

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

### Part 3a: The Second to Twelfth Regattas of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen

#### The Second Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1881

The Second Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen was held in Hamilton, Ontario on Wednesday, July 20, 1881. Moving the Regatta out of Toronto was not considered unusual, after all, the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen in the United States had been moving its National Championships from site to site since 1873. After the problems with the wind and water on Toronto Bay the previous year, there was an incentive to try another venue. Moreover, Hamilton now had three rowing clubs. The Leander R.C. and the Nautilus R.C. together had boated nine entries the previous year and they were joined by a new club, the Hamilton R.C. in 1881, which meant that there was an active group in Hamilton who could organize the Regatta. This was important. Although the CAAO was the governing body, it did not run the Regatta. That was the responsibility of the Local Regatta Committee.

That Committee “ had a new boat-house built for the accommodation of the visiting craft.” [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, July 21, 1881] Unfortunately, we are not told where the boathouse was located.

Hamilton, or more accurately, Burlington Beach, had two courses. One was on Burlington Bay, and the other was on Lake Ontario. Both were one mile and a half straightaway.



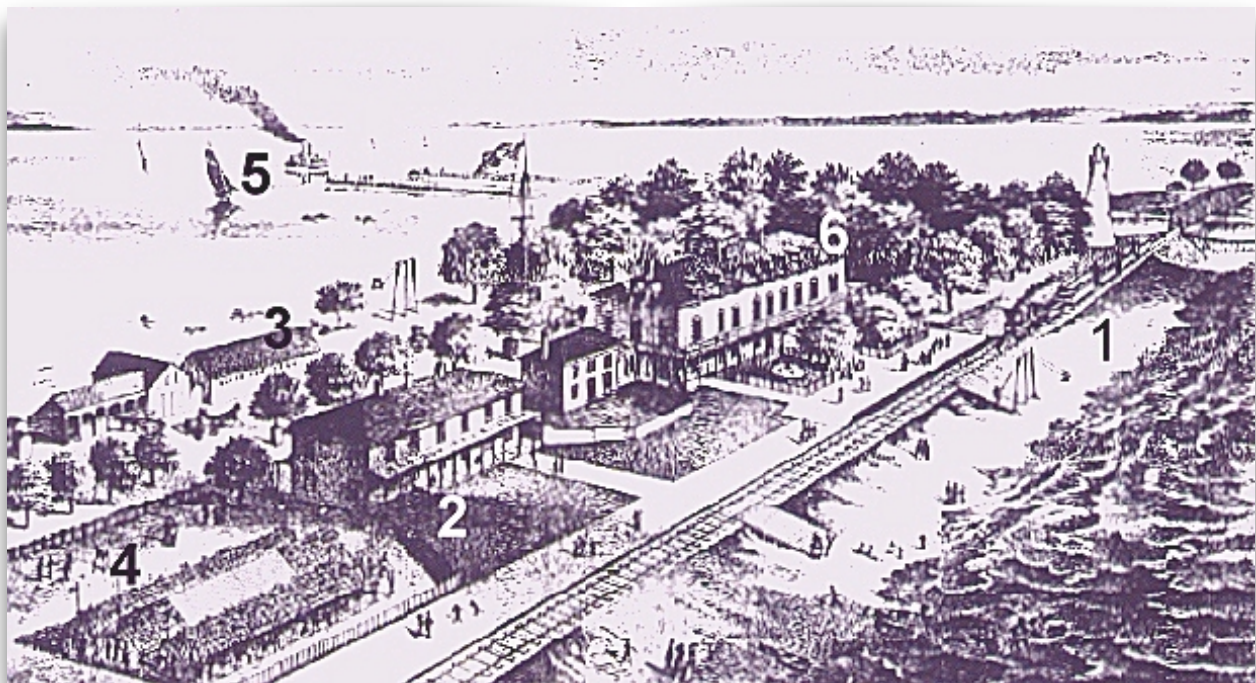


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Hamilton and Burlington Bay ca. 1880, from: *Picturesque Canada*, v. 2, pp. 453-454. (Hamilton, Ont. : Lloyd Reeds Map Collection, McMaster University Library) [<http://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A70030>]

This contemporary image shows Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario separated by a thin isthmus, Burlington Beach, often referred to in print as simply “the Beach.”

In 1881, because a strong southwest wind was churning up Burlington Bay, the lake course, with water only slightly calmer, was used. The start was at the south end of the Beach, at the right side in the image above, and the finish near the centre of the Beach, roughly where the highest pillar of smoke is in the image above, opposite the Ocean House, where thousands of spectators could see the finish.



