

2008-05

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Human Kinetics

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Adams, Carly (2008) "Queens of the Ice Lanes: The Preston Rivulettes and Canadian Women's Hockey, 1931-1940." *Sport History Review* 39(1): 1-29.

<http://hdl.handle.net/10133/2550>

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## **“Queens of the Ice Lanes”: The Preston Rivulettes and Women’s Hockey in Canada, 1931–1940**

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On May 2, 1998, friends, family members, and community supporters in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, paid tribute to a local hockey team from the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> Stories were shared and friendships renewed as the women of the Preston Rivulettes hockey club were etched permanently in the history annals during the inaugural induction ceremony at the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame.<sup>2</sup> Hilda Ranscombe, Gladys (Hawkins) Pitcher and Ruth (Dargel) Collins, three of the surviving team members, were among the guests of honor. They perused the display cases with photographs of familiar faces from yesteryear, reminiscing and sharing stories with the circle of family and friends on hand to celebrate the occasion. Local celebrities once again, Ranscombe, Hawkins, and Dargel were honored to receive this recognition through the Hall’s induction and the local media coverage. Indeed, the certificate from the event still adorns the wall in Dargel’s Kitchener home almost a decade later.<sup>3</sup> For the athletes present, as well as those no longer with us, the induction ceremony offered validation and recognition of their unique Canadian hockey experiences. Even though the celebration was important for those involved, its significance extends well beyond the community event.

Hockey is at the heart of Canadian culture and has been a national pastime since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Yet, as sport sociologist Mary Louise Adams contends, “if hockey is life in Canada, then life in Canada remains decidedly masculine and white.”<sup>4</sup> Canadian women have participated in ice hockey since the late 1880s. However, like other facets of women’s sport, the history of women’s hockey has received little attention in both academic and popular hockey scholarship. Seeking to rectify this omission, Brian McFarlane became the first author to substantively address women’s participation in the national game in *Proud Past, Bright Future*.<sup>5</sup> Although not a scholar per se, McFarlane’s book stimulated interest in the history of women’s hockey, and soon others like Joanna Avery and Julie Stevens and Elizabeth Etue and Megan Williams dedicated themselves to explicating this almost forgotten past, reminding us that silences in historical scholarship do not mean absences.<sup>6</sup>

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This article examines the early development of organized hockey for women in Ontario and specifically the story of the Rivulettes women's hockey club from the small town of Preston. The Preston Rivulettes hold a Canadian women's hockey record that is second to none.<sup>7</sup> During ten seasons from 1931 to 1940, the Rivulettes out-skated opponents and dominated women's hockey in Canada by claiming four Dominion championships and ten Ontario titles (see Tables 1 and 2).<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1 Dominion Women's Hockey Championship, 1933–1940**

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1933	Edmonton Rustlers (defeated the Preston Rivulettes).
1934	Not contested (Preston Rivulettes defaulted against Edmonton Rustlers).
1935	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Winnipeg Eatons); Lady Bessborough Trophy awarded for the first time.
1936	Not contested (Preston Rivulettes defaulted against the Winnipeg Olympics).
1937	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Winnipeg Eatons).
1938	Preston Springs Rivulettes (defeated Winnipeg Olympics).
1939	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Winnipeg Olympics and Charlottetown Islanders).
1940	Not contested (Preston Rivulettes and Winnipeg Olympics both defaulted).

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Sources: *Toronto Daily Star*, 1933–1940; *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1933–1940.

**Table 2 Ladies Ontario Hockey Association Senior Division Champions, 1923–1940**

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1923	Ottawa Alerts (defeated North Toronto).
1924	Ottawa Alerts (by default, North Toronto disbanded).
1925	Sudbury vs Toronto Pats in Final.
1926	No information available.
1927	Ottawa Rowing Club (defeated Toronto Pats).
1928	No information available.
1929	Toronto Pats (defeated Ottawa).
1930	Port Dover Sailorettes.
1931	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Pembroke). <sup>a</sup>
1932	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Chalk River).
1933	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Toronto Ladies).
1934	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Toronto Vagabonds).
1935	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Bracebridge).
1936	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Gravenhurst Muskokas).
1937	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Markdale).
1938	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Ottawa Rangers).
1939	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Ottawa Rangers).
1940	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Toronto Ladies).

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<sup>a</sup>In 1931, the Rivulettes won the Intermediate Provincial title; the senior title was not contested this year. The Toronto Silverwoods and the Ottawa Rowing Club had to abandon the series owing to lack of ice time.

Sources: *Toronto Globe*, 1922–1940, *Toronto Daily Star*, 1922–1940, *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1931–1940.

The Rivulettes won over 95 percent of their games, a win/loss record paralleled in the history of Canadian women's sport only by the Edmonton Graduates basketball team.<sup>9</sup> As players, the Rivulettes were skillful, aggressive, and physically powerful women, expressing attributes that were neither expected nor admired in women in sport during this era. Through skill and determination, they achieved a notable, if unexpected, public position during the 1930s within traditionally male cultural terrain.

The Depression years significantly impacted not only Canadians' working lives, but also their leisure time and the resources available for recreation and sport activities. Although those who lost jobs as a result of the global economic crisis faced new burdens associated with "enforced leisure," opportunities for sport and recreation diminished simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> Remembered as the "dirty thirties," the Depression marked a time of financial struggle, family hardship, and uncertainty across the country.<sup>11</sup> Relating the situation in Preston, City of Cambridge Archivist Jim Quantrell writes the following:

[T]he most vivid memory of the Depression is that of the many transients who came through in search of a meal and the famous "Soup Kitchen." The Police force, which consisted of three men, found its facilities fully booked with transients. Each night as many as 16 of them slept on the floor or on the table of the one room office before moving on to the next town in the vain search for a job.<sup>12</sup>

The Depression era strained the available financial reservoirs in all areas of society, with funds being reallocated to essential services. Under these broader conditions of economic strife and insecurity, the Rivulettes, like other men's and women's sports teams, struggled to find financial support to maintain their game commitments and travel to other provinces for championship matches.

The Rivulettes's experience of the local situation in Preston reinforces Shona Thompson's claim that the interaction between personal experience and socioeconomic context shaped the way women played sport.<sup>13</sup> For small towns like Preston with a population of just over 6,000 people during the 1930s, the success of the Rivulettes resulted in the team quickly becoming a signifier of civic identity and their sporting contests a form of popular civic ritual desperately needed to boost morale during the Depression.<sup>14</sup> According to David Whitson, "sports grounds came to serve as venues for modern kinds of collective experience and identification."<sup>15</sup> Although Whitson makes these observations in terms of professional sport and larger urban centers, in small-town Ontario there are many similarities. The town is the center of civic identity—where citizens come together for entertainment and emotional renewal through common interests, such as cheering for a local sports team. Through their national accomplishments, the Rivulettes offered Preston a unique opportunity for recognition and "civic boosters soon found that successful sports teams were among the best ways of putting their cities 'on the map.'"<sup>16</sup>

While relating the story of the athletes from the Preston Rivulettes hockey club, this article examines the experiences of women who tenaciously embraced what was socially perceived as masculine cultural terrain. By dealing with civic identity, the organization of the game, the inclusion of women's experience in historical scholarship, and the politics of representation, I aim to contribute to the

growing body of scholarship on women's experiences in sport. The story of the Preston Rivulettes's successes, financial impediments, and eventual demise—a story that constitutes a vital part of the female hockey legacy in Canada—offers a historically specific exploration of women's forays between sport, work, and social life in small-town Ontario during a decade of hardship and struggle created by the economic downturn of the Great Depression.

## The Rise of the Rivulettes and Organized Hockey for Working Women

By the time the Preston Rivulettes first stepped onto the ice as an organized team, women had been playing hockey in Canada for over 40 years, but it was not until the 1920s that women's hockey flourished in Ontario. As leagues were formed in communities across the country, newspaper reports reflect women's growing interest in the game. The need to increase the organization of the sport became paramount as more women became involved, leading to the creation of the Ladies' Ontario Hockey Association (LOHA) in 1922 to oversee the development of women's hockey.<sup>17</sup> As the first provincial governing body for women's hockey, the LOHA organized intercity leagues across the province from 1922 until 1940.<sup>18</sup> During its formation, the LOHA affiliated with the Ontario branch of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, patterning its structure on the men's Ontario Hockey Association constitution.<sup>19</sup> Teams from as far east as Ottawa and as far west as St. Thomas and London joined, with most of the teams coming from Toronto. During the early 1920s, the LOHA was the strongest women's sports organization in the province. The consistent number of teams from across the province under its banner suggests the extent to which the LOHA was accepted as the voice and administrator for women's organized hockey in the province during its early years of existence.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the girls and women who came together to form the Rivulettes founding hockey team shared an established comradeship developed as teammates on the summer sports fields—their baseball team was also named the *Preston Rivulettes*.<sup>21</sup> In 1930, as the softball season was drawing to a close, devoted friends and teammates Hilda and Nellie Ranscombe and Marm and Helen Schmuck sought an organized sport to play during the long winter months: ice hockey was the obvious answer, given that all four women grew up skating on the Grand River and the local pond adjacent to the Rocks Springs Brewery in Preston. In 1930, the four women contacted Alexandrine Gibb, “Canada's most preeminent women sports journalist of this era,” who credits herself with having a direct hand in starting the Preston women's hockey team.<sup>22</sup> In a 1935 column of “No Man's Land of Sport,” Gibb relates that in 1930 while holidaying at the Kress House in Preston, “a group of girls came to ask me what I would advise them to do in order to get an athletic club on its way. . . . They took my suggestions literally, hunted up their representative of the Legislative assembly, Karl Homuth; visited the other prominent townsmen; and the Rivulettes of Preston became a certainty.”<sup>23</sup> Gibb adhered to a philosophy of “girls' sport run by girls,” but she also recognized the value of having prominent, capable men as advisors and impressed the importance of this on her visitors.<sup>24</sup> Whereas other players came and went over the years, the Ranscombe and Schmuck sisters set the team on its organizational path and devoted themselves to the women's game throughout the decade.

