

Chapter 1 : Sports | National Museum of African American History and Culture

Sports matter in American history and in modern American culture. Our interest in sport reaches across dividing lines of age, income, geography, gender, and ethnicity. Wherever we go and whoever we meet, the world of sport gives us something in common—a shared language.

Koubaroulis Students will come away with a basic narrative of the emergence of sport in American society. Minor director Jennifer Lansbury recently answered a few questions about the new minor. Why is the Sport and American Culture minor unique? This minor provides an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how sport has influenced and been influenced by American culture. The two disciplines that are collaborating--sport management and history--provide approaches that will allow students to examine important questions from two different angles of study. History courses that support the minor will focus on issues such as the origins of U. Alternatively, the courses supported by sport management will use a historical perspective but also examine more closely the inter-relationship between sport and culture in present-day America, exploring historical and present-day issues from economic, political, social and cultural perspectives. What should students expect from the minor? Students should expect to gain a good understanding of the important inter-relationship between sport and American culture. This will be achieved largely through readings, lectures, discussions, informal and formal writing assignments, films, and group exercises. The academic literature for sport history and sport management has grown dramatically in the last 15 to 20 years, and students will be exposed to many fine books in their courses. What are the goals of the minor? In your opinion, how has sport influenced American culture? I think the more important question is how have sport and American culture influenced one another, for they enjoy a reciprocal relationship. Certainly sport has become a central part of American culture. Moreover, sport, both at the professional and amateur levels, provide Americans with a shared language to discuss issues rooted deep in the American culture, such as individualism and teamwork, commercialism, fair play, and classic "rags to riches" stories played out repeatedly on the playing field. Yet American culture has also influenced sport in the United States, shaping it in ways that distinguish it from its counterpart in other cultures. Color lines in many professional sports resulted in separate African American leagues and sport organizations. And American women struggled through much of the twentieth century to break into the masculine domain of the sporting world in ways that often differed significantly from their European "sisters. What kind of careers will this minor prepare students for? History teachers, particularly those in secondary and collegiate settings, will discover new and interesting ways to approach important historical topics related to race, gender, and class in American society. Physical education teachers as well as students pursuing careers in tourism and recreation, health and leisure fields will gain a more in-depth historical perspective to their field, and its trajectory in American culture. Sport management majors who enter careers in marketing, managing, or advertising at the professional or amateur level will better understand both the historical background to their field but also the relationship between sport and American culture in present-day America. Sociology majors that are looking towards careers in social services or government can differentiate their degree and create a niche in which to work in the public, private, or governmental sectors or to pursue further study. Sport provides an interesting way to approach so many issues important in American culture, both historically and in our present culture. In sum, if students are interested in statistics, they should check out a sports almanac.

Chapter 2 : Culture of the United States - Wikipedia

Frontier backcountry sport, would prove masculinity, often having a missing eye was a badge of honor to backcountry folks Ben Franklin believed in sport to form leadership, key player in enlightenment, he emphasized self-improvement and moral values in physical exercise, learned how to be a strong swimmer (at this time people were afraid of the.

