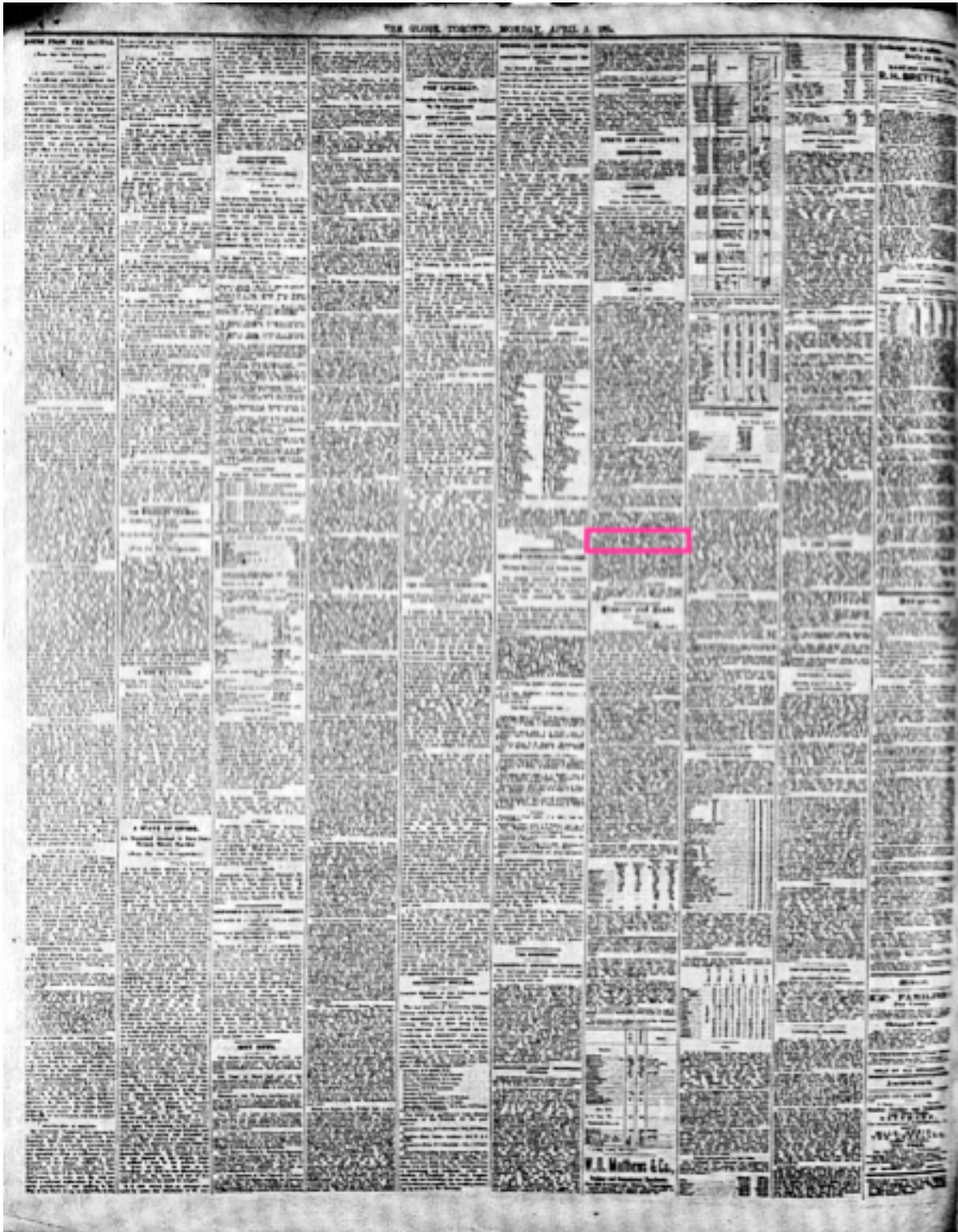


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A

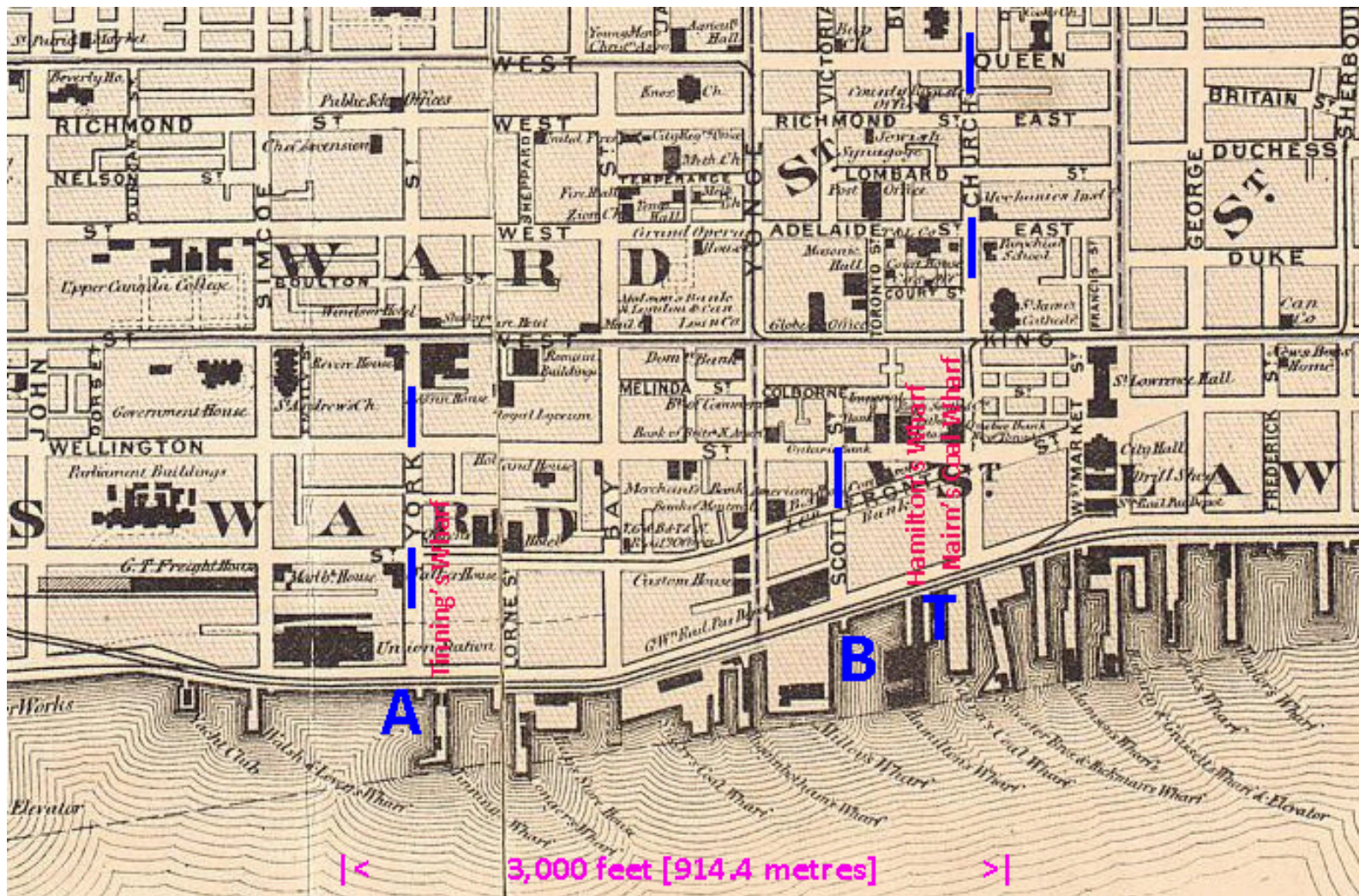
Below is page 4 of the April 9, 1880 edition of the *Toronto Globe*. The highlighted section is the announcement of the meeting to discuss the formation of an “Amateur Rowing Association for the Dominion of Canada.”



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The map below pinpoints the locations of the waterfront clubs *circa* 1880.



Detail from the 1878 map of Toronto drawn by A.T. Cotterell. Toronto Public Library: T1878/4Msm.

A lot of early Canadian rowing history happened on a stretch of Toronto waterfront less than a kilometre long.

Founded in 1865, by 1880, the Toronto R.C. (T) was the largest rowing club in the country. It is not clear where the Club kept its equipment during the first three seasons of its existence. However, we do know that its first boathouse was erected in the spring of 1868 “between Scott street and Hamilton’s wharf.” [The *Toronto Globe*, May 4, 1868, p.2] It was two storeys with the club room on the second floor above the boathouse which could “accommodate about sixty boats.” [The *Toronto Globe*, July 21, 1868, p.2] Keep in mind that none of those boats were eights. That facility served the Club’s needs

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until 1879, when “their new boat-house and club rooms, west of Nairn’s coal docks, [at the] foot of Church-street” [The Toronto *Globe*, June 2, 1879, p.4] were built.