At the first practice in early January of 1931, ten players joined the team: Nellie Ranscombe as goalie; Grace Webb and Margaret Gabbitass on defense; Helen Schmuck, Hilda Ranscombe, and Marm Schmuck as forwards; and Myrtle Parr, Pat Marriott, W. Makcrow, and S. Leahy as alternates.<sup>25</sup> Herb Fach, the manager of the Lowther Street arena in Preston, agreed to coach the team, and Roy Osgood acted as manager.<sup>26</sup> Molly Hanlon and Beatrice Collard also joined the team as chaperones, a common practice among women's teams of the time to protect the reputations and respectability of the players. Marvin and Olive Dykeman joined the team in 1932 as secretary/manager and chaperone, respectively. Although a handful of women remained with the team throughout the 1930s forming an unshakable foundation, several others bolstered the original squad in later years, including Dot Raffey, Helen Sault, Violet Hall, Ruth Dargel, Elvis Williams, and Norma Hipel, as well as Gladys Hawkins and Marie Beilstein, who joined the Rivulettes in the mid-1930s after playing several seasons with the Kitchener Wentworths hockey club.<sup>27</sup>

The Rivulettes, like other sports teams of the era, were challenged to find available ice on which to practice. Furthermore, throughout the 1930s, most of the players worked full-time or were still in school. However, unlike local men's and boy's teams, which generally had their choice of ice times, the significant social barriers to female athletes of the time left the Rivulettes to make do with the leftovers. Nellie Ranscombe and the Schmuck sisters worked in Preston at the Wragge Shoe Company and Savage Shoe Company throughout the 1930s.<sup>28</sup> Myrtle



**Figure 1** — The Preston Rivulettes (circa 1932): Back: M. J. Dykeman, Herb Fach, R. B. Osgood. Middle: Pat Marriott, Grace Webb, Mrs. Olive Dykeman (chaperone), Helen Schmuck, Helen Sault. Front: Hilda Ranscombe, Marg Gabbitass, Nellie Ranscombe, Myrtle Parr, Marm Schmuck. Courtesy of the City of Cambridge Archives Photographic Collection.

Parr lived in Hespeler and worked as a stenographer at the Bank of Montreal.<sup>29</sup> Sault, Hawkins, Dargel, and Beilstein lived outside of Preston and commuted by trolley to practice and play on the team.<sup>30</sup> Owing to the work commitments of the players, the best time to practice was in the evenings. However, despite Coach Fach's position as the manager of the local Lowther Street arena, evening ice time was difficult for women's teams to secure whether or not they were provincial champions.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, the team was forced, as Dargel recalls, "to practice at odd times."<sup>32</sup> In her February 22, 1935, "No Man's Land of Sport" column, Gibb explains that because "the hockey rinks aren't in love with letting the girls have their choice of hours or nights either on their ice surfaces, taking what is left has become a custom."<sup>33</sup>

By the end of January in 1931, the Rivulettes made arrangements to enter an intermediate-level league under the LOHA. However, owing to their late mid-season entry, they were not able to partake in regular league play with the other area teams who already had a fixed schedule. Consequently, the LOHA granted the Rivulettes a qualifying match against the Grimsby Peaches to earn a berth in the LOHA play-offs.<sup>34</sup> The Rivulettes defeated Grimsby in the two-game series, gaining entry into the second round of play-offs against the Port Dover Sailorettes, winner of the Port Dover-Simcoe series.<sup>35</sup> Defeating the Sailorettes in the quarter-finals, London in the semifinals, and Pembroke in the finals, the Rivulettes claimed the 1931 LOHA intermediate championship title—by all accounts a successful inaugural season and a prelude to their reign over women's hockey in Ontario.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout the 1930s, the Rivulettes played dozens of league, exhibition, and championship contests against teams within the province and across the country. The LOHA provincial league schedule consisted of regular-season games with a minimum of two and sometimes as many as six neighboring towns (see Table 3). In

**Table 3 League Opponents of the Preston Rivulettes by Year, 1931–1940**

1931	No league games. The Rivulettes entered the play-offs.
1932	Kitchener Wentworths, Guelph.
1933	Kitchener Freddie-Jacks, Guelph, London Silverwoods.
1934	Port Dover Sailorettes, Guelph Leaflettes, Brantford Y.W.C.A.
1935	No league; played exhibition games against the Toronto Pals. <sup>a</sup>
1936	Port Dover Sailorettes, Toronto Pals.
1937	No information available. <sup>b</sup>
1938	Hamilton Tigers, Stratford Aces.
1939	Toronto Ladies.
1940	Toronto Ladies.

<sup>a</sup>For the 1935 season, the Rivulettes were the only women's team in Southern Ontario west of Toronto. See Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 February 1935, 11.

<sup>b</sup>Information on the Rivulettes 1937 regular-season play is scarce. The *Galt Daily Reporter* is missing from January to April 1937 as a result of a flood in 1974 that caused damage to the collection prior to microfilming. The *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Toronto Globe* only report playoff games and championship contests for that year, suggesting that the Toronto women's team did not operate as part of the league during the 1937 season.

Sources: *Toronto Globe*, 1931–1940, *Toronto Daily Star*, 1931–1940, *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1931–1940, *Prestonian*, 1931–1933.



1932, the Rivulettes defeated the Guelph Leafettes and the Kitchener Wentworths in all nine games of the regular season and play-offs and subsequently went on to defeat Chalk River and claim the provincial championship and the Fanny Rosenfeld Trophy for the second time.<sup>37</sup> Not yet ready to retire their skates for the season, the Rivulettes soundly defeated the senior provincial champions from Toronto 4–0 in an exhibition match.<sup>38</sup> In 1933, plagued by poor weather conditions and sloppy ice on the natural ice surface at their home arena on Lowther Street,<sup>39</sup> the Rivulettes advanced to the senior division of the LOHA by defeating the Guelph Leafettes, the Kitchener Freddie-Jacks, and the London Silverwoods in every league and play-off game—maintaining their so-far undefeated streak.<sup>40</sup> Suffering their first tie in play-off action against the Port Dover Sailorettes, the Rivulettes nonetheless won the two-game series with a combined score of 5–2 and advanced to the championship round against the Toronto Ladies.<sup>41</sup> The Rivulettes defeated Toronto in a sudden death game, securing their provincial title for a third year.<sup>42</sup>

In 1933, the Dominion Women's Amateur Hockey Association (DWAHA) was formed to establish regulations for a Dominion Championship series among the top women's teams from across the country.<sup>43</sup> For the first-ever women's hockey Dominion Championship, the Preston Rivulettes traveled to Edmonton to challenge the Western Champions. The Edmonton Rustlers covered all of Preston's expenses, making the Rivulettes's first out-of-province trip relatively inexpensive. With over 200 fans at the train station to see them off, the Rivulettes departed from Preston Wednesday evening and arrived in Edmonton Saturday afternoon—five



**Figure 2** — The Preston Rivulettes in Edmonton, Ontario, Canada; March 1933. Courtesy of the City of Cambridge Archives Photographic Collection.



hours before the first game of the two-game series. In front of a reported 2,500 spectators, with Preston supporters listening to the game broadcast over the local radio station CKPC, the Rivulettes suffered their first-ever defeat in three seasons of play. The Edmonton Rustlers beat the Ontario Champions 3–2 and 1–0 to claim the first Canadian women’s hockey national title.<sup>44</sup>

Although unable to claim the title of Dominion Champions, the achievements of the Rivulettes were still celebrated upon their return home with a public “reception . . . on a community-wide scale” organized by the town council, the Preston Silver Band, Rotary Club, officers of the Canadian Legion, church organizations, and junior and intermediate hockey clubs. Also, one week after their defeat, the *Globe* reported that as guests of the Provincial Legislature in Toronto, the Rivulettes were “congratulated by Premier Henry on behalf of all the members for their achievements with blade and stick.”<sup>45</sup> Demonstrating how supporting the team offered the citizens of Preston much-needed social capital during the 1930s, the *Galt Reporter* exalted that the Rivulettes “placed this town on the sports map.”<sup>46</sup> The team offered the community of Preston a source of pride, accomplishment, and belonging as supporters. Cheering the team on or joining the crowds on King street to celebrate the team’s victorious return from provincial or national championships gave the citizens of Preston a feeling of belonging—a sense of community. Although they were not players on the ice or in many cases even in the arena during the out-of-town games, as club supporters they felt part of the team’s success, part of the process of bringing pride to their community. Station CKPC Preston enabled supporters to be part of this larger community from their living rooms by broadcasting games on local radio.<sup>47</sup>

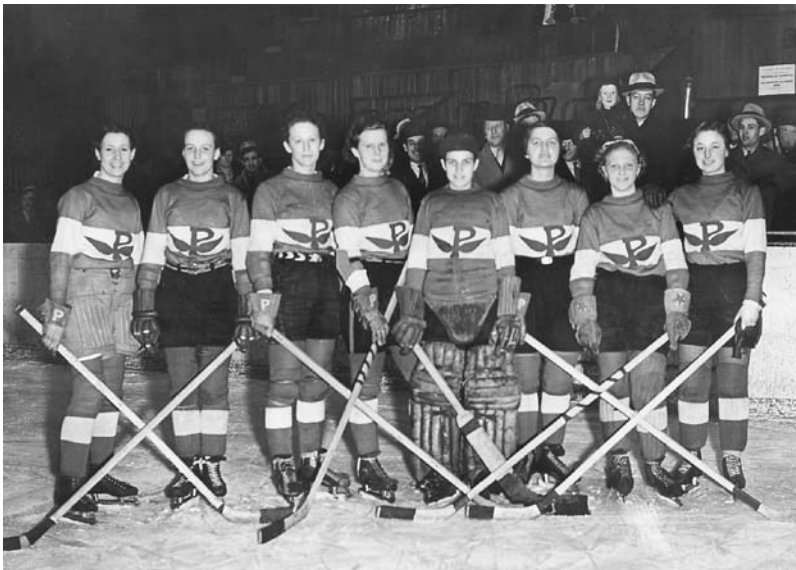
As the Rivulettes traveled and spread their name around the country, the town of Preston received favorable albeit vicarious exposure. Local Member of Parliament Karl Homuth in later years described the Rivulettes as a “great advertising medium.”<sup>48</sup> Many newspaper reports highlighted the growing connection between the Rivulettes and the community. In 1931, after the Rivulettes’s 4–2 win over Pembroke secured their first provincial title the *Prestonian* reported that the interest of local enthusiasts was already peaked:

The arrival home of the girls at 5 p.m. by motor on Sunday created the deepest interest. Early in the afternoon citizens formed groups on King Street, the local band was routed out, and all were expectant, closely scanning the approach of each car. Their final arrival more than repaid the many who had awaited many hours in a cold and raw wind. They were ushered in with the band playing and escorted by a large number of cars, making a trip through King Street and back to the arena. The remarkable performance of the local girl’s team has caused considerable comment among the local fans who have followed the great game of hockey for years. Organized as a team only a short time ago, inexperienced and unnoticed, made their way with ease through all opposition, at that without losing a game to bring this additional honor to Preston.<sup>49</sup>

In the later part of the 1930s as the team began to achieve national success, accounts of celebrations honoring the team also graced the pages of the *Galt Reporter*, the *Toronto Globe*, and the *Toronto Daily Star*. To celebrate the Rivulettes’s first national championship in 1935, the town of Preston held a gala banquet and sport leaders

from across the nation joined in the celebrations and sent telegrams and letters of congratulations. Each member of the team was presented with an engraved wrist-watch and the coaching staff received a silver water pitcher.<sup>50</sup>

Although eager to achieve top accolades as national champions, the Rivulettes were unable in 1934 to compete in the Dominion championship. Throughout the season, the Rivulettes played league games against the Brantford Y.W.C.A, the Guelph Leafettes, and their rivals the Port Dover Sailorettes.<sup>51</sup> Defeating all three teams in regular-season play and the Sailorettes in the first round of playoffs, the Rivulettes advanced to the provincial finals against the Toronto Vagabonds. Handily defeating the Vagabonds with a two-game combined score of 6–3, the Rivulettes claimed their fourth-straight provincial title.<sup>52</sup> Instead of advancing directly to the Dominion Championships as they had in the past, the Rivulettes competed in the inaugural Eastern Canadian championship series, which acted as a semifinal for the Dominion honors.<sup>53</sup> This additional championship reflects the growth of women's hockey in Eastern Canada. On March 24, 1934, at the esteemed Montreal Forum, the Rivulettes defeated the Montreal Maroons 4–1 in a “sudden death fixture” to claim the Eastern Canadian Women's Hockey Title and the Romeo Droust Trophy (see Table 4).<sup>54</sup> Having traveled to Edmonton the previous year, it was Preston's turn to host the Championship series, but they were unable to raise the necessary finances to bring the Edmonton Rustlers, the western champions, to Ontario—news reports suggest that the Rustlers required a \$1,500 guarantee for expenses from the Rivulettes, an impossible sum for the team and its small fan base to amass.<sup>55</sup> Thus, the Rustlers retained the Dominion laurels without contest.