Despite the diversity of Native American cultures, some games were widespread. The rules of a game might vary, but several games were popular in large regions of the West. Native Americans occasionally incorporated games into religious ceremonies. Heavy betting was common with most games. The best known of Indian games is lacrosse. It was most common among the tribes of the Atlantic seaboard and around the Great Lakes , but it was also played in the South , on the plains, in California , and in the Pacific Northwest. It was played with a ball made either of wood or of buckskin, which was caught with curved rackets with a net on one end. The goal was usually marked with two poles although in some areas only one was used. Kohl, a white traveler in Wisconsin , examined some lacrosse equipment. Hundreds of players assemble, and the wares and goods offered as prizes often reach a value of a thousand dollars and more. A kind of field hockey known as shinny was among the most popular Native American games. It was usually played by women, but sometimes, especially on the plains, might also be played by men. Among the Sauk, Foxes, and Assiniboine Indians, men and women played the game together, and among the Crows, teams of men played against teams of women. Native Americans in the East, on the plains, in the Southwest, and on the Pacific Coast played shinny. It was played with a ball or bag, often made of buckskin, which was hit with sticks curved at one end. The ball and sticks might be decorated with paint or beads. The length of the field varied from two hundred yards among the Miwok Indians to a mile or more among the Navajos. The ball could be kicked or hit with the stick but not touched with the hands. In regions of the West cold enough to have snow and ice in the winter, snow-snake was played. Its rules varied even more than those of lacrosse or shinny, but in general the game involved sliding darts or poles along snow or ice as far as possible. The projectile could be only a few inches long or might be a javelin up to ten feet long. The game was usually, but not always, played by men. Among the Crees, who played a variant of the game in which the dart had to pass through barriers of snow, only men played the game. Among the Arapahos, on the other hand, snow-snake might be played by adults or children but was most commonly played by girls. Hoop and pole was another widespread game with varying rules. In general a hoop was rolled along the ground while men tried to knock it over with spears or arrows. The hoop was usually relatively small, from three inches to a foot in diameter. The hoop might be open, but often the players stretched cords or a net across it. The hoop itself was often of wood but might be made of corn husks, stone, or iron. It was sometimes decorated with paint or beads. The score was determined by the way the hoop fell when hit by the pole. The game was most frequently played by two men although in some cases more participated. Among the Apaches In the s Col. Cremony described a Mescalero Apache game as follows: There are some games to which women are never allowed access. Among these is one played with the poles and a hoop. The former are generally about 10 feet in length, smooth and gradually tapering like a lance. It is marked with divisions throughout its whole length, and these divisions are stained in different colors. The hoop is of wood, about 6 inches in diameter, and divided like the poles, of which each player has one. Only two persons can engage in this game at one time. A level place is selected, from which the grass is removed a foot in width, and for 25 or 30 feet in length, and the earth trodden down firmly and smoothly. One of the players rolls the hoop forward, and after it reaches a certain distance, both dart their poles after it, overtaking and throwing it down. The graduation of values is from the point of the pole toward the butt, which ranks highest, and the object is to make the hoop fall on the pole as near the butt as possible, at the same time noting the value of the part which touches the hoop. The two values are then added and placed to the credit of the player. The game usually runs up to a hundred, but the extent is arbitrary among the players. While it is going on no woman is permitted to approach within a hundred yards, and each person present is compelled to leave all his arms behind. University of Nebraska Press, , pp. University of Nebraska Press, Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 3 : Sports in American Popular Culture

A unique and timely exploration of the cultural impact of sport on American society, including lifestyles, language, and thinking. A-Z entries covering a wealth of topics, including sports heroes, artifacts of sport, culture of consumption, racial discrimination, and gender.

Visit the Sports Archive Sportsass: It has been the individuals who shone bigger and brighter than those around them that have vaulted the mainstream sports in America into the multi-billion dollar industries that they are today. Every league in the United States has its superstars from the past that have catapulted their respective popularity. Hockey and Gretzky are synonymous. This following opened the door for a new and younger generation to pass through, and an American public salivating at the chance to experience more and more of it. So what about soccer? It was truly a team effort. Unfortunately, only the most cultured soccer fans in the U. Could this be the reason why soccer in America and its domestic league MLS have not made the strides necessary to rival the big four? I happen to think so America needs a superstar to rally behind, and now, finally, we may just have one. Enter fourteen-year-old Freddy Adu. In the true spirit of the American melting pot, Freddy, his mother, and his brother won a lottery to come to the United States from Ghana when he was eight-years-old. He grew up kicking a makeshift ball around barefoot through the dusty streets with other kids, then came to America and upgraded to grass fields and cleats. His mother, Emelia Adu, had the difficult task of working two and three jobs while taking care of her precocious kids as well. Freddy just wanted to keep playing soccer. By the time young Freddy was just eleven-years-old, he was playing so far and beyond the kids in his own age bracket that he was given the opportunity to play with teens sometimes as much as five or six years older than he. And he still dominated. His talent level was so high that one of the biggest soccer clubs in the world, Inter Milan of Italy, offered his mother a contract of , dollars for Freddy to come and develop with their youth academy. She politely turned it down and told them that Freddy would be best served by staying close to home with his family. Since then, Freddy Adu has continued to progress at the U. Soccer Academy in Brandenton, Florida. At the tender age of thirteen, he became the youngest player ever to wear the United States jersey in an international event. Now fourteen-years-old, he is playing with the United States Under 17 National Team and creating a buzz around the international soccer community that no American player in history has ever experienced. But why all the hoopla? Because Freddy scores goals. What they do want to see is the ball powerfully rocketed past the opposing goalkeeper at six thousand miles an hour or artistically chipped over him from twenty yards out. Until now, the United States has never produced a talent with the potential that Freddy Adu packs into his right, or left, foot. He plays with a nose for goal, with the flair to dazzle the crowds, and the creativity that may just make him a household name in the States within a very short few years. The danger, of course, comes from the hype and pressure that will undoubtedly be forced upon him in the next months. Luckily, Freddy seems to have a very good head on his shoulders. He is humble and without question a team player. Off the field, he is an astute student and will receive his high school diploma by next May thanks to exceptional tutelage and his full commitment to studying and an advanced education. In short, he is the complete package. But that time is coming soon. Adu in action and see if the hype matched the product. Against competition three years his senior, Freddy scored four goals in four matches and was among the top scorers in the tournament. Such heralded clubs as Real Madrid and Manchester United have all expressed serious interest in landing the young phenom. Major League Soccer is also doing its best to keep Adu close to home. The buzz for an American soccer player has never been so great. Nor has the pressure. Freddy Adu has stated his intentions very clearly: As a pure soccer fan, I want nothing more than to see Freddy Adu play soccer right here in the United States for a few years before heading off to Europe for the real big bucks. It might be just the shot in the arm that America needs and may one day help to make soccer in the United States THE place to play for all the big superstars. Of course, winning that World Cup one day might not be too bad either.