The new premises of the Club are an improvement in every way on their old ones, principally because they are more conveniently constructed and occupy a better situation. The building projects considerably past the water’s edge, and from a balcony in front the entire harbour can be seen. The lower portion is, of course, used as the boat-house, while above there is a billiard-room, a sitting-room, and a reading-room. The walls of the interior are tastefully decorated with pictures, among which are portraits of prominent oarsmen and a number of aquatic scenes. [The Toronto *Globe*, June 2, 1879, p.4]

Presumably, the Bayside R.C. (B) took over the old clubhouse of the Toronto R.C. at the foot of Scott St.. when it was organized in 1880. The two clubs were only a few metres apart which may account for the *Globe*’s referring to the Bayside R.C.’s being at the “foot of Church-street.” [The Toronto *Globe*, April 27, 1881, p.12] Robert Hunter accounts for the Bayside split from the Toronto R.C. this way: “The founding of the C.A.A.O. split up the members of the Toronto Rowing Club, the amateur members forming the Bayside Rowing Club.” [Robert S. Hunter, *Rowing in Canada Since 1848* (Hamilton: Davis-Lisson, 1933) p.48] That statement doesn't pass scrutiny because Toronto R.C. scullers and crews contested events at the CAAO Regattas until 1914. For instance, in 1880, there were eight TRC entries, the same number as Bayside. (The Argonaut R.C. had six.) Moreover, in 1882, Arthur Boswell, President of the Toronto R.C., was elected President of the CAAO, a position he held until 1891. Clearly the TRC was heavily involved in amateur rowing.

A more likely explanation for the split probably has to do with the emphasis which the Toronto R.C. placed on being a social, as well as a rowing club.

Part of the impetus for the formation of the Argonaut R.C. involved forming a rowing, not a social club:

In those days . . . the boats were owned by the crews who rowed them. Such a thing as a club owning a racing boat for the use of members, as in England, was unknown, in fact it was the effort to make a change in this respect that first originated the thought of a rowing club which should be, par excellence, a rowing club, rather than a boat club of a semi-social character, or a convenient place to keep private boats, a centre for organizing regattas, a place of resort for those who made it a lounging place and talked about, rather than did, rowing. Some of those in the old Toronto Club said that the suggested new departure was impracticable, and it was prophesied that not a dozen men could be found to support it. [*Historical Sketch of the Argonaut Rowing Club 1872 to 1911*. (Toronto, 1911) pp.5-6]

The men who formed the Bayside R.C. in 1880 may have felt the same way as the men who founded the Argonaut R.C..

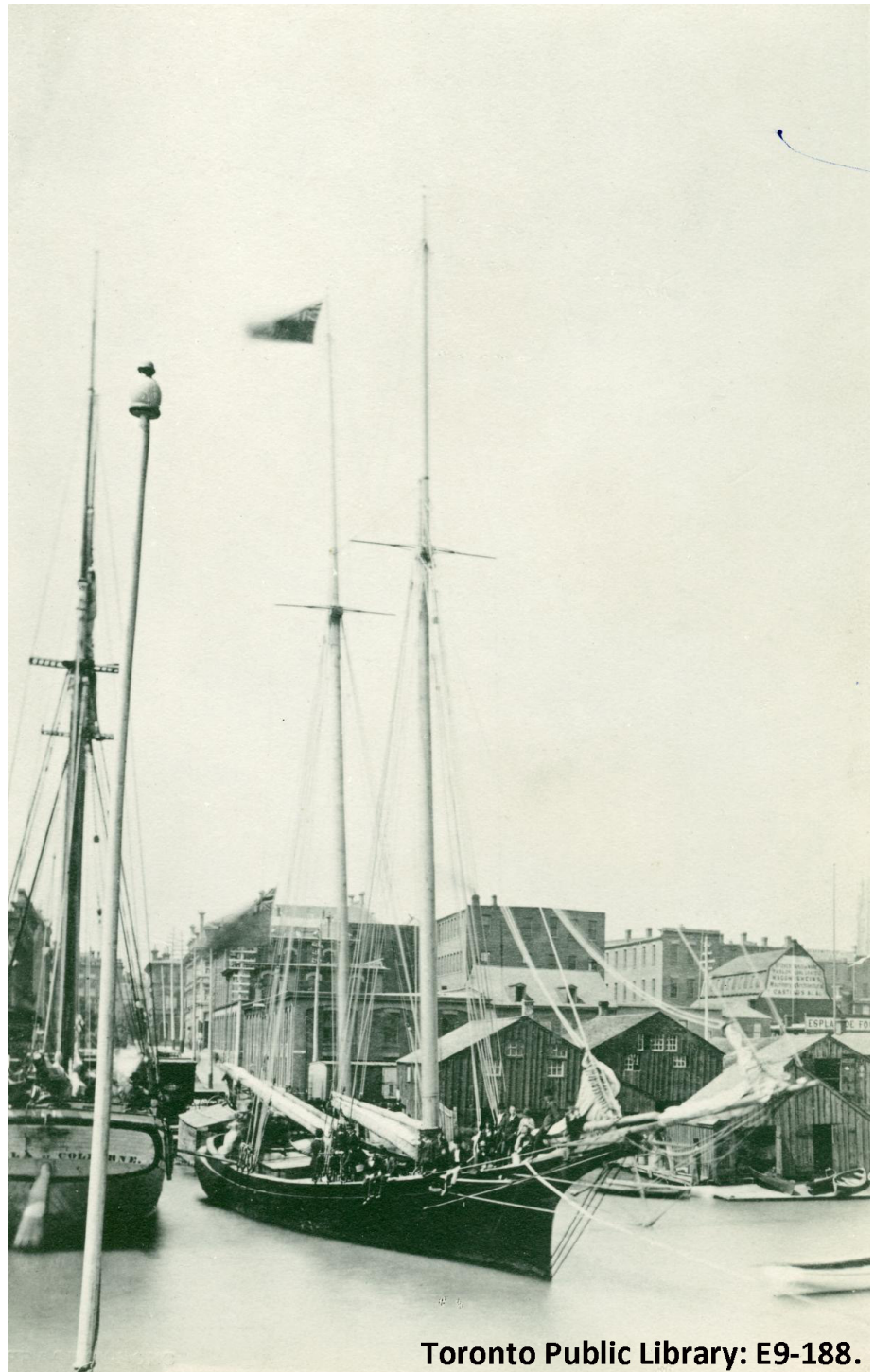
The Argonaut R.C. (A) was founded in 1872, and by 1880 was in its fourth boathouse. The first was a shed attached to George Wharin’s boathouse at the foot of George St., near Front and Jarvis Sts.. It was only large enough to house the one four