**Figure 3** — The Preston Rivulettes, circa 1934. Courtesy of the City of Cambridge Archives Photographic Collection.

**Table 4 Eastern Canadian Women's Hockey Championship, 1934–1940**

1934	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Montreal Maroons) Romeo Droust Trophy presented.
1935	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Summerside, P.E.I., Primrose A.C.). <sup>a</sup>
1936	Preston Rivulettes (defeated Montreal).
1937	Preston Rivulettes (Montreal Maroons defaulted).
1938	Preston Springs Rivulettes (defeated Charlottetown Islanders).
1939	No information available. <sup>b</sup>
1940	Not available.

<sup>a</sup>This team was formally known as the *Crystal Sisters* and was first formed in 1928.

<sup>b</sup>There was no Eastern Canadian Championship this year. The structure changed. The Rivulettes played the Winnipeg Olympics in the semifinals and then went on to play Charlottetown in the Dominion championship finals.

Sources: *Toronto Globe*, 1934–1940; *Toronto Daily Star*, 1934–1940, *Galt Daily Reporter* 1934–1940.

The following year brought different circumstances. Amid controversy and organizational unrest, the Rivulettes achieved, after three years of struggle, the top title in Canadian women's hockey: Dominion Champion. Although they played exhibition games against the Toronto Pals throughout January of 1935, by the beginning of February the Rivulettes still did not have a league schedule. News reports suggest controversy over eligibility issues concerning the alleged importation of players as well as a lack of a league in which the Rivulettes could play. Because all Rivulettes players were born and lived in Preston, Hespler, or Galt—the three adjoining towns that the hockey club drew from—the claim of western imports was unfounded and easily resolved.<sup>56</sup> However, the lack of a league proved to be a more substantiated allegation. According to women's hockey regulations, "clubs must compete in league or at least three teams before they [go] on into the quarter, semi, or finals of Canadian hockey."<sup>57</sup> By 1935, the number of teams in the senior division had fallen off considerably and the breadth of the LOHA's membership was declining, so the LOHA was forced by Myrtle Cook, president of the DWAHA, to change its rule and, consequently, the Rivulettes completed the season playing against the only other active senior team within reasonable traveling distance, the Toronto Pals. The Rivulettes defeated Bracebridge in the provincial finals, claiming their fifth Ontario title.<sup>58</sup> In five years of organized hockey, no other team in the province had defeated the "queens of the ice lanes."<sup>59</sup> They were untouchable. In 1935, after defeating the Montreal Maroons in the Eastern Canadian semifinals, the Rivulettes traveled to Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) to challenge the Summerside Primrose A.C. team in the finals.<sup>60</sup> With only seven players able to make the trip, the Rivulettes soundly defeated the Summerside team to claim the Eastern Canadian Championship.<sup>61</sup> For the Dominion championship, the Winnipeg Eatons traveled to Preston for the two-game series, marking the first time that the Dominion championship was played in the East. Determined to claim their first national title, the Rivulettes defeated the Eatons in two rough and aggressively fought battles.<sup>62</sup>

Prior to the 1936 season, news reports suggest that substantial changes to the Rivulettes were looming on the horizon. Founding member Helen Schmuck retired from the team following the national victory in 1935 reportedly owing to ill health.<sup>63</sup> Also, in October 1935, the *Toronto Daily Star* reported the possibility of Marm

Schmuck moving to Montreal to play for the Maroons and Nellie Ranscombe, the Rivulettes goalie, being actively recruited by other clubs.<sup>64</sup> However, the LOHA would not grant transfers to the two players.<sup>65</sup> In the end, the majority of the team remained intact for the 1936 season, with ten skaters including veterans Nellie Ranscombe, Hilda Ranscombe, Marm Schmuck, Nellie Ranscombe, Myrtle Parr, Helen Sault, Gladys Hawkins, Marie Belistein, and two new recruits—M. Neath and P. Soehner—who played only a few games with the team. In now customarily determined style, the Rivulettes defeated the Toronto Pals and the Port Dover Sailorettes in every game of league play.<sup>66</sup> The season, however, was not without controversy. Rough play and on-ice fighting in a match with the rival Sailorettes led to an LOHA investigation.<sup>67</sup> The *Galt Reporter* describes

[a]n impromptu and short-lived fisticuff display in the dying moments of the game provided further interest . . . as Eva Smith, visiting defense performer, dumped H. Ranscombe to the ice and then proceeded to pummel the local player who was in no position to retaliate. Referee G. Wright stepped into the breach disengaging the players and dolling out a penalty to Smith.<sup>68</sup>

This was not an isolated incident. In March 1936, Gibb labeled women's hockey contests as "battles," commenting that "the girls on the ice have demonstrated this year they are as good scrappers as any boys' team, and mostly they punch and forget the hair pulling idea."<sup>69</sup> Indeed, game reports throughout the 1930s are riddled with accounts of fighting and aggressive acts on the ice, suggesting the tough and aggressive form of hockey these women played.<sup>70</sup> Aggressive tactics and rough play, emulations of the prevailing male hockey model, were used to gain space and puck control or to sustain team momentum.<sup>71</sup> Heavy body checks, hooking, slashing, and fighting were all part of the women's game of the 1930s. In January 1998, recalling her experiences on the ice, Gladys (Hawkins) Pitcher told reporter Hana Gartner from the CBC's *Journal*, "If they want to fight I'm there."<sup>72</sup>

In 1936, defeating the Stratford Ladies and Gravenhurst Muskokas in the semifinals and finals, respectively, the Rivulettes captured their sixth provincial championship and earned a berth in the Dominion play-offs.<sup>73</sup> Traveling to Montreal, Quebec, for the Eastern Canadian hockey series, the Rivulettes once again showcased their skills on the ice at the Montreal Forum, home of the Montreal Maroons of the National Hockey League. Marvin and Olive Dykeman, coach and chaperone for the team, made the trip with only eight players to keep expenses down: starters Nellie Ranscombe, Hilda Ranscombe, Helen Sault, Myrtle Parr, Marm Schmuck, and Gladys Hawkins and substitutes Marie Beilstein and Marian Reed.<sup>74</sup> Undeterred by reports that the Montreal team had vastly improved from previous seasons, the Rivulettes won the series with a sound 9–2 verdict, achieving their second Eastern Canadian title.<sup>75</sup> News of the victorious small town from Ontario, Canada, reached the United States and was reported on the sports page of the *New York Times*.<sup>76</sup>

Next stop on the Dominion title path was Winnipeg; however, because of the cost of the Montreal trip, the financial arrangements for the 1936 Dominion championship proved contentious. For the Montreal series, there was no guarantee put up by Montreal and there was only modest spectator interest—one of the games saw only 168 spectators in attendance in a city of over 1 million residents. This

meant that the Rivulettes hockey club had to find a way to finance most of the trip.<sup>77</sup> Negotiations between the Preston management and the Winnipeg Rangers club began immediately following the Rivulettes's return from Montreal. Initially, the Rivulettes were offered fifty percent of the gate receipts, rather than upfront cash, to help cover costs for the journey out west.<sup>78</sup> Gibb explains the fifty percent offer, commenting, "It's a new ruling that the D.W.H.A., the governing body, put in when they apparently imagined they were as powerful and financially as strong as the C.A.H.A. It doesn't work in girls' hockey! It isn't working."<sup>79</sup> Revising its ruling from past years, the national governing body for women's hockey made it no longer mandatory for clubs to guarantee money to their visitors.<sup>80</sup> Dykemen, manager of the Rivulettes, presented a counteroffer for the Rangers to play the championship in Preston: a guarantee of \$300 in addition to the gate receipt percentage.<sup>81</sup> The Winnipeg club, however, declined the offer, adamant that they had played in Preston the previous year and it was Preston's turn to go west. In the end, the Rivulettes had an ultimatum: travel to Winnipeg at mostly their own expense or lose by default. The financial loss from Montreal coupled with the inadequate travel guarantee forced the Rivulettes to hang up their skates for the season, forfeiting their coveted Lady Bessborough Trophy to the Winnipeg Rangers by default.<sup>82</sup> In response to this early end to the women's hockey season, the sports page editorial in the *Galt Daily Reporter* questioned the value of the DWAHA:

It almost makes one wonder just what is the value of the ladies' dominion organization. The C.A.H.A., fans figure, has few enough uses, but it at least guarantees traveling expenses to clubs in the dominion playoffs. If the ladies' association cannot legislate to the same end it would appear that it serves little purpose other than to place a few women in publicity's glare. But perhaps we made a mistake entering into any argument with the other sex. It's almost a case of two strikes being called before the start.<sup>83</sup>

Examples such as this offer a window into the organizational world of women's hockey in Canada. Female governing bodies struggled not only with access to resources, but also with prevailing negativity and the continual questioning of women's ability to organize the game.