Chapter 4 : Sports in the United States - Wikipedia

Sports in the United States are an important part of American culture. American football ranks top as the favorite sport to watch in the United States followed by basketball, baseball, and soccer.

Leveling the Playing Field explores the contributions of athletes, both on and off the field. Some athletes have been symbolic figures of black ability, while others have taken their activism beyond the court to the courtroom, boardroom, and the newsroom. Because sports were among the first, and most high profile spaces to accept African Americans on relative terms of equality, sport has had a unique role within American culture. Within black communities, sports have always been political. From the refusal to allow African Americans an opportunity to compete to the formation of African American segregated sporting teams and leagues; from the hard won battles to compete at the highest levels of the game to the introduction of African American expressive cultural practices within the games, the African American presence in sports has had social and political consequences. Sports matter beyond the playing field. This exhibition demonstrates the centrality of African American contributions and challenges to contemporary American culture and politics. African Americans created their own sports institutions, most notably the Negro Leagues, during the era of segregation. The exhibition examines the impact of these institutions as well as the integration of African American sports figures into all-white leagues. At times, sports leads social change. Other times, sports stymies social change. Sports are a way to measure racial progress within the United States. Because of segregation, HBCU football programs were major producers of elite football talent through the s. In addition to developing top-level players, these programs allowed aspects of African American culture to blossom. Baseball Negro Leagues Baseball The Negro Leagues were among the most important businesses in black America during the first half of the 20th century. Excluded from Major League Baseball, African Americans formed their own teams and demonstrated that they could play the game at the highest level and run large enterprises. The YMCA saw the sport as a means to teach mainstream middle-class values. African Americans gravitated to basketball as a way to demonstrate sportsmanship, discipline, and sense of fair play—key aspects of the racial uplift campaign of the time. Since then, many black athletes have acknowledged the lessons they learned in sports as elements in their later successes in politics, business, and other fields. These two historically black colleges and universities produced many athletes that excelled in Amateur Athletic Union and Olympic track events. In addition to their athletic success, these programs used the achievements of their athletes to challenge racial discrimination and demonstrate feminine ideals, which countered racist stereotypes. Boxing The Color Line During much of the era of segregation, the color line prevented African American boxers from fighting for the heavyweight championship. Breaking the color line in boxing was one of the most important blows to segregation in the early s, because it challenged the notion that African Americans were inferior. Game Changers Game changers are the people, events, and institutions that have forced the sports world and larger society to alter its practices, belief systems, or racial politics. Some of these shifts have led to the mainstreaming of African American cultural practices and the redefinition of gender roles, as well as a change in the racial composition of athletic institutions. The impact of these game changers demonstrates the power of sports to transform the world.

Sports are ingrained within American culture, partially due to the longevity of organized sport in the United States. The first spectator sports in the world, in their modern forms, arose out of.

Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs Track and field[edit] Main articles: Florence Griffith Joyner is considered the fastest woman of all time [9] [10] [11] based on the fact that the world records she set in for both the m and m still stand. Americans have frequently set world standards in various disciplines of track and field for both male and female athletes. Tyson Gay and Michael Johnson hold various sprint records for male athletes, while Florence Griffith Joyner set various world sprint records for female athletes. Mary Slaney set many world records for middle-distance disciplines. A turning point occurred in US track in the running boom of the s. High school track in the United States became a unique foundation for creating the United States middle-distance running talent pool, and from to an average of 13 high school boys in the United States would run under 4: The number of high school boys running the mile under 4: Carl Lewis is credited with "normalizing" the practice of having a lengthy track career as opposed to retiring once reaching the age when it is less realistic of gaining a personal best result. The United States is home to school-sponsored track and field, a tradition in which most schools from middle school through college feature a track and field team. Due to the amount of American athletes who satisfy Olympic norm standards, the US holds national trials to select the best of its top-tier athletes for Olympic competition. Combat sports[edit] Oscar de la Hoya won ten world titles in six different weight classes, including the lineal championship in three weight classes. Winning a gold medal in the lightweight division and owns a national boxing promotional firm and one of the few boxers to take on promotional responsibilities while still active. Boxing in the United States became the center of professional boxing in the early 20th century. In the s and s, Muhammad Ali became an iconic figure, transformed the role and image of the African American athlete in America by his embrace of racial pride, and transcended the sport by refusing to serve in the Vietnam War. In the s and s, major boxers such as Mike Tyson and Riddick Bowe were marked by crime and self-destruction. Mixed martial arts in the United States developed in the s, and has achieved popularity in the early 21st century. Many companies promote MMA cards, with the U. Professional wrestling , which evolved into a mostly scripted kayfabe form of sports entertainment over the course of the 20th century, enjoys widespread popularity as a spectator sport. Interest in pro wrestling peaked during the Monday Night Wars of the s and s. This was due to the competition between the World Wrestling Federation WWF and WCW , which were the two biggest professional wrestling organizations in the country during the last two decades of the 20th century. It is also stated that, between the two companies, an estimated 16 million viewers tuned in every week. WWE remains the dominant professional wrestling company in the U. Judo in the United States is not very popular and is eclipsed by more popular martial arts like karate and taekwondo. Swimming and water sports[edit] Kelly Slater surfing in the Boost Mobile Pro at Trestles Swimming is a major competitive sport at high school and college level, but receives little mainstream media attention outside of the Olympics. Surfing in the United States and watersports are popular in the U. California and Hawaii are the most popular locations for surfing. The Association of Surfing Professionals was founded in Other popular individual sports[edit] Tony Hawk skateboarding Skateboarding â€” Skateboarding culture was born in the U. Hunting and fishing are popular in the U. Other popular outdoors activities in the country include hiking , mountain climbing , paintball and kayaking. In winter, many Americans head to mountainous areas for skiing and snowboarding. Road bicycle racing has increased in popularity, fueled by the success of cyclists Greg LeMond and the eight consecutive Tours de France won by American contestants although all eight were discarded in the wake of doping revelations against the two winners, Lance Armstrong and Floyd Landis. Mountain biking is also widely practiced, especially in the Rocky Mountains. Rodeo â€” The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association is the main professional rodeo organization in the world. Bull riding , a subset of the rodeo, enjoys popularity as a standalone sport, especially the pro competition, Professional Bull Riders. Bowling â€” Bowling is the most popular participation "game" sport in the U. It was the first winter sport included in the Olympics, in Popular

team sports[edit].

Chapter 6 : About the USA>Sports

Sports in America ultimately play a large role in the society's culture, enabling the American youth to understand the importance of physical fitness and sportsmanship at the local level, and providing an outlet to rally around universities, professional teams or even the country.

Sports play an important role in American society. They enjoy tremendous popularity but more important they are vehicles for transmitting such values as justice, fair play, and teamwork. Sports have contributed to racial and social integration and over history have been a "social glue" bonding the country together. Early Americans like Benjamin Franklin and President Thomas Jefferson stressed the need for exercise and fitness promoting for example running and swimming. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy continued to encourage physical activity. Today, the Council continues to play an important role in promoting fitness and healthy living in America. The United States offers limitless opportunities to engage in sports - either as a participant or as a spectator. Team sports were a part of life in colonial North America. Native American peoples played a variety of ball games including some that may be viewed as earlier forms of lacrosse. The typical American sports of baseball, basketball and football, however, arose from games that were brought to America by the first settlers that arrived from Europe in the 17th century. These games were re-fashioned and elaborated in the course of the 19th century and are now the most popular sports in the United States. Various social rituals have grown up around athletic contests. The local high school football or basketball game represents the biggest event of the week for residents in many communities across the United States. Thousands of baseball fans flee the snow and ice of the North for a week or two each winter by making a pilgrimage to training camps in the South and Southwest to watch up close their favorite players prepare for the spring opening of the professional baseball season. Individual competitions accompanied the growth of team sports. Shooting and fishing contests were part of the colonial experience, as were running, boxing, and horse racing. Golf and tennis emerged in the s. Recent decades have given birth to a wide variety of challenging activities and contests such as sail boarding, mountain biking, and sport climbing, collectively referred to as "extreme sports". For High School Students.

