The Vancouver Asahi Baseball Team and Cultural Acceptance 1920-1941

Christopher M. Pellerin, The University of Western Ontario

Degree
Master of Arts

Program
Kinesiology

Supervisor
Dr. Don Morrow

Abstract
This thesis analyzed how the Vancouver Asahis, through excellence in baseball, gained acceptance within the newspaper media and community from 1920 to 1941. An examination of Vancouver's history and culture determined the importance of baseball to the city, especially upon Bob Brown’s, Vancouver’s greatest builder of the game, immigration. A history of the Asahis was also examined to help frame baseball’s importance to the Japanese and why they wished to engage in this specific sport.

Through a content analysis within the Vancouver Sun and Daily Province newspapers, this thesis examined how the Asahis were represented in each of the two major newspapers in Vancouver. Words and phrases related to the themes of racism, praise, and acceptance, were documented and analyzed for frequency in each year sampled. This helped determine what type of coverage was afforded to the Asahis thematically. Through excellence in baseball, a sport primarily reserved for Caucasians, the Asahis managed to gain favour within the community as well as minimize the racism that Japanese residents of Vancouver normally received.

Recommended Citation
https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/1750

Asahí Baseball Team. 1914–1941. Vancouver, BC. 2008. Abenaki Migrations to New France (1675–1748). 1675–1748. New England, Quebec Wôlinak, QC Odanak, QC. 1918–1920. Quebec City, Montreal, Halifax, and nationwide. 2018. Early Science in Canada and the Hudson’s Bay Company (1768–ca. 1810). 1768–1810. The Asahi were a Japanese-Canadian baseball team established in 1914. The team went on to great success, particularly in the 1930s, winning numerous tournaments and championships. The team was based in Vancouver's Oppenheimer Park, in the city’s Japantown. Matsujiro Miyazaki, a Powell Street shop owner, was the Asahis' first coach and manager. The Asahi Baseball Team won the Pacific Northwest Championship five years in a row. The team was disbanded when its members were dispersed across Canada due to the Japanese-Canadian internment during World War II. The historic team of Japanese Canadian baseball players became a symbol of hope, of how the seemingly impossible could be attained through hard work, dedication, and cooperation. On the team's centennial anniversary, its legend will hit the big screen in a major Japan-Canada coproduction. The Vancouver Asahi originated in the Powell Street neighbourhood. Beth Carter, Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre director-curator, explained by phone that the area—known as Poweru Gai by local nikkei (people of Japanese descent) and, later, Japantown by others—became the focus for nikkei in the late 1800s. The area was near Hastings Mill, a sawmill that was one of the largest employers of Japanese Canadians.