(Re)Presenting the Orioles:
A Historiographical Analysis of Black Hockey History in St. Catharines

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Abstract

The St. Catharines Orioles was the first all-black hockey team in Ontario and played in the Niagara District Hockey League in the 1930s. The history of the Orioles, like many other African-Canadian hockey histories, such as the Coloured Hockey League of the Maritimes (1890s-1920s) has been overlooked, erased, and ignored. This erasure is indicative of broader sociological issues of race and racism as the historic exclusion and (non)remembering of non-white athletes contributes to our understanding of sport history in the present. By neglecting to include athletes of colour in the mainstream history of sport, sports historians are contributing to the whitewashing of Canadian sport history. This study examines how the Orioles have been remembered and forgotten, considers what voices, perspectives, and identities are marginalized or silenced through hockey histories, and asks how historical discourses shape contemporary constructions of race and sport. In this study, I conduct archival research in the 1937-38 St. Catharines Standard to develop a history of the Orioles as it would have been known in the 1930s. With this history, I work from a historiographical perspective to consider how the Orioles have been racialized and excluded from sports history in the present. I analyse two secondary sources, The Sports History of St. Catharines (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City (Jackson & Wilson, 1992), as I identify when and how non-white individuals are included in the histories. Noting the omission of black contributions in these texts is relevant as neglecting to include the role of black citizens is an active form of (non)remembering that perpetuates whiteness through exclusion. This research contributes to our understanding of race and sport in the present and seeks to challenge “the enduring myth of Canada’s benign racial history” (Joseph, et. al., 2012, p. 17) that denies the existence of racism in Canada and seeks to address the gap in
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historical and sport literature that not only lacks a comprehensive history of the Orioles but has consistently pushed black athletes to the periphery of sports history.

Keywords: Orioles, racism, hockey, sport history, St. Catharines
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The St. Catharines Orioles was one of the first all-black hockey teams in Ontario and played in the Niagara District Hockey League in the 1930s. There is very little publicly known about the team aside from a newspaper photograph, a few newspaper articles, and a recent *Sportsnet* news piece (Robson, 2016). The history of the Orioles, like many other African-Canadian hockey histories, such as the Coloured Hockey League of the Maritimes (1890s-1920s) has been overlooked, erased, or ignored.

This erasure is indicative of broader sociological issues of race and racism as the historic exclusion and (non)remembering of non-white athletes contributes to our understanding of sporting history in the present. By neglecting to include athletes of colour in the mainstream history of sport and instead segregating them to the margins, sports historians are contributing to the whitewashing of Canadian history of sport. Liberti and Smith (2015) uphold that “historical knowledge is partial, filtered, and ideological” (p.2), resulting in the production of histories that neglect to include minority contributions. As a researcher, I must consider who is served by emphasizing certain parts of histories at specific points in time as this conveys particular messages about history, power, knowledge, and whose stories are remembered at the expense of others. It is evident that by glossing over the history of the Orioles, sports scholars have maintained a dominant white narrative that contributes to the preservation of white privilege. If Canada is touted as a “cultural mosaic” and if hockey is considered to be Canada’s game, shouldn’t a team like the Orioles be celebrated as a part of our history?

I first learned about the Orioles when I was emailing my supervisor, Dr. Cathy van Ingen. I told her that I had an undergraduate degree in human kinetics with a minor in
history and that I was interested in intersections between gender, race, history, and sport. She replied saying that she had an interesting project in mind and that there was an all-black hockey team that had played during the 1930s in the same town as the university. I knew that St. Catharines was an important terminus on the Underground Railroad and that there must be a rich black history here, but I was not expecting to find ambivalence about black history and sport in the region. After scouring the Brock University databases, pouring over library books, and making several trips up to the special archives, I was only able to find limited information on the black settlement of St. Catharines. This was a much more arduous task than I had anticipated.

In my search for literature regarding the black settlement in St. Catharines, I found that much of the information available was lumped together with the Niagara region as a whole. After removing information specific to Niagara Falls, USA, I was able to pull out parts of black history more specific to Niagara and subsequently to St. Catharines. The first black slaves and black Loyalist soldiers arrived in the Niagara region during the late 1700s, with the largest number of escaped slaves settling in St. Catharines in the 1850s during the time of the Underground Railroad (Thomas, 1994; Winks, 1997). By 1855, the black community in St. Catharines had grown to 123 families who lived in what was referred to as the Colored [sic] Settlement, located on the outskirts of St. Catharines in the Geneva-North Street area. Though a large black population had lived in St. Catharines and contributed to the development of the city, there is precious little commemoration of the contributions of black citizens in the region. That said, there are some efforts being undertaken to memorialise some parts of this valuable history. For instance, Harriet Tubman Public School opened in St. Catharines in 2014 in honour of the
abolitionist who lived in the city from 1851-1858, returning to the southern United States multiple times and leading an estimated 300 slaves to freedom (Fraser, 2014; Reese, 2011; Thomas, 1994). In 2015, Dr. van Ingen and I attended a conference titled *Harriet’s Legacies: Race, Historical Memory and Futures in Canada*. As a part of the conference, we went on the Niagara Freedom Trail bus tour that took us to significant points of interest in the area where our tour guide shared different parts of black history in the Niagara region. Only a few sites had any visible commemoration at all. The Salem Chapel of the BME Church on Geneva Street was the most well commemorated of all the stops on the tour. It featured a bust of Harriet Tubman in a garden at the side of the church, as Tubman ran a boarding house not far from the church and attended services there when she was staying in Canada. The tour guide had never heard of the Orioles, but she was interested in my research and was excited that I would be researching local black history as part of my study.

I thought that it was interesting that no one had examined the history of the St. Catharines Orioles hockey team, but I was more interested in the fact that this was definitely not the only example of historic erasure from history. In looking through two of the city’s local history texts, *The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992), there are only very fleeting references to any non-white people. Where non-white people are included they seem to be written in as a disconnected afterthought, as if to say, “that’s good enough, we put them in there.” As part of my coursework, I took a class on critical sociologies of race and racism and it was as if my whole perspective on the world unraveled: as a white woman growing up in small, overwhelmingly white towns in
Ontario, my entire understanding of society had been bleached. I thought back as far as I could recall to history classes and all I could remember was white men. Slavery had largely been glossed over and made to seem more like ‘foreign labour’ than its brutal reality, and Canadians were always framed as ‘the good guys.’ While it was clear that American slaveowners murdered and abused black slaves, Canada was depicted as a nation where those slaves escaped to freedom and faced no persecution. Though I could recall wondering where women and people of colour fit into school history, I was astounded that it had taken me 25 years to realize how problematic this really is. As I began to think about this on a larger scale, it started to seep into my thoughts about everyday life. This leant itself very well to my research as I began to think more about racial erasure and whiteness, specifically their relations to sport in Canada.

In a Canadian context, hockey plays a particular role in reproducing colonialism through maintaining the dominance of particular (white) narratives (Krebs, 2012). It is viewed as synonymous with Canada itself in an overwhelming demonstration of nationalism. This is exceedingly problematic as these ties between hockey and national identity link Canadian-ness to the exclusion of people of colour and emphasize hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and violence. As Abdel-Shehid (2005) writes, “the ambivalence of nationalism is crucial to thinking about sport and black masculinities in Canada” (p. 29). This is an issue when we consider that sport, specifically hockey in the Canadian narrative, “plays a key role in constructing the nation and determining national belonging” (Joseph, Darnell, & Nakamura, 2012). It is evident that the absence of black Canadians from hockey history further perpetuates the concept of whiteness and normalcy of racial privilege, and that this absence “is crucial to the repressive and
normalizing processes of making insiders and outsiders – both within sporting cultures and nationalisms” (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p.5). Despite the celebration of Canada as a “cultural mosaic,” race in sport research in Canada is fundamentally lacking and thus contributes to ideas of Canada as “colour-blind” or “race-less” (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 3). My research challenges “the enduring myth of Canada’s benign racial history” (Joseph, et. al., 2012, p. 17) by addressing the gap in historical and sport literature that subsequently leaves a comprehensive history of the Orioles lacking, and only features a few texts on black hockey teams or players from Canadian history (Carnegie, 1997; Fosty & Fosty, 2004; Harris, 2003; O’Ree, 2000).

My research on the St. Catharines Orioles is about more than just telling a story of a team of black hockey players in the 1930s; it is about considering how sport historians and others have organized the past such that black athletes are erased from the national narrative. In challenging this injustice, othering, and historic exclusion, my research will combat the under-addressing and under-analysis of the subject of race and sport in Canada (Joseph, et. al., 2012). The purpose of this research is to conduct a historiography of the St. Catharines Orioles, the first all-black hockey team in Ontario. A historiography is more than a recounting of the past; it is the study of historical writing and is based on the critical examination of sources and of historical writing itself (Berg, 2004). A secondary focus of this study is to trouble the dominant narratives that are constructed around sport and Canadian national belonging. The following research questions frame this study:

- How have the St. Catharines Orioles been represented and remembered/forgotten?
What voices, perspectives, and identities are marginalized or silenced via hockey histories?

How do historical discourses shape contemporary constructions of race and sport?

This research is informed through a sociohistorical lens and draws from social theories of race and racism.

**Outline of Chapters**

The following chapter is a review of two main bodies of historical literature that inform my research: scholarship on black settlements in Niagara, and on the “disremembering” of black athletes within sport history. The literature on black settlement in Canada and the Niagara region provides historical context and allows me to identify sites of racial discrimination, providing a space for me to critique perceptions of Canada as a colour-blind and post-racial society. In the second section of the chapter, I explore how sports historians have largely neglected to examine the impact of the colour line within sports history. In particular, I critique the whiteness of hockey history in Canada, focusing on how the sporting contributions of black athletes have been framed, how their histories have been presented, and how their contributions have been overlooked.

Chapter Three outlines historiographical methodology and my use of archival research as my principle source of data. I explain the structure of my research project, and how the data will be collected through newspaper archives and analysed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of maintaining criticality, reflexivity, and integrity in my
research as I identify my own perspectives and ground my interpretations within data that I collect.

Chapter Four reads as a history of the Orioles derived from my research findings in the *St. Catharines Standard* and other newspaper archives. This allows me to construct the history of the Orioles as it was known to readers in St. Catharines in the 1930s, as well as to expand beyond the *Standard* by incorporating relevant articles from the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and the *Niagara Falls Gazette*. Mapping this history will provide a platform on which I am able to conduct a historiography of the Orioles in the next chapter.

Chapter Five consists of a historiography of the Orioles where I use content analysis to critically examine what I have found within the newspaper archives and consider how these articles were perceived within the community that produced them. This will reveal ways in which the Orioles were framed in the past by white reporters to a white audience. This chapter also features a close reading of two popular press history texts, *The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). This close reading will allow me to identify when and how non-white individuals are included in the histories and examine how the framing of non-white athletes compares to the ways in which white athletes are presented. Noting the omission of black contributions in these texts is also relevant as neglecting to include the role of black citizens is an active form of (non)remembering that perpetuates whiteness through exclusion.

In Chapter Six, I conclude my research by discussing the findings of my study and their relation to my initial purpose statement and research questions, identifying how
themes emerging from my data collection contribute to a growing body of literature that seeks to examine the contributions of black athletes to the history of sport in Canada. I summarize major findings that emerged in my data collection, reflect on my own learning, and comment on future work that remains to be done.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is a review of two bodies of historical literature that inform this research investigation - scholarship on black settlements in Niagara, and on the “disremembering” of black athletes within sport history. As I examine the formation of black settlements in the Niagara region, I identify racial segregation and discrimination that provides grounds for me to critique the perceptions of Canada as a colour-blind and post-racial society. I problematize social constructions of Canada as a Promised Land for fugitive slaves. Working from a historiographical perspective, I consider the ways in which histories of black settlement in Canada, specifically Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, have been framed and how this informs racial politics in Canada.

In the second section of this chapter, I explore ways in which sports historians have neglected to examine the impact of the colour line within sports history. In particular, I critique the whiteness of hockey history in Canada. I also critique key texts examining black lives and their absence from broader history through a historiographical lens. Rather than provide a comprehensive review of historical and black sporting literature, I focus on the ways in which these accounts have been framed, how their histories are presented, and how the sporting contributions of black athletes have been overlooked.

This literature review only begins to scratch the surface of documenting the history of the black population in Canada by providing a short introduction to a history that has been overlooked by the dominant whitestream Canadian narrative. Much of the literature produced by white Canadian scholars surrounding the black experience in Canada builds on the heroic image of Canada as a modern Canaan or Promised Land and
masks real prejudices impacting black lives in Canada. This whitewashing of history is being countered by black activist groups such as Black Lives Matter and the Ontario Black History Society as they work to commemorate, educate, and study black history and heritage. Plaques commemorating black contributions to Canada are becoming more common and black Canadian heritage sites in Ontario such as Uncle Tom’s Cabin in Dresden, the North Buxton Raleigh Township Centennial Museum in Elgin, and the Niagara Freedom Trail tour offered in the St. Catharines-Niagara region, for example, have provided commemorative education on black history and the black experience in Canada. Similarly, my literature review seeks to briefly examine the historiography of black athletes in Canada and consider how their stories are framed before examining the St. Catharines Orioles and (re)presenting their counternarrative within a whitewashed sporting history characterized by exclusivity and historic (non)remembering.

**Black Settlement in Canada**

Though perpetuated as an innocent bystander when contrasted to the overt brutality and prejudice that occurred in the United States during the time of slavery, Canada is far from faultless. Canadians tend to view themselves as *better than* the United States, particularly when compared to the viciousness of slavery in the South and during the Jim Crow era. According to Lampkin, some Canadians even believe that slavery occurred solely in the U. S. and that Canada was immune to injustices (as cited in Mensah, 2010). White history is venerated, and the history of blacks and other minorities is restricted to parentheses right from the beginning of elementary school (Mensah, 2010). Rather than being free of racial prejudice, “slavery has disappeared from Canada’s historical chronicles, erased from its memory, and banished to the dungeons of its past”
(Cooper 2007b, p. 19). This section of the chapter will provide a general overview of major Canadian events prior to emancipation and examine what is generally accepted in Canadian history before troubling the common discourse of Canada as a safe-haven of freedom and a blameless state. I will then address the collective downplaying of prejudice through colour-blind racism in Canada.

**Slavery.** The first recorded black man to have been transported to New France from Africa and sold as a slave was Olivier Le Jeune, brought from Madagascar in 1628 (Silverman, 1985; Winks, 1997). Le Jeune’s arrival in New France would not spark an influx of other Africans. As the economy of New France in the early 17th century was largely based on the fur trade, private enterprise, and the individualized work of coureurs-de-bois, Silverman (1985) argues that slavery was limited: New France lacked the large agricultural-based economy requiring many workers that allowed slavery to take hold in the southern parts of North America.

Slavery was an institutionalized practice in the colonies, enforcing laws that involved coerced, degrading labour and ensured that those born into slavery would remain enslaved (Rushforth, 2003). By the end of the 1600s most African people in North America were slaves and “their raison d’être was to work in perpetual servitude for the white colonists” (Cooper, 2007b, 19). In 1760, approximately 1100 of 3600 slaves in New France were black, with the majority being Indigenous (Neeganagwedgin, 2012; Silverman, 1985; Winks, 1997). Though these slaves did not labour on plantations as in the United States, they were still slaves and lived at the mercy of their owners, experiencing humiliation, oppression, and being subjected to physical discipline (Austin, 2010). Non-white skin was a mark of inferiority and, as both English and French laws
defined slaves as chattel (personal property), dehumanized slaves were often subject to beatings in an effort to demonstrate a master’s control of their property (Cooper, 2007a).

A recounting of Canadian history is incomplete without acknowledging the Indigenous people who occupied this land before the arrival of European colonists who enslaved Indigenous people as well as Africans. It is crucial to recognize that both black and Indigenous people faced white colonial settlers who enslaved them. Colonization itself refers to informal and formal methods that “maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous peoples, lands, and resources” (Wilson and Bird, as cited in Neeganagwedgin, 2012, p. 16). While the African slave trade saw the forced importation of Africans to North America, Indigenous people were used as slaves in their own ancestral territories. They became “othered” by white outsiders who deemed Indigenous people to be lesser and thus justified their assimilation, enslavement, and oppression (Neeganagwedgin, 2012). This also resulted in the displacement and massacre of Indigenous people as European colonizers “organized an international slave trade in American Indian [sic] slaves that led to the decimation of entire groups and depopulation of large areas” (Neeganagwedgin, 2012, p. 21).

Lives of Indigenous people have been written out of whitestream histories such that few people are aware of the realities of the oppression faced under chattel slavery and colonialism continues to obscure current histories of Canada’s violence, slavery, and racism towards Indigenous people (Austin, 2010; Neeganagwedgin, 2012). Writing Indigenous and black histories out of the Canadian narrative and erasing their contributions serves to perpetuate the myth of Canada as a nation founded by English and French, masking the realities of black and Indigenous slavery (Walcott, 2003). While my
research focuses on the history of the St. Catharines Orioles, it is important to
acknowledge the indigeneity of the land and recognise the contributions that Indigenous
people have made that are obscured through whitestream colonial record.

The Treaty of Paris signed in 1763 resulted in the turnover of most of New
France (all French land east of the Mississippi River) to Great Britain (Silverman, 1985). With this land exchange and transfer of power came the establishment of English
criminal and civil law as well as a strengthening of the institution of slavery (Winks, 1997). Two years later, the American Revolution began and saw the migration of British Loyalists and their slaves to Quebec (as the British had renamed New France). By the end of the American Revolution in 1783, over 2000 African slaves are said to have been
brought into Canadian colonies, with most relocating in Nova Scotia (Reese, 2011). The Loyalist migration was the first mass exodus of black refugees (both slaves and military men) to Canada (Winks, 1997).

In 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe initiated the passing of an
Act Against Slavery to begin gradual emancipation by the government of Upper Canada (Winks, 1997). The passing of this legislation did not effectively free one single slave, but it did prevent the introduction of new slaves to Canada and ensured that previously freed slaves could not re-enter bondage. While those who were already enslaved were to remain so until their death, children born to slave mothers after the passing of the Act would be freed when they turned 25 (Silverman, 1985; Winks, 1997). Though no new slaves could be imported from outside of Canada, they could be bought and sold within the colony or sold internationally (Cooper, 2007b). It was not until 1834 that the passing of the Imperial Act would officially abolish slavery in the British colonies (Winks, 1997).
Emancipation in Canada was official in 1834 but slavery was still thriving in the southern United States. The Fugitive Slave Act in the United States was passed in 1793, legalizing the arrest and return of escaped slaves to their masters. In 1850 the Act became the Fugitive Slave Law, a stronger legislation which outlawed safe-havens in northern states; increased fines for those harbouring refugee slaves and rewards for those turning in sympathizers; and meant that refugee slaves were legally obligated to be returned to their former masters if captured within the United States (Reese, 2010). After emancipation in Canada the influx of refugee slaves from the United States began to increase. The escape to Canada freed fugitive slaves from U. S. jurisdiction and provided a relative safe-haven in comparison to the United States as, when they crossed the border, American bounty hunters and slave-catchers could not pursue them (Reese, 2011). The path north from the Southern states was an important means of escape for black slaves moving to Canadian or northern American destinations, especially after the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law. This path became known as the Underground Railroad in the 1830s-50s and networks of abolitionists and sympathizers, known as conductors, aided in the escape of refugee slaves as they moved between ‘stations’ (Armstrong, 2009; Mensah, 2010).