OCEAN HOUSE, The "Long Branch" of Canada. Situated on Burlington Beach between Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario. Access to Hamilton by Rail (1) and boat (5) hourly. "The coolest resort on the Continent!" (2) Music Hall, Bowling & Billiards. (3) Boats for Hire. (4) Lawn Bowling. (6) Ocean House [Burlington's History: <http://eureka4you.com/burlington/history-history.htm> ] Lake Ontario is on the right; Burlington Bay on the left.

*As a personal aside, I had the experience of rowing on Lake Ontario between Port Dalhousie and the mouth of the Welland Canal at Port Weller. While it was not the roughest water I ever rowed on, I must tip my gob hat to the oarsmen who raced on that lake.*

Once the races were started, none of the crews stayed in their lanes but made for the calmer water near the shore.



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The Starter, A.D. Stewart, Hamilton's Chief of Police, had an anchored yacht at his disposal. He used a speaking trumpet, what we might call a megaphone, to address the crews, and a small cannon to start the races.

The Referee, Roger Lambe, and the press shared the *Luella*, and had as honoured guests, Edward Trickett, the former Champion of the World, and Ned Hanlan, the sculler who had beaten him the previous November.

The Toronto *Globe*, mentions the size of the crowd: "About noon large crowds of visitors began to arrive by boat and train, so that by the time the racing began it was estimated that five thousand spectators, or thereabouts, were present." [The Toronto *Globe*, July 21, 1881, p.10]

In addition, "the *Southern Belle*, *Queen Victoria*, and a number of steam yachts, tugs, and a fleet of smaller craft carried spectators." [The Toronto *Globe*, July 21, 1881, p. 10]

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1881 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Three Toronto clubs combined for 20 of the regatta's 54 entries and five of the eight first place finishes. The home town Hamilton clubs together had 14 entries and one winner. The Association was overwhelmingly made up of Ontario clubs.

The entry list published in the Toronto *Globe*, July 20, 1881, page 10, includes the club colours, presumably to help spectators pick out the competitors. These rarely appear in print. For that reason, they are included here.

Argonaut R.C. (dark and light blue)	(6/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C. (pink and blue)	(7/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Beaver R.C. (red and white)	(2/0)	Windsor, Ontario
Chatham R.C. (dark blue and white)	(4/0)	Chatham, Ontario
Dunnville R.C. (pink and blue)	(1/0)	Dunnville, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C. (blue, red and black)	(2/1)	Montreal, Quebec
Hamilton R.C. (red and black)	(3/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Leander R.C. (dark blue and white)	(3/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C. (cardinal and navy blue)	(8/1)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C. (cardinal and blue)	(1/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Peterboro R.C. (scarlet and black)	(1/0)	Peterboro, Ontario
Toronto R.C. (light blue and white)	(7/1)	Toronto, Ontario

There were also six American clubs competing:

Albany R.C. (white and blue)	(3/1)	Albany, New York
Celtic R.C. (not given)	(1/0)	Buffalo, New York
Centennial B.C. (blue)	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Detroit Scullers (blue and grey)	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Excelsior B.C. (dark blue)	(2/0)	Detroit, Michigan



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Narragansett B.C. (blue and white)

(1/0)

Providence, Rhode Island

The number of competitors was 104, up from 82 in 1880.

In spite of some pre-regatta chest-thumping by the American crews, only one won, Albany R.C. in the Pair. Their only competition was another American crew from the Detroit Scullers. Toronto R.C. scratched.

Before the start of the Senior Four-Oars race, objections were made against the Celtic crew on the grounds that they had won money on July 4th, and so, they were not amateurs. Referee Lambe allowed them to row, under protest, and left it to the Executive Committee to settle the question of eligibility after the race. In the end, the question was academic; the Celtics finished sixth.

It is interesting to note that, while one of the reasons that the CAAO was established was to get rid of the abuses of gambling, "[t]he backers of the Albany crew [in the Senior Four-Oared race] had laid a large amount of money on their men at considerable odds and appeared to have little doubt of the ability of the crew to win the race." [The Toronto *Globe*, July 21, 1881, p.10] Their third place finish behind Argonauts and Chatham meant that the Albany backers went home poorer for their trip to Canada.

Betting on races continued well into the 1960s. I was told a story about a normally responsible husband and father, who, after one too many beers at the Port Dalhousie Legion, was goaded into betting his whole pay cheque on the race that his son was in. Fortunately, his son's crew staged an upset and the father went home a rich man. Today, betting is an impromptu activity, usually instigated by someone in the grandstand just before a race, usually the Men's or Women's Senior Eight, and involves the supporters of two competing crews. Alcohol is often involved in getting the betting started.

