to travel country-wide, allowing him to work on badminton on the side. McMillan said:

After a year of travelling coast to coast, Don began to earn his spurs in no uncertain manner as the leader in the formation of a national association. We received help from several pros including Jess Willard, Jack Purcell, Ken Davidson, Jack Brewer and J. Frank Devlin. As these men moved around they carried the message about our plans for a national championship in 1937.<sup>4</sup>

Wilbur's main contacts were made in the towns of Seattle, Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The first slate of nominees for ABA offices were men from these areas and the first ABA election was a vote by mail in late 1935. Nine member associations, Western New York, Washington State, Philadelphia, Michigan State, Tri State, California, Metropolitan New York, Mid-West, and New



England participated in the election.<sup>5</sup> Donald Wilbur of Boston was elected president, William Ferguson of Seattle was chosen first vice-president, and W. Hamilton Walter of Chicago was elected second vice-president. Robert McMillan was assigned the post of secretary-treasurer.<sup>6</sup> A list of elected directors appears in the appendix (see Appendix I).

### National Championships

Following the election, by-laws were established, guidelines for membership were drawn up, and a monthly newsletter for member associations was created. Another task facing the newly-elected officers was finding a host for the first United States Badminton Championships. This problem was solved when the Mid-West Badminton Association sent in a bid in late 1936 to host the championships in April of 1937. The bid was accepted and the first U.S. National Championships was held at the Naval Armory Pier in Chicago.<sup>7</sup> Wrote the first ABA secretary, Robert McMillan:

The location was perfect as the Palmer House, in the Loop, which would be our headquarters, was within walking distance. We were to have an entire floor reserved in the hotel and ample facilities for our business meeting and for the Inaugural Banquet. . . . By direction of the officers I advised that the first formal meeting of the ABA would take place during the tournament. . . .<sup>8</sup>

It was reported in American Lawn Tennis that the first ABA meeting was held during a Saturday luncheon at the Palmer House.

Fifty contestants and officials attended and guest speakers were Mrs. George Wightman and William Keenan, president of the Canadian B.A. Mrs. Wightman delighted her audience with tennis reminiscences and Keenan spoke in high praise of both the standard of play in evidence and the wonderfully efficient management of the tournament.<sup>9</sup>

During the business meeting, it was voted to accept the Philadelphia

Badminton Association's request to host the second national tournament. Officers were elected for the 1937-8 season. Wilbur remained president while Leslie Nichols of California and W. Hamilton Walter of the Midwest were elected vice presidents. Robert McMillan remained secretary-treasurer.<sup>10</sup> A list of elected committee chairmen and directors has been included (Appendix J).

The donors of the five perpetual trophies to be awarded to each year's national champions were thanked for their generosity at the first meeting.<sup>11</sup> The records of the original ABA meetings are lost. Apparently discussion on the following items was held at the first meeting as committees were formed on the same: rules, amateur status, membership, publicity, and tournaments.<sup>12</sup>

### 1937 Championships

As previously mentioned, the Chicago players offered to host the first National Championships in the Naval Reserve Armory, April 1st through 3rd in 1937. Four professionals, Ken Davidson, Jack Purcell, Frank Roberts, and Jess Willard, helped promote the tournament which netted 150 entries, the cream of the crop from all over the country.<sup>13</sup>

Donald Wilbur, ABA president, appointed W. Hamilton Walter tournament chairman. The Evanston Infant Welfare Center Junior Board took command of ticket sales, publicity, and entertainment. Seventy-two people worked on the various organizational committees and twenty-two patrons and patronesses offered financial support for this first tournament.<sup>14</sup>

Seattle players and a few others arrived in Chicago a week before

the championships in order to practice, while Walter Kramer, top seed in men's singles, practiced with Joe Zaharko in Detroit. Most of the players arrived in Chicago on March 31, and registered at the tournament headquarters in the Palmer House.<sup>15</sup>

The tournament officially began on Thursday, April 1, when the first rounds of women's singles were called. Bert Barkhuff, the eventual champion, and Wanda Bergman, destined to be runner-up, did not swing into action until the second round. Barkhuff defeated Jean McLean of Detroit 11-6, 11-6. In other second round matches, Patience Radford defeated Wilma Traxel in three games and Connie O'Donavan of Michigan outlasted Mrs. W. C. Painter of Massachusetts with scores of 11-6, 7-11, and 11-7. Zoe Smith of Seattle defeated Radford in the quarter-finals, the latter continually clearing short, a fatal mistake as the former was able to hit powerful smashes. Barkhuff breezed into the semi-finals as did Bergman with an easy win over Shirley Stuebgin of Berkeley. O'Donavan defeated Junia Mason of Boston in the other quarter-final match, only to be limited to a total of nine points in two games by Mrs. Bergman in the semi-final. In the other semi-final match, Barkhuff faced her toughest opposition of the tournament in her doubles partner, Smith, and fought hard to win 11-9, 12-10.<sup>16</sup>