The exact number of people fleeing to Canada on the Underground Railroad is unknown, but it is believed that the largest influx of black refugees coming to Canada was during this period (Cooper, 2007b). As there were no ledgers kept that recorded the entry of fugitive slaves into Canada, it is not possible to know exactly how many people arrived, left, or stayed in Canada during this time. The Underground Railroad itself is a largely undocumented social movement veiled in misconception, misunderstanding,
debate, and ambiguity (Delle, 2008). Most of the information that is known about the Underground Railroad has been remembered from retrospective records, letters, and oral histories. This has resulted in the preservation of much of the history of the Underground Railroad as social myth, allowing the framing of Canada as a Promised Land to manifest (Delle, 2008).

**The Underground Railroad and the ‘Promised Land’**. The Underground Railroad is the feature of many books (including children’s books), documentaries, and other commemorative means. Much of this frames Canada as a hero-nation in stark contrast to the abusive south, building on the notion that Canada’s slaveholding history is one that was “erased from historical and national consciousness” (Cooper, 2007b, p. 22). That the Underground Railroad is preserved in children’s literature is somewhat problematic as it allows for the softening of history: without addressing slavery later in the Canadian curriculum, a children’s story may become someone’s only brush with the history of slavery in Canada. As such, the impact of slavery on black lives is diminished and lost in juvenile presentation. The Underground Railroad is transformed into a tale of adventure, masking brutal realities of slaveholding violence and suggesting that slaves left in search of adventure or exploration rather than escaping out of fear for their lives.

Another common criticism of much of the Underground Railroad literature is that it maximizes the roles played by white Canadian abolitionists and sympathizers and minimizes the function of those seeking freedom, framing the latter as being fully reliant on the former and acting as “passive victims” (Thomas 1994, 1-2). This was not the case however, as many received no aid on their journey at all. As Walker states, the Underground Railroad reference is not limited to an organized path of ‘stations’ headed
north; the Railroad refers to any overt and covert routes taken by slaves on their travels regardless of the amount of assistance received, if any (as cited in Mensah, 2010).

Though sympathizers did aid refugees where they could, sometimes by providing food, direction, a place to stay or hide, or travel by boat or train, most freedom-seekers who made the journey to Canada did so on their own or with little assistance (Shadd, 1994).

The shaping of Canada as the Promised Land is exceedingly problematic as it contributes to the whitewashing of history and the framing of Canada as a state immune to racial discrimination. The Underground Railroad was an effective means of travel to Canada and the estimated number of people successfully reaching Canada during that time ranges from 15 000 to 75 000 (Winks, 1997). Many different factors contribute to the vast range of this estimate including inaccurate census data, the inclusion of the black population already living in Canada with the estimated number of fugitive slaves, and the assumption that slaves recorded as passing through northern states made it to Canada and stayed, for example (Winks, 1997). While the actual number of escaped slaves reaching Canada is unknown, exaggerating the number of slaves who came to Canada allows Canadians to view themselves as morally superior to the United States. As arriving fugitive slaves were fleeing the overt racism and oppression that they faced under American slaveholding laws, the idea of Canadian freedom and image of Canada as a safe haven took hold. This history becomes a ‘feel-good’ story where Canadians view themselves as virtuous and the stories of the Underground Railroad that are told become more about Canadians helping escaped slaves and less about the experience of black refugee slaves themselves (Cooper, 2007b). Manipulating this history of the Underground Railroad to focus on the role of the white saviour is exceedingly problematic as this
whitewashing greatly contributes to the overlooking of the black experience in Canada. As Walcott (2003) notes, “Canada’s continued forgetfulness concerning slavery here, and the nation-state’s attempts to record only Canada’s role as a place of sanctuary for escaping African-Americans, is a part of the story of absenting blackness from its history” (p. 49). Stories of fugitive slaves and experiences of racial prejudice become invalidated as white Canadians inflate their role in the Underground Railroad as if to say, ‘we can’t be racist: we helped.’ It is important to note that most Canadians did not actively seek to help fugitive slaves from the South. Though some abolitionist groups did try and provide some aid, the majority of Canadians did nothing and racial prejudice began to manifest.

Racial discrimination and segregation intensified rapidly with the increased immigration of black fugitives. As fugitive slaves crossed the border with very little personal resources, many settled in Ontario border towns where black communities quickly began to grow. As populations increased, so did economic stress and discrimination. Lampkin states that conditions “got progressively worse until some [blacks] complained of more prejudice in Canada than in the United States” (as cited in Mensah, 2010, p. 52). Though some Canadians assisted refugee slaves through church organizations or charities, it was still illegal in many counties for a black person to purchase land, own a business, to run for public office, or to sit on a jury, and schools, restaurants, theatres, and hotels were racially segregated (Mensah, 2010). Racial discrimination and authorised segregation was part of daily life of nearly all black Canadians until the mid-1900s (Mensah, 2010). That is not to say that racism has
disappeared from the Canadian narrative, however. Racial prejudices still exist in the form of institutional and colour-blind racism that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In addition to the problematic transformation of the story of the Underground Railroad from the experience of fugitive slaves to the framing of Canada as a Promised Land, the story of Harriet Tubman as a conductor on the Underground Railroad has been romanticized in a manner that neglects the accounts of other escaped slaves. Tubman’s story has been glamorized to the point that she is referred to as “the most important person in the Underground Railroad” (Reese 2011, p. 210). Endowed with heroism and idolized as the Moses of her time, she is said to be “virtually synonymous with the institution” of the Underground Railroad, and that her life “has come to symbolize in many ways the struggle of the African people for freedom and justice” (Shadd, 1994, p. 54). Tubman did aid in the freeing of many slaves while putting herself at great risk throughout the 1850s. She had a home in St. Catharines from 1851 to 1858 and is said to have returned to the south up to 19 times, leading an estimated 300 people to freedom between 1849 and 1859 (Reese, 2011; Thomas, 1994). She did not remain in Canada however, and moved to New York in 1861, though she remained on the St. Catharines’ Fugitive Aid Society’s executive committee (Thomas, 1994). It is important that Harriet Tubman is recognized as a significant woman and that her story is shared, but we must be cautious that the championing of this story does not depreciate the contributions of others.

The historical framing of Canada as the virtuous Promised Land and the touting of Harriet Tubman as the saviour of escaped slaves informs racial politics in Canada. By restricting black history to the story of Tubman or to the whitewashed histories of the
Underground Railroad that perpetuate the image of the white saviour, the reality of the black experience in Canada is minimized and masked by white privilege. I will demonstrate this in my research as I argue that the absence of the St. Catharines Orioles from local sporting history is an example of the exclusion of black history from mainstream Canadian history of sport.

**Black settlement in St. Catharines.** The first black slave arrived in the Niagara region in 1782, with the total number of slaves estimated at approximately 300 in 1791 (Winks, 1997). Niagara became home to many black Loyalists and white Loyalists with black slaves relocating from the United States to Upper Canada during and shortly after the American Revolution (1775-1783) (Thomas, 1994). The British government encouraged the settling of white United Empire Loyalists in Upper Canada by offering military positions, land grants, and permitting white Loyalists to bring as many slaves as they had if they would relocate and fight for the Crown (Hill, 1981). As the British government offered freedom to black men who enlisted in their military as Black Loyalists, these black British soldiers would relocate to Niagara as freemen (Hill, 1981; Thomas, 1994). The Butler’s Rangers regiment of the British military was stationed at Fort Niagara and were given land grants in Grantham Township, which would later become St. Catharines (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). Among those receiving land grants was black private Richard Pierpoint. In 1794, Pierpoint and 18 other freemen in the area petitioned for adjacent land grants for freed blacks who served in the British military where a black community could be developed. This was likely the first petition to develop a black community in the area, although it was rejected by the government of Upper Canada (Thomas, 1994).
As a destination point on the Underground Railroad, the black population of St. Catharines would grow from approximately 150 in the 1838 to over 450 in 1851 (Jackson & Wilson, 1991). Harriet Tubman rented a boarding house where she sheltered escaped slaves behind the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church on Geneva Street and Hiram Wilson, a black abolitionist, also ran a haven for fugitive slaves in St. Catharines with his second wife (Shadd 1994; Winks 1997). By 1855, the black community in St. Catharines had grown to 123 families on the town assessment out of a total population of approximately 7000 (Thomas, 1994). The community, referred to as the Colored Settlement, was located in the North Street and Geneva Street area on the outskirts of the village of St. Catharines (Thomas, 1994).

The Salem Chapel BME Church remains a functional Church in St. Catharines to this day. It was constructed by black fugitive slaves in 1851. A branch of the African Methodist Episcopal denomination, the Salem Chapel later changed its name to provide a more Canadian identity and allegedly offer escaped slaves additional protection from recapture by their former owners (Thomas, 1994). The Church also aided in helping newcomers adjust to life in Canada, providing a supportive congregation for newly escaped slaves (Thomas, 1994). Churches were fundamental in black communities, dating back to the beginnings of slavery when church gatherings were the only social assemblies permitted by slaveholders (Hill, 1981). They were among the first buildings erected in black settlement areas and remained more than just places of worship, providing a space for black fellowship in a segregated society (Winks, 1997). In Nova Scotia, it was found that competitive hockey teams sprouted from local black Baptist Churches (Fosty & Fosty, 2004). Religion and hockey had clear ties, especially in the
Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes which emphasized Christianity as a vital part of their organization, having adopted the 17-point Baptist Articles of Faith as an unofficial Oath of Allegiance (Fosty & Fosty, 2004). In St. Catharines, the BME Church itself plays an important role in the history of the Orioles as the team was formed from members of the congregation who played hockey together recreationally before receiving sponsorship (Robson, 2016).

Although the city and its black community existed together, racism and discrimination were encountered in employment and schools were segregated (Hill, 1981; Thomas, 1994). Groups such as the Refugee Slaves’ Friends Society were formed from local abolitionists (including Harriet Tubman, mayor Elias Adams, and others) and attempted to provide aid to escaped slaves, but discrimination still abounded (Hill, 1981). A segregated school was opened in the Colored Settlement in 1851 and segregation in education did not end until 1883 when students were reintegrated into all grade levels (Hill, 1981).

Much of the Colored Settlement was damaged at the Militia Day riot in 1852. Black troops were given special congratulations during a military review and, though exact details are debated, it is understood that this angered white troops who began insulting the black militia and throwing rocks. Afterwards, a black soldier who was hit sought out the white man who had hit him, starting a brawl and resulting in a fire that burned much of the black settlement and injured several people. Though the black settlement would be rebuilt, it is evident that race relations were unsteady and often dangerous in the late 1800s (Thomas, 1994). This would continue into the 1900s and,
though segregation would not be sanctioned by law as in the United States, it would remain commonplace as a social practice in much of Canada.

As conceptions of Canada as the ‘Promised Land’ abound, it is easy to romanticize the way that escaped free blacks were treated in Canada, especially compared to the bondage and violent forms of discrimination faced in the south. It is important to note that Canada did not provide equality and that segregation was a reality. As more black fugitive slaves arrived, racist humour became more prominent in newspapers and town directories began to identify businesses owned by black people (Reese, 2011). Many churches, hotels, and employers turned away black members of the community, and schools were legally segregated in 1850: it was not until 1983 that the last segregated school in Canada was closed (Marsh & Bonikowski, n.d.).

Racial prejudice is still a reality in Canada, though it may not be as visible as a ‘Whites Only’ sign. Colour-blind racism has developed in Canada and the United States as a “racism without racists” where people claim to not see the colour of others’ skin (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). This allows white people to exercise their own racial privilege and racism against minorities under an umbrella where they claim that affirmative action plans are discriminatory against whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Racism and white privilege is maintained through the colour-blind white notion that blames minorities for creating racism and argues that “if blacks and other minorities would just stop thinking about the past, work hard, and complain [about racial discrimination] less,” then everyone would get along (Bonilla-Silva, 2017, p. 1). By denying the existence of racism after the end of Jim Crow segregation in the United States, white people are only succeeding in shrouding
overt racial discrimination with a clandestine veil of white privilege. Racism, though hidden, remains a subtle heartbeat beneath the white skin of privilege.

**Sport and the Colour Line**

The colour line, as defined by African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, identifies a divide formed through long-standing prejudice and hatred based on skin colour (Douglass, 1881). An escaped slave, Douglass uses this phrase to epitomise racial segregation in the late 1800s. Though Douglass writes after American emancipation, he identifies a deep-rooted prejudice that rises from slavery and continues post-abolition. He argues that, though there is no inherent evil by virtue of one’s skin colour, being black “is enough, in the eye of this unreasoning prejudice, to justify indignity and violence” (Douglass, 1881, p. 568). He also identifies that “the higher a colored [sic] man rises on the scale of society, the less prejudice does he meet” (Douglass, 1881, p. 576). Douglass optimistically calls for a world where dignity and rights are respected regardless of race, colour, or other prejudices.

Twenty years later in 1903, African-American civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois examines the meaning of being black through a series of essays collected in his work *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois (1994) writes that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line [sic]” (p. v). He endeavors to examine life within and without segregation, or what he refers to as “the Veil,” drawing on his experiences of prejudice to ground himself within the Veil. Du Bois popularized Douglass’s usage of the term “colour line”, carrying the description of segregation from the 19th and into the 20th century. Years after the repealing of the Jim Crow laws and the end of legal segregation in the United States, the colour line stretches into the present via colour-blind racism. As
Bonilla-Silva (2017) argues, “Jim Crow never died one hundred percent, and its ideology has remained important in many sections of the [American] nation and in segments of the white community” (p. xiv). This remains true in Canada as well. Though segregation now operates more covertly, white privilege still extends into residential segregation, job opportunities, and on a political and electoral level (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). Institutionalized racism draws the colour line into the 21st century, continuing to otherize as “color-blind racism serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-civil rights era” (Bonilla-Silva, 2017, p. 3).

The colour line has divided sport in a way that restricts black athletes to footnotes in the majoritarian history of sport. Ben Carrington (2010) examines the role of sport in shaping racial discourse in a British context. He examines post-colonial racial and political formation in the (re)making of the black athlete, analysing how blackness/whiteness and race/sport have articulated and thereby evolved. Carrington (2010) argues that sport reproduces dominant whitestream ideologies, referencing overt violent anti-black racial abuse in European football, the sexualization of black athletes, and identifying overwhelmingly white male professional sports administrations.

To counter the racial erasure of black athletes from sports history, Arthur Ashe Jr. (1993a, 1993b) compiled a three-volume text that examines the history of black athletes from the 17th century through to the completion of the text’s first edition in 1988. Ashe Jr. explores the historical context of black athletes, considering racial constraints that acted on their successes. He identifies that black athletic successes in the 19th century “are simply glossed over in most examinations of the period” (Ashe Jr., 1993a, p. xviii). He refutes the whitewashed majoritarian history of sport, providing a black
counternarrative that seeks to create a space for the black athlete. With regards to hockey, black hockey players are not referenced until the third and final volume of Ashe’s work examining black athletic contributions from 1946 to 1988. The section of information on ice hockey barely takes up two pages and Ashe identifies that “there [had] been precious little black participation in ice hockey” at this time (Ashe Jr., 1993b, p. 201). Though this is an American text, Ashe credits British Canadians for creating the modern game and identifies nine black Canadian and four black American players. At the point of publication, no black American had yet played in the National Hockey League (NHL) (Ashe Jr., 1993a, 1993b). Ashe attributes the lack of black participation in hockey to a preferential interest in football, basketball, and baseball, maintaining that “there is only a minimal amount of interest in [hockey] in the black American community” (Ashe Jr., 1993b, p 203).

Also within the American context, Miller and Wiggins (2004) address the link between the colour line and sport during the Jim Crow era and post-Jim Crow segregation, examining racial politics of sport. Acknowledging Du Bois’s claim that the colour line would indeed be the problem of the 20th century, the authors seek to examine diverse issues within race relations in the history of sport in the United States over the past century. They endeavour to provide historical foundations and discuss perceptions of race relations in the recent past on which future scholars can build (Miller & Wiggins, 2004). Similarly, Wigginton (2006) writes in “an attempt to make sense of why race still matters in sport” (p. xii). He recognizes that most literature surrounding African-American participation in sport is on the “big four” American leagues – baseball, basketball, boxing, and football – and opens his book with an examination of other sports
that remain overwhelmingly white despite integration attempts – golf, hockey, horse racing, and tennis. After considering the reasons that black athletes remain underrepresented in the latter sports, Wigginton (2006) continues to link black athletes with an ongoing struggle for civil rights and provides a chapter analysing the contributions of black women to American sporting history.

William Humber’s A Sporting Chance: Achievements of African-Canadian Athletes (2004) provides a short introduction to black history in Canada, as well as the black experience in Canadian sport. Humber makes it explicitly clear that, although black history in Canada is part of the North American account, black Canadians and Americans had vastly different experiences due to differing historical influence, combined English and French culture in Canada, and a strong effort of Canadians to define a national identity distinct from the United States (Humber, 2004). Sport is used as a lens through which the wider experience of black Canadians may be interpreted, revealing formerly ignored stories. Humber argues that “Canada’s record in matters of race has been a disturbing mix of occasional good intentions and ugly practices” (Humber, 2004, p. 16). Though wrought with acts of exclusion, he affirms that black Canadian sporting history is also a site of outstanding accomplishment as he examines the successes of black athletes such as boxers George Dixon and Sam Langford, sprinters Donovan Bailey and Molly Killingbeck, basketball players Sylvia Sweeney and Jamaal Magliore, and hockey players Herb Carnegie and Jerome Iginla, among others.

Gamal Abdel-Shehid (2003) provides a Canadian context of conceptions of race, sport, and national identity. He argues that “an examination of sport and black masculinity in contemporary Canada needs to pay attention to roots (attempts to establish
permanence) and routes (where we are travelling)” (Abdel-Shehid, 2003, p. 16). He seeks to provide a way to consider the black experience in Canada while considering how the past affects the present, or how roots affect routes (Abdel-Shehid, 2003). As such, I contend that neglecting the history of the St. Catharines Orioles ignores the roots of black Canadian contributions to sporting history and thus impacts our understanding of the routes of Canadian sport in the present.

Another example of tensions surrounding the colour line in sport has been analysed by Rita Liberti and Maureen M. Smith (2015), who unpack the historical record and trouble dominant narratives of American sprinter Wilma Rudolph. The authors examine the historical remembering of Rudolph as an African American female born into poverty as the 20th of 22 children in 1940 Jim Crow segregation, suffering from double pneumonia, scarlet fever, and later polio which crippled her right leg. She became an Olympic triple gold medalist sprinter in the 1960s before being diagnosed with brain cancer and dying in 1994 (Liberti & Smith, 2015). Liberti and Smith (2015) interrogate the ways in which the story of Rudolph has been made and remade over time, with her death and subsequent obituaries standing as construction sites for narratives developed to suit different purposes depending on their audience. They “[trouble] the notion of a single, knowable account” of history, maintaining that “historical knowledge is partial, filtered, and ideological” (Liberti & Smith, 2015, p. 2). As such, rather than developing a biography of Rudolph, Liberti and Smith (2015) trouble her posthumous memory by examining who is served by particular exaggerations, omissions, inclusions, and exclusions at different points in time. The authors affirm that Rudolph’s narrative told “a particular story about racial progress possible within a color-blind democracy” (Liberti &
Smith, 2015, p. 14). Similarly, I use Liberti and Smith’s (2015) work as a model in my examination of the historiography of the St. Catharines Orioles, arguing that by neglecting to investigate the contributions of black athletes as a part of the mainstream sporting narrative, their voices are being silenced and black athletes are being marginalized through the colour-blind preservation of white privilege.

Given what we know about racial erasure in sport, I examine racial erasure specific to Canadian hockey and the overlooking of black athletes. I am interested in determining how stories are told and not told, and how this contributes to the (non)remembering of contributions of black athletes to sport. Black hockey literature that does exist is presented as a counternarrative alongside whitestream popular texts rather than being integrated as part of an inclusive history. As such, I intend to consider how we can discuss hockey history from the beginning and include those sitting on the margins rather than solely examining black hockey history through a minority lens.