Chapter 7 : Sport and American Culture

Role and Significance of Sport in American Society Sport plays a major role in American life. More than three-fifths of U.S. adults, approximately million.

And yet, there are more grounds for blaming the War Between the States on Doubleday than for crediting him as the inventor of baseball or for even tolerating that assertion as innocuous whimsy. At least the general was at Fort Sumter in South Carolina on the morning of April 12, , was in charge of the Union batteries there, and did give the order to fire the Northern shots in response to the Confederate shelling that has generally been accepted as igniting the hostilities. Later on, he was even a primary figure in the turning point battle of Gettysburg. But the lingering benevolence toward the fatuousness of that connection has reflected another national pastime -- the tentative cultivating of an innocent spirit that has never existed except as fable and that, averting seamier historical alternatives, craves to be accepted at least for the fancy it is; i. Purity is never in so much demand as around the suspicion that impurity has been having a very rowdy time. Few periods in United States history have been rowdier than the one that provided a setting for the Doubleday fancy, the late nineteenth century. Nativism at home and expansion abroad excused just about any excess as patriotic striving. Between the end of the Civil War and the start of the Spanish-American War, whatever was good for America was more or less anything that somebody with a loud voice and a big stick said was good for America. The very language reeled from exposure to the unbridled, rapacious, and self-indulgent. Hired killers were regulators, when not peacemakers. Settling the West meant mass exterminations. Information was what the Hearsts and Pulitzers could improvise for sale. Reconstruction meant looting, then restoration. A trust was something not to be trusted. A game was what commercialized as much joy out of an athletic activity as possible. The game of games was baseball. It vanquished cricket as a competitor in the sports field, profited from its timely association with the extension of the railroads and development of the telegraph, and introduced parameters of mass entertainment long before such other amusements as the circus and vaudeville. Its growth in the s and s was unprecedented in numbers, responding as it did to both participatory exercise on the most informal athletic level and spectating habit for an admission price. The game as metaphor satisfied on any number of levels, encompassing the subtlest of mental maneuverings, the scientisms of statistical computations, and brute strength. It was physical chess that could be played by almost anyone and to a definite outcome within a short period of time. Spalding epitomized the American success story even as that theme was still just seeping into both fictional and nonfictional writings as a cultural touchstone. If he had been born too late to claim the role of inventor for himself, his own thriving remained resonant because he could see it as feeding off the immaculately original, all competing claims about the leisure activities of ancient Normans, Native Americans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen beside the point. It was a short walk from this perception to the conclusion that Destiny had a special task for him. His achievements in business and in America remained an investment, and investments either grew or evaporated depending on vigilance over them. Security -- for him personally and for any enterprise with which he was identified -- meant eliminating any possible transience to his success. His personal fortunes were no guarantee of anything; as often as not, they seemed to have spited prevailing trends, and how long could that be counted on to continue? All that had gotten him were debating society disputes that confirmed nothing except the pompous, stilted rhetoric of the debaters. He could be as inspired by transcendental visions as they could and, paradoxically, for at least one very immediate business reason. Only one thing made him their dining room equal: Only a short time earlier, the economic and political expansion aims behind the Spanish-American War had been justified as a mission to free Cuba from Spanish colonialism. The Gilded Age could be a heady time. Between the Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century, American attention to the rest of the world was decidedly spasmodic. Through lacerating phases of first putting the United back into the United States after the North-South hostilities and then conquering the final Western frontiers, what was going on in Rome and Copenhagen, let alone in Shanghai and Calcutta, seemed far less urgent than the potential havoc caused by boo weevils in Alabama, water shortages in California, and increasing demands by workers for trade union protections against trust