To the chagrin of female hockey organizers, the 1937 Dominion Championship series also faced the usual "yearly difficulties" as negotiations got under way.<sup>84</sup> The Rivulettes, defeating the Stratford Maids and Markdale in the provincial playoffs to claim their seventh LOHA title, subsequently won the Eastern Canadian Championship with the default of the Montreal Maroons, making their road to the national title one with few obstacles.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the Rivulettes were to meet the Winnipeg Olympics, western champions in a final on home ice. Incidentally, the Olympics also won by default because Alberta's provincial champions, the Calgary Grills, were barred from the Western Canadian contest for not paying their \$10 annual DWAHA membership fee.<sup>86</sup> Financial difficulties were plaguing teams across the country by the mid-1930s. Bobbie Rosenfeld, president of the LOHA stepped in to arrange the championship series on behalf of Preston, striking a satisfactory deal with the western club. Abiding by the current ruling of the DWAHA, Winnipeg agreed to fifty percent of the gate receipts with the remainder paid at their own expense.<sup>87</sup> After a breakfast as honored LOHA guests at Union Station in Toronto,

the thirteen-member Winnipeg party arrived in Preston full of excitement.<sup>88</sup> In front of a crowd of more than 2,000 spectators, the Rivulettes defeated the Winnipeg team 3–1 in the first game. Gibb describes the magnitude of the event, stating, “A band, four policemen, a couple of firemen, two capable referees, and a crowded house with a radio broadcast should be Canadian Women’s Hockey Association debut into big time sport.”<sup>89</sup> Ironically, instead of cheering the hometown team, the spectators at the Galt arena showered support on the visitors: “the entire arena stood and shouted its delight, when Margaret Topp and Maureen Gault of Winnipeg pushed the puck behind Nellie Ranscombe for their first and only goal of the evening.”<sup>90</sup> Winning the second game 4–2, in front of a crowd of over 3,000 spectators from across the province, the Rivulettes captured the pinnacle of women’s hockey in Canada—the Lady Bessborough Cup.<sup>91</sup>

The opening of the 1938 season was marked by an informal gathering at the Preston Springs Hotel, team sponsors for the year, followed by an on-ice practice.<sup>92</sup> The 1938 team saw the return of Helen Schmuck, who rejoined the lineup after retiring following the 1935 season. Original members of the team Marm Schmuck, Hilda Ranscombe, Helen Sault, and Nellie Ranscombe, along with Fay Hilborn, Elvis Williams, and new player Violet Hall, donned their skates in search of the Dominion laurels.<sup>93</sup> For the second year in a row, the city of Toronto did not ice a women’s team. Gibb suggested it was due to lack of ice and encouraged the women to find alternative ice surfaces such as the outdoor ice at Don Flats:

There’s ice . . . you girls . . . and plenty of it . . . the city floods the park for skaters and gives hockey cushions. Outdoor games will be best for your health and here is the solution to the problem that has been so perplexing . . . as to how to buy your way into the rink . . . and that of your opponents . . . and out again.<sup>94</sup>

With the absence of Toronto, the newly formed Hamilton Tigers and the Stratford Aces rounded out the Rivulettes’s league for the 1938 season. Wearing brand-new uniforms of red and white, the Rivulettes easily won every fixture in their seven-game schedule.<sup>95</sup> In an effort to recruit female players, the Rivulettes and Stratford Aces also played an exhibition game in Woodstock, in the hopes that a team from that city would be entered in the 1939 season.<sup>96</sup>

The semifinal round of provincial playoffs against the Northern Marvals of Cobalt was originally scheduled to take place in Preston. However, the Rivulettes were forced to relinquish their ice time to an Ontario Hockey Association men’s semifinal game. In her news column, Rosenfeld explains,

Everything was hunky-dory for this series to be played at Preston, . . . but, the O.H.A. stepped in and ordered the semi-finals of their intermediate “A” Section to be played in Preston this weekend. Naturally it necessitated the canceling of the ladies’ series. Who said “ladies first?” Anyhow in order that a winner be declared by the required date, in order that Ottawa District may be entertained, the Preston Rivulettes, seven-time Eastern Canada champions are now considering a counter offer of the Marvels to play the L.O.H.A. semi-finals there.<sup>97</sup>

Although the Preston women often drew larger crowds than the men’s teams, they still had little control over the scheduling of ice time. The men’s play-off series



took first priority at the rinks, and the women were often forced to make accommodations and last-minute changes. Gibb expresses her frustrating staling,

Girls hockey teams have to take the ice left-overs. From bantams to seniors, the boys get the preference in rinks throughout the province and when the boys' teams have completed their schedules . . . taken their defeats and victories . . . then the girls get the opportunity to take the ice.<sup>98</sup>

Traveling to New Liskeard, in northern Ontario, the Rivulettes defeated the Marvels 8–0 and 7–0 to earn a place in the provincial finals against the Ottawa Rangers.<sup>99</sup> Back on home ice, the Rivulettes defeated the Ottawa Rangers 5–1, to earn a place in the Eastern Canadian Championship. George Parsons of the Toronto Maple Leafs dropped the opening puck in front of a crowd of over 500 spectators, including four Maple Leaf teammates who took in the game. Taking center stage in the news reports from the game was Yvonne Richards of the Ottawa team, a 43-year-old mother of five who once played with the Ottawa Alerts, 1923 and 1924 winners of the provincial championship.<sup>100</sup>

For the 1938 eastern Canadian Championship, the Charlottetown Islanders traveled west to challenge the Preston Rivulettes on their home ice. Defeating the Eastern champions 12–2 in what Rosenfeld described as “the most strenuous girls’ contest witnessed here in many a moon,” the Rivulettes captured the Eastern Canadian championship and earned a berth in the Dominion Championship.<sup>101</sup> Meeting Winnipeg for the fourth consecutive year in the national championship, the Rivulettes expected an easy victory in front of a home crowd. However, before a reported 800 spectators—a small crowd in comparison to the previous year—the Rivulettes tied the first game 1–1. According to reports, this was “the first time the big red and white team have ever had such a thing happen on home ice since they became big time eight years ago.”<sup>102</sup> Incidentally, the Rivulettes did not wear their new Preston Springs–sponsored jerseys for the two Dominion championship games. Gibb explains,

Preston wore the Stratford Aces jerseys of yellow and black. On Saturday they had to wear big, clumsy sweaters of the boys’ team. All because the Bessborough Cup rules won’t let them play commercial teams for the Canadian hockey final. So they change their coats and colours a bit; too silly isn’t it. Their own uniforms fit them. They wear them all season and should be permitted to wear them for a Canadian final.”<sup>103</sup>

After an uncertain start, the Rivulettes defeated the Olympics 2–0 in the second game to capture the title of Dominion Champions.<sup>104</sup>

After the series, Fred Jackson, sports editor for the *Toronto Daily Star* reported that the Rivulettes’s national championship victories were “the only feather the east has pulled out of the championship cap to date.”<sup>105</sup> Following the close of the hockey season, the Rivulettes and other town sport champions—the Riversides, OHA Intermediate champions, and Robert “Scotty” Rankin—were honored for their achievements in front of over 200 onlookers at a town-sponsored banquet. Bobbie Rosenfeld presented the Rivulettes with the Fanny Rosenfeld, Romeo Daoust, and Lady Bessborough trophies emblematic of the provincial, Eastern Canadian, and Dominion titles, and windbreakers as a gift from the town.<sup>106</sup>



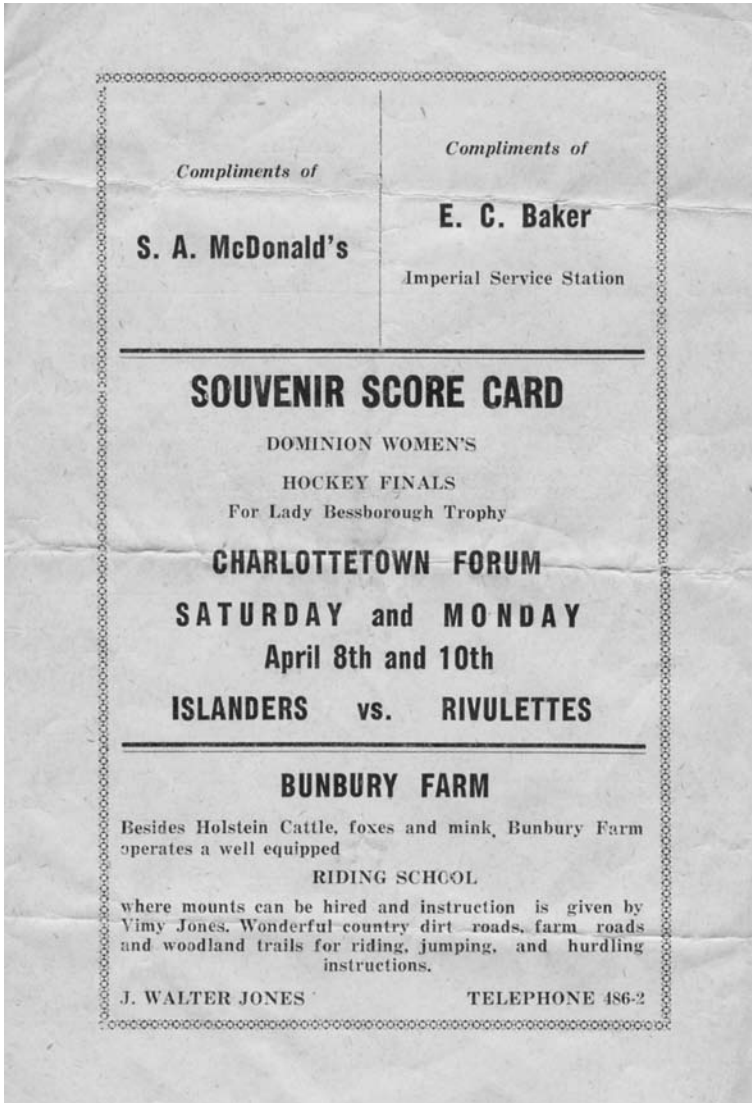
## Ruth Dargel, the War, and the Demise of Women's Hockey in Ontario

The Rivulettes opened their 1939 season on January 23, at the Varsity Arena in Toronto, defeating the Toronto Ladies 2–0.<sup>107</sup> Being one of only two teams in the league for the season, the Rivulettes captured the league title by winning the two-game play-off series with a combined score of 6–0.<sup>108</sup> Defeating Markdale, the Northern Marvels, and the Ottawa Rangers, the Rivulettes met Winnipeg in the semifinals of the Dominion Championship, with the winner meeting the Eastern Champion for the title—a different structure from previous years.<sup>109</sup> Confident of a large crowd, the Rivulettes offered Winnipeg 70 percent of the gate receipts to cover their trip expenses.<sup>110</sup> Defeating Winnipeg in two close-fought games with scores of 3–2 and 0–0, the Rivulettes earned the right to challenge for their fourth Dominion Championship.<sup>111</sup>

In 1939, the Rivulettes traveled east to defend their title against the Islanders of Charlottetown, P.E.I., maritime champions. Among team members making the eastern journey was 16-year-old forward Ruth Dargel. Born in 1923, the youngest of five siblings and the only female, Dargel learned to play hockey on outdoor ponds with her brother:

When I was small, I had a brother that played. And I had speed skates at the time and he said to my dad, “you get her off those speed skates and get her on tube skates” he says “I’m not playing with her with that. We were playing in the backyard and that’s how I got started.”<sup>112</sup>

Since debuting on February 5, 1938, Dargel was one of the youngest members of the Rivulettes, playing on what was affectionately known in the press as “the kid line.”<sup>113</sup> She recalls that it was her mother who arranged for her to try out with the team: “It was my mother who got me going. Herb Fach’s boy was a mailman. So she says something to him one day and he says ‘bring her down.’ So I went down and I got on the team.”<sup>114</sup> Female athletic experiences of the past were informed by the creation of personal meanings within the larger shifting social environments in which girls and women lived. Negotiating the often-uncertain terrain, each athlete constructed her sport experiences in unique ways with implications for how we perceive women’s sport involvement of the past. Stories of individual athletes inform the broader social process of sport practices of the past and challenge us to broaden our understanding and interpretation of sport in Canadian society. For Dargel, the seven-day team trip to P.E.I. was her first time away from home. She recalls the trip as her most memorable experience with the team: “we left here [Preston] on a Friday. Pretty near a week. We had a great time.”<sup>115</sup> Ten players, with their coach, manager, and chaperone, left Preston in April around Easter by train, and after a short layover in Montreal, they reached the Atlantic. Traveling to P.E.I. on the S.S. Charlottetown ferry was an adventure for the players. Dargel recalls that “when we went on the boat we had an ice cutter, and he had to cut the ice in order to get going. . . . It was a rough ride. . . . Upon reaching the town, the daughter of a Charlottetown MP met the ferry and the group embarked on a tour of the city, including the Parliament buildings, where each girl received a coin.”<sup>116</sup> Eager to retain their Dominion title, the Rivulettes soundly defeated the Charlotte-



**Figure 4** — Preston Rivulettes versus Charlottetown Islanders, game program, 1939. Courtesy of Ruth (Dargel) Collins.

town Islanders 11–3 in two games.<sup>117</sup> News reports suggest that a thousand people witnessed the games over the two-day affair.<sup>118</sup>

A chronological recounting of the Rivulettes’s seasons speaks to the success of the team. However, by the late 1930s and as the Depression was drawing to a close and the country was readying itself for war, the success of the team was

detrimental to its stability—as time went on, the more games and championships the Rivulettes won, the less interest they received from their fans and the town community. More broadly, the success of the Rivulettes was detrimental to the organization of women's hockey in Ontario. Teams across the province did not want to join the LOHA—which by this time had only enough teams to operate a senior division across the province—because of the unlikely chance they had of winning not only the provincial title but even individual games. Ultimately, the success of the Rivulettes was causing LOHA membership numbers to decrease. Since entering the LOHA in 1931, the Rivulettes had not lost a game in Ontario. Instead of joining the organization in pursuit of a provincial title only to be beaten by the Rivulettes, teams chose to play exhibition games against other teams with similar skill levels. News reports in 1939 suggest that several Canadian women's hockey teams were invited to the United States for a ten-day barnstorming exhibition tour. The Rivulettes, despite their national record and overall unparalleled achievements in women's hockey in Canada, were not invited. Instead women's teams from Montreal and Toronto, two major city centers, would represent the country. Jackson comments on the situation:

The Rivulettes believe they are getting the well-known run-around from the larger centres and we heartily agree with their calculations. It's been a long time since an outstanding team of any brand of sport, male or female, has been treated with such discourtesy and disregard. Here we have what is easily the outstanding ladies' hockey team in the Dominion over a period of years and they are pushed around for rival puckettes who can't hold a candle or push a puck in the same arena. It seems to me that the promoters in the United States arenas have been badly misinformed in ladies' hockey around here. . . . It is said that the reason the Rivulettes were not invited was that they were so superior in the other girls' teams that the exhibition would be turned into a farce or a three-act comedy.<sup>119</sup>

Gibb suggests that Irene Wall, president of the Quebec branch of the Women's Amateur Athletic Federation, was asked to nominate two traveling women's hockey teams for the United States tour. She in turn gave the names of her home city's team and the Toronto Ladies from Ontario. Attempting to explain the situation, Gibb states, "The only reasons I can see for inviting an Ontario team which isn't at the top provincially are first to get even with Preston for defeating Montreal so consistently, and secondly to get a team which will be closer to their own strength."<sup>120</sup>

For the 1940 season, Toronto and Preston were the only two teams in the LOHA's senior division. Putting the disappointment of exclusion from the United States tour behind them, the Rivulettes opened the 1940 season in mid-January by defeating the Toronto Ladies 2–0 and 6–0 in the first two games.<sup>121</sup> By the end of February, the Rivulettes had captured the league title and their tenth provincial crown, defeating Toronto in every game.<sup>122</sup> The Dominion Championship against Winnipeg did not take place because neither team could raise enough money to cover travel expenses—a familiar tune in women's hockey circles—forcing the Rivulettes to end their season after only a handful of games. The financial support provided by community members through gate receipts and the local hotel was not enough to sustain the Rivulettes. During an interview with the *Galt Reporter*

in 1966, Coach Fach related, “taking a hockey team across Canada in the height of the Depression was an undertaking fraught with all kinds of problems, money being the main difficulty.”<sup>123</sup> Pitcher recalled times when Dykeman, the team manager, would “make the rounds knocking on the doors” of local businesses trying to find the funds to send the team to Montreal, out East or wherever they needed to travel to defend their title.<sup>124</sup> News reports decades after the team folded suggest that in 1939, Dykeman and Fach mortgaged their homes to raise enough money for the team to travel to Charlottetown, P.E.I.<sup>125</sup> The men thought they would get this money back through gate receipts the team would receive from the games in Charlottetown; however, the Rivulettes’s portion of the money was not enough to cover team expenses.

By 1940, the future of organized women’s hockey in Canada was bleak, with women’s hockey participation having declined drastically across the country. By 1940, the LOHA could no longer maintain its existence as an independent governing body for women’s hockey. Indeed, news reports in October 1941 state that the LOHA had “closed shop.”<sup>126</sup> The LOHA amalgamated with the Ontario Branch of the Women’s Amateur Athletic Federation (WAAF)—a move facilitated by Roxy Atkins, who was the president of both the WAAF and the LOHA in 1941. Although news reports suggest that women’s hockey continued throughout the province in the early 1940s, there were no organized leagues and no provincial championships.<sup>127</sup> Sport historian Ann Hall reports that by 1941 there was not a single women’s hockey league operating in Toronto and in Winnipeg there were no teams at all.<sup>128</sup> Resources for women’s hockey were decreasing as the country shifted its focus to the war overseas.

Although men’s sport in Canada diminished in a manner similar to women’s, there was a resurgence of men’s sport in the postwar period that was never realized for women. This recovery was indicative of the predominant place that the National Hockey League held as a major Canadian cultural institution for the numbers of men and boys participating at community levels. Women’s organized hockey remained relatively dormant. The underlying assumption that hockey was for men and boys was reinforced in 1956 when nine-year-old Abigail Hoffman challenged a “boys”-only policy in minor hockey by competing on a West Toronto team, only to be prohibited from continuing once her identity was made public. Women were expected to cheer for their favorite hockey heroes, not to actively participate. Their success and the difficulties of the LOHA in arranging league play, coupled with decreasing fan support, exclusion from barnstorming tours in the United States, and the perpetual financial difficulties that faced women’s teams throughout the 1930s led to the eventual disbandment of the Rivulettes.

## The Politics of Representation

Halls of fame contribute to, and in many cases, dictate the formation of community memories—the *remembering* of sport.<sup>129</sup> In 1995, sport historian and activist Bruce Kidd challenged members of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS) to actively confront the lack of female inductees by pushing for parity on selection committees and submitting well-researched nominations.<sup>130</sup> Established in 1997, the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame, as a public

institution, distributes information and singles out specific sports and athletic accomplishments from the community, bestowing a level of status on individual athletes and teams, both male and female. Over the past decade, female athletes and women's teams have increasingly appeared on the induction lists of community halls of fame, but they remain conspicuously absent from national halls, such as the Hockey Hall of Fame (HHOF) in Toronto, which self-proclaims to be *the* authority for showcasing both amateur *and* professional hockey.<sup>131</sup>

The success of the Rivulettes is undeniable. In 1999, Hilda Ranscombe's name was submitted to the HHOF for induction consideration. Ranscombe helped the team achieve success as team captain for the duration of its existence. She was also a mentor for the women on the team, providing coaching, encouragement, and advice on and off the ice. The detailed nomination package that accompanied the request was filled with glowing, detailed teammate and community supporter testimonials attesting to Ranscombe's decades of dedication to the development of women's hockey in Canada as a player, coach, and supporter of the game. Carl Liscombe, National Hockey League Detroit Red Wings player from 1937 to 1946, recalled that he "... played hockey with and against Hilda and her sister Nellie on the Grand River in Preston and Galt. Hilda was just as good as any boy, and better than most, myself included. When we picked teams, she was always the first one chosen."<sup>132</sup> Mary McGuire from the 1938 Stratford Aces team recalled that "Hilda was without a doubt the best female hockey player in the world."<sup>133</sup> In 2001, the *Cambridge Times* called Ranscombe "Preston's own female version of Wayne



**Figure 5** — Hilda Ranscombe. Courtesy of the City of Cambridge Archives Photographic Collection.

Gretzky.”<sup>134</sup> Dargel recalls that “Hilda took me under her wing showing me some of the finer skills and how to be a professional both on and off the ice. She was our captain and patiently and enthusiastically shared her knowledge and love of the sport.”<sup>135</sup> Ultimately the attempt to have Ranscombe inducted was unsuccessful—the fate of all female nomination packages to date. The arguably conscious omission of women reinforces the trivialization of women’s sport accomplishments and the domination of men in the central status positions.<sup>136</sup>

Interestingly, many newspaper and secondary source accounts of the team indicate that the Rivulettes *have* been inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame, an interesting statement given the complete absence of females from the Hall’s induction lists as either builders or players.<sup>137</sup> Perhaps this misconception can be traced back to a news report from 1963. Under the headline “Rivulettes to Enter Hockey Hall of Fame,” an article in the *Galt Evening Reporter* suggested that the HHOFF contacted Hilda Ranscombe and “they would like to recognize the team’s outstanding achievements by placing the championship trophy and pictures within the hall’s confines.”<sup>138</sup> Although this was certainly a well-deserved recognition of the team’s success, it was in no way an induction into the hall’s prestigious honored members lists seemingly reserved for men. But why is recognition from the HHOFF so important? Historian Shona Thompson argues vehemently that

feminist attention to sport has revealed a history of women being denied opportunities, of being restricted and excluded from participation, of *having our accomplishments ignored* or ridiculed, of hearing our efforts being used as male forms of derision, of having our labour and our bodies exploited in the name of sport, and of being divided against each other by endemic misogyny and homophobia.<sup>139</sup>

Exclusion from halls of fame is just one way women’s accomplishments are overlooked. Kidd argues that “the dearth of women in so many halls and exhibits . . . contributes to the ‘symbolic annihilation’ of women throughout the public discourse.”<sup>140</sup> Indeed, the growing body of literature on the gendering of sport throughout history and women’s sport experiences more specifically provides countless examples. Historically, sport fields, as a social space for competitive and leisure physical activities have been viewed as the rightful place of men and boys. The longstanding dynamic legitimizing of sport as a masculine enclave secured an insider status for men—the welcomed recipients of public recognition.<sup>141</sup> Ice hockey is a sacrosanct part of Canadian culture that, as Gruneau and Whitson argue, “has become one of this country’s most significant collective representations—a story that Canadians tell themselves about what it means to be Canadian.”<sup>142</sup> But it is stories of the men’s game that have built this mystic. As Adams argues, “despite increasing numbers of female players, hockey still makes a major contribution to discourses of Canadian national identity that privileges native-born, white men.”<sup>143</sup> The obfuscation of women’s involvement in hockey since the late 1800s, at both community and national levels, tends to exclude the women’s game from the Canadian hockey aura. The Rivulettes are inspirations for Canadian women of all ages—their experiences are those of legends—a Canadian hockey story that should never be forgotten.