Walter Kramer of Detroit, the eventual men's singles champion, nearly was extended to three games in his opening round against Frank Roberts of Baltimore, but managed to win the set's second game 18-13. He then easily defeated George Bent of Chicago to reach the quarter-finals. Other quarter-finalists were Hock Sim Ong (Malaysia), Hamilton Law (Seattle), Henry Reynolds (Chicago), Kenneth Ridgeway (Garden City,

New York), Chester Goss (Los Angeles), Don Eversoll (Los Angeles), and Leland Gustavson (Westport, Connecticut).<sup>17</sup>

The quarter-final round found Kramer struggling to defeat Law in the second game after easily defeating him 15-2 in the first. The Detroit player was hard pressed to win the second game 15-13. Goss pulled Gustavson into the net time after time where he out played him to win 15-6, 15-10 in another quarter-final match. Ong brought Eversoll's hopes for victory to a sound halt with a 15-4 victory in the third game after playing well in the close first game. Reynolds gave his hometown fans something to cheer about when he defeated Ridgeway 9-15, 15-5, and 18-13 to become the other semi-finalist. In the semi-final round, Goss was no match for Kramer and was soundly defeated 15-4, 15-6, while Reynolds pressed Ong into a three-game battle eventually won by the latter 10-15, 15-10, and 15-8.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the early rounds of ladies doubles were quite decisive. Wanda Bergman and Helen Gibson breezed through their first round match against Roberta Elder of Dayton and Mrs. Frank Ketchum of Chicago before defeating Jean McLean and Mrs. Ray Casey of Detroit 15-2, 15-12. Hazel Wightman and Eleanor Collier easily won their first two rounds.<sup>19</sup>

The competition seemed to be stiff in the early rounds of the men's doubles. Ward Starrett and H. H. Fraser of Glencoe provided some excitement for the gallery as they defeated H. J. Trimborn and F. C. Wiley of Chicago, with scores of 15-13, 15-13. Another hard-fought battle found George McCook and Hock Sim Ong of California defeating Reynolds and Mickie of Chicago 15-6, 10-15, 15-8. In the semi-finals, the Richardson twins of Boston barely squeezed by Jerry Burns and

Walter Kramer of Detroit 15-13, 13-15, 15-9. The Detroit pair declined to set in the second game which they barely won. Thereafter, they lost their momentum and the match. Ridgeway and Don Vaughn (New York) forced Eversoll and Goss to set in the second game in the other men's doubles semi-finals after losing the first game 15-8.<sup>20</sup>

Many close games were in evidence in the opening rounds of the mixed doubles competition. Jean McLean and Rees Cramer of Detroit edged Wildes and Sistrunk of Chicago 15-10, 15-17, 15-9. After romping through the first game 15-1, the eventual champions, Bert Barkhuff and Hamilton Law had to play much harder in the second game to defeat Elizabeth Smith and Houghton of Boston 15-12. Connie O'Donovan and Leo Gould of Detroit were evenly matched in their first round match against Miss Jackson and Andrews. The Detroit duo won with scores of 17-16, 16-17, 15-13 in a hotly contested match.<sup>21</sup>

The most noteworthy mixed doubles match of the quarter-final round was between Seattle's Barkhuff and Law and Boston's Hazel Wightman who partnered California's Chester Goss. Wightman and Goss used deceptive strokes and smart placements, but the Seattle pair had more power on their side and won 13-15, 15-5, 15-13. George McCook and Zoe Smith managed to win a closely contested quarter-final match against Donald Vaughn and Helen Dixon with scores of 17-14, 9-15, 15-13. In other quarter-final action, Mrs. Casey and Kramer won over Mrs. Bergman and Gilbert Carpenter, 15-2, 13-15, 15-7, while Pat Radford and Don Richardson defeated Jean McClean and Rees Cramer 15-7, 15-11.<sup>22</sup>

Barkhuff and Law had an easier time in the semi-final, and eliminated Radford and Richardson 15-12, 15-6. In the other semi-final

match, an injured George McCook was forced to default his match to Kramer and Casey.<sup>23</sup>

It was reported that a crowd of 5000 socialites observed the matches in the final rounds:

The boxes and front rows of seats surrounding the center court were filled with beautifully gowned women in evening dress with escorts attired in white ties and tails. Back of this circle rose tier on tier of enthusiastic supporters forming the largest audience ever to watch a badminton display on the continent. The swimming pool was turned into a night club for this occasion and was decorated with streamers and vari-colored lights. On one side was erected a long bar or counter where a large choice of salads and meats were temptingly displayed. Musicians wandered between the tables playing popular selection. The tournament dance was a gay affair and well attended.<sup>24</sup>

