

Edward W. Brown
Excerpts from September 5, 1990 Oral History
Interview by Mary Ellen Thomsen

Establishing Ice Hockey at Gilman

MET: Well, then you were in coaching from the very beginning. And having had a lot of experience in athletics yourself, what led you to start a hockey team and a lacrosse team for Gilman?

Mr. Brown: I always loved hockey. I played it as a kid. I just loved it. One day, or one winter, we had an unusual snow storm -- ice storm, thaw and freeze, rain and freeze at Gilman -- and we played hockey on the athletic field. And I just thought, golly, that would be wonderful to be able to play that all the time. This was in about 1924 and it wasn't until the early '30s that we got hockey going. It's such a good sport.

MET: Where did you practice?

Mr. Brown: The practice was difficult. I happened to be the Chairman of the Hockey Committee for the Maryland Scholastic Association. So I drew up the practice schedules as well as the game schedules. The way it started initially, was on Saturday afternoon after the public skating session at Carlin's, we arranged with Poly to play a hockey game, and we did that on five Saturday afternoons in the winter. Well, it went across pretty well. The kids loved it. Now we practiced between 12:30 and 1:15 on Saturday afternoon when we could get the ice after the public session. We played those games in the afternoon on Saturday. Then we arranged to have a league a little later on and played at Carlin's. The Carlin's rink was not long enough to accommodate six players on a side, so we reduced it to five. The two wing men, one of them faced off as center, hockeyed off to start the game. We had a team. We didn't call it Gilman, we called it the Roland Park Rangers because the Trustees wouldn't allow us the use the name Gilman.

MET: Why was that?

Mr. Brown: I think that they thought that it was not a regularly recognized sport with a place to practice and a place to play and so forth. The Captain of the hockey team was also a wrestler. He could do both with the hockey schedule we had. So there were four Trustees that met in Mr. Morrow's office, and Dr. Finney was the President of the Board of Trustees then and so Morris Emory, who was the captain, and I went in to talk to them and we answered their questions and put up as good a case as we could for hockey, and they decided that they would allow us to use the name of Gilman. So we were able to remain in the league. Then Carlin's burned down and we went to Sports Center. We had a league of about, I'd say, eight teams and we were always either first or second. We had pretty good going. We practiced on Monday afternoon after the public session at 5:00 o'clock or a little after 5:00, and we'd take the 5:00 to 5:30 half hour, and I'd always arrange to have a team like Poly that we got along well with, to come on next so that

we could join together and we'd have an hour. So, that was Monday. Then Tuesday often times we played games because I persuaded the powers that be that Gilman wasn't going to draw as much as some of the rest of them did, so they'd better put those others on Friday night and just put Gilman off on Tuesday afternoon, which was fine. So we did that. Then on Wednesday we had flat pieces of sheet metal, four of them, and we'd put two on each end of the tennis court, the concrete tennis court that we had then --the main tennis court -- and built goals and we'd go out and shoot for an hour or so in the afternoon. They got to be pretty good shots.

MET: Well, the Trustees must have been pleased when you retired the Harvard Cup, weren't they? You had to win three out of four years to retire.

Mr. Brown: I guess so. And then on Thursday we went down to the public session and they allowed us to skate. And I'd get the kids to go down there to skate, get them to bend over like this because when you play hockey you don't stand up like a stick, you bend over, and I'd get them to bend over. Oh, they had to tie their skates, and their backs hurt -- come on, get out there, you're alright. Then Friday we'd have the practice again. Now, we built a rink at school. We got the Campbell people -- Ty Campbell was very much interested in hockey. Mr. Baetjer, Mr. Harry Baetjer, was very much interested in hockey. So Mr. Baetjer would help with the financial side, and the Campbell people would do the construction work. We went to the Philadelphia Road area and got some clay which was pretty much impervious to moisture, and had the Campbell people build a fence around to keep the puck in. And then we put in posts along each side and we strung wire between the posts and we took burlap curtains and fastened them on rings and put them on the wire. We'd tie them back when we practiced and played. We'd pull them out at 10:00 o'clock in the morning and we'd have ice in the afternoon. But we depended on Mother Nature. Now one year we didn't have any luck at all because it was a warm winter. Another year we had about, I'd say, twenty days of skating and we used to let the people from around go ahead and skate up Saturday afternoon. I used to get Barry Wood, who was a doctor -- he played on Harvard as you know --I'd get him in there and we'd scrimmage against the kids. He loved it. He loved to play. He played on our Greenspring team that we had -- played down at the Sports Center at night.