**Hockey Histories and the Search for the Black Player**

Studies of race and sport in Canada are fundamentally lacking, reinforcing notions of a colour-blind and raceless nation (Joseph, et. al., 2012). Conceptions of white normativity and white centrality are reproduced in sport through the normalizing of institutional racism and linking of masculinity with whiteness and privilege. “The enduring myth of Canada’s benign racial history” is preserved and the place of racial identity in social hierarchies is reinforced through sporting culture (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 17). Discussions of race and sport are necessary to counter this problematic denial of racialization by whitestream Canadian sporting culture.
Most popular press hockey texts do not include historical black hockey literature. While there is some literature focused on the experience of black players in hockey, most of these books are autobiographies including those of Herb Carnegie, Val James, and Grant Fuhr (Carnegie & Payne, 1997; Fuhr & Dowbiggin, 2015; James & Gallagher, 2015), or children’s literature telling the story of P. K. Subban, Jarome Iginla, and Willie O’Ree (Burgan, 2015; Mortillaro, 2011 & 2012; O'Ree & McKinley, 2000). This is problematic as it insinuates that unless black hockey players write their own autobiographies, hockey historians and journalists will not write about them. Children’s literature also lends itself to the glossing over of issues of race and racism in sport by neglecting discussions about the realities of race relations in Canada and how they have been demonstrated through sport. The biographies of these pioneering players become stories of overcoming racism and adversity through ‘sport-conquers-all’ narratives rather than addressing social and ideological inequalities that uphold white privilege. Preserving these histories in children’s literature is not innocent: rather, this lack of commemoration is an active form of disremembering (Clinton as cited in Liberti & Smith, 2015).

Black representation in sport history texts is also lacking. An important exception is the text Black Ice which reports on the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes that operated from 1895-1925 (Fosty & Fosty, 2004). Led by Baptist ministers and Church members, the league was simultaneously used as a means to make money and attract young black men to the church while serving as a black pride organization. Henry Sylvester Williams, future organizer of the Pan-African Conference (forerunner for the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People), was one of the key organizers of the league, originally creating team names with double meanings: names
such as “the Stanley,” “the Jubilee,” “the Eureka,” and “the Moss Backs” exemplified coded language and double entendres that allowed black athletes to share in black pride while silently mocking white oppression (Fosty & Fosty, 2004). The league itself was established not only as one of the most complex sporting organizations of its time, but also as a site of political statements and black pride.

The *Acadian Recorder* newspaper was Baptist-owned and reported on games in the Colored League, bringing their accounts to white readers. Many white spectators were drawn to the game, but racism abounded in news coverage that referred to a theatrical style of hockey and covered the games as if they were intended to be humorous. Fosty and Fosty (2004) quote one newspaper as stating that “the game and players were good and apart from the novelty of seeing them play they gave the spectators good value for their money” (p. 96). Many reports demonstrated overt racism, especially early after the League’s conception. An article from the *Halifax Herald* even compared a hockey game to “a fight from slavery and the plight of the Maroons” (Fosty & Fosty, 2004, p. 55). This merited a response from an anonymous black man who writes a rebuttal, describing the plight of the expulsion of the black Maroons from Jamaica to Canada and the abolition of slavery, criticizing the author for comparing these events to a hockey game and likening him to the roots of the Ku Klux Klan which was gaining ground in the United States (Fosty & Fosty, 2004).

The League became one of the best known and most skilled organizations in Eastern Canada, with players from the league being noted as the first to use slapshots and Henry ‘Braces’ Franklyn being recorded as the first goalie to drop to the ice to stop a puck (Fosty & Fosty, 2004). Fosty and Fosty (2004) examine the creation, development,
and death of the Colored Hockey League at length as a venue for hockey, a site of racial
resistance and political statements, and as “the first black pride sports movement in
history” (p. 66). They provide a short background to black history in Canada, specifically
the history of Black Loyalists and Maroons in the Maritimes, and a deeper discussion of
the forming and destruction of Africville in Nova Scotia and its ties to the league. The
authors attest that “the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes changed the way hockey
was seen and played in early Canada,” affirming that the lack of reference to
contributions of black hockey players renders present-day hockey “a sport whiter in
history than a Canadian winter” (Fosty & Fosty, 2004, p. 162).

Responding to a gap in literature regarding black players and their experiences
in professional hockey, sports reporter Cecil Harris (2003) dissects interviews with NHL
players and their encounters with race and racism. Players like Jarome Iginla, Herb
Carnegie, Willie O’Ree, Georges Laraque, Grant Fuhr, Peter Worrell, referee Jay
Sharrers, player agent Bryant McBride, and more were interviewed by Harris and, though
each individual case is different, all of those interviewed had experienced racism
firsthand (Harris, 2003). Harris’s interviews share a personal perspective from players
that is evident of blatant name-calling and physical attacks, but also of institutional
racism that impacted both individuals and their families inside and outside of sport. In an
Indigenous context, Jordin Tootoo (2015) recalls his experiences with racism in the NHL
and in minor leagues that he faced as an Inuk player in his autobiography. Tootoo (2015)
recalls “racism at just about every level of the game” (p. 210). The privileging of
whiteness and presence of racism are overarching themes in the experiences of non-white
players at many different levels.
Interestingly, on the page opposite the opening chapter, the iconic newspaper photograph of the St. Catharines Orioles from the *St. Catharines Standard* is printed (Harris, 2003, p. 12). The caption states that the year of the photograph is unknown and the only person in the picture who is named is the mascot, Sylvia Moore, the daughter of the BME Church pastor. There is no other reference to the team made in the text. Harris states that “since the dawn of the twentieth century black players have overcome economic, geographical, racial and cultural barriers to have significant impact on [hockey]” (Harris, 2003, p. 14). By printing this photograph of the little-known Orioles, Harris acknowledges the history of black hockey in Canada and its (non)telling as both a racial and cultural barrier, but also presents a problem: this photograph that allegedly hung in the Hockey Hall of Fame has a history that is not shared with it.

These sources contribute to documenting black history and experiences in hockey, seeking to uncover and preserve that which has been historically excluded. My research on the St. Catharines Orioles, one of the first all-black hockey teams in Ontario, will contribute to this body of literature as I examine the ways that black hockey history has been framed and endeavour to create space for these stories within whitestream majoritarian history.

**Hockey and Issues of Canadian Identity**

Hockey is particularly linked to the reproduction of colonialism in Canada as it reproduces hegemonic white masculinity (Krebs, 2012). It is viewed as synonymous with Canada itself in an overwhelming demonstration of nationalism. This is exceedingly problematic as these ties between hockey and national identity link Canadian-ness to the exclusion of people of colour and emphasis on hegemonic masculinity,
heteronormativity, and violence. Sport, specifically hockey in the Canadian narrative, “plays a key role in constructing the nation and determining national belonging” (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 3). Thus, by ignoring the past and overlooking the contributions of black hockey players in Canada, we are ignoring a part of the nation and denying that sense of national belonging through racial othering.

Gruneau and Whitson (as cited in Wong, 2009) refer to hockey as “an essence that exists outside of the influences of social structure and history” (p. viii). In response to this, Wong (2009) contends that linking hockey and Canadian-ness indefinitely is exceedingly reductionist in nature as it ignores ways that Canadians consume hockey “based on their socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, and location” (p. viii). Wong (2009) argues that maintaining this essentialist view suggests that the nature of hockey and its relationship with being Canadian is stagnant in the midst of such a large and widespread Canadian culture. Instead, he frames hockey as a “battleground for the conceptualization of class, gender roles, amateurism/professionalism, race, and a host of other issues that forged the ‘Canadian’ identity” (Wong, 2009, p. x). Focusing on the development of hockey prior to the second world war, Wong (2009) draws on scholars to compile a discussion of hockey and nation across Canada, finding that the experiences of minority groups is lacking and under-analyzed, and ultimately defining Canadian identity as aggressive, male, middle-class, and white. Holman (2009) similarly upholds that hockey carries multiple meanings, suggesting that even a game itself is a different story depending on who is playing, who is watching, and who is recounting the story. Specifically, Holman (2009) defines hockey as a multifaceted network of stories that have (and have yet to be) told from a range of diverse perspectives. In the telling and not
telling of certain stories and by privileging the retelling of particular perceptions over others, hockey reveals ways in which scholars of sports history and Canadians as a whole have defined and performed complex identities in favour of a white, middle-class, heterosexual, male Canadian identity over others. That said, neither Wong (2009) nor Holman (2009) historicize black players in their arguments. Rather, they expand on Gruneau and Whitson’s (1993) seminal text that addresses how, amidst vast claims of the centrality of hockey to Canadian culture, there has not been enough analysis of why these claims are made. As they do so, all three works and their analyses occur in the realm of the white male, neglecting contributions of non-white athletes or discussions of how non-white lives in Canada were impacted by the culture of hockey that they argue is so central to Canadian identity.

French-Canadian author Roch Carrier has written that “hockey is life in Canada” (as cited in Adams, 2006, p. 71). Paul Henderson’s popular text entitled How Hockey Explains Canada: The Sport that Defines a Country (Henderson & Prime, 2011) begins with a foreword by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper who states that “one of the things that makes us unique as Canadians – and it’s true whether you are aboriginal, English, French, or multi-cultural – is that we play hockey” (p. viii). While this seems to warmly bring Canada together in a multicultural celebration of inclusivity, it masks the reality of hockey as a reflection of heterosexual, white, middle-class men. A subtitle of a two-page section of the book reads “How Hockey Explains our Darker Side” and provides details about some deadly post-game fan riots (Henderson & Prime, 2011, p. 190-191). What about the darker side of Canada that lies under the shadow of colour-blind racism that neglects to mention minority contributions to Canadian hockey at all? Aside from some
fleeting references to Indigenous people in the introduction and a nine-page chapter on “how hockey explains feminism” (that features many quotations of men delegitimizing women’s sport) (Henderson & Prime, 2011, p. 119-127), the book is overwhelmingly devoid of reference to women and people of colour. Evidently, the book does live up to its title as it demonstrates how hockey explains a hegemonic white and misogynistic Canada.

As Adams (2006) writes, “if hockey is life in Canada, then life in Canada remains decidedly masculine and white” (p. 71). Gender disparity is evident in the consistent privileging of men’s hockey over women’s hockey at local and national levels regarding ice time, media prominence, and shinny (pick-up hockey) (Adams, 2006). In regard to preserving whiteness, Jarome Iginla presents an interesting case: as captain of the Calgary Flames, Iginla was the first black captain in the NHL and, as the 2004 Stanley Cup finals were played between Calgary and Tampa Bay, he was hailed as “Canada’s Captain.” Though having a black player as “Canada’s Captain” may seem indicative of a change in racial perspective, in an interview with the Globe and Mail about his personal characteristics, race was entirely overlooked. Adams (2006) notes that, in a country where racism remains a factor in everyday lives of people of colour, neglecting to discuss race belittles issues of racism and perpetuates the belief that race does not matter. Rather, Adams (2006) insists that “in a sport dominated by white men, Iginla’s race is significant not just in terms of the number of black players, but in terms of the sport’s contribution to the construction of whiteness in [Canada]” (p. 75).

A study on constructions of whiteness in Olympic hockey also used Iginla to examine the marginalization of black hockey players as he was the only black player in
the 2006 men’s Olympic tournament (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). Interestingly, though researchers set out to examine how Iginla was constructed throughout the tournament, they found that he was largely ignored unless he touched the puck. The research purpose thus shifted to conceptions of whiteness and utilizes Chidester’s concept of “the presence of absence” to argue that whiteness is maintained through the absence of overt references to race (as cited in Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012, p. 4). They do not advocate for the singling out of Iginla because of his race but do suggest that by omitting his personal stories while the stories of other white players are being told, he is being isolated: the absence of his story amidst others reinforces hegemonic white masculinity (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012).

Sport is deemed one of the primary venues for the production of national identity, even over religion or politics in some countries. International sporting events are scheduled on a regular cycle (e.g. the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup) allowing for a nationally constructed ‘us versus them’ mentality that unites countries and is easily maintained through the regularity of these events (Watson, 2017). Hockey is used to form Canadian national identity, in many cases with help from the Canadian government as they claim that hockey promotes a sense of community that spans racial and gendered boundaries (Watson, 2017). This is not so however, as hockey remains decidedly white and male: by promoting hockey as a national sport and claiming to unite the country, all those who are not white, middle class, urban, heterosexual males are effectively excluded. As Watson (2017) states, “hockey is a contested symbol of Canadian national identity” and it raises the question of “who may define the Canadian nation” (p. 304).
In response to the whiteness of hockey and the meanings that this lends to the establishment of national identity, Pitter (2006) explores ways that hockey has impacted the sense of Canadian identity in Canadian people of colour. He examines conceptions of race and racism in Canada before discussing hockey and its relationship to being Canadian through Roch Carrier’s website: *Backcheck: A Hockey Retrospective* on the Canadian archive library site. Interestingly, Pitter (2006) notes that neither Indigenous peoples nor other people of colour are present in photographs or stories on the site. Larry Kwong, Freddie Sasakamoose, and Willie O’Ree, the first Asian, Indigenous, and black players, respectively, are omitted from the site. Pitter (2006) notes that this exclusion of people of colour is indicative of racial bias: though hockey has become more inclusive of both English and French Canadians, as well as white European immigrants, people of colour are not included in the same way (Pitter, 2006). Pitter addresses the gap in literature surrounding black hockey players in the NHL, stating that it was not until the appearance of an increased number of black players in the league that attention was given to the topic. He writes that this interest in filling the gap demonstrates that black players have been playing hockey for years, even at the highest national levels when allowed (Pitter, 2006). He argues that the fact that these stories are only now coming to the forefront is indicative of systemic racism in Canadian sport and maintains that “ignoring the accomplishments of non-whites in hockey, as well as the obstacles they have had to struggle against, has served to distort our collective consciousness” (Pitter, 2006, p. 135).

Canadian hockey icon Don Cherry also presents a problematic embodiment of national identity. His *Coach’s Corner* segment on CBC’s *Hockey Night in Canada* is arguably more watched than the games themselves (Allain, 2015). Cherry promotes a
raucous style of hockey and reinforces a cis-gendered, heterosexual, white, self-made masculinity. He perpetuates this masculinity as ‘normative’ and seeks to protect the hard-working man from social forces such as feminism and immigration that he believes seek to undermine this patriarchal masculinity (Allain, 2015). Cherry positions himself as a national icon within this masculinity, preserving the idea that masculinity is in crisis and successfully othering those who do not fit within these boundaries, as if to say: if you are not a white, working-class, heterosexual, cis-gendered male hockey fan who enjoys a physical game, you cannot be Canadian. He champions the ‘Canadian game’ of hockey as a violent and physical sport, openly making xenophobic comments directed at Russian and European players that play more evasive than physical games (Knowles, 1995).

Cherry frames input from non-white, non-Canadian perspectives as an attack on Canada’s version of physical hockey and, by association, as an attack on Canada itself. Elcombe (2010) claims that by championing the white working-class male, Cherry’s appeal crosses gender and cultural boundaries as well. This is exceedingly problematic as Elcombe (2010) uses Cherry to set the standard for what Canadians ‘should’ be, othering those who do not fit within the model of the white, working-class man.

Indigenous hockey teams in Canada have also faced similar forms of racism at the expense of powerful white brokers. Hockey in an Indigenous context has been utilized by white colonists as a means for cultural assimilation, especially in the case of residential schools (Forsyth and Heine, 2017; Te Hiwi and Forsyth, 2017). Te Hiwi and Forsyth (2017) examine the Pelican Lake Indian Residential School (1945-1951) and discuss how hockey was used as a means of subjugation in Indigenous children. While trips to Toronto were framed as rewards, Te Hiwi and Forsyth (2017) uphold that the
hockey-playing youth were being paraded as examples of “successful” assimilation attempts at the residential schools. Colonizing narratives obscure realities of trauma faced in residential schools, as national organizations such as CBC choose to retrospectively highlight “positive stories about Canada’s national game” (Forsyth and Heine, 2017, p. 206) rather than address violence and assimilative realities faced by Indigenous people. The absence of non-white hockey history is very apparent in my search for literature on Indigenous hockey as few articles discuss realities of racism faced by Indigenous hockey players both in the past and the present.

**Whiteness and the National Hockey League.** Hockey remains the whitest of major sports, with fewer than 30 black players out of over 700 participating athletes (Arthur, 2017). As such, racism has remained a part of the NHL today. In 2011, Philadelphia Flyers winger Wayne Simmonds had a banana thrown at him in a shootout during an exhibition game against the Detroit Red Wings (“Banana Thrown,” 2011). In 2012, Joel Ward was subject to racist tweets after scoring a series-winning overtime goal for the Washington Capitals and eliminating the Boston Bruins from the playoffs (Boren, 2012). This situation is strikingly similar to racist tweets directed at forward P. K. Subban in 2014 after he scored the winning overtime goal in a game between the Boston Bruins and the Montreal Canadiens (“Twitter Blows Up,” 2014). In protest of police brutality and systemic racial injustice, NFL athlete Colin Kaepernick refused to stand during the American national anthem in 2016. After other athletes in the NFL, NBA, WNBA, MLB, and even on the US women’s national soccer team, J. T. Brown of the Tampa Bay Lightning became the first NHL player to raise a fist in protest during the American national anthem on October 7th, 2017. Brown received death threats and other racist
responses on Twitter after doing so (O’Brien, 2017). Though there have been attempts to combat racism in the NHL, racism is still a common occurrence at different levels of hockey in Canada and the United States.

In an attempt to expand the boundaries of hockey and introduce the sport to children from different backgrounds, the NHL hired Willie O’Ree as the Diversity Ambassador for its Hockey is for Everyone initiative in 1998. Between 1998 and 2008, this initiative established 36 hockey programs across North America designed for economically disadvantaged youth and introduced hockey to over 85,000 children from diverse backgrounds (“Hockey is for Everyone,” n.d.). The initiative’s mission statement reads: “we believe all hockey programs - from professionals to youth organizations - should provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for players and families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status” (“Hockey is for Everyone,” n.d.). Though the NHL has verbalized a belief in inclusivity this does not always translate into practice, as evident in racial and homophobic slurs that are common both in the NHL and in minor leagues.

Commemoration of the contributions of black athletes to hockey in Canada presents another issue: there is a lack of representation of athletes of colour in the Hockey Hall of Fame. Grant Fuhr was the first black male hockey player to be inducted in the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2003. Angela Davis, along with Cammi Granato, was part of the first induction of women to the Hall in 2010. Davis and Fuhr are thus far the first and only black female and male hockey players to be installed in the Hockey Hall of Fame since its establishment in 1945 (“Hockey Hall of Fame,” 2018). Willie O’Ree will join the Hockey Hall of Fame in November of 2018 as a builder in recognition of his
contributions to race and sport in the NHL (Clipperton, 2018). In 2018, the NHL also introduced the Willie O’Ree Community Hero Award that will be given “to the person who best utilizes hockey as a platform for participants to build character and develop important life skills for a more positive family experience” (“Willie O’Ree: Builder Category,” 2018). Thus far, these are the only three black hockey players to gain recognition in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

In an effort to provide black athletes with recognition for their contributions to sport, members of the Society of North American Historians and Researchers (SONAHR) and historians George and Darril Fosty hosted three Black Ice Hockey & Sports Conferences and Hall of Fame inductions in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia between 2006 and 2008 (Black Ice Hockey, n.d.). From this organizing group, the Black Ice Hockey and Sports Hall of Fame Society was established in 2009 in Nova Scotia with the goal of promoting “awareness of the roles played by blacks in hockey and other notable sports” (Black Ice Hockey, n.d.). In addition to advocating for the creation of a black hockey and sports hall of fame, the group also organizes an annual Black Youth Ice Hockey initiative in Nova Scotia as an introductory skating and hockey program for boys and girls aged 4-10 as an entry program to minor hockey. As of yet, this Black Ice Hockey & Sports Hall of Fame is only available online and there are no readily accessible plans for a physical site for the Hall of Fame. No inductions have been made since 2008 (Black Ice Hockey, n.d.).

