"These violent competitions... provided a structured and formalized pattern of aggression..." where the sport has always been best known, as well as among the various members of the Huron-Nation, which was strengthened or reaffirmed through their athletic competition (Wolff 1977). The hard fought games themselves served as a "peaceful" means by which members of the individual teams, whether kin groups or nations, could vent their personal or group hostilities against their athletic "foes," while maintaining their political alliances. These violent competitions, in which broken bones were common and death not at all infrequent (Converse 1808:143-146), provided a structured and formalized pattern of aggression which held the potential for damage to a minimum. The solidarity built up among the competitors helped to create a larger group or unit that acted as a single political force. Together, they could withstand assault from without or launch raids into the territories of people not in their "league," in an athletic as well as political sense. A variation of this form of political affiliation and interaction also must have existed among the proto-states and states of Mesoamerica (see Jones's article in this issue), serving to cement alliances and facilitate interactions. Not surprisingly the Seneca, the westernmost of the Five Nations, seem to have been the most active of the people involved in early lacrosse competition, for they were the "keepers of the western close." From this position they met the threat of peoples from the northwest and southwest and led the attacks on their many foes, such as the Susquehannocks. At home their physical and strategic skills were honed with the game of lacrosse.

The smaller groups of Lenape, Muscogee, and people like them could not compete in these athletic or military activities except in a limited way (Becker 1983). With sparse populations, peoples such as the Lenape were concerned with searching for the basic resources needed for survival and with ways to accommodate their more powerful neighbors. Working as individuals, linked to others only by kinship, the Lenape made their way in the world without the complex sporting activities needed by and characteristic of people such as those united into the Five Nations Confederacy.

Team competition is one of the legacies of these Native Americans, often noted in reviewing our heritage. From lacrosse to pok-a-tok in Central America, the larger indigenous American societies reaffirm their identity by fielding teams to compete against people from another cultural group. Ancient Creek athletic events generally were individual competitions, while ancient American sports quite often were team activities.

The History of Sporting America

Philadelphia Pastimes

John L. Cotter

A record of the traces of sports are often ephemeral, especially in North America. The Indians left a few ball courts, notably in the Southwest, various gaming pieces, a snow snake here and a clunky stone there, and accounts in ethnological records (see Becker's article on lacrosse in this issue). European and other immigrant groups left a little more, but not much.

In Colonial Philadelphia, the games played by boys and girls alike reflected sports practiced in their ethnic and national places of origin in Europe. Swedish and German children practiced in the 17th and 18th centuries the same games of skill and athletic prowess glimpsed in...
Games and sports of children were much the same in Europe and the newly established cities of the American colonies. These blue and white Dutch tile of 1675-1750 show activities familiar to Philadelphia children of the 18th century, and some are still practiced in the 20th. This differs from other activities. Single Hed. ca. 13 x 13 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of Anthony N. B. Garvan. Photograph by Eric Mitchell.

Peter Broughel's famous 16th century painting of children's games in Flanders, or in the delightful Dutch blue and white tiles which adorned fireplaces and walls of New as well as Old World houses to recount for bawlers of all ages and lands how childhood hours were spent (Fig. 2). These tile fragments are prime archaeological records.

English immigrants also had their sport patterns, and these precedents have a clear echo in present practice. As the 19th century neared, Philadelphia boys were having fun with such toys and games of dexterity and strategic skills as marbles in its many forms (spans and spoons, knock-out, ring-taw), slingshot (tops (whip-top, peg-top), pea shooter, battledore and shuttlecock, and that more sport known from the stone age to Roman times and ever since; skipping round, flat stones on water. Early Philadelphians from England called this duck, duck, and drake (one, too, and three skips). Adults applied the term "playing ducks and drakes" to risky circumstances, often financial, and did. But adult men were racing horses as soon as they could be imported, and leisure allowed recreation—and betting. Horse racing in an indoor ring, the hippodrome, flourished at the turn of the 19th century. The Walnut Street Theater (1809) began one of these, although the Philadelphia institution was even more fabled than the present-day oldest continuously operated theater in the English-speaking world. As for the race tracks where Philadelphia colonists cheered their favorite horses, only traces remain. One was along what is now Race Street—the name has stuck ever since. The other was where now stands City Hall at Center Square, still the scene of betting but on more refined than marbles (Weigley 1982:90).

In 1931, the Penn athletic field and stands turn the scene surprisingly like 1904—five spectators and uniforms almost unchanged. But six years later all vanished with the building of the "Quad of men's dorms opposite Water Institute. Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the University of Pennsylvania.
Other spectator sports characteristically enjoyed by men were bare and bull baiting and cockfighting. For participant and spectator, there was the manly—perhaps rough—activities of wrestling, which could be either "fair fight" or "rough and tumble," the latter entailing kicking, hitting, and gouging. According to Pierce Egas (1822), a Mr. John Palmer noted of his travels in the United States and lower Canada in 1817 that "Prize-boxing is unknown in The United States." Alexander Graydon said that American ice skaters in the latter 18th century were "the best and most elegant in the world." They were good swimmers, too: Benjamin Franklin had been expert at both skating and swimming from his Bastian childhood, and as an elderly diplomat he amazed Parisians by casting off his clothes and swimming briskly in the Seine.