The tournament committee voted to allow Hock Sim Ong of Malaya to compete in the tournament, and he became a finalist after defeating four Americans. His opponent in the finals was the eventual champion, a tall and able player from Detroit, Walter Kramer. Kramer won the first game 15-10, and was down 1-4 in the second game when he suddenly ran out fourteen straight points to become the first United States singles champion. Barkhuff of Seattle used an effective "skyrocket" serve and defeated Bergman in the singles finals 11-4, 11-1, to become the first ladies singles champion.<sup>25</sup>

Barkhuff returned to the court and partnered Smith of Seattle to win the ladies doubles in an exciting three-game match against Bergman and Gibson. Barkhuff's well-placed shots and consistent game complemented her partner's powerful smash. The east coast pair seemed to tire considerably in the third game and lost their bid for the championship with match scores of 15-6, 4-15, 15-6.<sup>26</sup>

The men's doubles final between Donald and Philip Richardson

of Boston and Chester Goss and Don Eversoll of California lasted only two games. Goss's outstanding net play forced the Bostonians to lift the bird time and time again, only to lose the rally when Eversoll smashed the bird through them. The final score was 15-11, 15-3.<sup>27</sup>

Mrs. Casey and Kramer began the mixed doubles final with a strong showing in the first game over Law and Barkhuff and won 18-13. Law and Barkhuff seemed to be more consistent in the second game and continually forced their opponents to lift the shuttle so they could gain the offensive. The Seattle pair won the second game 15-8 and easily took the third by winning 15 points in a row to become the first U.S. mixed doubles champions.<sup>28</sup>

Bert Barkhuff became the first triple crown national badminton champion in United States history. Mrs. Barkhuff (now Cunningham) answered some inquiries in 1979:

. . . I believe my "skyrocket serve" was one of my best shots and . . . I was scared no matter who I was playing against. I was confident but scared. It had to be that way with me. I never thought any match would be easy. Reliving my final matches? I have relived them many times in the past. I guess I never will forget how exciting everything was. . . .<sup>29</sup>

### 1938 and 1939 National Championships

The National Championships were held in both 1938 and 1939. In 1938, they were held in Pennsylvania and in 1939, in New York. Winners in 1938 were Hamilton Law and Richard Yeager in men's doubles, Hamilton Law and Bert Barkhuff in mixed doubles, Wanda Bergman and Helen Gibson in ladies doubles, Bert Barkhuff in ladies singles, and Walter Kramer in men's singles.<sup>30</sup>

The 1939 championships were held in the 165th Infantry Armory,

home of New York's Sixty-ninth, a famous Irish regiment. The tournament began on Thursday, March 23, and the champions were crowned on Saturday, March 26.<sup>31</sup>

Two thousand spectators watched the tournament in New York on the final night. The total entry list was 249, an increase of 44 over 1938.

Equally as surprising as the victory of Freeman over Walter Kramer in the national men's singles final (1939) was the semi-final defeat of attractive Mrs. Del Barkhuff of Seattle by Miss Helen Gibson of Westport. As the 12-10 third game would indicate, it was indeed a very close finish and thus the champion of both 1937 and 1938 fell by the wayside. It is interesting to note that the 1938 women's singles runner-up, Mary Whittemore of Boston, carried on to win the tourney this year. In the three years of the nationals, the West Coast has carried off the bulk of the honors, never having failed in the men's doubles. Chester Goss and Don Eversoll of Beverly Hills and Los Angeles won the men's doubles in 1937. They were beaten in the 1938 finals of the same event and did not compete this year. Hamilton Law and Dick Yeager of Seattle won the event both in 1938 and this year.<sup>32</sup>

Dick Yeager and Zoe Smith faired better than their Seattle compatriots, Law and Barkhuff, and won the mixed doubles title.<sup>33</sup> It appears that there was a real need for the national championships and the tournaments of the first few years provided some outstanding championship play.

#### Summary

Badminton became a more sophisticated, organized sport in the 1930's in the United States as indicated by the creation of the American Badminton Association and the first national championships. The American Badminton Association was formed in 1935 to create a stronger front for promotion of the sport. Shortly after the national organization was created, the first United States National Badminton Championships was



held in Chicago and Bert Barkhuff of Seattle became the first triple crown national champion in United States history. Others who won national titles in the first championship were Walter Kramer of Detroit, and Zoe Smith and Hamilton Law, both from Seattle. The national tournament was held in Philadelphia in 1938 and in New York in 1939, and new champions were crowned.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>"Thirty Years of the A.S.A." Badminton U.S.A. 26 (March 1967):3.

<sup>7</sup>McMillan, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup>"Chicago Sidelines," American Lawn Tennis 20 (April 1937):63.

<sup>9</sup>McMillan, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup>Wilbur to Sales, 13 February 1972.

<sup>11</sup>"Chicago Sidelines," p. 63.

<sup>12</sup>"Thirty Years of the A.S.A.," p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>C. C. Peterson, "American Success," Canadian Lawn Tennis and Badminton 9 (May 1937):21.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12, 21.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 12, 11.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 12, 21-22.