There was a bit of controversy concerning the winners of the Double Sculls Inrigged race, the Bayside R.C.. The second place crew from the Argonaut R.C. protested that the boat used by the Bayside pair was not a true inrigged lapstreak since it had a racing shell's bottom. Referee Lambe ruled that it was a matter for the Executive Committee to resolve and let the result stand.

To see the winners and times of the 1881 races in tabular form, go to <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

To read descriptions of the races, get The Toronto *Globe*, July 21, 1881 edition on microfilm.

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

As had happened in Toronto in 1880, the presentation of the prizes was conducted with much pomp and ceremony, including music, speeches by some notable rowing personalities, including Ned Hanlan, and fireworks.

Reproduced below is the *Globe's* description of the event. Note that cups were occasionally presented in lieu of medals, and in some races, second place finishers also received awards.



### PRESENTATION OF PRIZES.

As was announced, the prizes to the different oarsmen were presented this evening in Dundurn Park. The first part of the evening was enlivened by an excellent musical programme given by the 13th Battalion band. Mayor O'Reilly then announced the names of the winners, to whom the prizes were presented by Mrs. O'Reilly, as follows:—

First Race—Single scull inrigged—J. Graham, of the Toronto R. C.; silver cup.

Second Race—Pair-oared race—J. T. Gorman and R. T. Gorman, of the Albany crew, N. Y.; two gold medals.

Third Race—Junior single sculls—C. Greenwood, of the Bayside R. C., Toronto, and M. Furlong, of the Nautilus R. C., Hamilton.

Fourth Race—Senior four-oared race—Argonauts, of Toronto; R. McKay, J. W. Hogg, A. G. Thompson, and C. F. Galt; \$500 challenge cup and four gold medals.

Fifth Race—Double scull race—C. Furlong and J. Donahue, of the Nautilus R. C., Hamilton.

Sixth Race—Junior four-oared—Argonauts, of Toronto, W. G. A. Lambe, D. Mossom, O. Morphy, and H. Wallace; four silver cups.

Seventh Race—Senior single scull—J. Laing, Grand Trunk Rowing Club, Montreal, first prize, \$300 Challenge Cup; second prize, H. Kirby, Narragansett Rowing Club, Providence, R. I., gold medal.

Eighth Race—Double scull, inrigged—Bayside Rowing Club, Toronto, R. Price and H. Best, two silver cups.

Each announcement was greeted with rounds of applause, especially after the announcement of the Argonauts four-oared, Furlong and Donahue's two-oared, and the Albany crew.

The prizes having all been presented, Hanlan was called upon to speak. He came forward amidst cheers, and thanked those present for the compliment.

Trickett, ex-Champion of the World, spoke next, and expressed himself as highly pleased with the course; also of the Management Committee for the very complete and perfect manner in which the races were carried out.

Referee Roger Lambo was called, and came forward amidst rounds of applause. He said he had never seen so much fairness shown by oarsmen competing, and congratulated them on their sportsmanlike manner.