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that belonged to some of the founders. The second boathouse was also a wooden structure on the Esplanade near Frederick St.. In 1873, the Club moved to its third, larger, boathouse located at the foot of York St. on the Esplanade. That one was destroyed by fire in 1879, and was immediately replaced by another on the same site. [Historical Sketch of the Argonaut Rowing Club 1872 to 1911. (Toronto, 1911) p.6]

The Toronto Public Library labels this photo: "Hamilton's Wharf, east from foot of Scott St."

Although this 1884 photo features the yacht *Countess of Dufferin*, it also gives us an idea of the conditions that the Bayside R.C. had to contend with. The gap between the buildings on the left is Scott St. running north, and the wharf on the right is Hamilton's wharf. The only two-storey structure visible in the photo that might be the Bayside R.C.'s home, is on the extreme right, behind the boathouse with several boats on its dock. The new Toronto R.C. clubhouse would have been out of the photo on the right at the foot of Church St..



Toronto Public Library: E9-188.

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C

For the first 23 years of its existence, the Annual Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen was held in several cities on a variety of different courses:

1880 (August 4 & 5) Toronto [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles straightaway. Aug. 4 - near Island - west to east; Aug. 5 - near city - east to west finishing west of Yonge St.]

1881 (July 20) Hamilton/Burlington [Lake Ontario. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1882 (August 19 & 21) Lachine [Lake St. Louis. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1883 (July 25) Ottawa [Ottawa River. 1.5 miles straightaway - “a short distance below the city”]

1884 (July 29) Toronto [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles straightaway - used the course close to the city - finished near the waterworks]

1885 (August 5) Hamilton/Burlington [Burlington Bay. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1886 (August 7) Lachine [Lake St. Louis. 1.5 miles straightaway - with the current]

1887 (August 6) Ottawa [Ottawa River. 1.5 miles straightaway - against the current - finishing behind the Parliament buildings]

1888 (August 2) Toronto [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles straightaway - used the course close to the city - finished “a little west of the Grand Trunk elevator”]

1889 (August 20) Hamilton/Burlington [Burlington Bay. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1890 (August 9 & 11) Lachine [Lake St. Louis. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1891 (August 10 & 11) Barrie [Kempenfelt Bay. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1892 Toronto (July 20 & 21) [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles straightaway - near island from Wiman Baths (Wards’ Island?) to Hanlan’s Point]

1893 (August 4 & 5) Hamilton/Burlington [Burlington Bay on 4th & Lake Ontario on 5th. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1894 (August 3 & 4) Hamilton/Burlington [Lake Ontario. 1.5 miles straightaway]

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1895 (August 2 & 3) Hamilton/Burlington [Lake Ontario. 1.5 miles straightaway]

1896 (August 6 & 7) Brockville [St. Lawrence River. 1.5 miles straightaway - up stream]

1897 (August 5 & 6) Brockville [St. Lawrence River. 1.5 miles straightaway - up stream]

1898 (August 8 & 9) Toronto [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles straightaway - “almost in the centre of the bay, starting 200 yards east of the Gap and finishing opposite Mugg’s Landing.”]