Women were not much at the pedestal sports in early America, but the men of the frontier were. The most notable relay race of record was the infamous Walking Purchase of 1809 in which the most energetic walkers were organized to cover in a day and a half enough of south-eastern Pennsylvania in a closed circuit to inspect and dissuade the unsuspecting Indians who had agreed to yield the land so encircled. In that athletic scam a team of three athletes, expected by the Indians to walk, soon were running flat out on a cleared path, and by noon of the second day had gained Thomas Penn, the second Lord Proprietor, half a million acres of prime aboriginal cornfields and hunting grounds. As if blighted by this precedent, walking as an athletic feat languished, and it was not until 1851 that walking races were included in American championships and the sport went national. American sportswomen were thwarted by a Brighton policeman in the Olympic Games of London in 1908 (Encyclopedia Britannica). Walking has gone downhill in this country ever since. Jogging is currently in ascendency, having surpassed cycling, which wheeled onto the American scene at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. The emergence of the university in both 18th century America presented a bridge between the athletics of childhood and adulthood, and collegiate sport was born. This was anticipated by the ever avant garde Ben Franklin who proposed in 1749 for the students of what was to become the University of Pennsylvania. "That to keep them in Health, and to strengthen and render active their Bodies, they frequently exercised in Running, Leaping, Wrestling, and Swimming." (Franklin 1749).

At the University of Pennsylvania competitive sports began in the fall of 1873 when members of the classes of '73, '74, and '75 organized an athletic association, offering at the first meet a contest of throwing a baseball for distance and a running match (Orton n.d.). In the spring of 1874 the association was reorganized and the number of events was raised to 10. The record shows a reportable H. L. Willoughby took the hop-step and jump at 35 feet 8½ inches, to which he added the hammer throw (9 lbs.) at 72 feet 10½ inches and the standing broad jump at 7 feet 8¾ inches. T. Kerr took the 120-yard dash in 12 seconds, the 120-yard hurdles (3) in 15 seconds, and H. W. Andrews won the baseball throw at 327 feet 5½ inches. The broad jump went to H. Porter at 14 feet 1 inch. The competitions became intercollegiate for the 1875 season. Rowing on the Schuylkill was first organized at Penn by the University Boat Club in 1875. This sport became intramural and local for many years. Later the victorious boat houses added their skin boats, and river races were to become the most enduring heritage of this type of architecture in this country.

Prior to 1876 when rugby was "first and finally adopted," football had been played for years at Penn. (In January of 1872 a mere 14 seniors played 21 students picked from the other classes of 1872, with Penn') The year 1876 was Penn's worst, when it lost to Yale 50–0. In due time the rugby tradition evaporated.

When the Penn campus moved to West Philadelphia from its original Center City campus in 1787, a sporting field was established on the site of the present residential Quad. Since 1889, the University has had its share of triumphs, some prouder-winded footballs, the trophies, and the record of events in the archives. And there are the many sculptures of athletes by the physician-artist R. Batson (1879) and the many pennant displays in the 1920s when many Greek sculptors did for the Olympic heroes of antiquity.

couples had obliterated all, and the athletic field was moved towards the Schuylkill, into the present-day Franklin Field opposite the new University Museum, with baseball diamonds relegated to the railroad track bottoms by the river. (Franklin Field overlooks an earlier 19th century potter's field from which emerges, unhidden, in storm drain excavations, occasional evidence of medical school teaching specimens—a snarv skull or so.)

In 1900, a Penn track team of 13 men dominated the medallists in the Second Olympiad in Paris (Fig. 6). Penn mustered a selection of top men from the track team which had that year won its fourth consecutive victory in the Intercollegiates with a total of 39 points, 18 of which were contributed by the phenomenal Alvin Christian Kraenzlein. At Paris he took 4 gold medals, J. B. Tewkesbury and L. K. Baxter another 2 each, and G. W. Orton took 1 for a Penn sweep of 9 firsts, plus 7 seconds. This was the pritorminal "Chariots of Fire" in American collegiate athletics, never to be matched (Penn historian E. Digby Baltzell in a speech to the Alumni Reunion, October 27, 1984). Penn might have won more golds had not the contests been held on a Sunday, when staunch Presbyterian James W. McCracken and E. R. Bushnell, both leading athletes, declined to compete and went to church instead. Nor were these gentlemen to be remembered only as athletes. Kraenzlein, McCracken, and Tewkesbury became notable M.D.'s., Orton was a Ph.D., and Bennington an Episcopalian Bishop of Pennsylvania.

Playing fields and stadia are quickly replaced and lost in America, in contrast to the ball courts of the Maya and the Greek stadia. The history of Penn sports lies mainly in the assorted equipment and relics, in the trophies, and the record of events in the archives. And there are the many sculptures of athletes by the physician-artist R. Batson (1879) and the many pennant displays in the 1920s when many Greek sculptors did for the Olympic heroes of antiquity.