## Notes

1. Eugene McCarthy, "Sports heroes inducted into hall of fame," *Kitchener Record*, Kitchener, ON, 4 May 1998, A1.
2. The Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame is easily accessible at the Cambridge Centre, a local shopping mall, in Cambridge, Ontario, approximately 100 km southwest of Toronto. For more information, see [www.cambridgesportshalloffame.ca](http://www.cambridgesportshalloffame.ca).
3. Interview with Ruth (Dargel) Collins, Kitchener, Ontario, notes in possession of author, 8 September 2006.
4. Mary Louise Adams, "The Game of Whose Lives? Gender, Race, and Entitlement in Canada's "National" Game," in *Artificial Ice: Hockey, Culture, and Commerce*, ed. David Whitson and Richard Gruneau (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2006), 71.
5. See Brian McFarlane, *Proud Past, Bright Future: 100 Years of Canadian Women's Hockey* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1994).
6. See Elizabeth Etue and Megan K. Williams, *On the Edge: Women Making Hockey History* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 1996) and Joanna Avery and Julie Stevens, *Too Many Men on the Ice: Women's Hockey in North America* (Victoria, BC: Polestar, 1997).
7. On 1 January 1973, the city of Galt merged with the towns of Preston and Hespeler to form the city of Cambridge.
8. It is most frequently cited in both scholarly literature and newspaper accounts that the Rivulettes have won six Dominion titles from 1935 until 1940. See for example, B. Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 103. But in 1936 the Dominion championship was not contested. The Rivulettes could not afford to make the trip and were forced to default the Dominion series to Winnipeg. See "Rivulettes Are Forced to Default," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 6 April 1936, 4. Also, in 1940 the Dominion Championship was again not contested as neither Preston nor Winnipeg could raise the finances to travel across the country.
9. After an extensive search of the *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1930–1942; *Toronto Daily Star*, 1930–1942; *Toronto Globe*, 1930–1942; and *Prestonian*, 1930–1932, I found evidence of 87 games the Rivulettes played in Ontario and across Canada, in league, exhibition, and championship matches. From these game reports, there were only two reported losses, with both of these occurring in Edmonton during the 1933 championship series. See "Preston Rivulettes Lose at Edmonton," *Toronto Globe*, 20 March 1933, 18; "Ontario Champions Beaten by Edmonton," *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 March 1933, 12. Given that in 1939 and 1940 there was only one team in the league, and in 1931 and 1935 the Rivulettes did not play in a league owing to lack of teams, compounded by the fact that the team did not start their season until January each year, it is highly unlikely that they played anywhere near the 350 games that is so commonly cited in the literature.
10. Susan L. Forbes, "Gendering Corporate Welfare Practices: Female Sports and Recreation at Eaton's During the Depression," *Rethinking History* 5 (2001): 66.
11. For more on the Depression in Canada, see, for example, Michael Horn, *The Dirty Thirties* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1972); James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State 1914-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Michael Horn, *The Depression in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988); Paul Men-nill, *The Depression Years: Canada in the 1930s* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall, 1978).
12. Jim Quantrell, *A Part of Our Past: Essays on Cambridge's History* (Cambridge, ON: City of Cambridge Archives, 2000), 26.
13. Shona Thompson, "Sport, Gender, Feminism," in Kevin Young and Joe Maguire (eds.) *Theory, Sport, & Society* (Elsevier Science, 2002), 111.



14. See David Whitson, "Hockey and Canadian Popular Culture: The Making and Remaking of Identities," in K. B. Wamsley (ed.) *Method and Methodology in Sport and Cultural History* (Dubuque, Iowa: Times Mirror Higher Education Group, 1995), 189–196. For population figures of Preston, see Jim Quantrell, *Timeframes: Historical Chronologies of Galt, Preston, Hespeler, Blair and Cambridge* (Cambridge, ON: City of Cambridge Archives, 2003), 313.
15. Whitson, 190.
16. *Ibid.*, 193.
17. The location of the meeting minutes for this organization, if they exist, is unknown.
18. Regarding the formation of the organization and the inaugural meetings, see "Lady Hockeyists to Organise Tomorrow," *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 December 1922, 3; "Lady Hockeyists to Meet Tomorrow," *Toronto Globe*, 8 December 1922, 8; "Over Forty Teams Enter New Series," *Toronto Globe*, 18 December 1922, 9.
19. See M. Ann Hall, *The Girl and The Game* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 43. The first women's association to affiliate with the AAU of C was the Canadian Ladies Golf Union formed in 1913.
20. See "Intermediate Series for Ladies' Hockey," *Toronto Daily Star*, 14 December, 1925, 10.
21. The Rivulettes were not the first women's hockey team to grace the ice surfaces in Preston and surrounding areas. During the early 1920s, there is evidence of women's hockey matches taking place in both Preston and the neighboring town of Galt, although specific information is scarce. See, for example, *Galt Reporter*, 14 March 1924, 4. This article reports of a match between the Preston Hurlburts and a North Toronto team in the provincial playoffs; *Galt Reporter*, 30 January 1925, 4. This article indicates there was a team from Galt called the *Galt Imperials*. Listed as a substitute on the Galt Imperials for the 1925 season was Pat Marriott, a future Preston Rivulettes player. By the late 1920s, there are no references to women's hockey in Preston or Galt in the local newspapers.
22. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 April 1935, 14. For more information on Gibb, see M. Ann Hall, "Alexandrine Gibb: In 'No Man's Land of Sport,'" *International Journal of the History of Sport* 18 (2001): 149–172.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Hall, "Alexandrine Gibb," 151 and 154. See also A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 1 May 1937, 17.
25. "Rivulettes Win in Grimsby by 5 to 1 Count," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 20 February 1931, 4.
26. The Lowther Street Arena, home of the Preston Rivulettes, was built in 1913 and officially opened on 1 January 1914. The arena had a 2,500-spectator capacity and the ice surface measured 190 feet by 90 feet. It was built as the home of the local men's junior team, the Ontario Hockey Association Intermediate Champions. The arena remained in use until 1949 when it was declared unsafe and was demolished. See Quantrell, *Timeframes*, 117.
27. Norma Hipel was the daughter of Norman Hipel, Ontario member of parliament for Waterloo South.
28. See *Town of Preston Directory, 1932-1940*, City of Cambridge Archives; Eleanor (Nellie) Ranscombe and Helen Schmuck Obituaries, City of Cambridge Archives, R-61.
29. See *Town of Hespeler Directory, 1936*, City of Cambridge Archives.
30. Interview with Ruth (Dargel) Collins, Kitchener, Ontario, notes in possession of author, 3 May 2004.
31. This was a part-time position for Herb Fach. The Preston Directories from the 1930s list his occupation as builder, mechanic, mason, and owner of Fach and Caskenette throughout the decade. See *Town of Preston Directory, 1932-1940*, City of Cambridge Archives.

32. Collins interview, 3 May 2004.
33. Alexandrine Gibb. *Toronto Star*, 22 February 1935, 13; See also *Toronto Daily Star*, 2 March 1938, 12. Women have to wait until the men's play-offs are done before they can begin.
34. "Rivulettes in Ontario League," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 27 January 1931, 4.
35. "Rivulettes Won in Grimsby by 5 to 1 Count," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 20 February 1931, 4; "Rivulettes Won From Grimsby to Take First Round," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 24 February 1931, 4.
36. For accounts of these games from local papers see, "Rivulettes Win From Port Dover Sailorettes 1-0," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 3 March 1931, 4; "Local and Personal," *Prestonian*, Preston, Ontario, 5 March 1931, 21; "Rivulettes Defeat London on Local Ice to Gain a Two-Goal Lead, L.O.H.A. Playdowns," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 6 March 1931, 4; "Preston Girls Win," *Prestonian*, Preston, Ontario, 12 March 1931, 23;
37. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Open the Season with Decisive 8-1 Win Over the Kitchener Wentworths," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 21 January 1932, 5; "Rivulettes Dump the Kalsomine on Royal City Club," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 27 January 1932, 5; "Rivulettes Hand Kitchener Wentworths 2-0 Drubbing for Third Straight Victory," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 29 January 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Beat Kitchener, Grab Play-off Berth," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 3 February 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Take Wentworths into Camp, 1-0 Score," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 9 February 1932, 4; "Preston Ladies Hockey Club Wins Soft Game," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 17 February 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Win final Game of Schedule by 6-0," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 19 February 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Gain Two Goal Lead over Twin City," 23 February 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Kalsomine Twin City Wentworths 3-0, Annex Intercounty Hockey Laurels," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 4 March 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Win Game and Round," *Toronto Globe*, 4 March 1932, 19; "Rivulettes Defeat the Chalk River Girls 3-0, Again Annex Ontario Ladies' Championship," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 14 March 1932, 4; "Rivulettes Capture Intermediate Title," *Toronto Globe*, 14 March 1932, 7.
38. "Rivulettes Give Varsity Co-eds Coat Whitewash," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 22 March 1932, 4; "Preston Rivulettes Win Championship," *Toronto Globe*, 22 March 1932, 12.
39. See Quantrell, *Timeframes*, 117.
40. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Open Season With Win," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 January 1933, 4; "Rivulettes in a Win Last Night Over Kitchener," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 13 January 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Remain Undefeated," *Globe*, 13 January 1933, 12; "Rivulettes Win at London and Improve Status," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 16 January 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Add Another Win to Unbroken String," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 31 January 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Blank Twin City Girls," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 February 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Pass the Kalsomine," 13 February 1933, 4; "Preston Girls Secure 2 Goal Play-off Lead," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 21 February 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Eliminate the Royal City Club by 5-0 Verdict, Guelph Last Night," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 24 February 1933, 4.
41. For the most part, LOHA play-off and championship series consisted of two games with a combined score to determine the victor. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Win at Port Dover," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1 March 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Win from Port Dover by 5-2 on Round," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 March 1933, 4.
42. See "L.O.H.A. Championship at Stake This Evening," *Globe*, 3 March 1933, 12; "Rivulettes Defeat Toronto Ladies by One Goal and Earn Trip to Edmonton," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 9 March 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Will Likely Go West," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 11 March 1933, 4; "Rivulettes Leave for Edmonton Tonight," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 15 March 1933, 4.
43. See "Toronto Writer on Girls' Hockey," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 25 February 1933, 4.
44. For game reports, see "Goal in Last Minutes of Play Gives Edmonton Club 3-2 Win Over the Rivulettes," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 20 March 1933, 4; "Preston Rivulettes Lose at Edmonton,"