managements. More than any bilateral economic or political agreements or exchanged state visits, the fairs offered highly suggestive glances at what might be gained from mutually deepened explorations across the oceans. Just in the years around the turn of the century, there were major international expositions in New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta, Nashville, Omaha, Buffalo, St. The first stop after a swing through several American cities out to California was Honolulu, where the party arrived too late for a scheduled Saturday game and learned that Protestant missionaries had gained enough of a foothold to impose a ban on Sunday ball. Even the reports describing the visit as a delirious triumph acknowledged that Professor Bartholomew won as much applause as the ball players. After Australia, the tour became a concentrated study in apathy, racism, and precocious Ugly Americanism. A rough three-week sail across the Indian Ocean to Ceylon Sri Lanka instigated considerable grouching from the players and produced merely one five-inning exhibition. A subsequent stop in Egypt was worse. A game in Naples appeared to launch the European portion of the tour happily when thousands jammed a cricket field under the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. He received appalled silence even when he raised his offer, promising that in return for access to the Colosseum, he would toss money at some local charities. He got no further in a bid to have his party received by the pope, and had to settle for playing a perfunctory game before King Humbert I and Prime Minister Francesco Crispi in the Villa Borghese. Plans to play in Florence died when the Americans were informed upon arrival that the Tuscan capital lacked suitable grounds. The main difference between Italy and France was that the latter stop-off was mercifully briefer. As in Rome, Spalding set his sights on a venue the indoor Exposition Hall for Industry in Paris that was denied to him, and he had to play before an indifferent throng at the Parc Aristotique on the banks of the Seine. The White Stockings owner got the opportunity to prove his case with the last leg of the trip -- a two-week swing through England, Scotland, and Ireland. But then there was also the Prince of Wales declaring that, as excellent as baseball might have been, he could never see it replacing cricket in his passions; railway station crowds across England showing more curiosity about the Royal train than about who was on it and why; and, having missed the memo about the cordiality, the blistering response to the games by the British sporting press. The Americans are proud of it -- the national Columbian game. But we know all about arrested development from a study of Darwin. If it had all ended there, with Spalding maybe telling himself that the opening of a sales office in Australia had made everything worthwhile, the tour would have been little more than an antic footnote to baseball history. An extravagant harbor reception was followed by a street parade, a celebratory exhibition game, and seats of honor at the opera. They have carried the American name to the uttermost parts of the earth -- and covered it with glory every time. The closest he came was President Benjamin Harrison, who spent a few stiff minutes with the tour members in Washington, making it evident that it would be beneath his dignity to be seen at a ballgame; but then Harrison had just sidled into the White House on the strength of an Electoral College vote that had negated a popular consensus for Grover Cleveland, so, president or not, his was hardly the most authoritative voice in the land. I would like to get it introduced into social life, into the churches. I do not know a place or thing, system or class or method that would not be improved by your code of ethics, for an institution that teaches a boy that nothing but honesty and manliness can succeed, must be doing missionary work every day of its existence. It will not only make a high standard of baseball men, but make the whole world better for its presence. Nothing remained of the six-month voyage but those few good days in Melbourne and Sydney. As shown by the orations delivered after his world tour, Spalding and his contemporaries would have found such an interpretation of the sport intolerable. On the contrary, they could not discuss baseball without reaching for analogies reeking of the bellicose. In an age in which war heroes were the most prominent public idols, the pitcher and catcher who formed a battery were presented as civilian soldiers, wresting victory from the enemy at all costs. Pitchers fired; comeback rallies came in volleys; wins were conquests. It was hardly a giant step from this mentality to the conclusion that if baseball had a single founder, it had to be someone incorporating military virtues, and certainly not a foreigner. Indeed, because of business affairs and then such prestigious appointments as heading the United States delegation to the Olympics, almost two decades passed from the start of his full-bore insistence on a single American creator to the naming of Doubleday as that visionary. There was also the discovery that sixty-seven diaries kept by the general maintained the same silence, that the closest he came to mentioning

