

Perhaps "the most important 'least considered' episode in history"

The Birth of Montreal Ice Hockey

The Montreal Gazette - Nov 27, 1943
[Browse this newspaper »](#)
[Browse all newspapers »](#)

Page 18 of 3



The Montreal Gazette - Nov 27, 1943
[Browse this newspaper »](#)
[Browse all newspapers »](#)

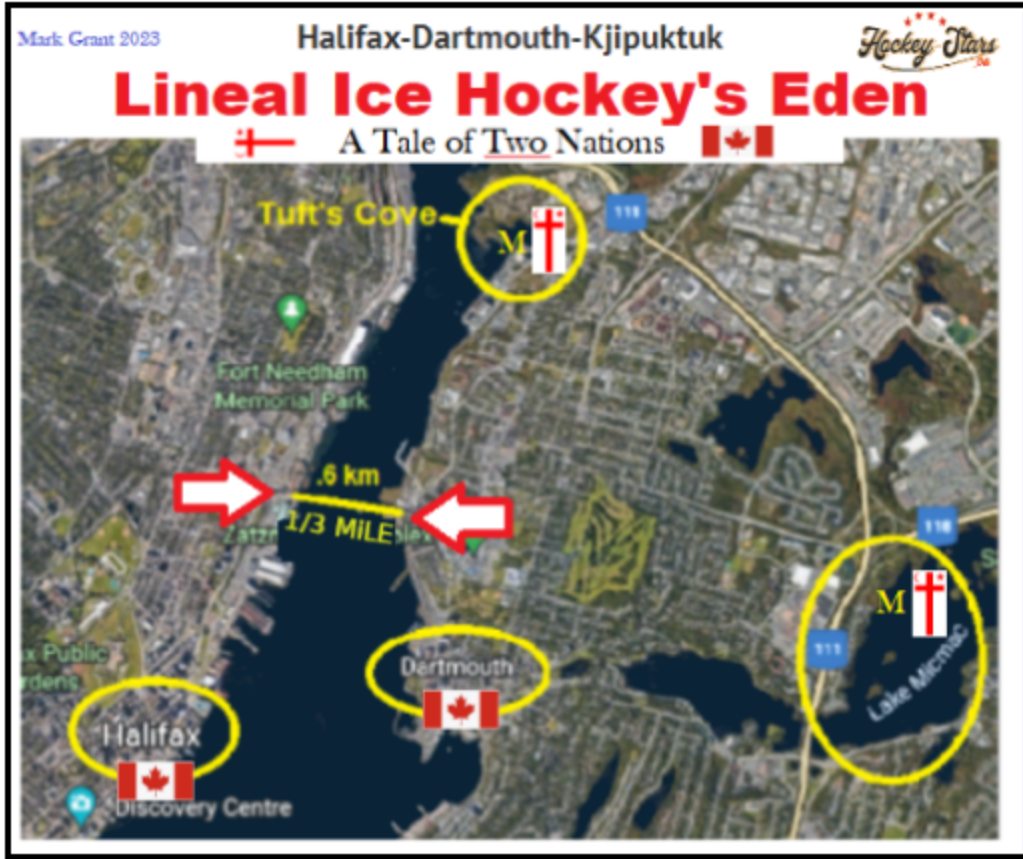
Page



Early Hockey at Halifax
Charles Bruce Fergusson
Archivist of Nova Scotia 1965

As substantiation for his opinion that hockey originated at Halifax, Menke cites the words of Henry Joseph of Montreal, a graduate of McGill, that a student friend J. G. A. Creighton was responsible for the start of hockey in Montreal, that Creighton was from Halifax where he had seen the game played, and that it was Creighton who first suggested that they obtain hockey sticks from Halifax and take up the

There is no doubt that Creighton had ample opportunity of becoming familiar with and adept at the game in Halifax. As this article indicates, hockey had been played there for years. James George Aylwin Creighton, son of William Hudson Creighton, was born in Halifax on June 12, 1850. He was educated at the Halifax Grammar School, at Dalhousie University and at McGill University. After obtaining the degree of B.A. at Dalhousie University in 1868, he was employed as an engineer in surveys and construction on the Intercolonial Railway, the Lachine Canal, Montreal Harbour, and other public works until 1877. Consequently, he



How the Birth of Montreal hockey locks down Ice Hockey's Earlier Evolution

In the image above, we placed the Gazette article between the second and third flags because the birth of Montreal ice hockey *literally* links the last two Stars to the first two, culminating in a very real yet simple storyline about modern Ice Hockey's true origins. Historians know for many, many reasons that Montreal hockey was based on a transfer of Halifax hockey by James Creighton, which is one of the *Gazette* article's more important revelations. It provides the reader with the testimony of a participant in the literal birth of Montreal ice hockey, Henry Joseph, who singles out Creighton. In doing so, he points us to Halifax, Nova Scotia and no other pre-Montreal "hockey" setting.

Halifax ice hockey's *unique* North American-European makeup enables us to locate the literal birthplace of the ever-evolving stick game that became Canada's official version of Ice Hockey in the 1890s after being transferred to Montreal. It also enables us to identify this hybrid stick game's birth time, to a degree that is never considered by today's more common claims and theories about the origins of Ice Hockey.

The *1st Star* Mi'kmaq players who joined the Halifax-Dartmouth colonists, our *2nd Star*, called Halifax, Kijikpuktuk. Therefore, in early Ice Hockey's true story, "Halifax" can alternatively be thought of as Halifax-Dartmouth-Kijikpuktuk. We note that the birth of hockey in Montreal, our *3rd Star*, in order of appearance, had to literally wait for the arrival of Kijikpuktuk Mi'kmaq's sticks, as this proves that Montreal's and soon Canada's inheritance was in fact a Canadian-Mi'kmaq version of "hockey."

By then, Henry Joseph and the other Montrealers surely had Dartmouth's Acme skates. Or, they had ones that copied the Acme's revolutionary 'enhanced leveraging' technology. In our free book, we call the subtle process, through which Canadians began using Halifax gear or their imitations, the "Halifax takeover" of early Canada's frozen ponds and lakes. The Halifax takeover fueled the "Montreal takeover." Both takeovers were inseparable, in fact, and that's what makes this *Gazette* article vitally important.

The birth of Montreal ice hockey weeds out pretenders by confining serious discussion of our Halifax-Montreal stick game's past to the five-by-four mile location in the lower-right corner image -- not to ancient Greece, not various one-off games played by English royals, et cetera, nor to any other stick game. For decades, historians have basically ignored the birth of Montreal. This has led to the entrenchment of many false narratives that basically ignore our first two Stars, often in the name of embellishing a myth in which Ice Hockey's story only begins in Montreal in 1875.

Rather than continue in this direction, we should instead ask what Halifax's James Creighton could do with the Kijikpuktuk Mi'kmaq stick and Dartmouth skate at the birth of Montreal ice hockey. This angle has never been explored, and it may be the most instructive way of explaining 19th century Ice Hockey's evolution.

We suggest that Creighton's performance at the birth of hockey in Montreal will largely explain the rise and institutionalization of 'Montreal ice hockey' across Canada by the end of the 19th century. Through his command of Halifax-Dartmouth-Kijikpuktuk's necessary technologies, combined with his desire to make a positive impression, Creighton performed the Selly of the Century then, based on what those "Montrealers" would later accomplish, and most centrally in making their Halifax-Montreal version of "hockey" Canada's official version of Ice Hockey by the 1890s.