1899 (August 3 & 4) Brockville [St. Lawrence River. 1.5 miles with a turn]

1900 (June 30 & July 2) Toronto [Toronto Harbour. 1.5 miles with a turn - start and finish at “the new city wharf at the foot of Bay street”. The turning buoys were 0.75 miles to the west.]

1901 (August 3 & 5) Ottawa [Lake Deschenes “opposite the park at Aylmer” at the Victoria Yacht Club. 1.5 miles with a turn]

1902 (August 2 & 4) Brockville [St. Lawrence River. 1.5 miles with a turn]

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D

The photo below is of John Joseph (J.J.) Ryan, Canada's pre-eminent amateur sculler between 1885 and 1895. He competed initially for the Bayside R.C., then the Toronto R.C., and finally for the Sunnyside Boating Club, where he was also Club Captain. At the CAAO Regattas, he won the Junior Single Sculls in 1885, and the Senior Single Sculls in 1886, 1887, 1888, and 1890. He also won the Senior Double Sculls with Eddy Durnan in 1892, and with John Rumohr in 1895. At the U.S. National Regattas in 1892 and 1893, he won the Senior Single Sculls. In 1894, he competed for the Diamond Sculls at the Henley Royal Regatta, but lost in his first heat.

John Ryan's great grandson, Ron Ryan, who provided the photo, added the inscription on the bottom. It is written in pencil on the back of the photo.

That inscription, plus the 1892 NAAO Championship banner in the lower right, plus the fact that there is no 1893 banner, tells us that the photo was taken after the 1892 U.S. Nationals and before the 1893 U.S. Nationals.

That raises a question about the presence of the CAAO's Challenge Cup for Single Sculls, the big trophy on the left. Ryan had last won it in 1890, so what is it doing in a 1892/3 photo? Either he borrowed it for the photo, or he hadn't returned it in 1891.



*John J. Ryan,
as he was when he took the Single Sculls from America's best back in 1892*

Ron Ryan collection.

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E

A Few Words About the Results

The data in the results were obtained from the official records of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen and from newspaper accounts of the races.

The official records were used for the first place finishers and their times. The documents consulted were: *Constitution and By-Laws of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen as in Force August 8th, 1890*, the 1905 Canadian Henley Regatta programme, and the *C.A.A.O. Regatta Rules and Record Book*, 1966 edition.

In a few instances, where no time was published in any of those documents, but a time was given in the newspapers, I have included that time and distinguished it from the official times with an *.

For placement after first, I had to rely on the newspapers. In some years, they were complete. In other years, they were not. That is why some results are marked "ALSO ROWED". I know that they were in the race, but the newspapers did not indicate where they finished. We should not be too hard on the reporters of those races. We must remember that the competitors were distinguished by different coloured hats or shirts or swatches of coloured cloth pinned to the bow-man's hat or shirt, and that there was no public address system, other than, perhaps, a megaphone used by the Umpire or Referee. Moreover, the press typically followed the races and did not have a good look at the finish, a task made more difficult when there were many competitors in one race.

Occasionally, there was disagreement between newspaper accounts regarding placement. In those instances, I tried to harmonized the different newspaper accounts. I admit that what I came up with may be wrong, and I welcome having those errors pointed out to me.

I used "SCRATCH" when the newspaper account stated that the competitor scratched, or when the competitor was included in the list of entries but did not compete.

The designations "DID NOT FINISH" and "DISQUALIFIED" are self-explanatory. However, in turning heats, "DISQUALIFIED" sometimes meant the sculler or crew did not turn around the correct buoy but finished the race and was then relegated to last place. They were not, strictly speaking, disqualified. This led to some strange outcomes in a few preliminary heats (when all the competitors were going to the final), in which a sculler or crew were disqualified for turning around the wrong buoy, but still qualified for the final. Since the records included here report final results only, if that happened in a final I have marked them "DISQUALIFIED".

The order of the events on the Results pages is the order which was followed at the Regatta.

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PLEASE NOTE: This History is a work in progress. I will post chapters as I finish them and I will make changes to chapters which are already posted as I become aware of new information, or have errors pointed out to me. This version was completed on November 10, 2022. If you find errors or omissions, use the Contact link at <http://goldmedalphotos.com/> to point them out to me. Stan Lapinski.