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- <sup>1</sup>Donald Wilbur to Diane Hales, 28 December 1978.
- <sup>2</sup>Robert McMillan, "How It All Began!" Badminton U.S.A. 35 (November 1975):21.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 18.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 19.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 18.
- <sup>7</sup>"Thirty Years of the A.B.A." Badminton U.S.A. 26 (March 1967):5.
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- <sup>12</sup>"Chicago Sidelights," p. 63.
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- <sup>14</sup>C. C. Petersen, "American Baptism," Canadian Lawn Tennis and Badminton 9 (May 1937):11.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12, 21.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 12.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 12, 12.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 12.
- <sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 12, 21-22.

- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 21.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-22.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 22.
- <sup>24</sup>"Thirty Years of the A.B.A.," p. 5.
- <sup>25</sup>"Badminton's Rebirth," Time 21 (April 1937):35.
- <sup>26</sup>Petersen, p. 23.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 22.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup>Bert Barkhuff Cunningham to Diane Hales, 26 March 1979.
- <sup>30</sup>Program of the American Badminton Association's Annual Amateur Open Championships, 4-7 April 1962, Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania.
- <sup>31</sup>Maureen Orcutt, "Women in Sports," New York Times, 12 March 1939, sec. 5, p. 7.
- <sup>32</sup>"Seven Years of Badminton," Western Tennis 4 (March 1939):22.
- <sup>33</sup>Orcutt, p. 7.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### FOR FURTHER STUDY

##### Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop a history of the sport of badminton in the United States between the year 1878, when the first badminton club was unofficially formed in New York, and 1939, a year that marked the end of a major period of growth of badminton in this country.

Available literature and works of art indicate that badminton's forerunner, the game of battledore shuttlecock, was a game which was played in early America. Battledore shuttlecock was a game that required a battledore (racket), shuttlecock, and one or more players, but did not require court boundaries, as does the modern game of badminton.

Battledore shuttlecock was played in three forms. It was a means of divining the future or a game in which the object was to keep the shuttle in the air as long as possible. It also was played as a game in which the object was to cause one's opponent to miss.

When and where battledore shuttlecock changed to require court boundaries is unknown. It is known that the game appeared in both England and India at approximately the same time in the late nineteenth century.

Badminton was named after the Duke of Beaufort's English estate "Badminton" after the sport was played there one balmy afternoon in 1873. Shortly thereafter, E. Langdon Wilks and Bayard Clark traveled from the United States to England and India, respectively, where each learned the game. Upon their return to New York, they agreed to begin some badminton activity and, by 1878, the first club in the United States was unofficially founded and was called the Badminton Club of the City of New York.

Badminton was a slow game when it first appeared in the United States in the 1870's. A fast shuttle was used, which required little effort on the part of the players in hitting it end-to-end. An hour-glass shaped court made less area for players to cover and a higher net made it difficult to hit smashes and drop shots with good angle. Rackets were somewhat cumbersome while the formal dress worn by players made it difficult to run and stretch.

The game began to be more athletic in nature in the early 1900's when players began wearing tennis clothes, which allowed more movement. Also, a slower speed shuttle (requiring more effort on the part of the players to hit it end-to-end) was employed. The rules of the Badminton Association of England, which called for a standard-sized rectangular court, became the official rules followed by badminton enthusiasts in the United States in the early 1900's. This standard-sized court enabled players to refine their strokes and footwork.

The Badminton Club of the City of New York was the only badminton club in the United States until 1908, when a club was formed in Boston. The New York group was a highly formal and social club while the Boston

club was of a more athletic nature. The two clubs met for a series of intercity matches, which involved men only. Serious competition for women did not emerge until the 1930's.

While badminton began as a slow game in the United States, by 1930, it was a sophisticated, demanding sport which was gaining nationwide popularity. During the depression years, the population enjoyed increased leisure time and many used this time to play badminton. Badminton could be played almost anywhere, was simple to learn, was inexpensive to play, and provided vigorous exercise. The fact that it could be played indoors during the cold winter months was a factor in its increased popularity.

Clubs in New England, the metropolitan New York area, Delaware Valley, Chicago area, Seattle area, and Los Angeles area were thriving in the 1930's and afforded opportunities for competitive badminton as well as social events for their members.

Many influential people played badminton during this time period and badminton professionals helped promote the sport. Jess Willard, Bill Hurley, Ken Davidson, and Jack Purcell toured the country thrilling audiences by playing the game. Several athletes who had gained fame in other sports began playing badminton and it also was popular in the cinema colony. Stars such as Sonja Henie, Harold Lloyd, and Bette Davis all were shuttle chasers.

Badminton underwent a period of growth in the 1930's. The time was right for the creation of a national organization and a national championship. A group of four men from Boston, led by Donald Wilbur, formed the American Badminton Association in 1935. Shortly after the

national organization was created, the first United States National Badminton Championships was held in Chicago. The title winners at the first national championships were Bert Barkhuff, Zoe Smith and Hamilton Law, all from Seattle, and Walter Kramer of Detroit.