Through my research, I intend to contribute to the conversation that seeks to examine the contributions of black athletes to Canadian sporting history. In the next chapter, I outline the methodology and the methods that will provide a framework for my
research. I will be engaging in historiographical archival research as I examine the way that the history of the St. Catharines Orioles has been recorded and the ways that this history has been overlooked in newspaper archives from the *St. Catharines Standard* and other major newspapers of the 1930s.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

This chapter outlines the methodology and the methods that framed this research. It begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework of my study and my justification for its use, followed by a detailed account of the methods of data collection and analysis that I used to undertake this study.

Methodology

The purpose of methodology is to outline the theoretical approach and principles that will guide my investigation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Within this research, I draw from a sociohistorical approach informed by social theories of race and racism. The purpose of this research is to conduct a historiography of the St. Catharines Orioles, the first all-black hockey team in Ontario. A historiography is more than a recounting of the past; it is the study of historical writing and is based on the critical examination of sources and of historical writing itself (Berg, 2004). A secondary focus of this study is to trouble the dominant narratives that have been constructed around sport and Canadian national belonging. The following research questions frame this study:

- How have the St. Catharines Orioles been represented and remembered/forgotten?
- What voices, perspectives, and identities are marginalized or silenced via hockey histories?
- How do historical discourses shape contemporary constructions of race and sport?

According to Andrews (2008), “all historical accounts are produced by individuals who are products of their environments that affect their focus, what they
include or leave out, and the conclusions they draw” (p. 400). This means that it is
difficult to produce a historical document without incorporating an individual perspective
as meanings and biases are, intentionally or not, attached to documents as they are
created (Day & Vamplew, 2015). Historiographers acknowledge these relationships
between history and those who write it, incorporating authors’ perspectives in their
research. As such, historiography reveals dominant perspectives within particular time
periods as historiographers study not only a historical document itself, but also analyse
external and internal factors impacting its production and presentation.

For this project, I engage in historiography in order to examine how the Orioles’
historical representation (or lack thereof) has informed our understanding of sport history
in St. Catharines (Andrews, 2008). Specifically, my focus with a historiographical
approach is to examine the sources that have shaped what we know about the Orioles.
Rather than focusing on retelling the past, this research critically examines the sources
and historical writing on the St. Catharines Orioles hockey team as part of larger
historical narrative of St. Catharines.

Methods

Data collection. Methods are how the study itself is carried out - “they are the
tools of the investigation” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 333). Methods are a crucial
part of a historical research project as the way that a phenomenon is studied has the
power to shape or determine knowledge that we draw from it. In other words, what is
learned about history is greatly dependent on the methods used to study it (Gunn & Faire,
2012). Historical methods of data collection may include archival research, visual
analysis, studies of material analysis and place, collective biography and life story,
Geographic Information Systems (GIS), language and the formation of meaning, and more. In this study, I conduct archival research and gather primary and secondary sources about the Orioles. This forms the bulk of my data collection process as locating source material is a key component of historical research (Berg, 2004).

Primary sources are original artifacts created firsthand and relate an eyewitness experience of events (Berg, 2004). Examples include diaries, photographs, audio or visual recordings, constitutions, newspaper articles containing factual accounts or eyewitness descriptions, journals, maps, uniforms and jerseys, sports equipment, etc. (Berg, 2004; Bombaro, 2012). Secondary sources involve second-hand accounts or reflective testimony from individuals who were not present (Berg, 2004). They “provide summaries, analyses, commentary, and criticism of events in history based on the study and interpretation of primary sources” (Bombaro, 2012, p. 85). This includes textbooks, encyclopedias, retrospective oral histories, journal articles, popular media sources, and newspaper articles that interpret historical events (Berg 2004; Bombaro, 2012). In this study, I utilize both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources that are included in this research are newspaper articles, primarily from the *St. Catharines Standard*, and two books as secondary sources, *The Sporting History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992).

To collect newspaper articles, I conducted archival research. Archives are often considered to be the primary place that historians do their research. According to King (2012), archival research is “the bread and butter of [a historian’s] professional existence” (p. 13) and can be likened to lab experiments for physical scientists or anthropological
fieldwork. Spending time in archives extracting primary documents seems to be a pseudo ‘rite of passage’ for budding history students yet is often taken for granted or glamorized by popular media (King, 2012). Rather than sifting through stacks of dusty books, yellowed papers, and fragile artifacts, my research in the newspaper archives took place in the Brock University Library as I scrolled through reels of newspaper microform. Microform reels store images of documents on photographic film and were used before modern digitization to cut back on the amount of storage space required for serial publications like newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals (Bombaro, 2012). A microform viewer is required to illuminate and magnify the film and allows me to crop and copy articles and images that are relevant to my work.

The St. Catharines Standard newspaper is the principle primary source driving my data collection. This daily newspaper of the City of St. Catharines was first published in 1891 and is the largest daily newspaper in the Niagara region. My data collection includes the sports sections of the Standard from January 1937 to the end of the hockey season in March 1938, as these are two years when the Orioles were active. As the Standard does not have newspapers from this decade on a digital database, I conducted a manual search through the library microfilm and scrolled through two years of individual film reels to collect data. Three other major newspapers of the time, the Toronto Daily Star, the Globe and Mail, and the Niagara Falls Gazette were also examined. As both the Star and the Globe are digitized, I used key terms to search online databases for articles pertaining to the Orioles. Given that the focus of my research is in 1937 and 1938, I restricted my search to these two years and used colloquial language of the time. Terms that were included in my search are: “hockey,” “negro,” “black,” “colored,” and
“Orioles.” I used varying combinations of these words and different Boolean search terms to broaden and refine the scope of my search as required. Six articles from an American newspaper, the *Niagara Falls Gazette*, were also brought to my attention by Donna Ford of the Central Ontario Network for Black History and daughter of Orioles player Richard Nicholson. I include these articles as part of my data collection and analysis as well.

I use two popular press history books written for the general population as secondary sources: *The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). At the time of the publication of *The Sports History of St. Catharines*, sports editor Jack Gatecliff wrote that this book “is, indeed, required reading for all St. Catharines sports followers” (McNabb & Meighan, 1969, foreword), and emphasized that, to his knowledge, no other city had produced a popular press book of sports history. Mayor Mackenzie Chown proclaimed that “sports [had] always been an essential part of community life in St. Catharines” (McNabb & Meighan, 1969, letter), bringing honour to the city and enjoyment to its citizens. Yet this book only features photographs and names of five black athletes with no discussion of their sporting achievements or further acknowledgement of contributions from black athletes. The omission of black athletes in this text is continued by the exclusion of black citizens as a whole in *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992).

*St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* was published in 1992 by the St. Catharines Standard as part of its 1991 centennial celebration. It is touted as “the most comprehensive heritage account ever published of the St. Catharines region” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, dust jacket). This book however, as a comprehensive history, overlooks the
contributions of black Canadians to the history of St. Catharines. Including a short section regarding the Underground Railroad and a picture of Harriet Tubman, there are ten references to the black population of St. Catharines throughout 414 pages of history. The exclusivity of these two books is problematic as they are created for a popular audience and serve as ‘comprehensive’ histories, yet they ignore contributions of black Canadians. In doing so, they contribute to (and are demonstrative of) the whitewashing of history in St. Catharines. Analyzing these secondary sources provides a place for me to juxtapose a black interpretive counternarrative alongside the white-stream history that has already been published by popular press.

**Data analysis.** Historical research is not solely a data-amassing enterprise - it also includes analysis. As Berg (2004) outlines, “the purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of systematic procedures” (p. 7). Data analysis involves gathering, categorizing, and interpreting data through content analysis in order to identify patterns and congruencies within the data. Through my historiographical data analysis, I identify the historical exclusion and overlooking of the Orioles as the result of individual and collective whitewashing. This lays the groundwork for a discussion regarding what this omission means in regard to ways that race and racism impact whose stories are prioritized over others.

Content analysis is “a means of trying to learn something about people by examining what they write” (Berger, 1991, p. 25). It is “an indirect way of making inferences about people” (Berger, 1991, p. 26) based on what they consume and produce. Though it may be criticized based on its assumption that “behavioural patterns, values, and attitudes found in [the] material reflect and affect the behaviours, attitudes, and
values of the people who create [the] material (Berger, 1991, p. 25), content analysis is ultimately the most fundamental process of investigating a text and the material written therein (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Content analysis is traditionally considered to be a quantitative method of data analysis as its findings are enumerated and can thus be counted (Berger, 1991). According to Berg (2004), however, content analysis should not remain exclusively quantitative: though having counts of textual data provides a way to identify, organize, index, and retrieve the data, a thorough analysis of organized data requires careful consideration of which words are used and how they are presented. This provides researchers with opportunities to learn how authors of these texts interact with and view their social worlds (Berg, 2004). Content analysis is used in my qualitative analysis as “it is a passport to listening to the words of a text and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words” (Berg, 2004, p. 269).

Latent, rather than manifest, content analysis is used to analyze the data. Manifest content is comprised of “those elements that are physically present and countable” (Berg, 2004, p. 269). Examples may include the number of times a specific word is used, number of articles, the size of an image, the size of a document, colours used, etc. It is an objective analysis of data that examines the surface structure of the message (Berg, 2004). Contrarily, latent analysis “is extended to an interpretive reading of the symbolism underlying the physical data” (Berg, 2004, p. 269). This moves beyond the surface to explore deeper meanings, including inferences about data and symbolic meanings (Berg, 2004). Deeper meaning drawn out through latent analysis is important to my content analysis as Mason states that documents are “constructed in particular contexts, by particular people, with particular purposes, and with consequences –
intended and unintended” (as cited in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Latent analysis provides a means for me to take the information that was written in newspaper documents and consider how they were produced, how they were framed, and how they were understood. This allows me to determine what is present in my primary and secondary sources, identify exclusions, and explore meaning behind these inclusions and exclusions.

Newspapers have traditionally been common sources of information for sports historians and the reconstruction of sports history, though Day and Vamplew (2015) caution that they must be interpreted rather than accepted as fact. Furthermore, written archives can be sites where power and privilege may be perpetuated as the evidence kept “is always a function of power relationships in past and present societies” (Day & Vamplew, 2015). Though I do use newspaper articles that I collected as a means to reconstruct a known history of the Orioles, I also acknowledge that there is more to history than what is found therein. My research also focuses on the interpretation of what I found and did not find within the newspapers. This is particularly important to my historiography of the Orioles as my research considers both the textual information itself as well as the perspectives of the journalists and historians who recorded it in order to identify power and privilege.

With this in mind, I conduct my analysis of the St. Catharines Standard by scanning every issue printed between January 1937 and the end of the hockey season in March 1938. This allows me to get a general feel for how newspapers in the 1930s were formatted, ways in which race relations were articulated in the media, and what current events were impacting the world at the time. By paying particularly close attention to the sports sections of these papers, I identified that men’s boxing, hockey, basketball, and
badminton at all different levels were popular and garnered a lot of attention, and I gained an understanding of how sports were reported at the time. This understanding allowed me to begin to see differences in the reporting of white and non-white athletes in mainstream media. Conducting a latent analysis of the *Standard* focused on the Orioles provides a space for me to identify and examine racial bias that was present therein. By analysing this data, I am able to see the ways in which the Orioles and other black athletes were framed in the past by white reporters to a white audience.

Newspaper articles from *The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star*, and *The Niagara Falls Gazette* are analysed in a similar manner. Rather than looking at the entire sports section, however, I am only interested in articles that specifically refer to the Orioles themselves. A latent analysis of these articles included examining how the Orioles were represented and similarities and differences compared to their representation in the local *Standard*.

After analysing the content of the newspapers, I complete a close reading of *The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). This includes recording when and how non-white athletes are referenced and if the way that they are included is different from how white athletes are presented. Omission of black athletes in these secondary sources is significant to my research as absence can sometimes convey more than presence. By neglecting the contributions of black Canadians, these two popular press books perpetuate whiteness through non-inclusion.
Quality of Research

Validity and reliability are terms familiar to the maintenance of quality in research. Validity allows researchers to claim ‘truth’ in their findings through effective experiment design and subject variable measurement as they “[seek] to answer the question: ‘was I right?’” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 473). Reliability “[ensures] that the experiments can repeatedly measure these variables accurately” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). While validity and reliability are often deemed to be the gold standard for quantitative research, internal and external validity are more frequently used in qualitative research. Internal validity reflects how research findings match reality and external validity is a measure of the degree to which results may be deemed ‘true’ in other circumstances (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Though some qualitative researchers find that validity and reliability may be suitable measures of quality for their studies, the sociohistorical scope of my research requires a less formulaic approach to quality.

As presented by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) I intend to focus on criticality, reflexivity, and integrity as means to maintain quality throughout the research process. In my critical analysis, I examine my findings throughout my research process by considering them from multiple perspectives and positions of negations and truth to consider biases. My research is unique in that rather than avoiding biases in the data, I use them to discuss the past and help understand the present. Reflexivity requires that I acknowledge my position as a researcher and how my background and personal experiences affect decisions made within my study. This is tied to researcher integrity as I identify my own perspectives and ground my interpretations within the data that I have collected (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). As a white female researcher, I recognize that I
do not bring personal experiences of racism into my study. I must acknowledge that I
come to this historical exclusion from a position of white privilege and as an outsider,
and that I do not intend to speak on behalf of members of the black community. Rather,
through my research, I identify gaps in whitewashed historical memory and problematize
the ways in which history has been recorded, presented, and celebrated by whitestream
media, and seek to provide a space for black counternarratives to coexist within the
annals of sporting history.

In addition to maintaining quality throughout my research process, I also work to
ensure the quality of the research product. Maintaining an audit trail and keeping clear
appendices throughout my data analysis contributes to the quality of my research. I
recorded and catalogued raw data, research notes, analysis products, and process notes
throughout my study. Though these paper trails themselves do not verify the quality of
my text, they present a clear record of my research process, allowing others to follow my
steps and refer to specific points within my manuscript (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Triangulation, a “cross-examination at multiple points” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013),
also lends itself to ensuring credibility. As I accumulate data for my audit trail, I cross-
examine data across multiple sources whenever possible to broaden my understanding of
the history of the Orioles, when and where they played, and how they were portrayed
within newspapers and across multiple sources (i.e. the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail,
the Niagara Falls Gazette, and the St. Catharines Standard).
Chapter 4: (Re)Tracing the Team – the Orioles in the Media

The history of the St. Catharines Orioles has been largely ignored by sport and hockey historians. As a result, a comprehensive history of the Orioles has never been written. While there are fleeting references to the Orioles within the popular press, including most recently a 2016 *Sportsnet* article aptly titled, “The mostly lost history of the St. Catharines Orioles,” the history of the team and its players has been largely overlooked and excluded from Canadian sports history. What is commonly known is that the St. Catharines Orioles was the first all-black hockey team in Ontario and that they played in the Niagara District Hockey League (NDHL) in 1937 (Ferguson, 2000; Gatecliff, 1991; Humber, 2004; Robson, 2016).

In the following chapter, I trace out a history of the Orioles based on newspaper archival research. I focus my research on the *St. Catharines Standard* as it was the largest daily newspaper in the Niagara region. My data collection includes the sports sections of the *Standard* from January 1, 1937 to March 30, 1938 as these were two years when the Orioles were active. My research terminates at the end of March 1938 as the NDHL had ended due to mild weather. I also searched digital archives to access two other major newspapers of the time, the *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Globe and Mail*. As these archives are available online, I used colloquial language of the 1930s to search for articles pertaining to the Orioles and was able to find three that fit into my study. After collecting these articles, I used latent content analysis to construct a history of the Orioles as it would have been read through the newspapers in 1937 and 1938. This content analysis allows me to define what archival record of the Orioles exists, how the team was
presented in 1937 and 1938, as well as to consider what this record does (and what it does not) reveal to readers in the present.

1937 – The Orioles’ Standard Debut

According to the Sportsnet news article published in 2016, the St. Catharines Orioles were already playing together at the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) church when “Touch” Woods, a local trucking company owner, and Wally Walker, a florist and Lions Club member, became sponsors of the team in 1936 (Robson, 2016). That the team was formed of BME congregants is historically significant as the church has been an important institution in the lives of many black residents, as well as for fugitive slaves escaping to Canada via the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was a member of the BME church and operated a boarding house operated behind it that became an important centre of support and activity for fugitive slaves (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). Furthermore, many teammates were descendants of Adam Nicholson, escaped slave and prominent member of the black community in St. Catharines who arrived in Canada in the 1850s and attended the BME church with his family (D. Ford, personal communication, April 4, 2018; Robson, 2016).

The first mention of the team in the St. Catharines Standard occurs on February 16, 1937 when the paper announced that the Orioles entering contention in the Niagara District Hockey League (NDHL) under the sponsorship of H. G. “Touch” Woods and W. W. (Wally) Walker (“Colored Squad Enters League,” 1937, February 16; see Appendix A). The roster was made up of 16 players and three members of the team’s administration: George West (also team manager), Doug Nicholson, Gordon Dorsey, Art Wilkinson, Wilf Bell, Dick Nicholson, Jimmy Harper, Ed Smith, Amos Dorsey, Ken
Bell, Hope Nicholson (captain), Laverne Dorsey, “Chuck” Harper, Chester Smith, Ron Nicholson, Cern Lindon, Bobby Bell (mascot), Ben Walker (secretary-treasurer), and Alex Nicholson (business manager) (“Colored Squad Enters League,” 1937, February 16). The article notes that the Orioles were outfitted in orange and black jerseys and socks with TST (Toronto-St. Catharines Transport), the name of “Touch” Woods’ trucking company, stitched on the chest. A few days later on February 19, 1937, what has now become an iconic photograph of the Orioles team was published in the Standard with the caption: “Canada’s Only All-Colored Hockey Team – St. Kitts Orioles” (1937, February 19, p. 16; Figure 1). This image was also featured in Robson’s (2016) Sportsnet article and has been reported to have once hung in the Hockey Hall of Fame (D. Ford, personal communication, April 4, 2018). The addition of the team to the NDHL was documented the following day in sports writer Jimmy Whyte’s best performances of the week as he recognized “Harold G. ‘Touch’ Woods adding a little color [sic; emphasis
added] to the Niagara District Intermediate Hockey League” (Whyte, 1937, February 20, p. 12; see Appendix B).

The addition of the Orioles to the league was also announced in the *Globe and Mail*, where the Orioles are referred to as “the only all-colored puck brigade cavorting in the Province” (Munns, 1937, February 17, p. 17; Figure 2), and Woods and Walker are again noted for their outfitting of the team. Sports editor Tommy Munns (1937, February 17) facetiously writes “why didn’t they call ‘em the Black Birds?” (p. 17). Munns also specifically references team captain Hope Nicholson, stating that he is the “male member of Canada’s lone set of colored triplets” and that he is “one of the promising lightweight boxers in the St. Catharines mitt colony.” He also adds a racialized comment at the end of the article that states “no matter how proficient [Hope] becomes with the gloves no one will ever refer to him as a ‘white hope’” (Munns, 1937, February 17, p. 17). This is the only article referencing the Orioles in *The Globe and Mail* that was published in 1937.

The team played its first reported exhibition game against Weston’s Bread, from the St. Catharines Industrial League, on Saturday, February 27. Though they lost 10-6 and were deemed to “[need] practice and condition badly” (Browne, 1937, March 1, p.
10; Figure 3), the Orioles’ debut was called a “success” as they “were willing and
checked like fiends” (Whyte, 1937, March 2, p. 10; see Appendix C). This is one of the few
games that featured a full article in the Standard rather than a short paragraph in a daily column.