athletic activities of any kind was in urgings to himself to take more walks. But by the s, baseball was more than a significant economic sector. It had also degenerated into a setting for corporate venalities and boardroom double-crosses, fixed games and other gambling excrescences, mass public drunkenness, and routine violence involving players, fans, and umpires. In one notorious incident, women tore up a Washington stadium after their Adonis of the moment had been tossed out of a game, putting an end to the gentility images sought through Ladies Day promotions. The national pastime, as its publicists had come to call it with a straight face, felt itself crumbling internally and under siege externally. In this spirit, his National League stomped out both the Players League and the American Association at the beginning of the decade. The external pressures were trickier. Never had there been so many rivals for the baseball dollar as in the s: The Spaldings of the surviving National League were hardly on a window ledge: But the long-term prospects for the industry were something else. Things were simply too messy. One tested recourse for enterprises in difficulty is an appeal to patriotism, and scoundrels of the period wrapped themselves in the flag to justify everything from charging higher sugar prices to paying immigrant workers substandard wages for unloading sugar cargoes to invading foreign sugar cane fields. But baseball was neither a table staple nor an arena of civic obligation. Leisure industries were still only approaching the frontier of the social imperative they would clutch as a prerogative in the twentieth century. Moreover, entrepreneurs like Spalding had been highly visible amid all the executive chamber manipulations and scandals attaching themselves to the sport; whatever self-righteousness they found in themselves for their actions, that did not translate easily to attracting the discretionary income of the family audiences increasingly viewed as the lifeblood of mass entertainment. If there was any modesty at all in the vision Spalding had of his activities, it was in his practical concession that people like himself were insufficient for propagating the religion of baseball. The most successful of self-made men got their hands dirty, and if baseball was about anything in its importance to America, it was in its emblematic place above the fray. Myth-making was an ardent pursuit in late nineteenth-century America. A bloodless Protestant ethic might have still found compatible application to industrial society, but personal, consoling configurations of higher powers were not as superfluous in teeming metropolises and across vast prairies and mountains as they had been across the Atlantic in English villages and German squares. Even without factoring in the spread of Catholic iconography thanks to Irish, Italian, and Polish immigrants, abstract contemplations showed more of an inclination to be voids waiting to be, if not filled, at least encircled by the hyperbolic, the legendary, and the fictional. Big countries made for punishing senses of isolation, and human agency acquired new value in morality tales through Uncle Remus, in romantic impressionability through the likes of Jesse James and Steve Brodie, and in commercial fantasy through Paul Bunyan. Spalding had a particular vantage point for this outlook from his southern California home at Point Loma. Under the influence of his long-time mistress and then following the death of his first wife second wife Elizabeth Mayer Churchill, he had become fascinated with the teachings of Helena Blavatsky, attending meetings of her Theosophy Society in the San Diego area. In contrast to, say, a Johnny Appleseed or to some of the suspect tales clouding the figure of a Buffalo Bill, a Zeus or a Kali did not entertain conjectures about human prototypes; they had always been divinely above the fray, with no responsibility for the sordidness of daily living. If his contemporaries could be tickled by the legendary for enlarging the human, the characteristically aloof Spalding was enthralled by the mythical as remote from the human, as Olympian impassivity not to be compromised by social or historical vicissitudes. Doubleday had been active in the East for decades as a Theosophist. Whether or not they ever shook hands, and time and geography factors indicated they did not, they still had the meeting ground of Theosophy. Given her connection with the men, in different parts of the country though it had been, it is hardly surprising that some researchers have attributed a critical role to Elizabeth in the selection of Doubleday as the pure American pioneer her husband had been seeking for years. There is no hard record of Spalding seriously considering other candidates for his role of a single American inventor. He would contend that he did, but the only collaborating names to emerge Alexander Cartwright, for instance had been rejected in his speeches and articles for some time. It was at this point that, in true Gilded Age fashion, the fabulous encountered the purposive and waylaid much of the narrative to come. The fabulous was supplied by Abner Graves, a year-old Colorado mine owner and real estate investor, who, during a trip to

Akron, Ohio in April , read an article in the local Beacon Journal in which Spalding reiterated his belief in a single American founder of baseball and asked readers if they could provide him and his commission with any information supporting that view. Graves provided -- and provided and provided. That was about the only part of his story that remained even relatively constant in his correspondence and in voluminous newspaper interviews. In his various accounts, Graves sometimes had only been told of the Doubleday demonstration by the boys there at the time, other times had himself been one of the marble shooters, and still other times had played in a game for testing the Doubleday regulations.

Chapter 8 : News: Mason Welcomes Sport and American Culture Minor

Correspondingly, the American traditions and conventions of that sport don't exist elsewhere simply because that sport is not played there to a significant degree. American sports culture has little affection for leagues/associations which do not play in the United States or Canada.