Within fifty years from the time that the first badminton club was formed in the United States, there were many changes in costume, nature of the players, and amount of vigor expended on the sport. A slow paced, formal, society game changed to a highly competitive athletic sport which, by 1939, appeared to have a promising future in the United States.

#### Conclusions

- (1) Badminton's forerunner, the game of battledore shuttlecock, was played in early America.
- (2) E. Langdon Wilks and Bayard Clarke were responsible for introducing the game of badminton to the United States in 1873.
- (3) Wilks and Clarke established the first club in the United States, the Badminton Club of the City of New York, in 1878.
- (4) In the United States, badminton began as a slow-paced, society game but evolved into a demanding sport.
- (5) While organized competitive contests were available for men before 1920, similar opportunities for women did not exist until the 1930's.
- (6) The period of badminton's greatest growth in the United States was during the 1930's.
- (7) Badminton professionals, especially Jess Willard, popularized

the game in the United States.

(8) The American Badminton Association, founded in 1935, provided a united front for the game.

(9) Two years after its founding, the American Badminton Association sponsored the first United States National Championships and Bert Barkhuff, Hamilton Law, Zoe Smith, and Walter Kramer were the first United States champions.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

(1) A biography needs to be written on Kenneth Davidson, badminton professional and promoter in the United States from 1935 until he was killed in a plane crash on Christmas Eve in 1954. His widow, who resides in Santa Monica, still is in possession of Davidson's old scrapbooks.

(2) A biography on Dr. David Freeman could be a most interesting research study. Dr. Freeman, former world badminton champion, also won the national junior tennis championships as well as squash and table tennis titles. Dr. Freeman presently resides in the San Diego, California, area.

(3) Biographical studies of two of the first national champions who are still living could prove interesting. Hamilton Law presently resides in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Bert Barkhuff Cunningham lives in Arroyo Grande, California.

(4) A thorough history on any of the hundreds of badminton clubs which were founded in the 1930's would be of value. Some of the major clubs which were omitted here are the Manhattan Beach (California), San



Diego, Detroit, and Baltimore clubs.

(5) A history of badminton from 1939 until the present needs to be written.

(6) More details of the popularity and nature of battledore shuttlecock in colonial times may be available in historic records on the east coast and should be investigated.

(7) A thorough study of badminton in the cinema colony in the 1930's would be most interesting. Many stars who played are still living and might provide further insight into badminton in Hollywood during the depression.

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Program for the Ninth Open Amateur Championships of the American Badminton Association, Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania, 4-7 April 1962.

APPENDIX A

PLAYERS CONTACTED

1. Crockshire, Gordon. 1095 S. Orange Grove Blvd., Pasadena, CA
2. Cunnaghan, Surt Zwischoff. 333 S. Elm, P33, Arroyo Grande, CA
3. Deaver, Ronald. 823 Russell Avenue, Clovis, CA
4. Davlin, Frank. Ballyshannon, Manor Kilbride, Blessington, County Wicklow, Ireland
5. Edson, Stephen. 43 Calhoun Drive, Spokenish, CA 95830
6. Ford, Robert. c/o The Club, Pebble Beach, CA
7. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. L. Winchester. 173-100 Red Springs Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108
8. Law, Hamilton. 2443 E. Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO 80212
9. Lonsdale, Julian. 414 E. 34th Street, New York, NY 10018
10. Mead, Guy. Dunsmuir Rd., RR 3, Kelowna, BC V1Y1R1 Canada
11. Ross, Helen. 113 E. 72nd St., New York, NY 10021
12. Scheele, Herbert. 4 Madeline Avenue, Bromley East, England
13. Tibbatts, Helen. 4431 Pacific Coast Highway, L207, Torrance, CA 90505
14. Wilbur, Donald. 4 Berkshire Rd., Wallingford Hills, MA 02151

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PLAYERS CONTACTED

1. Cronkhite, Gordon. 1095 S. Orange Grove Blvd., Pasadena, CA
2. Cunningham, Bert Barkhuff. 735 S. Elm, #33, Arroyo Grande, CA
3. Deaver, Ronald. 023 Russell Avenue, Clovis, CA
4. Devlin, Frank. Ballysmutton, Manor Kilbridge, Blessington, County Wicklow, Ireland
5. Edson, Stephen. 45 Calhoun Drive, Greenwich, CN 06830
6. Ford, Robert. c/o The Smiths, Box 497, Pebble Beach, CA
7. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. L. Winchester. 173-300 Hot Springs Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108
8. Law, Hamilton. 2443 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO 80222
9. Romaine, Julian. 414 E. 84th Street, New York, NY 10028
10. Reed, Guy. Dunsmuir Rd., RR 3, Kelowna, BC VIY7R2 Canada
11. Rose, Helen. 215 E. 72nd St., New York, NY 10021
12. Scheele, Herbert. 4 Madeira Avenue, Bromley Kent, England
13. Tibbetts, Helen. 4431 Pacific Coast Highway, L202, Torrance, CA 90505
14. Wilbur, Donald. 4 Berkshire Rd., Wellesley Hills, MA 02181