Jimmy Whyte provided a play-by-play record of all goals, suggesting that “lack of coaching and
of condition helped in [the Orioles’] downfall, as much as the good work of the Weston
squad” (Whyte, 1937, March 1, p. 11; see Appendix D). An account of this game also
made into the sports pages of the Toronto Daily

Star where it was reported that “the only
colored hockey team in Canada, the brightly
garbed St. Catharines Orioles” lost to the
Westons (“Colored Boys Lose,” 1937, March 1,
p. 9; Figure 4).

The next game was advertised for March 2 against the Thorold Arenas
(“Hockey-Thorold,” 1937, March 1; see Appendix E), though it was cancelled that
morning due to mild weather and a lack of ice at the rink (“On the Tapis,” 1937, March 2;
see Appendix F). Similar to other teams at the time, the Orioles sought to sign better
players to their roster. On March 4, 1937, it was reported that player and team manager
George “Ninny” West stated that the team was “undergoing a process of change and that
the management [was] signing more new players” in addition to trying to “coax ice on
their outdoor rink in the northeast end to get the benefit
of more and better practices” (Browne, 1937, March 4, p. 16; Figure 5). Browne (1937, March 4) also stated that the “the city public [were] keen to see [the Orioles’] first tussle” in the NDHL (p. 16). Unfortunately for all NDHL teams, the league was unable to adhere to their regulation schedule due to mild weather and delayed games and was removed from their spot in the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) playoffs for 1937 (Browne, 1937, March 6; Figure 6). That said, the Orioles came together on March 10, 1937 for a game against “a team composed of clever young stars from Thorold teams” and played at the Thorold arena (“Orioles Meet Thorold Team,” 1937, March 10, p. 12; see Appendix G). Though a large turnout was predicted, only a small crowd was reported and the Orioles were again defeated 9-2 (“Orioles Lose to Arena Squad,” March 11, 1937, p.14; see Appendix H).

According to the Standard, the Orioles finished their 1937 season with no regular season NDHL games played, and two losses in exhibition matches. Another source was brought to my attention by Donna Ford of the Central Ontario Network for Black History, and daughter of the late Orioles defenceman Richard “Dick” Nicholson. Ford had been in contact with a local historian who searched the Old Fulton...
New York Post Cards website, a digital newspaper repository, and found several entries from 1937 indicating that the Orioles had played more games than were reported by the Standard. All entries were published in the Niagara Falls Gazette, an American newspaper, on the Canadian News page and stories were indicated to have come from Niagara Falls, Ontario. On March 11, 1937, the St. Catharines Orioles were to play the Falls Cartage of the Falls Mercantile League (Figure 7). The article states that “the appearance of the Garden collection ‘duskies’ [created] considerable interest” (“Duskies vs. Falls,” 1937, March 11, p. 32) The following day, an article entitled “Duskies Defeated” ran in the Gazette, stating that the Orioles “still [had] a trick or two to learn before they [could] be classed as a competitive caliber” after being defeated 6-2 (“Duskies defeated,” 1937, March 12, p. 26; see Appendix I). The Orioles played another game on March 22 that was reported in the Gazette. This game announcement is of particular interest as it states that “two colored hockey teams, St. Catharines Orioles and the Falls Swallows will go through three regulation periods of puck chasing” (“Colored teams to play tonight,” 1937, March 22, p. 14; see Appendix J). This seems to indicate that, although the Orioles are frequently touted as Canada’s only all-black hockey team, there was potentially another active all-black team at the time: The Falls Swallows. This
is the first mention of another all-black hockey team in the Niagara region. Furthermore, the same article goes on to state that this game “will be played as part of the attractions of the Industrial league semi-final” (“Colored team to play tonight,” 1937, March 22, p. 14). This reveals that the game was considered to be more of a spectacle for Industrial league hockey fans than an actual competitive hockey game. On March 23, the post-game article states that “as far as the records disclose the first all-colored hockey game in the province was played at the Falls arena last evening” and that the Swallows won by a score of 4-3 (“Falls beats Orioles,” 1937, March 23, p. 18; Figure 8). A few days later on March 29, as a part of a larger hockey report, the Orioles would play the Swallows again “in their second game for the all-colored hockey championship of the district” (“Wires meet Cans,” 1937, March 29, p. 14; see Appendix K). On March 30, a newspaper article states that the Swallows and the Orioles tied 1-1 (Figure 9). The article also proclaims that this game “was billed for the colored hockey championship of the territory far and yon,” even though they were “alleged to be the only all-colored hockey teams in hockey” (“Swallows tie Orioles,” 1937, March 30, p. 12).

A news article entitled “Negro Puck Club: 16 Colored Lads on Team – All They Need is Ice” (Rowland, n.d.; see Appendix L) was also provided to me by Donna Ford, and it is referred to in Robson’s (2016) Sportsnet article, where it is said to have been...
published in the *Toronto Daily Star* (D. Ford, personal communication, April 4, 2018). However, I was unable to locate this article in digital archives and without key information such as a date and site of publication, it is extremely difficult and labour intensive to trace through microfilm without knowing where (or when) to begin searching. Furthermore, the caption below the third photograph included in the piece gives credit to “*The Star Weekly* cameraman” (Rowland, n.d.). This presents a problem in my research: while this article is literally in my hands, I am unable to source it properly or trace its origins as it was cut out of a newspaper and kept in a family scrapbook. It is clear that John Rowland was the author of the piece and that it appears to come from *The Star Weekly*, as mentioned in the article, but all other sourcing is assumed. I gather that the article is from 1937 as it seems to be showcasing the debut of the new Orioles team which occurred in February of 1937. Unfortunately, this is speculative as there is no concrete date associated with the article. Also associated with this article is a picture of Orioles defenceman, Laverne Dorsey, printed under the title “‘Some Day – Who Knows?’” (Turofsky, n.d.; see Appendix M). This photo came with the aforementioned article and, in the caption, notes that “photographs of other members of the team may be found in the Sports Section” (Turofsky, n.d.). A second copy of this picture was also found in a black history file of loose newspaper clippings in the St. Catharines Public Library along with an attached handwritten note that reads “Laverne Dorsey, Defenceman. St. C. Orioles hockey team, 1937.” Neither the caption below the photograph nor the Rowland (n.d.) article was included in the library’s files. According to Rowland (n.d.), the Orioles were “the most sponsored team in Canada.” He also writes that “Touch” Woods suggested a game be played between the St. Catharines Orioles and
an all-Chinese team in Montreal (Rowland, n.d.). I was unable to find other sources that confirmed whether or not such a game took place.

1938 – The Orioles’ Second Season

At the end of 1937, and the beginning of their second NDHL season, the Orioles came together for a game against a team called the Falls Ambassadors (Browne, 1937, December 9; Figure 10). The Ambassadors’ roster is listed as “three Smiths from the Falls, two more from Cayuga by that name, two Platos, Thompson, Ford and some others” (Browne, 1937, December 9, p. 18). On December 17, it is revealed that the Falls Ambassadors were “the only other all-colored squad in Ontario hockey circles” (“City Orioles are Organized,” 1937, December 17, p. 21; see Appendix N). The Orioles were again to be sponsored by “Touch” Woods and were searching for a rink to practice and play on. In addition to sponsor “Touch” Woods, president Reverend Ivan Moore, coach Watson Graves, and manager Benjamin Walker, the 15-man roster is listed as: goal, Wilfred Bell (secretary) and Art Wilkinson; defense, Dick Nicholson, Ron Nicholson, Chester Smith, and Doug Nicholson; centres, Amos Dorsey (treasurer) and Morris Dorsey; wings, Hope Nicholson (captain), Gordon Dorsey, Ken Bell, Laverne Dorsey, Jim Harper, George West, and Buddy Harper (“City Orioles are Organized,” 1937, December 17). Though rosters for both teams were mentioned, the Standard has no published result or record of any game between the Orioles and the Ambassadors taking place.
On January 4, 1938, the NDHL had organized and was looking for more entries.

At the time that this article was written, the intermediate league consisted of “Niagara, Port Weller, St. Davids, Jordan, Merritton, Thorold and St. Mary’s and Transports (colored) of [St. Catharines]” (“N.D.H.L. Now Has Organized,” 1938, January 4, p. 11; see Appendix O). This is the first indication that the Orioles may have changed their name. Further evidence is provided on January 10th when the team is referred to as “the St. Kitts (colored) Transports” who are “backed by “Touch” Woods” (“Hockey Opens Here Tonight,” 1938, January 10, p. 11; see Appendix P). The Transports played their first game in the NDHL against the Delco Barons on the evening of January 10th, 1938, where they lost 8-2 (“Barons Secure Opening Game, 1938, January 11; Browne, 1938, January 11; Figure 11). It becomes evident in the game’s review that the Orioles have changed their name to the Transports as the team is referred to as “the orange-black Truckers,” the two goals were scored by Amos Dorsey and Hope Nicholson, and the dressing roster for the game included Bell, H., R., and D. Nicholson, A., H., G., and M. Dorsey, and Smith, all of whom were listed in December 1937 as the Orioles (“Barons Secure Opening Game,” 1938, January 11, p. 11; see Appendix Q).

Also appearing on January 11th was the first half of the NDHL schedule that saw the Transports playing seven games between January 12th and February 2nd (“N.D.H.L. Ice Schedule List,” 1938, January 11; see Appendix R). The second league game for the Transports was to be played on January 12th against the Niagara Hornets, but an article published on the 14th states that the game had been postponed due to mild weather and
soft ice, and that the teams would play that evening (“Niagara Hornets to Tackle Transports,” 1938, January 14; see Appendix S). The Transports lost to the Hornets by a score of 5-1 (“Transports in Second Defeat,” 1938, January 15; see Appendix T). The unnamed author of the article misspelled all of the Nicholson’s surnames (“Nickolson”) throughout the article, and Laverne Dorsey was the only player referred to solely by his misspelled first name, “Leverne” (“Transports in Second Defeat,” 1938, January 15, p. 12). It is interesting to note that a player by the name of Flowers was in goal, though no other articles in the Standard list Flowers on a roster (“Transports in Second Defeat,” 1938, January 15). It is unclear as to whether or not Flowers was indeed signed onto the Transports roster, whether he was picked up by the team if they were in need of a goalie due to absences, or if there was another error in the article. The only other reference to Flowers goaltending is in an article in the Globe and Mail recounting a game in Grimsby on January 25, 1938 (“All-colored hockey team bows to Grimsby Midgets,” 1938, January 26).

The Transports would meet the Barons again on January 19, 1938. Though the author of this article is unknown, the Transports are recognized as the author writes that “city hockey fans who pass up the games at the box bowl [the Transports’ home rink] are missing plenty of action” and that “the players are due some patronage from the fact that they are giving everything for the pure love of the game” (“Barons-Transports Meet,” 1938, January 19, p. 12; Figure 12). Though the
author noted that the Transports played better than they had in their first game against the Barons, the Transports were defeated 6-0 (“Barons Blank Transports 6-0,” 1938, January 21; see Appendix U). An article in the Globe and Mail once again refers to the team as the Orioles as it reveals a game played between the Orioles and the Grimsby Midgets in Grimsby on January 25, 1938 (“All-colored hockey team bows to Grimsby Midgets,” 1938, January 26; see Appendix V). The Orioles were defeated 2-0, though they only travelled with one extra player compared to Grimsby’s six substitutes.

Mild weather struck again and it became necessary to revamp the NDHL schedule due to lack of ice on outdoor rinks (Browne, 1938, January 27; see Appendix W). A paragraph in Browne’s (1938, February 11) column states that the “St. Kitts colored Transport troopers are dismayed” as they were unable to keep outdoor ice for practice - all outdoor hockey leagues in the area were postponed as well” (p. 12; Figure 13). The Transports were booked to play a game in Guelph and one in Ottawa, though there are no articles in the Standard to indicate whether or not these games were played. On February 16, 1938, Browne noted that the NDHL had become so disrupted by mild weather and game cancellations that the league would be sending the Niagara Hornets to represent them in the OHA playoffs, as per league organizers Howard Swayze and Bob Douglas (Browne, 1938, February 16; see Appendix X).

The St. Catharines Orioles, or the Transports, as they were referred to in 1938, did not win a single game according to the St. Catharines Standard. What is evident
through the history of the Orioles however, is that they were often treated as more of a spectacle than as a competitive team and that they met racism in playing and reporting. In the next chapter I outline a historiography of the Orioles which is, in part, a summary of the historical writings on the team. A historiography is a critical examination of writings on the past, or the act of the writing of the history itself. As such, this chapter includes an examination of the ways that the articles about the Orioles were written in the Standard, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Daily Star, and the New York Gazette. I also draw on the framing of black individuals in two popular press history texts, The Sports History of St. Catharines (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City (Jackson & Wilson, 1992), to discuss how the Orioles (and other black hockey teams at this time) were racialized and pushed to the margins of hockey history.
Chapter 5: (Re)Understanding the Team – Analysing the Orioles’ History

The purpose of my research is not to stop at the (re)telling of the Orioles’ history that I traced out in the previous chapter. Rather, the purpose of my research is to conduct a historiography of the team, critically examining the sources that I have compiled and the ways that they are written by historians. In the first section of this chapter, I will be relying on newspaper articles dated between January 1937 and March 1938 that were published in the St. Catharines Standard, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Daily Star, and the Niagara Falls Gazette that allowed me to draw out a history of the Orioles as told through popular newspaper media (and presented in the previous chapter) to conduct the first part of my historiography. In the second section of this chapter, I will introduce two popular press historical texts that focus on St. Catharines and the sporting history in St. Catharines that will further support claims made through the first part of my historiography.

Through the research that I have conducted in newspaper archives and information that I have read in these historical texts, I will trouble the dominant narratives that are constructed around sport and Canadian national belonging. The following research questions framed my analysis:

- How have the St. Catharines Orioles have been represented and remembered/forgotten?
- What voices, perspectives, and identities are marginalized or silenced via hockey histories?
- How do historical discourses shape contemporary constructions of race and sport?
By using these questions to direct my research, I have been able to examine the place that the Orioles have occupied in the past and discuss how they, and other black hockey teams of the times, have been excluded.

**Erasure in Primary Newsprint Sources**

The St. Catharines Orioles periodically resurface through historic memory, though there is no easily accessible in-depth research readily available to the public. According to Dan Robson (2016), author of the latest *Sportsnet* article focusing on the Orioles, a reprinting of the 1937 photograph of the team first reappeared in the St Catharines Standard in the late 1970s. On March 27, 1991, an article was published claiming that Canada’s only all-black hockey team was based in St. Catharines (Gatecliff, 1991; see Appendix Y). The article presents the same photo from 1937, along with a short biography and interview with team captain Hope Nicholson. According to Gatecliff (1991), the photograph was to be hung in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, the Kingston Hockey Hall of Fame, and in Maple Leaf Gardens, though I am unable to confirm if the photograph ever made it to these walls. A feature in *MacLean’s* magazine in 2000 displayed the same photograph of the Orioles above a timeline of black hockey history (Ferguson, 2000). The article stated that the Orioles were an all-black hockey team competing in the Niagara District Hockey League in 1937, that they competed against all-white teams from St. Catharines, Guelph, and Niagara Falls, and that the team lasted for four years (Ferguson, 2000). In 2007, another article was published in the *Standard* titled “Hockey Club Endured Racism: St Catharines Orioles one of province’s first all-black hockey teams” (Schudlo, 2007, p. A3). Schudlo (2007) uses interviews with Donna Ford (daughter of the late player Richard Nicholson), player Gordon Dorsey,
and historian George Fosty as primary sources of information. Similarly, Robson (2016) also relies on interviews with Donna Ford as a primary source for his *Sportsnet* article. Though other articles may mention racism, the Schudlo (2007) and Robson (2016) pieces are the only ones that really seem to begin to address the institutionalized racism faced by the Orioles in both their competition and coverage.

In Schudlo’s (2007) article, Fosty states that the team was not taken seriously and that “journalists [dismissed] them as not being real hockey,” though Dorsey affirms that the team was serious about wanting to win (p. A3). Fosty also notes that “[journalists] would have seen [the Orioles] as a novelty, as entertainment, like a circus act” (as cited in Schudlo, 2007, p. A3). Robson (2016) echoes this as both he and Schudlo (2007) cite Rowland’s undated Toronto news article that refers to players as ‘colored boys’ and features such overtly racist lines as: “They may not get anywhere as pucksters, but the club suah has colah… yeah mam!” (Rowland, n.d.; Appendix L; as cited in Robson, 2016 and Schudlo, 2007, p. A3). Dorsey’s daughters add that players faced racism from the opposing teams as well as the journalists, noting that some teams refused to play against the Orioles at all (Schudlo, 2007). This may have contributed to the lack of reporting of the Orioles in the *Standard* in 1937 and 1938: if teams refused to play against the Orioles because they were black, it would not be unrealistic for reporters to refuse to cover their games for the same reason. Nearly all the articles featuring the Orioles/Transports in the *Standard*, and all found in the *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Globe and Mail*, explicitly referred to the team as “colored,” beginning with the reporting of the Orioles as “adding a little color to the Niagara District Intermediate Hockey League” (Whyte, 1937, February 20, p. 12; see Appendix B). Articles in the *Niagara Falls Gazette*
not only referred to the team as “colored,” but also repeatedly referred to them by the pejorative term “duskeys” (“Duskeys defeated,” 1937, March 12; “Duskeys vs. Falls,” 1937, March 11).

The debut article in the Standard also states that the Orioles would “create additional interest wherever they [played]” (“Colored Squad Enters League,” 1937, February 16, p. 10; see Appendix A), likely solely because they were an all-black team. The type of interest that was garnered, however, was more for racialized theatrical display than for hockey skill. Large audiences were often anticipated by reporters, but it was usually reported in the post-game review that turnouts were much smaller than expected and that the Orioles drew only small crowds to games (Browne, 1937, March 1; Browne, 1937, March 4; “St. Kitts Orioles Meet Thorold Team Tonight, 1937, March 10; “Niagara Hornets to Tackle Transports,” 1938, January 14; “Orioles Lose to Arena Squad,” 1937, March 11). Reporters did not frame the Orioles as a team that delivered high caliber hockey that may have attracted a larger audience – they were described more for comedic entertainment than for athletic prowess. This is comparable to the racist news coverage of the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes that operated from 1895-1925. League games were covered by the Acadian Recorder and the Halifax Herald newspapers, among others, and articles often emphasized the novelty and humour of seeing two all-black league teams go head to head in theatrical displays (Fosty & Fosty, 2004).

