

ates settling for lower-paying jobs, older women without college degrees getting positions in retail sales, and recent immigrants under 30 taking entry-level work.

“Steady, high levels of payroll job growth will be needed” in the next few years if teens are not to be left idle, Sum and his colleagues conclude.

SOCIETY

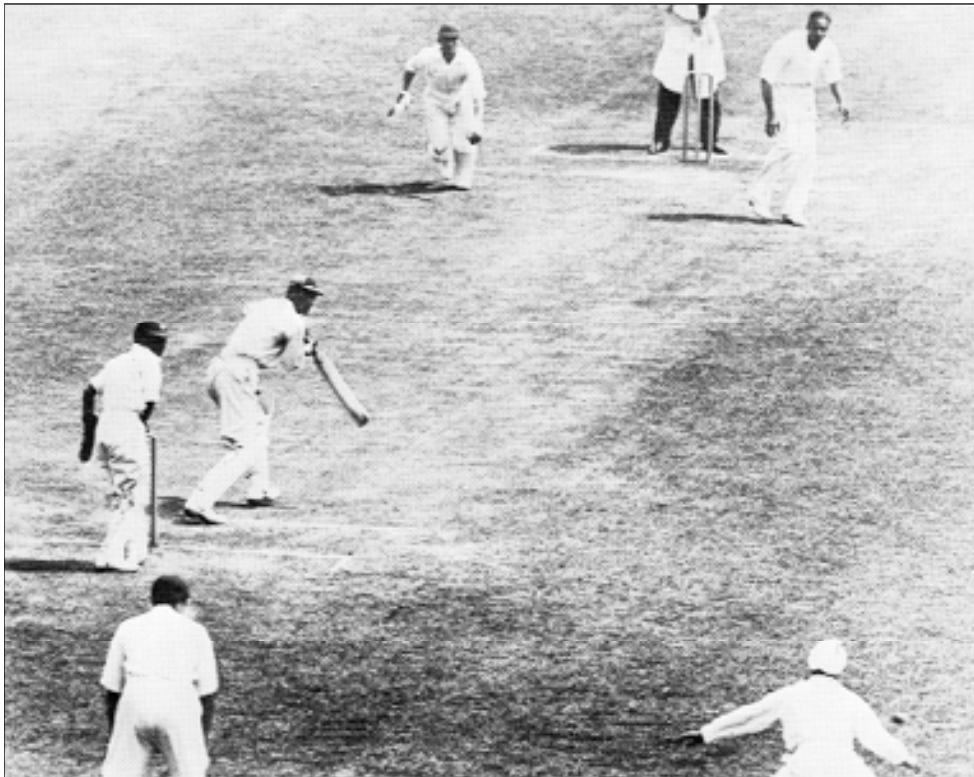
Cricket's Empire

“Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket” by Jason Kaufman and Orlando Patterson, in *American Sociological Review* (Feb. 2005), Univ. of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Sociology, 3718 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-6299.

Cricket has been called by one historian the “umbilical cord of Empire linking the mother country with her children.” Another called it the “main vehicle for transferring the appropriate British moral code from the messengers of empire to the local populations.” By any measure, the British effort was spectacularly successful; during the 19th and 20th centuries the game attracted players throughout the empire from Australia to Zimbabwe, and it’s now dominated by the former colonies. Yet in

the United States and Canada, the game, after enjoying some initial popularity, failed to catch on. In that experience, according to Harvard University sociologists Kaufman and Patterson, lie important lessons about cultural diffusion in our own global age.

Mass media and popular tastes may dominate the global spread of values and beliefs, but elites also play an important role. That’s certainly the case with cricket. In the British Empire, the English overlords



India was soundly beaten when it played its first cricket match against England’s national team in 1932, but today, India and several other former British colonies dominate the sport.

and local elites energetically promoted the sport's spread. Often, the main mechanism for imparting the game to colonial populations was the same as it was among the upper-class English: through playing cricket in schools. This was certainly true in Jamaica and India, but less so in places such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda, relatively late colonial acquisitions in which, says one commentator, "the Victorian public school ethos never really took root."

The game flourished regardless of class systems already in place, whether in India, with its rigid caste system, or in Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados, where, say the authors, "blacks and whites sometimes played cricket together." The authors speculate that in areas where social mobility was limited, "colonial elites, comfortable in their place atop the social hierarchy, had little reason to discourage those beneath them from playing a game that paid symbolic homage to British cultural and political hegemony." Indeed, the game allowed those on the lower social rungs entrée, albeit sometimes only symbolic, into the white-dominated ruling classes.

Why did cricket fail to catch on in Canada and the United States? The invention of baseball may be partly to blame. With a publicist's flair for hyper-

bole, entrepreneur A. G. Spalding outlined the sports' distinctions in 1911: "Cricket is a gentle pastime. Base Ball is War! Cricket is an Athletic Sociable [sic], played and applauded in a conventional, decorous and English manner. Base Ball is an Athletic Turmoil, played and applauded in an unconventional, enthusiastic and American manner."

Kaufman and Patterson suggest another reason why the game struggled in North America. In the United States, as in Canada, cricket quickly became relegated to a few elite clubs and developed a reputation as both snooty and boring. As early as 1884, *The New York Times* speculated that the game was limited to "Philadelphia because cricket is the slowest of games and Philadelphia is the slowest of cities."

Less secure in their social status than their counterparts in the British colonies, American and Canadian elites weren't eager to share the game with the lower orders. They didn't nurture it in schools or promote open competition. Just as certain "high-brow" entertainments such as classical music and fine art became the almost exclusive province of the wealthy in both Canada and the United States, so too did cricket, and the rest of the population decided to leave the game to the idle rich.

A New Room of One's Own

"Self-Storage Nation" by Tom Vanderbilt, in *Slate* (July 18, 2005), www.slate.com.

Our homes may be our castles, but in America, they're still not big enough to hold all our stuff. And thus the self-storage industry is growing as quickly as we can throw up endless rows of prefab tin garages around our cities and towns, says Vanderbilt, a Brooklyn-based writer. The country has nearly 40,000 self-storage facilities offering some 1.875 billion square feet of personal storage space. One in 11 American households has a self-storage stash.

The first self-storage facilities popped up in Texas in the late 1960s. In the early '70s, the big national companies—Shurgard, Public Storage, Storage USA—were born. Last year alone, the number of self-storage units on

the market spiked 24 percent. The industry's revenues now exceed those of Hollywood.

"For a resolutely banal landscape," Vanderbilt says, "self-storage is a surprisingly fertile cultural indicator." He speculates that "no-fault" divorces, high-volume sellers on the online auction website eBay, and Americans' tendency to roam—the average American U.S. resident makes 11 moves in a lifetime—all help to keep self-storage outfits in business and on the move themselves.

But it's American consumerism, suggests Vanderbilt, that emerges as the main stimulant. The average American home was 2,400 square feet in 2004—800 square feet larger than it was three decades ago. But many