APPENDIX B

OTHER LETTERS WRITTEN

1. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA 23185
2. Massman, Bea, Editor Badminton U.S.A. 333 Saratoga Rd., Buffalo, NY
3. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY 10028
4. New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West, New York, NY 10024
5. Reinforced Shuttlecocks, Ltd. 6-9 Charterhouse Square, London EC1M 6ES
6. Scheele, Herbert, Editor World Badminton. 4 Madeira Ave., Bromley Kent, England
7. Willard, Owen. 147 Granite St., Leominster, MA 01453

Sincerely,

Blaine W. Nelson



APPENDIX C  
SAMPLE LETTERS

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711

Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York, New York 10024

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711

Bea Massman, Editor  
Badminton U.S.A.  
333 Saratoga Road  
Buffalo, New York

January 21, 1974

Dear Bea,

I am writing my master's thesis on "A History of Badminton in the United States from 1878-1939." I would be interested in knowing if any readers have materials in their closets on clubs, personalities and events that might be of assistance to me. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Hales

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711

Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York, New York 10028

November 15, 1973

Dear Sir or Madame,

I understand that a painting by William Williams entitled "Master Stephen Crossfield" is on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I would very much like to purchase a photograph of this painting if it is possible. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Hales

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
October 18, 1978

New York Historical Society  
170 Central Park West  
New York, New York

Dear Sir or Ms.,

I am writing my master's thesis on "A History of Badminton in the United States from 1873 to 1939." The New York Badminton Club is the oldest badminton club in the country. It has been called to my attention that you have the minute book of the club for the years 1887-1921. I am wondering if it would be possible for you to xerox and mail a copy to me?

The minute book was given to you on October 18, 1922, by the club secretary of the time, Walter Rysam Jones. The official title of the club is "The Badminton Club of the City of New York."

Receiving a copy of the minutes would greatly enhance my research. Please advise me of the cost of such a service.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Hales

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
November 18, 1978

R.S.L.  
6-9 Charterhouse Square  
London EC1M 6ES  
England

Dear Sir,

I am writing my master's thesis on a "History of Badminton in the United States from 1878-1939." I am wondering if you would be so kind as to tell me when your company was established both in England and in Pennsylvania? Also, do you have any records of shipping birds to the Badminton Club of the City of New York in the early 1900's? Some important changes occurred in badminton around that time, and knowing what shuttle was used would be helpful.

My husband and I have tried the new synthetic shuttles you sent us and both agree your brand is the best synthetic on the market. It is the only synthetic that can be tumbled at the net.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Hales

Diane M. Hales  
1421 Niagara Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
February 25, 1973

Mrs. James McKinley Rose  
215 East 72nd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Mrs. Rose,

I am a member of the United States women's international badminton team. I am also working on my master's thesis, a "History of Badminton in the United States from 1878-1939." In discussing my project with Mr. J. Frank Devlin, I have learned that the collection of memorabilia of the Badminton Club of the City of New York is in your possession. Would you consider allowing me to see the collection next month? I will be in the New York area on other badminton business at the end of the month. Thank you for your consideration.