Rather than being lauded for exceptional play or brilliant displays of hockey, the Orioles were framed as ‘doing their best’ against superior white athletes and playing to put on a spectacle rather than compete legitimately in games. One article states that
Orioles player “‘Ninny’ West was a whole show in himself, the original racer on skates” and refers to their upcoming first official NDHL game as the team’s “first act” (Browne, 1937, March 1, p. 10). This framing of the team as a source of comedic entertainment echoes the popular blackface minstrel shows that were common sources of entertainment in the 1930s in St. Catharines and the Niagara area (“Minstrel Show,” 1937, February 1; “Minstrel Show,” 1937, April 6); “Minstrel Show Held at St. David’s,” 1937, March 12; “The Cast of St. George’s Minstrel Show,” 1937, April 17). Minstrel shows, most commonly performed by whites dressed in elaborate costumes with painted black faces, served to provide racist humour to white audiences by mocking black people in a pejorative way, as well as to convert black cultural expropriation into what was viewed as ‘innocent’ white entertainment (Womack, 2012). That the Orioles may have been positioned as a site to draw humour through their gameplay likens them to these minstrel shows and the ridicule and marvel found therein by white audiences.¹ Minstrel shows also served to reaffirm the place of the white male in society: by accentuating black (as well as gendered) stereotypes, white males were reassured that they were neither black nor slaves and therefore would deem themselves superior (Wellman, 1997). This concept of innate white superiority was drawn through the Standard as reporters consistently reaffirmed that white teams were inherently better and often seemed as if they were expecting the Orioles to play poorly. This is evident in Whyte’s (1937, March 1) statement that the Orioles “turned in a surprisingly good performance” (p. 11; see Appendix C) after their first game ever. Whyte adds that “several of the Orioles displayed

¹ It should also be noted that Orioles players may have understood themselves to be entertainers as well as hockey players, as this may have afforded them different opportunities for safety, access to further sponsorship, or for invitations to play other teams, which they may have used to keep their team playing.
a lack of acquaintance with the sticks they were carrying,” and their “rugged attempts to
carry the battle to the flying bakers [(the Weston’s Bread team)] provided many laughs
for the crowd” (Whyte, 1937, March 1, p. 11). Though the crowd was full for this
exhibition debut, the article mocks the team and highlights amusement that came from
the game while affirming that the white Weston’s squad was indefinitely better. The
black Orioles simultaneously became both an object of ridicule and a means to reassure
white fans that their white athletes were superior, similar to the role that minstrel shows
served in the late 18 and early 1900s (Wellman, 1997).

The team is further flouted when *Globe and Mail* reporter Tommy Munns
rhetorically asks why the team was called the Orioles instead of the Black Birds (Munns,
1937, February 17). Munns continues this xenophobic framing of the Orioles as he
chooses to use words that evoke a comedic response within white audiences, such as
referring to the hockey team as “the only all-colored puck brigade cavorting in the
province” or to their uniforms as “gorgeous orange and black toggery… which would
delight the eye of Octavus Roy Cohen” (Munns, 1937, February 17, p. 17). The use of
“cavorting” denotes a frantic excitement that emphasizes disorganization and likens the
team more to animals or young children than to athletes. Similarly, “toggery” is a
synonym for clothing that is usually used to express humour or informality. Choosing to
write that the players are dressed in toggery rather than in jerseys or sweaters is indicative
of more attempts to frame the Orioles as a facetious team rather than serious competition.

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2American author Octavus Roy Cohen is famous for his detective tales, particularly those
of Florian Slappey, one of the first fictional black detectives. The short stories, and later
blackface adaptations, were paramount examples of racist caricatures and coloured
prejudice that saw Florian Slappey as a foolish, bumbling detective who lacked any sort
of skill and spoke with extremely exaggerated black dialect at the amusement of white
audiences (Smith, n.d.)
After completing my research in the *St. Catharines Standard* archives, it is evident that the overlooking of the Orioles in the past has undoubtedly resulted in misunderstandings of the team in the present. For instance, the general consensus in the historical present is that the Orioles played for ‘a few years’ beginning in 1937, yet there is no clear time when the team disbanded and estimates seem to range from two to five years. That there is such a range in the amount of time that the Orioles played together, it is evident that in-depth archival research on the Orioles has not been conducted prior to my study. This is also apparent in my surprise when I learned that the Orioles had changed their name to the Transports in 1938 (‘N.D.H.L. now has organized,’ 1938, January 4; see Appendix O). In speaking with Donna Ford and analysing more recent sources, it appears as though this was not commonly known. Even Ford had never heard of the Transports and was very interested in the article that I shared with her (D. Ford, personal communication, April 4, 2018). This may also provide a reason as to why researchers are lacking information in the present – if historians have neglected to include the team’s name change, searching for the Orioles when they were called the Transports will be futile. With this new piece of information, researchers may expand the search for the Orioles to include a search for the Transports which may yield more information. That the name change has not previously been noted by hockey historians is also indicative of the historic erasure of the Orioles. While this information was not hidden in the *Standard* nor removed from the archives, the fact that it has not been found or shared indicates that historians have not looked closely enough to the archives to uncover more information about the team. Little attention has been paid to the details of the Orioles beyond knowing that they played in 1937 and for an undisclosed number of years after
that, and this greatly contributes to our (mis)understandings of the team today. There may be more information on the Orioles (or the Transports) available in the Standard archives and beyond and, though this is outside the scope of my Master’s research, this would be a fundamental place to continue researching the history of the team and expanding our knowledge of the history of black athletes in Canada.

It is also interesting to note the appearance of The Falls Swallows and the Falls Ambassadors in the archives (“Colored teams to play tonight,” 1937, March 22; “Falls beats Orioles,” 1937, March 23; “Wires meet Cans,” 1937, March 29; “Swallows tie Orioles,” 1937, March 30; Browne, 1937, December 9; “City Orioles are Organized,” 1937, December 17). It seems that there were two other all-black teams playing in the area at the same time as the Orioles. Historically, this is a significant find, particularly as the Orioles are consistently referred to as the first or only all-black hockey team in Ontario or Canada. As the Ambassadors and Swallows are described as all-colored teams as well, the frequent reporting of the Orioles as the first and only all-black team is not accurate. This exclusion of the two Niagara Falls teams from the historical record is a prime example of racial erasure: due to institutional racism that kept media coverage of black citizens to a minimum, two entire teams of black athletes have been overlooked in research and do not appear in the historical present.

Many questions are raised by the uncovering of articles in the St. Catharines Standard and the Niagara Falls Gazette that discuss the Falls Ambassadors and the Falls Swallows. The Falls Ambassadors first appear in the Standard on December 9, 1937, just prior to the beginning of the 1938 NDHL season. The article itself is rather unclearly worded as it is announced that “the colored hockey squad that Touch Woods outfitted last
winter” was “at it again, only in the Falls and carry the heavy name of Ambassadors” (Browne, 1937, December 9, p. 18). At first read, I was under the impression that the Orioles had changed their name from the Orioles to the Ambassadors, but this was not the case as the next article about the teams listed the names of the Ambassadors’ players. The Orioles remain unnamed and the Ambassadors’ roster is listed in the article only as: “three Smiths from the Falls, two more from Cayuga by that name, two Platos, Thompson, Ford and some others” (Browne, 1937, December 9, p. 18). Not only is the roster incomplete, but Browne listed no first names or any further details about the team.

The final line of the article states: “whether they need Ninny Cooper as manager is a question mark” (Browne, 1937, December 9, p. 18). It is unclear who Ninny Cooper is and what relevance this would have on either the Orioles’ or the Ambassadors’ playing abilities, though the way that it is used seems to indicate that it could potentially be included as an insult directed at either or both teams as a question of whether or not either team will be successful without him.

A subsequent article published on December 17 announced that the Orioles had again come together as a team, that “Touch” Woods would be sponsoring them once more, and that they were to play “against the Falls Ambassadors, the only other all-colored squad in Ontario hockey circles” (“City Orioles Organized,” 1937, December 17, p. 21). In contrast to the partial list of surnames that formed the Ambassadors’ roster, the Orioles full squad is listed, along with their sponsor and team administration. This is the first time that the Orioles are referred to as “the Garden City’s [(St. Catharines’)] only colored hockey unit” rather than Canada’s only all-colored hockey team, after it was made clear that the Orioles were not the only colored team in the area. Though it was
announced that the Orioles and the Ambassadors were to play against each other, there are no other articles in the *Standard* to confirm whether or not this game was ever played. Less than a month later, the Orioles would be referred to in the *Standard* as the Transports, which they would be called for the remainder of the 1938 season. There is no *Standard* record of the Transports meeting the Ambassadors either, nor is there evidence of the Ambassadors playing in another league that was covered by the *Standard*. The Ambassadors are clearly another victim of historic erasure and exclusion leading to historic non-remembering.

Though the Ambassadors was the first all-black hockey team other than the Orioles that I was able to find in the *Standard*, the *Niagara Falls Gazette* based out of Niagara Falls, New York, reports two games played in March 1937 between the St. Catharines Orioles and the Falls Swallows, yet another all-black team overlooked by historians. All of the articles found in the *Niagara Falls Gazette* were shrouded in racism as the games between the Orioles and white or black teams were framed as spectacles rather than legitimate competitions. The first game, between the Orioles and the Falls Cartage (part of the Falls Mercantile League), referred to the Orioles as “the Garden collection ‘duskies’” and it is stated that they were generating considerable interest “as part of the Mercantile program” that would feature two games that evening (“Duskies vs. Falls,” 1937, March 11, p. 32). The article published the following day again refers to the Orioles as the ‘Duskies,’ and their 6-2 loss is chronicled, with the reporter stating that the Orioles “still have a thing or two to learn before they can be classified as a competitive caliber” and that “the Cartage had no trouble disposing of [them]” (“Duskies Defeated,” 1937, March 12, p. 26; see Appendix I). The Orioles were not only beaten, they were
“disposed of,” and their playing ability is not even considered to be competitive, even though 6-2 is not an unreasonable hockey score. Many all-white teams of the time posted similar scores, or scores with a larger differential, though no reporters called their competitive abilities into question.

The first game between the Orioles and the Falls Swallows was to be “played as part of the attractions of the Industrial league semi-final” (“Colored teams to play tonight,” 1937, March 22, p. 14; see Appendix J). Even though the event was “thought to be the first of its kind in the Dominion” (“Colored teams to play tonight,” 1937, March 22, p. 14), it was framed as a sideshow attraction that was played as a part of a larger legitimate league semi-final. In the reporting of the score the following day, it was reaffirmed that this game was thought to be “the first all-colored hockey game in the province” (“Falls beat Orioles,” 1937, March 23, p. 18). The Falls won the game 4-3, but no details are provided on how the game played out aside from the reporter noting that the Orioles lost only after putting up “a stubborn battle” (“Falls beats Orioles,” 1937, March 23, p. 18). Neither the Orioles nor the Swallows are lauded for good play or criticized for poor play. In contrast to games played between white teams in the same newspaper that garnered long summaries of the games, articles featuring the Orioles are, at their longest, merely short paragraphs or part of a larger report. After a longer paragraph about the Industrial League semi-finals, a final sentence states that the Orioles would play the Swallows a second time after another league semi-final game, this time for “the all-colored hockey championship of the district” (“Wires meet Cans,” 1937, March 29, p. 14; Appendix K). This is the first mention of an all-colored championship in any news articles or other literature that I have read, and it is added to the bottom of an
article as an afterthought. As there were no articles discussing this all-colored championship, it is possible that the game was referred to in that way as a mockery, especially as it failed to garner legitimate coverage in comparison to other games between all-white teams that featured large headlines and multiple pregame and follow-up articles. It also raises the question: if there was an all-colored championship, were there more black teams that played in the area than those which were reported in the *Standard* or the *Gazette*? The article published on the following day would read that the Swallows and Orioles were “alleged to be the only all-colored teams in hockey” (“Swallows tie Orioles,” 1937, March 30, p. 12). As the *Standard* announced the Orioles as “Canada’s only all-colored hockey team” (1937, February 19, p. 16), in spite of evidence suggesting that the Swallows and Ambassadors played in the same year and neglecting to include that the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes ran from 1895-1925 in Nova Scotia, it is very possible that there were more active all-black hockey teams playing not only across Canada, but locally as well. That said, the game between the Swallows and the Orioles was tied 1-1, and “the game was billed for the colored hockey championship of the territory far and yon,” according to the *Gazette* (“Swallows tie Orioles,” 1937, March 30, p. 12). In searching the Fulton County archives for the Orioles and for the Transports, I was unable to find any additional articles outside of these six.

Insofar as I have researched, it seems as if the Orioles were the only one of the three local black hockey teams that had sponsorship, particularly sponsorship from a prominent white man of the time. Rowland (n.d.) goes so far as to state that the Orioles

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3 In 1937, Harold G. “Touch” Woods was the owner of the Toronto-St Catharines Transport (TST) trucking company, president of the St. Catharines Minor Baseball Association (“Monk Morden is Acquisition,” 1936, December 23), manager of the St.
were “the most sponsored team in Canada” (see Appendix L) after recognizing Toronto-St. Catharines Transport owner “Touch” Woods and St. Catharines Lions’ Club member Wally Walker as their sponsors. The first article published about the team states that the Orioles are “enabled to compete through the courtesy of two sportsmen of the city” (“Colored Squad Enters League,” 1937, February 16, p. 10). References to “the generosity of ‘Touch’ Woods and ‘Wally’ Walker” (“Canada’s Only All-Colored Hockey Team,” February 19, p. 16) are very common, and the team’s existence is attributed to its sponsors (Browne, 1937, December 9; “City Orioles are Organized,” 1937, December 17; Rowland, n.d.). Even after the announcement of the NDHL’s folding in March 1937, the Orioles are the only team that is specifically referenced as Browne (1937, March 6) asks how the “St. Kitts Orioles [are] going to show their wares and orange-black uniforms that Touch Woods and Wally Walker of the Lions bought” (p. 12).

Compared to articles focused on white sports teams that only occasionally referenced sponsors, the Orioles sponsorship was referred to multiple times as their white sponsors were brought to the forefront of their reporting. According to Ford (D. Ford, personal communication, April 18, 2018) and Robson (2016), the players that would become a part of the Orioles had already been playing together when they were approached with sponsorship. The Standard frames the formation of the Orioles such that it seems they exist by virtue of white men, echoing the concept of the ‘white saviour’ that emphasizes a reliance on white men throughout history. Interestingly, none of the references to the Falls Ambassadors or the Falls Swallows mentioned sponsorship from Catharines Grads, a popular men’s basketball team in the prominent “Big Seven” league featuring competitive teams between St. Catharines and Toronto (Browne, 1937, January 13), and the Canadian Boxing Commissioner for the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) (1937, February 8, p. 10).
anyone. As such an emphasis had been placed on the ‘graciousness’ of white sponsors of
the Orioles ‘allowing’ them to play competitively, one can infer that the lack of sponsor
recognition in Ambassadors and Swallows articles means that they had no sponsorship (at
least from white sponsors). Reporting on the Orioles in the Standard was thus portrayed
as less of a sports review and more of an ad for Woods’ and Walker’s companies. Having
prominent white sponsors meant that, by focusing on the Orioles and their sponsorship,
the role of the ‘white saviour’ would be furthered in mainstream media thus intensifying
the image of black reliance on white charity under the guise of sport.

When it came to conducting my research and finding out as much as I could
about the Orioles, Donna Ford was the source of much of the information that I was able
to gather beyond the St. Catharines Standard. Ford had also been contacted and featured
in articles by journalists Gatecliff (1991), Schudlo (2007), and Robson (2016), and had
met with other local historians over the years to discuss findings and compare notes (D.
Ford, personal communication, April 4, 2018). As such, the information shared in the
news articles over the last few decades has been much of the same information simply
resurfacing in a different year by a different author. The sources and full interviews that
have been conducted by journalists with former players or their ancestors who have since
deceased are not readily available and, consequently, the only remaining accessible
information is that which has been openly published. There are no Orioles players alive
today that have any memory of the team’s existence, and most of the collected
information that exists to carry it into the future lies in a manila folder in Donna Ford’s
living room or scattered through various public library files. Using the Orioles as an
example, and perhaps more so the coverage of the Ambassadors and the Swallows, it is
evident that the restricting of the black sporting body to the margins of written history has resulted in its erasure. By neglecting to examine and record histories like these, these teams and their histories are effectively removed from the past as they become exceedingly difficult to find, discuss, and understand in the present and future. As people who were a part of the team, their children, and their memories pass away, historians’ abilities to recount what happened becomes more and more myopic until small pieces of information seem to appear more as afterthoughts than as their own stories. This is demonstrated on a broader scale in the secondary pieces of literature that I have chosen to focus on in the second part of my research as they lack not only the presence of the Orioles, but also of the contributions of black citizens to the history of St. Catharines as a whole.

**Erasure in Secondary Historic Sources**

*The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb & Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992) are two popular press history books that showcase the history of St. Catharines. At the time of the publication of *The Sports History of St. Catharines*, sports editor Jack Gatecliff wrote that this book “is, indeed, required reading for all St. Catharines sports followers” (McNabb & Meighan, 1969, foreword), and emphasized that, to his knowledge, no other city had produced a popular press book of sports history. Mayor Mackenzie Chown proclaimed that “sports [had] always been an essential part of community life in St. Catharines” (McNabb & Meighan, 1969, letter), bringing honour to the city and enjoyment to its citizens. Yet this book only features photographs and names of five black athletes with no discussion of their sporting achievements or further acknowledgement of contributions
from black athletes. A photo of profiles of the 1951 Ontario Senior B Softball Champions, the Thompson Products Chiefs, includes profile photos of Leslie Bell (pitcher) and George Bell (centre field) who are pictured with their teammates. Sunny Hicks is pictured with his baseball team, the St. Catharines Stags, as the Niagara District Sr. A Champions in 1950. Sheila Flowers is pictured holding a trophy with white male Jerry Hinton, the two having been named Outstanding Civilian Athletes of 1967. There is no mention in the text of what is required in being an Outstanding Civilian Athlete, nor what sport(s) the winners were involved in. Finally, O. Summers (no first name provided) is pictured with the Alert Athletic Club hockey team after being awarded champions of the Niagara District Hockey League in 1921-1922 (McNabb & Meighan, 1969). Aside from the names of players, it is unclear how long each athlete played their respective sports as no other details are provided. Though there are many features that focus on individual athletes, teams, or other members of the athletic community, black individuals are overwhelmingly excluded from the text as four of 186 pages contain photos of black athletes.

The omission of black athletes from popular press history texts is continued in St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City (Jackson & Wilson, 1992). In 374 pages of history, there are nine references to black contributions to St. Catharines. Though some references are longer compared to others, the half-page column on the Underground Railroad and accompanying picture of Harriet Tubman is the most, yet still vaguely, detailed. The segment defines the community as a “‘coloured’ population” that lived in the Geneva and North Street area in 1853, noting that although the community was not considered to be a ghetto, it was still physically and socially separated from the white population. An 1853
description of what was then referred to as the “‘negro village’ [states] that it was neither a swamp nor a mud hole, but in a respectable part of the growing town where property was valuable” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p 48). During the 1850s, when the population of the community grew most rapidly, white citizens of St. Catharines are said to have “had genuine compassion for their plight” and are credited for being “helpful and charitable” before it being noted that black residents were considered to be inferior and had limits “placed on their belonging in the community” as they had previously been slaves (Jackson & Wilson, p. 48). The text gives no further details on what exactly these “limits on belonging” entailed. Rather, authors provide an excerpt from American abolitionist Benjamin Drew’s interviews with slaves in 1856 that takes away from prejudices and presents a flamboyant description of St. Catharines as “Refuge! Refuge for the oppressed! Refuge for Americans escaping from abuse and cruel bondage in their native land!... Refuge and rest!” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 48). Realities of racism in St. Catharines are dismissed, and the image of Canada as a Promised Land is spread. The perception of the white population as charitable, compassionate, and blameless is fostered as they are framed as faultless: even though the authors make note that black citizens were thought to be inferior and limited in their belonging, there is no direct responsibility placed on the white community for such restrictions. This lack of white accountability is woven through the text, as is a general glossing over of St. Catharines’ black history which is seemingly added in as an afterthought lacking depth and further examination.

The first reference to the black community in St. Catharines states that Dick’s Creek in St. Catharines was named after Richard Pierpoint, “described as a ‘Negro’ on the Muster Roll of the Butler’s Rangers” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 19-20). The
reference is two sentences long and is injected in a five-paragraph section about the first settlers in the region, which emphasizes contributions from the Butler’s Rangers and early comings of other settlers to the area. The next few sections outline pioneer life, including a segment focusing on experiences and skills of pioneers. The section includes American Loyalist pioneers who were farmers, merchants, and craftsman, and settlers of English, Scottish, German, French, and Dutch heritage. The final paragraph in the section states that “immigrants were allowed to bring their black slaves, and some free black men were also accommodated on the land” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 21). No detail surrounding the skills of those free blacks that came to the region are noted. Focus is shifted instead to the act of 1793 that banned the importation of slaves to Canada and to the forming of the Colored Corps in the war of 1812. This paragraph is the only mention of the Colored Corp’s involvement in the War of 1812 – though there are four pages that discuss the War later on in the text, no further discussion of the formation or contributions of the Colored Corps are noted, and no discussion of racism or prejudice is given.