*Toronto Globe*, 20 March 1933, 18; "Edmonton Girls Win Over Preston Team," *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 March 1933, 14; "Edmonton Girls Defeat the Rivulettes 1-0 and Win the Ladies Canadian Championship," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 21 March 1933, 4. "Ontario Champions Beaten by Edmonton," *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 March 1933, 12.

45. Interestingly, Henry is also quoted saying, "I would express the hope that when they are older some of them may have seats in this House." "House Honors Preston Ladies," *Toronto Globe*, 26 March 1933, 14. This news report also indicated that the previous day the Newmarket Junior team was honored in the House for their accomplishments.

46. See "Meet Tonight to Plan Reception for Rivulettes," *Galt Reporter*, 22 March 1933, 4.

47. For more information on Preston's first radio station, CKPC, see Clara Bernhardt, "CKPC's Early Years in Preston," *Waterloo Historical Society*, Vol 57. 1969, 64-68.

48. *Galt Evening Reporter*, 3 January 1966, 15.

49. "Congratulations," *Prestonian* (Preston, ON) 19 March 1931, 27. After the season was over, a large crowd of 1,475 spectators came to the Lowther Street arena for a benefit game between the Rivulettes and the Toronto Silverwoods in honor of Helen Schmuck, who was confined to her home owing to an illness. See "Rivulettes Defeat Toronto Silverwoods," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 31 March 1931, 10. The reporter blamed Schmuck's illness on her strenuous efforts on the ice, stating that her "sensational playing had everything to do with the teams fine achievement and who through her unsparing efforts, so lowered her vitality and resistance, that she suffered a breakdown."

50. A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 April 1935, 14. "Preston Rivulettes Honored at Banquet," *Toronto Globe*, 17 April 1935, 6

51. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Win from the Port Dover Girls 2-1," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 5 January 1934, 4; "Rivulettes Use the Kalsomine on Leafettes," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 12 January 1934, 4; "Rivulettes Too Good for Guelph," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 31 January 1934, 4; "Rivulettes 12 Brantford 0," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 2 February 1934, 4; "Rivulettes Won in Port Dover," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 6 February 1934, 4.

52. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Get One-Goal Lead in Title Match," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 9 March 1934, 4-5; "Vagabonds Defeated in Preston Match," *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 March 1934, 10; "Rivulettes Again Defeat the Varsity Vagabonds to Take Fourth Straight L.O.H.A. Title," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 12 March 1934, 4.

53. See "Rivulettes Discuss Plans for the Play-offs," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 17 March 1934, 4.

54. "Rivulettes Defeat Montreal 4-1 Saturday to Win Eastern Canada Ladies Hockey Title," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 26 March 1934, 4; A. Gibb, "Preston Girls Outclass Maroons in Girls' Hockey Playoff," *Toronto Daily Star*, 26 March 1934, 10.

55. See A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 29 March 1934, 15; "Stop! Look! Listen!" *Toronto Daily Star*, 3 April 1934, 10; "Rivulettes to Hang Up Skates," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 3 April 1934, 4.

56. See "Prestorials," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 1 February 1935, 4.

57. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 February 1935, 11.

58. "Rivulettes Blank Bracebridge Ladies 4 to 0 for their Fifth Consecutive O.L.H.A. Crown," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 25 February 1935, 4.

59. "Queens of the Ice Lanes," and other variations, such as "Champions of the Ice Lanes" and "Queens of the Frozen Surface," were nicknames for the Rivulettes often found in press reports in the late 1930s. See, for example, "Ottawa Rangers Arrive in Town," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 25 March 1938, 6.

60. See "Rivulettes Take Opening Game of Ontario-Quebec Series 3-1 Verdict Over Montreal," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 2 March 1935, 4; Alexandrine Gibb, "Preston Earn Two Goal Lead Eastern

Canadian Semi-Final," *Toronto Daily Star*, 2 March 1935, 10; "Preston Wins Round From Montreal 3-1," *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 March 1935, 6; "Scoreless Draw Saturday Gives Rivulettes the Right to Meet Maritime Champs," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 March 1935, 4. A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 March 1935, 12. News reports suggest that the Summerside Crystal sisters had not been defeated since they organized in 1928; see "Rivulettes Leave for Maritimes," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 6 March 1935, 4; Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 March 1935, 12.

61. "Despite Long Train Trip, the Rivulettes Step Into Eastern Club for 4-0 Win Opener," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 9 March 1935, 4; Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star* 11 March 1935, 10. "Rivulettes Capture Canada East Title," *Toronto Globe*, 11 March 1935, 7.

62. For game reports, see Alexandrine Gibb, "Sticks and Fists Fly Freely as Girl Hockeyists Battle," *Toronto Daily Star*, 26 March 1935, 12; "Rivulettes Grab Six Goal Lead From Winnipeg Eatons, First Game of Dominion Playoffs," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 26 March 1935, 4; "Peg girls Lose to Preston," *Toronto Globe*, 26 March 1935, 7; A. Lytle, "Star Sport Rays," *Toronto Daily Star*, 27 March 1935, 11; "Preston Girls Turn Back the Winnipeg Eatons 3-1, Capture Series by 10-2 Score on Round," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 28 March 1935, 4; "Girls Wanted Another Fight But Referees Stopped Them," *Toronto Daily Star*, 28 March 1935, 14.

63. See "Preston Ladies Capture Opener," *Toronto Globe*, 23 January 1936, 7.

64. See "Preston Hockeyists are Moving East," *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 October 1935, 14.

65. "Stop! Look! Listen!," *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 October 1935, 12. This article quotes the Montreal manager Buster Horwood explaining the reason why Schmuck did not go to Montreal, "We couldn't get her the job she wanted."

66. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Get Away to a Good start, Taking Port Dover Sailorettes 3-1 in 1936 Debut," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 22 January 1936, 6; "Preston Ladies Capture Opener," *Toronto Globe*, 23 January 1936, 7; "Rivulettes Beat Toronto Pals, 7-1," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 30 January 1936, 6. "Sailorettes in One-All Draw with Rivulettes," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 February 1936, 4; "Rivulettes Take Verdict from Port Dover Girls," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 20 February 1936, 4.

67. See "L.O.H.A. To Investigate Fight at Girls' Game," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 21 February 1936, 6.

68. "Rivulettes Take 3-1 Verdict From Port Dover Girls," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 20 February 1936, 4.

69. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 25 March 1936, 12.

70. See, for example, "Hockey Amazons in Fistic Display," *Toronto Daily Star*, 20 February 1936, 16; "Sticks and Fists Fly Freely as Girl Hockeyists Battle," *Toronto Daily Star*, 26 March 1935, 12; "Girls Draw Major for Fistic Display," *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 March 1937, 14; "Prestorials: Sports Here and There," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 27 February 1931, 4; "Rivulettes Win From Port Dover by 5-2," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 March 1933, 4, 12; "Hamilton Ladies Shut Out By the Rivulettes 2 to 0," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 7 February 1938, 4.

71. Kevin B. Wamsley and Carly Adams, "Stepping in With Fists: Agression in Early Women's Hockey," paper presented at the annual conference of the North American Society of Sport Sociology, 2006, Vancouver, British Columbia.

72. Interview with Gladys Pitcher and Hilda Ranscombe, CBC, *Journal*. 16 January 1998.

73. For game reports of the Stratford and Gravenhurst games, see "Rivulettes Open Stratford Series with a 4-1 Verdict," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 28 February 1936, 6; "Preston Rivulettes Eliminate Stratford," *Toronto Globe*, 2 March 1936, 7; "Preston Rivulettes Dispose of the Classic City By 4-0 Shutout; Edge On Round. 8-1" *Galt Daily Reporter*, 2 March 1936, 4 (this news report suggests that this is the first year that Stratford women have competed in organized hockey); "Rivulettes Take first Game with Gravenhurst 4-2," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 9 March 1936, 4; "Another Title

For Preston,” *Toronto Globe*, 11 March 1936, 7; “Rivulettes Score 9-2 Win Over Gravenhurst and Enter Dominion Hockey Playoffs,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 11 March 1936, 4; “Rivulettes Again Win Hockey Title,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 11 March 1936, 14. The match between Preston and Gravenhurst was announced on the center of the sports page of the *Galt Daily Reporter*, a rare occurrence for the team. Usually the reports are found in the town of Preston section of the news. Perhaps this was prompted by the change in venue for the game, which was to take place at the Galt arena with artificial ice instead of the soft natural ice surface at the Preston arena. See “Ladies’ Finals on Galt Ice Tonight,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 10 March 1936, 8.

74. See “Rivulettes on Way to Montreal,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 27 March 1936, 6.

75. “Preston Defeats Montreal Girls,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 28 March 1936, 4; “Maroon Girls Down 4 Goals in Series With Preston Team,” *Montreal Daily Star*, 28 March 1936, 13; “Maroons Easy for Rivulettes,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 30 March 1936, 4; M. Cook, “In the Women’s Sport-light,” *Montreal Daily Star*, 30 March 1936, 23.

76. “Preston Women Keep Title,” *New York Times*, 29 March 1936, S2.

77. For comments from coach Marvin Dykeman, see “No Arrangement for Hockey Final,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 30 March 1936, 4, and D. McKenna, “Preston Invited to Party and Finds Out Later It’s on Them,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 31 March 1936, 9. Gibb reports that ticket sales amounted to \$250. This was split two ways: half to the Forum, with the rest to the Rivulettes after the referee’s fees had been deducted. See Alexandrine Gibb, “No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 30 March 1936, 10.