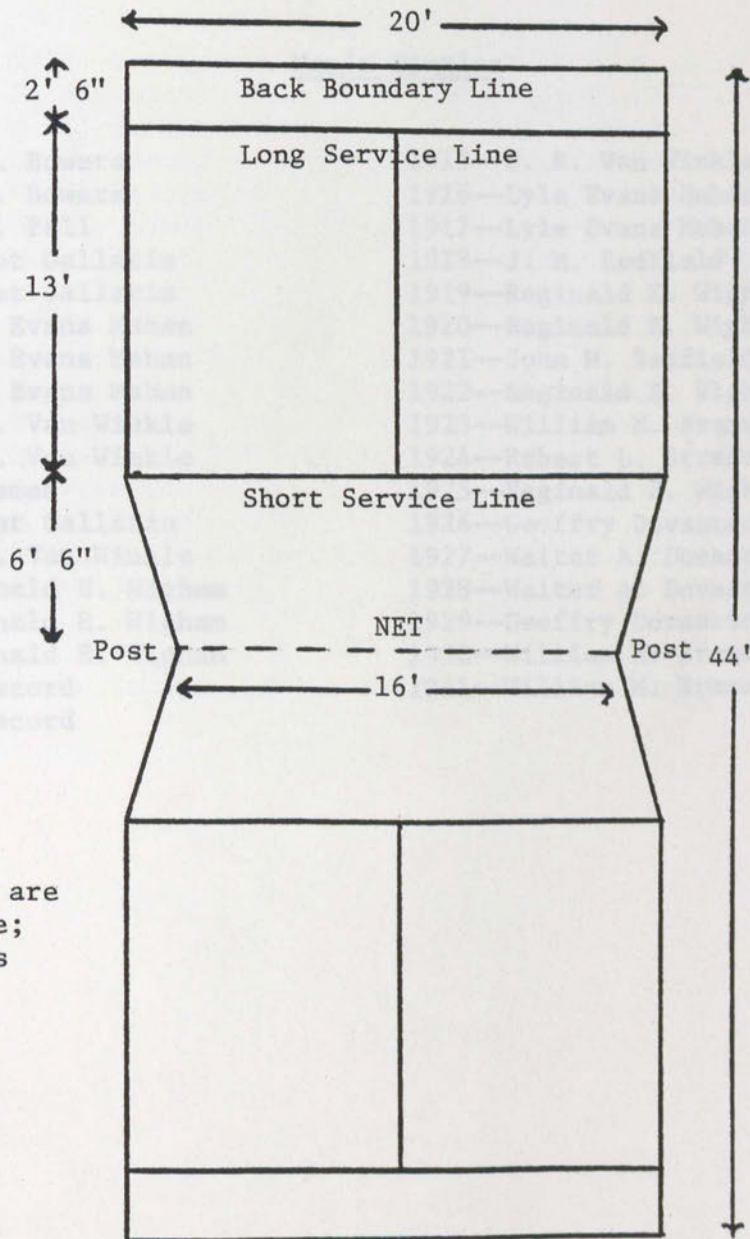
Sincerely,

Diane M. Hales

Dimensions are  
approximate;  
court sizes  
varied.

APPENDIX D

THE COURT PRIOR TO MARCH 1901



Dimensions are approximate; court sizes varied.

SOURCE: Herbert Scheele to Diane Hales, 26 January 1979.

APPENDIX E

BADMINTON CLUB OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK CHAMPIONS

Men's Singles

1897--S. D. Bowers	1915--E. K. Van Winkle
1899--S. D. Bowers	1916--Lyle Evans Mahan
1899--T. R. Pell	1917--Lyle Evans Mahan
1900--Goelet Gallatin	1918--J. M. Redfield
1901--Goelet Gallatin	1919--Reginald E. Wigham
1902--Lyle Evans Mahan	1920--Reginald E. Wigham
1903--Lyle Evans Mahan	1921--John M. Redfield
1904--Lyle Evans Mahan	1922--Reginald E. Wigham
1905--E. K. Van Winkle	1923--William M. Bramwell
1906--E. K. Van Winkle	1924--Robert L. Strebeigh
1907--No Games	1925--Reginald E. Wigham
1908--Goelet Gallatin	1926--Geoffry Dovaston
1909--E. K. Van Winkle	1927--Walter A. Dovaston
1910--Reginald E. Wigham	1928--Walter A. Dovaston
1911--Reginald E. Wigham	1929--Geoffry Dovaston
1912--Reginald E. Wigham	1930--William M. Bramwell
1913--No Record	1931--William M. Bramwell
1914--No Record	

## APPENDIX 7

## WOMEN'S METROPOLITAN BADMINTON, MAY 1924

1. Miss Fanny Coster Women's Singles

1898--Miss M. E. Coster	1915--Miss E. A. Scott
1899--Miss G. R. White	1916--Miss M. Kemble
1900--Miss M. E. Coster	1917--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1901--Miss M. E. Coster	1918--Miss M. Kemble
1902--Miss M. E. Coster	1919--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1903--Miss Jessie Lynch	1920--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1904--Miss L. H. Scott	1921--Mrs. L. G. Morris
1905--Miss L. H. Scott	1922--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1906--Miss L. H. Scott	1923--Miss E. B. Handy
1907--No Games	1924--Mrs. L. G. Morris
1908--Miss M. Kemble	1925--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1909--Miss M. Kemble	1926--Mrs. Edward K. Van Winkle
1910--Miss M. Kemble	1927--Mrs. W. A. Dovaston
1911--Miss A. Prentice	1928--Mrs. W. A. Dovaston
1912--Miss E. A. Scott	1929--Mrs. G. Dovaston
1913--Miss E. A. Scott	1930--Miss E. B. Handy
1914--Mrs. L. G. Morris	1931--Miss E. B. Handy

SOURCE: Collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York.

Approved by Mr. Edward K. Van Winkle, Chairman.

SOURCE: Collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York.



APPENDIX F

WOMEN'S METROPOLITAN RANKINGS, MAY 1934

1. Miss Fanny Curtis
2. Mrs. Wanda Bergman Westport
3. Mrs. William Watson New Haven
4. Miss Emmeline Shaffer New Haven
5. Miss Edith B. Handy New York
6. Mrs. F. Richard Ford New York
7. Mrs. John R. Paul New Haven
8. Mrs. Lawrence Romaine New York
9. Miss Helen Wardlow New York
10. Miss Helen de Peyster New York
11. Miss Grace Boulton Hewlett
12. Miss Aloise Boker New York
13. Mrs. Lewis G. Morris New York
14. Miss Barbara Stevens New Haven
15. Mrs. William Foote Hartford

Approved by Mr. Howard Boulton, Chairman.