Another quick reference to black history is found in a section subtitled “Irish Canal Builders” that features a rough 1851 census breakdown noting Irish, British, American, and Canadian-born citizens. The paragraph mentions that “there was also a Black [sic] population” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 45). There are no further details given regarding the size of the black population, their heritage breakdown, or their religion, all of which are provided in discussions of white immigrant settlers. A similar mention occurs in reference to the growth of St. Catharines as a shipbuilding centre in the 1800s, where it is noted that some of the growth could be attributed to “the availability of
a skilled labour force that included Black carpenters” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 56).

The BME and Zion Baptist Churches, both established as part of the black community, are featured in a paragraph in the “Early Churches” section of the text, followed closely by a short paragraph discussing segregated schools and prejudices therein. A social register listing in 1856 included many industrial professionals, as well as the overt mentioning of one black individual, as the paragraph reads: “mechanics were listed, and among many others was John Lindsay of the ‘Colored Town’” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 78). It is unclear why Lindsay was the only person mentioned by name, or if the “many others” referred to were also people of colour but, by solely mentioning Lindsay and specifying that he is from the “Colored Town,” he is further segregated.

Aside from the piece on the Underground Railroad, the largest section of information on the experience of the black community in St. Catharines is a short, half page-length discussion of examples of discrimination and school segregation found in the section titled “Old and New Immigrants” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 180-181). An extremely brief mention of the Black community being located on Geneva and North street appears in a larger discussion of what the authors refer to as different “ethnic clusters” and “foreign quarters” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 188). In a 19-page chapter entitled “Social Activities, Leisure, and Recreation,” there is no mention of black athletes or their participation in any physical or social activity. There is also no mention of a black population in St. Catharines beyond the 1900s – the last 160 pages of the text are devoted to the 20th century, but there is no reference to any people of colour at all.

Each of these books’ authors have referred to their own works as key texts: The *Sports History of St. Catharines* is referred to as “required reading for all St. Catharines
sports followers” (McNabb & Meighan, 1969, foreword), and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* is touted as “the most comprehensive heritage account ever published of the St. Catharines region” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, dust jacket). What both texts indicate, however, is that the black body has been excluded from this “comprehensive” body of literature. References to black individuals are few and far between. Even then, when they are the focus of the text, the spotlight is still shifted to whites. In a discussion of early black settlement in St. Catharines, it is noted that “William Hamilton Merritt and Oliver Phelps had ca. 1835 provided this group with a generous gift of land on which to live” (Jackson & Wilson, 1992, p. 47). Though the segment focuses on black history, the reference to the “generous gift” from a few white men serves to disempower the black community and reinforce ideals of the ‘white saviour’ that emphasize a black reliance on white gifts and charity. This is strikingly similar to the way that reporters in 1937 and 1938 frame the Orioles as if they exist solely by virtue of their white sponsors, H. G. “Touch” Woods and Wally Walker, echoing the concept of the ‘white saviour’ that emphasizes a reliance on white men that resounds throughout history.

The two St. Catharines’ historical texts, one offering a general history of the “canal city” and the other focusing on sport, play an important role in encouraging particular interactions with the past. Each of these texts and their histories produces an understanding of the past that continues to diminish contributions and dismiss lives of black citizens. Historiography teaches us that the act of writing history is one that needs to be carefully examined as it conveys specific messages to serve different people at particular points in time. Tracing the history of the Orioles has revealed that black Canadians have been largely ignored in majoritarian historical narratives within and
beyond the realm of sport, and that this erasure has impacted historical thinking in the present in order to preserve white privilege. In the last chapter, I conclude by summarizing the major findings of my research, reflecting on my own learning, and commenting about future work that remains to be done.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

“Who controls the past... controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”

- George Orwell

This research study on the St. Catharines Orioles is about more than merely telling the story of a team of black hockey players in the 1930s: it is about considering how sport historians and others have organized the past such that black athletes are erased from the Canadian national narrative. By working to uncover that which has been ignored in the past, scholars can fill in gaps in whitewashed histories and seek to combat active non-remembering that preserves whiteness through exclusion. This final concluding chapter does not bring the story of the St. Catharines Orioles to a close. On the contrary, I seek to summarize my research findings in the newspaper archives and secondary sources, reflect on what I have learned throughout this process, and suggest future work that remains to be done through a final return to the research questions that guided my study.

By (re)telling the story of the Orioles, my research presents a detailed account of the hold that white supremacy has had on our understanding of history and highlights ways that this plays a key role in creating and preserving racial inequalities in the present. My work leaves no doubt that racism played a paramount role in the way that the team was (and was not) reported and the legacy that this has left in the pages of St. Catharines’ sporting history. The research indicates that the Orioles’ debut in the St. Catharines Standard began with their roster announcement on February 16, 1937 (“Colored Squad Enters League,” 1937, February 16) and was quickly followed by the publishing of a team photograph three days later on February 19 (“Canada’s Only All-Colored Hockey
The team would garner some attention over the rest of the season and, though they did not play any official Niagara District Hockey League (NDHL) games in 1937 due to mild weather, the *St. Catharines Standard* and the *Niagara Falls Gazette* reported five games: four losses and one tie (Browne, 1937, March 1; “Orioles Meet Thorold Team,” 1937, March 10; “Duskie vs. Falls,” 1937, March 11; “Colored Teams to Play Tonight,” 1937, March 22; “Swallows Tie Orioles,” 1937, March 30). The 1938 season saw the reforming and renaming of the team to the Transports who, according to the *Standard*, played and lost three league and one confirmed exhibition game (Browne, 1928, January 11; “Transports in Second Defeat,” 1928, January 15; “Barons-Transports Meet,” 1938, January 19; “All-Colored Hockey Team Bows to Grimsby Midgets,” 1938, January 16). This in itself is another important finding in my research: not only were the Orioles underreported, but the reference to the team as the Transports in 1938 is not mentioned in the present at all. Due to the lack of reporting on the Orioles in the *Standard*, it is quite possible that the Orioles played many more games than those that were recorded therein. This underreporting laid the groundwork for historic erasure in the present as it became easier, the further away from 1937 that it was, to forget that which was already being excluded.

Another key finding of my research lies beyond the Orioles in the games that were not covered in the media that I studied. The *Standard* reports that the Orioles were to play two exhibition games at the end of 1937, one against an all-Chinese team from Montreal and another against the Falls Ambassadors (Rowland, n.d.; Browne, 1937, December 9), and two more at the end of the season in March 1938, one in Guelph and another in Ottawa (Browne, 1938, February 11). These games were announced, but there
is no confirmation in the *Standard* that indicates whether or not the games were played. That the Orioles changed their name to the Transports, there were reports of two other all-black hockey teams playing in the Niagara region at the same time, and that there was an all-Chinese team in Montreal are all incredibly important findings of my research. That these teams are not commonly known is indicative of historic erasure as their names and stories have not been carried into the present. Though the story of the Orioles has been underreported in the present, the Falls Ambassadors, Falls Swallows, and the unnamed all-Chinese team from Montreal have remained totally unreported in recent history. Historic racial erasure has pushed these teams out of current history of sport entirely.

As illustrated in Chapter Five, the ways in which journalists wrote articles about the Orioles reflects the way that race was articulated in 1937 and 1938, thus impacting our understanding of race and sport in the present. By presenting the Orioles as a team that ‘barely played competitive hockey’ and was consistently bested by ‘superior white athletes,’ the Orioles and the black community of St. Catharines were subtly (and sometimes blatantly) ridiculed and pushed to the margins. Likening the team to entertainment garnered from minstrel shows and consistently referring to the team as the ‘colored squad’ or ‘the duskies’ racializes the Orioles and emphasizes racial prejudices faced by the team and the black community as a whole. A further repetitive stressing of the importance of “Touch” Woods and Wally Walker to the Orioles insinuates that, without the financial support of two prominent white men, the team would have been unable to play. This perpetuates the role of the ‘white saviour’ that reinforces the role of white men who “allowed” people of colour to participate in sport and furthered the idea
of white charity in media coverage. My research highlights how the media played a dominant role in reflecting, producing, and preserving racial discrimination, and joins other researchers who seek to challenge ways that Canadians have, historically, considered themselves to be part of a nation that is (more or less) free of racial prejudices.

Two other local historical sources, *The Sports History of St. Catharines* (McNabb and Meighan, 1969) and *St. Catharines: Canada’s Canal City* (Jackson & Wilson, 1992), were each published within the last 50 years and reflect the ghettoization of black athletes and citizens in their notable omission from the pages of these popular press history texts. In a collective 560 pages between the two texts, there are only 14 references to black residents of St. Catharines. This exclusion of black citizens from history echoes the omittance of the Orioles from the *St. Catharines Standard* on a broader historical scale, providing firsthand evidence of the erasure of the contributions of the black community from the annals of history in St. Catharines.

Historical work is challenging. Historical work that focuses on a population that has been marginalized and erased from the past is even more onerous. The framing of non-white individuals throughout history as it has been written by white scholars has resulted in the furthering of racist stereotypes that serve to frame non-whites as inferior or uncivilized. Recently, organizations such as *National Geographic* have begun to acknowledge their racist past and consider their historic othering and framing of non-whites as “savages” through perpetuating a dualistic “us-them” and “civilized-uncivilized” mentality (Goldberg, 2018). In a Canadian context, *Canadian Geographic* has subsequently launched an investigation to examine the back issues of their publication for “examples of racist portrayals of minorities” in articles and images.
(Mussa, 2018). The framing of minorities as uncivilized throughout history has resulted in a lack of reporting of black Canadians as making valid contributions to, or even actively participating in, local history. Consequently, we see an overlooking and underrepresentation of black Canadians in historic sources. This became very clear to me in my research in the Standard as non-white individuals were often omitted entirely, included as criminals (“Confessed Negro Killer to Chair,” 1937, February 11; “Murder Suspect,” 1937, January 15; “Negro Given Jail with 10 Lashes,” 1937, March 15), or racialized as comic strip stereotypes (“Circus Proprietor,” 1937, December 18; Stanley, 1937, October 12; Stanley, 1938; January 31). Historical work on black Canadians reveals this derogative framing by white reporters and historians that must be acknowledged in the present, lest we continue to invalidate non-white populations through denying a racism that has formed the backbone of major popular historic media in the present.

Through the archival work that I have completed in the newspaper archives and the Brock and the St. Catharines Public Libraries, as well as the leads that I followed after speaking with Donna Ford, I have gained an unprecedented appreciation for properly citing and sourcing information. In my research, I came across countless articles or information in articles that I could not trace to a source. The Rowland (n.d.) article for instance, is one that may come from the Toronto Star, as hand-written on Ford’s copy of the article. There is no date associated with the article and it does not come up in a digital archive search so, while I can physically hold a copy of the article in my hands, I am unable to determine where it was first published or find it again. Some of the printouts of webpages that I found either in the library archives or in Ford’s folder have since expired
and, though I have a printout of the webpage and the name of the web link, I am unable to access it currently or prove if it ever existed at all. A significant amount of time searching outside of the *St. Catharines Standard* was dedicated to verifying sources, finding their origins, and determining their validity. The articles from the *Niagara Falls Gazette*, for instance, were first brought to my attention through a printout of an email exchanged between Donna Ford and another historian. After days of searching the internet and hours of following different links, I was finally able to access a website that provided full access to PDF pages of the *Gazette* and many other newspapers. I was able to download one page at a time and, without page numbers in the email, was left to guess at where the articles that I was looking for appeared. Though I found all of the articles that I was looking for, there may be more in other locations that I have not come across yet.

Researching the Orioles and comparing what I found in the archives to what is known in the present has reinforced that the way history has (not) been written can have a huge impact on our understanding of history in the present. Though I came to this project with the understanding that ‘the past’ as it happened was often not exactly the same as ‘history’ as it was recorded, this project has made that indefinitely clear. Racialized injustices are written, intentionally or not, into histories based on intersections of power and privilege as we consider whose stories have been remembered at the expense of others’. As historians, it is our responsibility to acknowledge our biases for ourselves and for future readers and to consider exclusivity in our writing. By writing solely about the overlooking of black athletes in St. Catharines, for example, I have neglected to examine Indigenous athletes and their underrepresentation in local history, and I have not
considered a gendered perspective in my work. Perhaps these are future directions that can stem from my research.

This project was guided by three research questions. The first question asks: how have the St. Catharines Orioles have been remembered or forgotten? Through my research, it is evident that the Orioles have been remembered by families of those who played on the team and somewhat more broadly by popular press articles that appear periodically (Gatecliff, 1991; Robson, 2016). Aside from this, I cannot confirm whether the first published photograph of the Orioles (“Canada’s Only All-Colored Hockey Team,” 1937, February 19) hung in the Hockey Hall of Fame, the Kingston Hall of Fame, or Maple Leaf Gardens as reported by Gatecliff (1991). I can, however, report that the Orioles have been largely excluded from local hockey history in St. Catharines and their memory rests on fleeting appearances in news media and in a file folder in Donna Ford’s living room.

My second research question asks what voices, perspectives, and identities are marginalized or silenced via hockey histories? It becomes exceptionally clear through my research that history has been whitewashed – voices, perspectives, and identities of non-white athletes are severely underreported and under-analysed, especially concerning hockey histories that were the focus of my study. As hockey is perpetuated as the Canadian narrative, it is likened to notions of an overwhelmingly white, heterosexual masculinity. This is evident in my research as the 1937 and 1938 newspapers were brimming with stories of white male athletes. In order for a non-white athlete to appear in the newspaper, it seems as if they had to be either sponsored by a white man (like the Orioles), an international winning sensation (such as boxer Joe Louis), or have
demonstrated a great feat of athleticism or received an award that the newspaper was unable to overlook. The Standard demonstrated this in their including of events like sprinter Jesse Owens racing a horse on foot (Browne, 1936, December 26) or the 1936 awarding of Canada’s first Lou Marsh trophy in recognition of Canada’s top athlete to middle-distance runner Dr. Phil Edwards after winning five bronze medals in three Olympic games in 1928, 1932, and 1936 (Dulmage, 1936, December 22). While white male athletes were featured daily at different ages and in various levels of leagues, athletes of colour needed to perform at exceptional levels to be included in the sports reports. Unlike the plethora of white men who graced the pages of the sports section at any age or level, athletes of colour faced prominent racism in their reporting by being consistently referred to as ‘colored’ individuals, ‘Negros,’ or ‘darkies.’ Of the articles that I surveyed in my research, it was very rare to find an article that was published including an athlete of colour without overt mention of their being non-white. White male athletes consistently stood at the forefront of history (as evident in both my primary and secondary source research) and all others were pushed to the margins.

This understanding of white athletes links very well to my final research question which seeks to examine how historical discourses shape contemporary constructions of race and sport. A backdrop to this thesis research are the increasing racial tensions (i.e. white nationalism) that have surged publicly in the present Trump era, including the rise of white nationalist rallies and demonstrations that became lethal in Charlottesville, Virginia⁴ that showcase overt racism and are being countered by the

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⁴ Charlottesville, VA was the site of the Unite the Right rally in 2017 that was declared a state of emergency by the governor of Virginia after extreme violence broke out between hundreds of white nationalists and counter-protestors. One counter-protestor was killed
Black Lives Matter movement. Examples of current racism are not limited to the United States however. It is alive in Canada in systemic racism (Hoath, 2017); evident in death threats shouted at shoppers in a Hamilton parking lot where a man was hit by a truck as the white driver openly exclaims “I’m racist as f*ck… I would kill your children first” (Taekema, 2018); and demonstrated in white Conservative Member of Parliament Maxime Bernier’s claim that cultural diversity will “destroy” Canada (Aeillo, 2018). This obvious rise in violent white nationalism in the United States and Canada informs our understanding of racial tensions and, specific to my research, our understanding of articulations of race and sport in the present. This also makes my research extremely current in the wake of visible white xenophobia.

The overlooking of black athletes in the past left a large gap in historical knowledge: white reporters generally wrote about white athletes, and the non-white population was omitted. As a result, the racism of the era and the ways that this framed and limited racialized athletes’ experiences is not explicitly outlined. Non-white athletes clearly participated in sport and recreation, had hobbies, and worked, yet this is largely disregarded in primary and secondary sources, as evident in this research. Using the Orioles as a specific example, I found that their story was a particularly difficult one to tell as their history is extremely fragmented. Though there have been some measures undertaken in St. Catharines to better represent historical narratives that reflect race and racialization⁵, a comprehensive black history of St. Catharines is lacking. While trying to

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⁵ Efforts to commemorate black history in the Niagara region include the opening of Harriet Tubman School in St. Catharines in 2015 (“About Harriet Tubman Public
locate additional articles on the Orioles at the St. Catharines Library, for instance, I was able to provide more newspaper articles than they were able to provide me, and a librarian and I discussed adding my thesis to the library’s collection after its completion. More research needs to be done to combat this under-analysis of race and sport research in Canada.

In regard to expanding information specific to the Orioles, there are many avenues where my research in the archives may be continued. For instance, the Fulton County Archives (Niagara Falls Gazette), other newspapers in Niagara Falls, Canada, and in the surrounding area can be researched as I did with the St. Catharines Standard - going page by page and paragraph by paragraph for any mention of the Orioles, and then the Transports. This is slow and painstaking research, particularly as the early period of the newspaper is not digitized. Other Niagara newspapers can also be examined for further mention of the Falls Ambassadors or Falls Swallows, two other black hockey teams that I uncovered in my research. That these hockey teams have not been mentioned in any hockey literature that I have found is indicative of historical erasure as well – though the Orioles are underreported, neither the Ambassadors nor Swallows are reported about at all. I am interested in going further into the archives to see what more can potentially be uncovered about the Ambassadors and the Swallows and comparing their erasure to that of the Orioles.

School,” 2018), the erection of plaques at various sites that are significant to local black history in the Niagara region (“Online Plaque Guide,” 2018), and the addition of the Norval Johnson Heritage Centre collection of Canadian and American black history resources to the St. Catharines Library (“Norval Johnson Heritage Centre Collection,” 2015).
When I first set out to complete my Master’s thesis, I expected to answer many questions that I had about the articulations of race and sport. I anticipated that I would learn a lot about my own identity and position as a white female athlete and researcher, and that I would gain a deeper understanding of ways that whiteness has pushed the experiences of black athletes to the footnotes of white-washed sporting histories. While I did answer many of my questions and learn a great deal about racial injustice, othering, and historical exclusion, I did not expect that I would have more questions when I completed my research than I did at the beginning. With my original questions answered, I have begun to wonder: where else (and how deeply) has this erasure impacted whitestream understandings of race and sport? Why did the Orioles receive media attention (albeit not much) while the Ambassadors and the Swallows were barely mentioned? If “historical knowledge is partial, filtered, and ideological” (Liberti & Smith, 2015, p. 2), resulting in the production of histories that neglect to include minority contributions, why are more researchers not exploring these histories and making a stronger effort to combat the under-addressing and under-analysis of the subject of race and sport in Canada (Joseph, et. al., 2012)? While I am unsure of the correct answer to these questions, I can affirm that engaging in this research is a far from simple task. As a researcher, I have experienced every emotion between excitement at finding articles to anger and frustration at the abundance of racism that I have been faced with in the newspapers and in discussing my research with others. I have wrestled with my position as a white female researcher examining racism and prejudice that I have no direct experience with. I have struggled through countless explanations when (white) people ask, “why does a black hockey team from the 1930s even matter?” In an era when white
supremacist groups are resurfacing and racism and sexism are overtly encouraged by prominent politicians, my research has never been more current. Using Canada’s national sport as a prime example of the perpetuation of white, heterosexual, male privilege, the absence of black Canadians from hockey history further prolongs the practice of whiteness and normalcy of racial privilege. This absence “is crucial to the repressive and normalizing processes of making insiders and outsiders – both within sporting cultures and nationalisms” (Abdel-Shehid, 2005, p.5). In a time when racial othering is regaining prominence in political and social media outlets, my research seeks to challenge “the enduring myth of Canada’s benign racial history” (Joseph, et. al., 2012, p. 17) that denies the existence of racism in Canada and addresses historical sport literature that lacks not only a comprehensive history of the Orioles, but that has consistently pushed black athletes to the periphery of sports history.
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COLORED SQUAD ENTERS LEAGUE

Orioles Place Team In N. D.H.L. Against Five Rivals

President Lincoln Quinn of the N.D.H.L. will have to arrange his outdoor hockey schedule to make room for the new entry in their intermediate ranks. The latest puck squad to enter is that of the colored team of this city, who will be known as the Orioles. The colored puck-chasers are enabled to compete through the courtesy of two sportsmen of the city, H. G. (Touch) Woods and W. W. (Wally) Walker, who have equipped the Orioles with handsome orange-black jerseys and stockings, with the caption “T. S. T.” across the chest of the former.