78. See “Winnipeg Offer of 50 Percent Fails to Intrigue Girls,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 31 March 1936, 4.

79. Alexandrine Gibb, “No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 3 April 1936, 11.

80. “Winnipeg Women Win Championship,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 8 April 1936, 22.

81. “Rangers Unable to Accept Offer,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 1 April 1936, 16; “Sporting Gossip Here and There,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 14 April 1936, 10.

82. “Rivulettes Are Forced, Default,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 6 April 1936, 4; “Winnipeg Accepts Default of Preston Rivulettes,” *Toronto Globe*, 9 April 1936, 8.

83. “Sporting Gossip Here and There,” *Galt Daily Reporter*, 14 April 1936, 10.

84. Alexandrine Gibb, “Miss Hipel is Hockey Star,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 31 March 1931, 16.

85. For game reports, see “Girls Draw Majors For Fistic Display,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 March 1937, 14; “Preston Girls’ Hockey Team Again ‘Champs,’” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 16 March 1937, 18; “Preston Rivulettes Win Eastern Title on Default,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 24 March 1937, 20.

86. “W.A. Hewitt Denies Offer to Calgary,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 March 1937, 12; Alexandrine Gibb, “Miss Hipel is Hockey Star,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 31 March 1931, 16; Alexandrine Gibb, “No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 3 April 1937, 13.

87. Bobbie Rosenfeld, “Preston Girls Might Defeat Boys’ Sextets,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1937, 17. In the end, Gibb reported that Winnipeg received \$840, the Galt Arena \$500, \$140 went to the DWHA, with only \$100 left for the host team and champions, the Rivulettes. See Alexandrine Gibb, “No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 April 1937, 13.

88. Alexandrine Gibb, “Flying School Teacher is Chaperone of Winnipeg Club,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 April 1937, 12.

89. Alexandrine Gibb, “In No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 April 1937, 13.

90. Alexandrine Gibb, “Wily Rivulettes Outsmart Winnipeg Girls’ Sextet,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 April 1937, 13. For more on Galt and Preston’s support of the Winnipeg team, see Alexandrine Gibb, “No Man’s Land of Sport,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 10 April 1937, 11.



91. Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Preston Girls Again Capture Dominion Title," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 12 April 1937, 19; "Dykeman-Fach Lassies Bang Out 4-2 Decision Saturday Against Peggers, Win in Straight Games," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 12 April 1937, 4; Alexandrine Gibb, "Rivulettes Retain Title After Fine Puck Display," *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 April 1937, 13.
92. "Rivulettes are Entertained Here," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 5 January 1938, 4.
93. See "Champion Rivulettes Will Defend Laurels," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 19 October 1937, 14; see "First Practice," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 6 January 1938, 4; H. A. Cole, "Cole Expects Trouble When Puck Rivals Meet," *Toronto Daily Star*, 29 January 1938, 12.
94. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 December 1937, 18.
95. For game reports, see "Rivulettes Open with a 5-0 Win," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 24 January 1938, 4; "Rivulettes Hand Out Kalsomining," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 27 January 1938, 4; "Rivulettes Down Hamilton Tigers," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 29 January 1938, 4; "Hamilton Ladies Shut Out by the Rivulettes 2 to 0," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 7 February 1938, 4; "Rivulettes Win Fifth Straight," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 10 February 1938, 4; "Rivulettes Down Stratford 5 to 0," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 17 February 1938, 4; "Rivulettes End Sked Undefeated," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 25 February 1938, 7.
96. See "Exhibition Game Draws Big Crowd," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 18 February 1938, 7.
97. Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Feminine Sport Reel," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 2 March 1938 15.
98. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 2 March 1938, 12.
99. "Preston Rivulettes Wallop Northerners," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 14 March 1938, 18; "Rivulettes in 8 to 0 Shutout at New Liskeard," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 14 March 1938, 4; "Rivulettes Defeat Northern Marvels," *Toronto Daily Star*, 14 March 1938, 11; "Rivulettes Take Northerners," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 15 March 1938, 4.
100. The Ottawa team returned to the ice after a six-year absence. For game reports, see "Preston Lead Ottawa Girls," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 26 March 1938, 20; "Rivulettes Take First Game of the Series with Ottawa Rangers by 3-1 Count; Play Again Tonight," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 26 March 1938, 4; "Preston Girls Win Ice Title," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 28 March 1936, 19; "Rivulettes Turn Back Ottawa Rangers 6-1 Giving Preston Second Title For the Season," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 28 March 1938, 4.
101. Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Preston Girls Win Round, 12-2," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 9 April 1938, 19.
102. Alexandrine Gibb, "Winnipeg Girls Surprise Champion Preston Sextet," *Toronto Daily Star*, 18 April, 1938, 11. See also B. Rosenfeld, "Peggers Hold Preston Even," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 18 April 1938, 16.
103. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 April 1938, 12.
104. Alexandrine Gibb, "Preston Rivulettes Again Canadian Hockey Champs," *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 April 1938, 11.
105. Fred Jackson, "Spinning the Sports Wheel," *Toronto Daily Star*, 28 April 1938, 16.
106. "Preston Honors Sport Champions," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 4 May 1938, 16; A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 May 1938, 14.
107. Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Preston Girls Win Opener, 2-0," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 24 January 1939, 16, 17.
108. See "Preston Blank Toronto Girls," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 23 February 1939, 16; "Preston Girls Oust Toronto Puck Entry," *Toronto Daily Star*, 23 February 1939, 14.
109. For game reports, see B. Rosenfeld, "Feminine Sports Reel," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 6 March 1939, 17; A. Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 March 1939, 14.
110. Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Feminine Sports Reel," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 31 March 1939, 23.

111. "Rivulettes Win 3 to 2 in First of Semi-finals," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 4 April 1939, 4-5. "Winnipeg Girls Extend Preston," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 4 April 1939, 16; "Gals from the Golden West Hold Prestonites Scoreless," *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 April 1939, 18; "Rivulettes Advance to Finals by Holding Olympics to a Tie," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 5 April 1939, 4.
112. Collins interview, 3 May 2004.
113. See "Hamilton Ladies Shut Out by the Rivulettes 2 to 0," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 7 February 1938, 4.
114. Collins interview, 3 May 2004.
115. Ibid. See also Dave Menary, *Cambridge Times*, 16 March 1996, 17-18.
116. Collins interview, 3 May 2004.
117. "Rivulettes Earn 4-2 Victory in First of Finals," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 10 April 1939, 4; "Rivulettes Collect Another Dominion Title, Turning Back Charolottetown 11-3 on Round "Rivulettes Earn 4-2 Victory in First of Finals," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 10 April 1939, 4; "Rivulettes Collect Another Dominion Title, Turning Back Charolottetown 11-3 on Round," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 11 April 1939, 4; "Montreal Six Enters Finals for Allan Cup," *New York Times*, 11 April 1939, 31.
118. See, for example, "Rivulettes are Back from East," *Galt Daily Reporter*, 12 April 1939, 4.
119. Fred Jackson, "Spinning the Sports Wheel," *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 November 1939, 14.
120. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 November 1939, 14.
121. Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 January 1940, 9; Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 26 January 1940, 14.
122. "Rivulettes Retain Hockey Title," *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 February 1940, 12; Alexandrine Gibb, "No Man's Land of Sport," *Toronto Daily Star*, 16 February 1940, 14; "Rivulettes Defeat Toronto Girls, 8-2," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 20 February 1940, 15.
123. *Galt Evening Reporter*, 3 January 1966, 8.
124. Chrisitne Rivet, *Kitchener Record*, 29 March 1997.
125. Ibid.; *Preston Times*, 28 March 1962, 8, 11.
126. See Alexandrine Gibb, *Toronto Daily Star*, 15 October 1940, 12.
127. See, for example, Bobbie Rosenfeld, "Feminine Sports Reel," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 22 January 1941, 13. Although the LOHA amalgamated with the WAAF, there is no evidence that the WAAF actually took control of organizing women's hockey in the province. Ultimately, the demise of the LOHA in 1940 had devastating effects on organized women's hockey in the province. It was not until over thirty years later, in 1975, that another governing body for women's hockey in Ontario was established—the Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA).
128. Hall, *Girl and the Game*, 97.
129. B. Kidd, "Missing: Women From Sports Halls of Fame," *Action CAAWS/ACAFS*, Winter 1995: 4.
130. Ibid.
131. Carly Adams and Kevin B. Wamsley, "Moments of Silence in Shallow Halls of Greatness: The Hockey Hall of Fame and the Politics of Representation," in *Putting It On Ice: Women's Hockey-Gender Issues On and Off the Ice*, ed. C. D. Howell (Halifax, NS: Gorsebrook Research Institute, 2005), 13-17. Currently, no women have been inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame as players or builders.
132. As part of the nomination package, a scrapbook was created by Betty Barnes, Hilda and Nellie Ranscombe's niece, and Dave Menary, reporter for the *Cambridge Times* newspaper. The scrapbook chronicles Ranscombe's personal achievements and contains numerous letters from former Rivulette players, players from opposing teams, and residents from Preston who saw the



team play in the 1930s. Although the nature of the letters are biased in their intent in support of Hilda's proposed induction to the Hall, they do reflect the remembrances of the authors and offer insight into the relationships between Ranscombe, team members, and acquaintances. The original scrapbook can be found at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, with copies at the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame and in the possession of Betty Barnes.

133. Letter from Mary McGuire to Betty Barnes, 15 February 1999, Ranscombe Scrapbook, Hockey Hall of Fame Archives, Toronto, Ontario.
134. *Cambridge Times*, 2 February 2001, 21.
135. Personal correspondence from Ruth Dargel to Betty Barnes, Ranscombe Scrapbook, Hockey Hall of Fame Archives, Toronto, Ontario.
136. The exact number of nominations for female players and builders submitted to the Hockey Hall of Fame is unknown. The records are not accessible to the public and their storage location, once rejected by the selection committee, remains a mystery, even to the archivists at the Hall's resource center. As a standard policy for all submitted nominations, no explanation is ever communicated as to why nominations are rejected.
137. See Avery and Stevens, 71, and Isabelle Southcott, "Her Championship Seasons," *Powell River Peak*, Powell River, British Columbia, 21 April 2004, 24.
138. "Rivulettes to Enter Hockey Hall of Fame," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 8 June 1963, 14.
139. Thompson, "Sport, Gender, Feminism," 106. Italics have been added to the original.
140. Kidd, "Missing: Women From Sports Halls of Fame," 4–5.
141. For more on the cultural struggle that women faced, see Hall, *The Girl and the Game*, 1–14.
142. Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada*, 1993, 13.
143. Adams, 71.