The varieties of English people as opposed to the other peoples in the British Isles were the overwhelming majority ethnic group in the 17th century population of the colonies in , and were The English ethnic group contributed the major cultural and social mindset and attitudes that evolved into the American character. Large non-English immigrant populations from the s to , such as the Germans , or more , Scotch Irish , , added enriched and modified the English cultural substrate, The Encyclopedia of Colonial and Revolutionary America, Ed. John Mack Faragher, , pp. The religious outlook was some versions of Protestantism 1. The British colonies inherited the English language, legal system , and British culture , which was the majority cultural heritage. Latin American culture is especially pronounced in former Spanish areas but has also been introduced by immigration, as has Asian American cultures especially on the West Coast. Forced migration during the Atlantic slave trade , followed by liberation won in the American Civil War created African-American culture which pervades the South and other areas receiving internal immigrants during the Great Migrations. Blending Southern and traditional African culture to some degree, this uniquely American culture has its own dialect; has contributed significant innovation in music, dance, and fashion; embraced a struggle by many African-Americans for political and economic equality; and is associated with significant populations of African-American Muslims and Christians in " Black churches ". Rap and music videos featuring African-American urban street culture have appeared in countries and melded with local performance cultures worldwide. Native culture remains strong in areas with large undisturbed or relocated populations, including traditional government and communal organization of property now legally managed by Indian reservations large reservations are mostly in the West, especially Arizona and South Dakota. The fate of native culture after contact with Europeans is quite varied. In contrast the Hawaiian language and culture of the Native Hawaiians has survived in Hawaii and mixed with that of immigrants from the mainland U. It occasionally influences mainstream American culture with notable exports like surfing and Hawaiian shirts. Most languages native to what is now U. The most common native languages include Samoan , Hawaiian , Navajo language , Cherokee , Sioux , and a spectrum of Inuit languages. See Indigenous languages of the Americas for a fuller listing, plus Chamorro , and Carolinian in the Pacific territories. American culture includes both conservative and liberal elements, scientific and religious competitiveness, political structures, risk taking and free expression, materialist and moral elements. Despite certain consistent ideological principles e. The flexibility of U. However, beginning in the s and continuing on in the present day, the country trends towards cultural diversity , pluralism , and the image of a salad bowl instead. Due to the extent of American culture, there are many integrated but unique social subcultures within the United States, some not tied to any particular geography. The cultural affiliations an individual in the United States may have commonly depend on social class , political orientation and a multitude of demographic characteristics such as religious background, occupation, and ethnic group membership. Some subcultures have national media exposure with dedicated television channels and crossover with mainstream media such as Latin, African American, and LGBT culture , though there are many niche channels. Some communities have local broadcast or paper publications that carry content from a specific culture, such as native radio stations or Chinese-language newspapers in Chinatowns. Almost every subculture has a presence on the World Wide Web and social media. Military history has influenced American culture and its worldwide reach in several ways. German cuisine became stigmatized by World War I ; but in contrast the end of World War II resulted in cross-fertilization of American and Japanese business techniques during reconstruction and occupation, and brought home troops with an increased taste for Italian dishes. Wars have also forced progress on equal rights for women and racial minorities, as these groups proved their till-then unrealized potential either in industry while men were off fighting, or by serving in the military honorably and effectively. The American Civil War

highlighted differences in culture including attitudes toward racism between the Southern United States and the North. Though the issue of slavery was settled by the war, racism and discrimination persisted and were supported by laws in some Southern states. Combined with determined civil rights activism, later wars resulted in profound changes in social norms, including desegregation, more intermixing of Black and White cultures, and more egalitarian social roles for men and women compared to countries that have not undergone similar shifts. Modern display of the Confederate flag and removal of Confederate monuments and memorials remain controversial cultural and political issues, though many elements of proud Southern identity and culture such as hospitality, drawl, and comfort food have nothing to do with racial division. Some differences in modern cultural tendencies fall along liberal-conservative political lines, with people on both sides of that increasingly self-segregating. The post-WWII economic and military power of the United States not to mention its large, relatively unified population also helped it become more of an exporter of its own culture and values compared to its initial tendency to import of European culture especially in its early, largely rural decades. The United States has also administered now-foreign territories for many years, creating opportunities for cultural intermingling among many government employees and military personnel. Colonists from the United States formed the now-independent country of Liberia, which inherited a considerable amount of American culture and values. Given its proximity, relatively free movement over the border, the highly integrated North American economy, strong military alliance, shared origins in British colonialism, and a common language, the English-speaking culture of Canada is strongly influenced by that of the United States. Some Canadian resist the dominance of the United States includes requirements for domestically produced mass media, though especially since the Hollywood North phenomenon began in the s, Canada also exports entertainment to the United States. American movies may have made the biggest impact of all American exports on popular culture worldwide.

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Delaney writes, "to ignore sport is to ignore a significant aspect of any society and its culture" (7), continuing to note, "sport is the opiate of the masses, due to the fact that we are in the age of the sport consumer, which is dissimilar to the age of the sport spectator" (Delaney, 14).