At the meeting and election of officers of the Oriole H.C., the following were named: Alex. Nicholson, business manager, 63 Vine (phone 1197); George West, team manager; Ben Walker, secretary-treasurer, 140 Welland Avenue (phone 3438-W); Watson Graves, coach; Hope Nicholson, team captain.


Insofar as is known, this is the first all-colored hockey team in Ontario ice circles and will create additional interest wherever they play. St. Catharines Granites, St. Catharines Bowerys, St. Davids, Niagara and Port Dalhousie are the other rivals in the outdoor league.

Orioles wish to gratefully acknowledge the courtesy and financial aid of Messrs. Woods and Walker.

("Colored Squad Enters League," 1937, February 16, p. 10)
Appendix B

Best Performances of the Week:
St. Catharines Macs in their come-
back, and Thorold Mountaineers in
clinching first place in intermediate
and second place in junior . . . The
backbone and sportsmanship of the
Smithville Imps in hockey and the
Hamilton Royals in basketball . . .
Harold G. "Touch" Woods adding a
little color to the Niagara District
Intermediate Hockey League . . .
Toronto finally knocking over De-
troit Red Wings . . . Grimsby arena
giving their share of next Tuesday
gate, playoff or not, to the stricken
Dancer family of Smithville . . .
Willie Fitzgerald untracking "long
enough to get some points at Mer-
riton . . .

(Whyte, 1937, February 20, p. 12)
Appendix C

Sports Shots

The debut of the only Canadian colored hockey team Saturday night was a success, despite the fact that the boys lost, 10-6, to Weston's Bread. The Orioles were willing and checked like fiends, but they showed lack of practice and condition. They will add something to Linc Quinn's Niagara District League, even though their chances of winning the title would seem remote. The boys swing back into action at Thorold tonight, opposing the Mountain Town Arenas.

(Whyte, 1937, March 2, p. 10)
(Whyte, 1937, March 1, p. 11)
Appendix E

(Hockey-Thorold," 1937, March 1, p. 10)
ON THE TAPIS

TODAY

Basketball—St. Paul vs. First United (return game bantam church finals), 6:30; St. George’s vs. First United (return game midget church finals) 7:30; Thorold South at St. Catherine R.C. (first game junior Ontario church series) 8:30, boys’ gym., collegiate.

Hockey—Thorold Mountaineers at Grimsby Peach Kings (first game group 4 finals), Grimsby arena, 8:30; St. Catharines Orioles at Thorold Arenas (exhibition) Thorold arena, 7:30. Cancelled, no ice.

(“On the Tapis,” 1937, March 2, p. 10)
Appendix G

St. Kitts Orioles Meet Thorold Team Tonight

Canada's only colored hockey team, the St. Catharines Orioles, will see action again tonight when they face Thorold Arenas at Thorold rink tonight at 8:30. The Orioles, deprived of the planned N.D.H.L. season, are in excellent shape and will face a team composed of clever young stars from Thorold teams, who have been using the Arena as headquarters. A large turnout is expected to see the teams in action.

(“Orioles Meet Thorold Team,” 1937, March 10, p. 12)
ORIOLES LOSE TO ARENA SQUAD

THOROLD, March 11.—Canada’s only coloured hockey team, the St. Catharines Orioles, ran into another reverse in their second start of the season at Thorold Arena last night when the Mountain Arenas defeated them 9-2. Only a small crowd saw the interesting game.

Arenas led 3-0 at the end of the first period on goals by Norm Hay (Leitch), Leitch (Hudson) and Hudson individually. The count was 6-2 at the end of the second period, Bochinfuso, Ryckman and Leitch getting Thorold tallies, while Ed. Smith and Laverne Dorsey counted Oriole goals. John Hill scored twice and Andy Kerr once for the Arenas in the last semester.

The Thorold team had too much finish and condition for the coloured players, who nevertheless kept battling away and trying for goals.

The teams:


Thorold Arenas—Goal, G. Hay; defense, N. Hay, Kerr; centre, John Hill; wings, Ryckman, Bochinfuso; subs, Hudson, Leitch, Jones, Jim Hill.

(“Orioles Lose to Arena Squad,” March 11, 1937, p. 14)
Appendix I

(“Duskies defeated,” 1937, March 12, p. 26)
Appendix J

Colored Teams to Play Tonight

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont., March 22—An event, thought to be the first of its kind to be staged in the Dominion, is billed for the arena tonight. Two colored hockey teams, St. Catharines Orioles and the Falls Swallows, will go through three regular periods of puck chasing. The same will be played as part of the attractions of the Industrial league semifinals and will commence at 9 p.m.

(“Colored Teams to Play Tonight,” 1937, March 22, p. 14)
Appendix K

(Wires meet Cans,” 1937, March 29, p. 14)
Negro Puck Club
16 Colored Lads on Team—All They Need is Ice

Gang Way, Here We Come

By JOHN ROWLAND

When one talks of Harlem these days, it is usually about a red-headed colored band or a fancy stepper. One seldom hears of a Harlem hockey club. Yet, that's what the 

St. Catherine's Scrubs are. They have a puck-chasing crew and every member of the team is as plant as any famous Harlem knight.

Yes, folks. St. Kitts lays claim to the only all-colored puck-chasing crew in the entire region of Ontario. Their skates count on — with stars resplendent in orange and black sweaters and stockings and the latest in hockey pants.

The Orioles

T hey call themselves the Orioles and are entered in the Niagara District Hockey League. They may not get anywhere as pucksters, but the club such has color— ... yeah man!

The Orioles organization is a bit confusing at first. Though known as the Orioles, they wear sweaters with the proud device E.H.T. (Toronto-St. Catherine's Transport), they are all members of the British Methodist Episcopal church, and are sponsored by "Touch" Woods and "Wally" Walker of the St. Catharines Lions Club. They are the most sponsored team in Canada.

Skates But No Ice

T he boys have other worries though. They have been worrying about the uniforms, and the boys worry about whether they really are a hockey team or just a social club. We understand that it is difficult to be a hockey team without any ice.

The Star Weekly cameraman could testify to the boys' enthusiasm. While pictures were being taken, pucks were flying gaily past the camera and life was hazardous indeed. Maybe it is the uniforms that imbue the boys with such carelessness abandon. We imagine it must be a thrilling experience to wear those sweaters. The orange on th
Meet the Team's Captain

as the Orioles, they wear... with the proud device T.S.T. (Toronto-St. Catharines Transport), they are all members of the British Malapadst Episcopal Church... sponsored by "Touch" Woods and "Wally" Walker of the St. Catharines Lions Club. They are the most sponsored team in Canada.

Skates But No Ice

The boys have other worries, though. They haven't any place to practice, the team manager worries about keeping the uniforms clean and the boys worry about whether they really are a hockey team or just a social club. We understand that it is difficult to be a hockey team without any ice.

The Star-Weekly cameraman could testify to the boys' enthusiasm. While pictures were being taken, pucks were flying gaily. The camera and life was hazardous indeed. Maybe it is the uniforms that imbue the boys with such carelesss abandon. We imagine it must be a thrilling experience to wear those sweaters. The orange on the sweaters is so very, very orange and the black stripes are so very, very black.

Have Brother Acts

Not one member of the team is steadily employed. The Rev. Ivan Moore, rector of the colored church and father of Sylvio... The Star Weekly that in the past seven years the colored population of St. Catharines has dwindled from 100 to 200.

The Orioles' team roster runs to brother acts. There are five Nicholas, three Dorays, two Bells and two Smiths. Most of the boys are boxers, several are dancers, and all of them are very nice boys indeed.

Novel Anyhow

Genial "Touch" Woods claims he has the most colorful team in... suggests a game be arranged between the Orioles and the all-Chinese team in Montreal, to be played in Maple Leaf Gardens. We hesitate to forecast the outcome of such an international contest, but it would be a most entertaining performance. Those sweaters are worth travelling miles to see.
And This is the Goalie

TELE PHOTO

THEY TAKE THEIR HOCKEY SERIOUSLY

Rowland, n.d.)
“Laverne Dorsay, star defenceman of the St. Catharines Orioles, Ontario’s only all-colored hockey team, is snapped plump in the middle of a day dream by Cameraman Lou Turofsky. Laverne and the rest of the boys are waiting for ice and just rarin’ to go – or maybe the picture reveals all that (photographs of other members of the team may be found in the Sports Section)” (Turofsky, n.d.).
CITY ORIOLES ARE ORGANIZED

Colored Puck Team Elects Officers and Names Roster

St. Catharines Orioles, the Garden City’s only colored hockey unit, will again don ice blades this winter, providing they can secure arena ice for practice purposes and their games. At their organization meeting last night, at the B.M.E. Church, President H. G. (Touch) Woods, of the Toronto-St. Catharines Transport, again came to the fore with his generous offer to outfit the city hockey entry and the familiar orange-black colors will be seen in action against the Falls Ambassadors, the only other all-colored squad in Ontario hockey circles. Officers elected were: Patron, H. G. Woods; president, Rev. Ivan Moore; secretary, Wilfred Bell; treasurer, Amos Dorsey; manager, Benjamin Walker (phone 2853W); coach, Watson Graves; captain, Hope Nicholson. The team personnel, as named by Manager Walker, is listed as follows: Goal, Wilfred Bell, Art Wilkinson; defense, Dick Nicholson, Ron Nicholson, Chester Smith, Doug Nicholson; centres, Amos Dorsey, Morris Dorsey; wings, Hope Nicholson, Gordon Dorsey, Ken Bell, Laverne Dorsey, Jim Harper, George West and Buddy Harper.

(“City Orioles are Organized,” 1937, December 17, p. 21)
Appendix O

N.D.H.L. NOW HAS ORGANIZED

Howard Swayne is President; 8 Clubs in Intermediate

The Niagara District Hockey League held its 20th annual organization meeting last night at the Y.M.C.A. with Pres. Lincoln Quinn of Niagara, presiding. Although the various teams in intermediate, junior and juvenile are not sure of outdoor ice, the interest and enthusiasm was intense and no less than eight clubs will carry the burden in the intermediate, with six in junior and four in juvenile.

Pres. Quinn retired as president, owing to pressure of business, the office going to Howard Swayne of this city, by unanimous vote. R. E. Douglas of Port Dalhousie is secretary-treasurer and the executive will consist of two members of each represented club. Intermediate entries thus far are Niagara, Port Weller, St. Davids, Jordan, Merriton, Thqold and St. Mary's and Transports (colored) of this city.

Pres. Swayne announces the deadline for entries at Friday of this week at the "Y" and prospective clubs in all groups are asked to phone 31 at Port Dalhousie or 2090-J (city). The N.D.H.L. will also send its intermediate winners into the O.H.A. playoffs as formerly, having entered already with Secy. W. A. Hewitt.

Hockey Opens Here Tonight

President Howard Swayze of the N.D.H.L. announces the opening games of the intermediate schedule, which loop gets under way tonight at two rinks. The city clash brings together the two St. Catharines units, St. Kitts (colored) Transports against Delco Barons from the G.M. plant, which fixture is carded at the box lacrosse bowl of the city sports park at 8 o’clock. The other half of bracket sees St. Davids at Niagara Hornets at the river town. The schedule, extending up to February 2, will appear in tomorrow’s issue.

For the four teams, St. Kitts Barons and Transports, Niagara Hornets and St. Davids. Ice is reported good at the lacrosse bowl and since it is the first outdoor game on natural ice in this city during the past two winters, the hockey fans are in for an inning, as the Transports, backed by Touch Woods, will provide plenty of color for the Swayze loop.

(“Hockey Opens Here Tonight,” 1938, January 10, p. 11)
Appendix Q

("Barons Secure Opening Game," 1938, January 11, p. 11)
Appendix R

"N.D.H.L. Ice Schedule List," 1938, January 11, p. 11
Appendix S

Niagara Hornets to Tackle Transports

Postponed for soft ice on Wednesday, St. Catharines Transports are billed to take on Niagara Hornets at the city lacrosse box bowl tonight in their scheduled N.D.I.L. game. City hockey fans passed up the first set-to in this city of Barons and the colored troopers, but they will not miss on this one, as the river men from the old fort town are said to be the hardest checkers in the loop and just what the truckers of the Nicholson-Dorsey-Bell brigade can do in the way of snaring a win is one that has the hockey fans talking. Manager Ben Walker of Transports is predicting a win for the orange-black pucksters over the Hornets and promises a rare old battle when the Niagarans visit here for the first time.

(“Niagara Hornets to Tackle Transports,” 1938, January 14, p. 16)
TRANSPORTS IN SECOND DEFEAT

Lose to Niagara Hornets 5-1 in N.D.I.L. Ice

-Tilt

St. Catharines Transports again met defeat at the lacrosse bowl in the Niagara District Intermediate B loop. This time, Niagara Hornets were victorious by a 5 to 1 score.

The opening period produced two goals, the first after twelve minutes of play when Don Sherlock dented the twine on a pass from Campbell. He came back five minutes later to score again, this time unassisted. The only penalty of the game was handed out in this period, G. Dorsey being the offender. Hornets made the count 3-0 at the close of the second, on a goal by Gordon, with Fellows assisting at the ten-minute mark. In the third period, Campbell scored twice, with Awde giving him the pass on the first, while Doug Nicholson put one past Moore in the Hornet goal.


Niagara Hornets: goal, Moore; defense, H. Sherlock and Campbell; centre, Nesbitt; wings, Hope, Mann; subs, Awde, Gordon, D. Sherlock, Fellows.

Referee: Reg Roco, St. Kitts.

Barons Blank Transports 6-0

At the lacrosse bowl on Wednesday, Delco Barons made it two in a row over the Transports by handing them a 6-0 shutout. The Transports put up a better game than the first time and only hard luck around the net kept them off the score sheet. The winners opened the scoring in the first period with two goals, Wedsworth and Taylor counting. They increased it to 4-0 at the end of the second with Dempsey and Rock denting the twine. The last period they added two more, to end the scoring, Wedsworth scoring his second of the night and Steeve one. The win left the Barons in third place and the loss was the Transports fourth of the season against no wins.

Barons—Cleaverly, Tomczyk, McLean, Taylor, Rock, Steeve; subs, Garrle, Wedsworth, Dempsey, Randall, Greer.


(“Barons Blank Transports 6-0,” 1938, January 21, p. 17)
All-Colored Hockey Team Bows to Grimsby Midgets

Grimsby, Jan. 25 (Special).—Grimsby Midgets won from St. Catharines Orioles, the only colored hockey team in Ontario, 2 to 0, here tonight. Orioles, though a much heavier team were not nearly as speedy as the Midgets. Ferris tallied both counters, the first on a pass from Craig and the second on a pass from Warner.

St. Catharines Orioles—Goal, Flowers; defense, R. Nicholson, H. Nicholson; centre, L. Dorsey; wings, Smith, A. Dorsey; sub, G. Dorsey.

Grimsby Midgets—Goal, Farrell; defense, Hiltz, Ferris; centre, K. Warner; wings, Shulock, Mason; subs, Neale, Reid, Duffield, N. Warner, Winters, Craig.

Referee—Doug Robble, Grimsby.

(“All-colored hockey team bows to Grimsby Midgets,” 1938, January 26, p. 15)
Président Howard Swayze of the N.D.H.L. has found it necessary to revise his outdoor ice schedule, owing to the vagaries of the weather. This week's mild spell and rain wrought havoc with the outside rinks, but the present blizzard and cold snap was a break in the right direction for the teams and they propose to run off the games every night. Alec McKenzie permits play on the city box bowl here for Barons and Transports. Niagara and St. Davids get more wind and consequently better ice.
Appendix X

Just what is doing in intermediate, junior and juvenile N.D.H.I. groups rests with Howard Swayne and Bob Douglas. Disrupted schedules by uncertain outdoor conditions have altered the set-ups to such an extent that only the moguls know the answer. It is thought that Niagara Hornets, Falls Cats and Thorold Mounts in the three classes will represent the district in coming Ontario playdowns.

(Browne, 1938, February 16, p. 12)
Appendix Y

The Only All-Colored Hockey Team in Canada

What was probably Canada’s only black hockey team played in St. Catharines in 1937. The Orioles played in the Niagara District League and made several out-of-town tours. Front row, from the left, George West, Ted Wilkins, Wilfred Bell, Ken Bell, Larry Dorsey, Captain Hope Nicholson, Gordon Dorsey and standing is three-year-old Sylvia Moore, daughter of BME Church pastor J. Ivan Moore. Back row, Secretary Ben Walker, Chuck Smith, Doug Nicholson, Ted Smith, sponsor H.G. (Touch) Wood, business manager Alex Nicholson, Dick Nicholson, Amos Dorsey and Mr. Moore whose BME church helped sponsor the team.

Canada’s only all-black hockey team based here

By JACK GATECLIFF
Standard Staff

Gerry Foran, a retired St. Catharines firefighter, asked if I would be interested in a clipping from the Friday, Feb. 14, 1937 St. Catharines Standard which showed an all-black hockey team known as the Orioles.

Foran had found it among family photos and other odds and ends from the estate of the late Fred Becker.

I was especially interested because Lefty Reid of the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto had asked me years ago if any photo prints of the St. Catharines Orioles existed, explaining that as far as he knew it was the only all-black team in the world.

He wanted to use the picture in the hallowed halls of hockey as part of the game’s history.

A slightly different version of the team picture also appeared on these pages years later, thanks to Jim Bush who moved back to St. Catharines after spending several years in Hamilton.

Well, Lefty was a better sleuth than years 1916 and Edith Cavell was the English nurse executed for helping Allied prisoners of war to escape in Europe in 1915.

“I’m told congratulations poured in to my parents from mayors, the premier, prime minister and even King George V,” said Hope, who grew up on Vine Street between Welland Avenue and Queenston Street, an area his friend Le Roy Pickard likes to call The Bowery.

“I also heard that Nestles Chocolate and other companies provided us with supplies of special baby food.”

“It was said we were the first triplets in Ontario but I can’t vouch for the truth of that statement.”

The families of Hope and his wife Norma are now fifth generation Canadians. They have two sons Hope Jr., a Toronto real estate agent, Michael, a Scarborough high school teacher, and four grandchildren.

Hope’s grandparents came here from Kentucky via the Underground Railway and lived on a small plot of land near McNab to escape slavery. They also worked on neighboring farms. Norma’s forbearers originated in Idaho
(Gatecliff, 1991, March 27, p. 27)