SOURCE: Collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York.

APPENDIX G

WOMEN'S DOUBLES METROPOLITAN RANKINGS

MAY 1934

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Mrs. Capehart & Miss Helen de Peyster     | New York  |
| 2. Miss Edith Handy & Mrs. Romaine           | New York  |
| 3. Mrs. Ford & Miss Boker                    | New York  |
| 4. Mrs. Bergman & Miss Taylor                | Westport  |
| 5. Mrs. Alfred Conlan & Miss Curtis          | Central   |
| 6. Mrs. Robert Paul & Mrs. Wm. Randolph      | New Haven |
| 7. Mrs. Wm. Watson & Miss Shaffer            | New Haven |
| 8. Mrs. Wm. Edgar & Miss Grace Boulton       | Hewlett   |
| 9. Mrs. Richard Aldrich & Mrs. Henry Bultman | New York  |
| 10. Mrs. Morris & Miss Wardlow               | New York  |
| 11. Miss Stevens & Mrs. Wm. Watrous          | New Haven |
| 12. Mrs. S. A. Harned & Mrs. Lyon            | Larchmont |
| 13. Mrs. Foote & Mrs. Mansefield             | Hartford  |
| 14. Mrs. W. Miller & Mrs. Waugh              | New Haven |
| 15. Mrs. Sullivan & Mrs. Senior              | Scarsdale |

Approved by Mr. Howard Boulton, Chairman.

SOURCE: Collection of the Badminton Club of the City of New York

APPENDIX H

OTHER PEOPLE WHO HELPED ORGANIZE THE  
AMERICAN BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

FIRST DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

1. Mr. Del Barkhuff--Seattle
2. Miss Wanda Bergman--New York
3. Miss Aloise Boker--New York
4. Mr. Justin Canfield--Mid-West
5. Mr. Harry Conlan--New York
6. Mr. Rees Cramer--Detroit
7. Mr. Robert Elder--Dayton
8. Mr. Clark Erwin--Spokane
9. Mr. Lea Gustavson--New York
10. Mr. Ted Jarrett--New York
11. Mr. Hamilton Law--Washington
12. Mr. George McCook--California
13. Mr. Orville Mills--Washington
14. Mr. Roger Morse--Boston
15. Mr. Les Nichols--California
16. Mr. Ken Ridgeway--New York
17. Mr. Timothy Royce--Seattle
18. Mr. and Mrs. Whitfield Painter--Boston
19. Mr. Samuel Sague--Ohio
20. Mr. Ward Starrett
21. Mr. Norval Trimborn--Mid-West
22. Mr. Jack Van Praag--California
23. Mr. Donald Vaughn, Jr.--New York
24. Mrs. Hazel Wightman--Boston

SOURCE: Robert McMillan, "How It All Began!" Badminton U.S.A. 35  
(November 1975):21; and "Thirty Years of the A.B.A.," Badminton U.S.A.  
26 (March 1967):5.

APPENDIX I

FIRST DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

1. E. L. Burhyte--Western New York
2. William Ferguson--Washington State
3. W. W. Frazier, III--Philadelphia
4. Walter R. Kramer--Michigan
5. W. McIlwraith--Tri State
6. Leslie I. Nichols--California
7. Donald Vaughn--Metropolitan New York
8. W. Hamilton Walter--Mid-West
9. Donald Wilbur--New England

SOURCE: Robert McMillan, "How It All Began!" Badminton U.S.A. 35 (November 1975):21.

SOURCE: "Chicago Highlights," American Lawn Tennis 30 (April 1927):43.

## APPENDIX J

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND DIRECTORS OF THE AMERICAN BADMINTON ASSOCIATION, 1937-8

#### Committee Chairmen

1. W. W. Frazier, III (Philadelphia): Nominating Committee
2. Robert McMillan (Boston): Publicity
3. Roger E. Morse (N.E.): Amateur Status
4. L. I. Nichols (California): Rules
5. W. Hamilton Walter (Chicago): Tournaments
6. W. Hamilton Walter (Chicago): Membership

#### Directors

1. Walter Boettner (Mid-West)
2. E. L. Burhyte (W.N.Y.)
3. L. R. Daniels (N.E.)
4. Robert Elder (Dayton)
5. W. W. Frazier, III (Philadelphia)
6. L. Winchester Jones (California)
7. Orville H. Mills (Washington)
8. Roger Morse (Boston)
9. Leslie Nichols (California)
10. Donald C. Vaughn (N.Y.)
11. W. Hamilton Walter (Chicago)
12. Donald E. Wilbur (Boston)

SOURCE: "Chicago Sidelights," American Lawn Tennis 20 (April 1937):63.