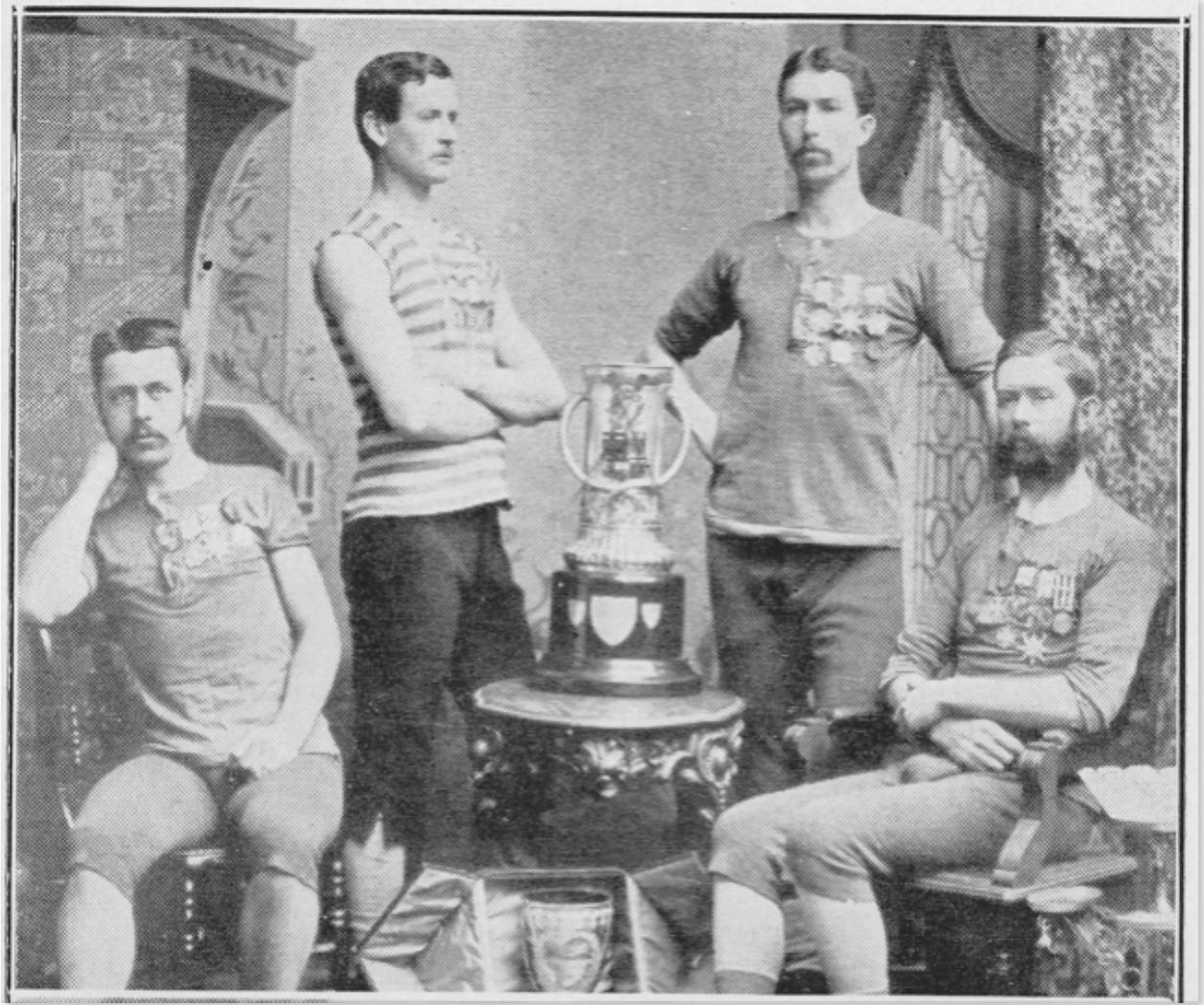
Hanlan being recalled said that from the reception he received it would almost seem that he had just won a victory. He referred to the Ross challenge and stated that Ross had made a challenge and that he was willing to row any time for \$5,000 on Toronto Bay.

In the park there was a very large crowd assembled to see the presentation. There was a grand display of fireworks at the close.

[The Toronto Globe, July 21, 1881, p.10]



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The Argonaut R.C. Senior Four-Oars crew with the Challenge Cup they won at the 1881 Regatta of the CAAO. From the left they are: A.G. Thomson, G.F. Galt, J. Hogg and R.McKay. After this photo was taken, George Frederick Galt moved to Winnipeg, and helped form the Winnipeg R.C.. He returned for the Sixth Regatta in 1885 wearing Winnipeg R.C. colours.

The *Toronto Globe* summed up the Second Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen this way:

The regatta to-day has undoubtedly been the most successful meeting of amateur oarsmen that has ever taken place in Canada, and this success reflects the very highest praise upon the committee of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen who have had the matter under control, and who have succeeded in bringing the regatta to so brilliant an issue. No hitch whatever in the arrangements have taken place, no disputes remain to be settled, and no annoying exceptions have been taken to the decisions of any of the officers. [The *Toronto Globe*, July 21, 1881, p.10]

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Unlike the coverage of the 1880 Regatta, there is not a single mention of races not starting on time, or of poor accommodations for the press.

# 1881



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### **The Third Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1882**

On April 14, the annual meeting of the CAAO was held in Hamilton at the Royal Hotel. It was chaired by the President, Harold Lambe. The following clubs were represented: Bayside R.C.; Chatham R.C.; Grand Trunk R.C.; Leander R.C.; Nautilus R.C.; Peterboro R.C.; and Toronto R.C.. Absent were Argonaut R.C.; Beaver R.C.; and Lachine Boating Club.

There don't seem to have been any major issues, however "some motions amending the by-laws were discussed at length, taking up considerable time. Many of the amendments were unimportant and were voted down." [The Toronto *Globe*, April 15, 1882, p.3]

Only two items are reported in the press: the first was to issue an invitation to the Ottawa R.C. to hold the 1883 Regatta, since it had been the first to apply. If Ottawa declined, the Regatta would go to Toronto.

The other item was the election of Officers and Executive for 1882:

Officers:

President: A.R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.

1st Vice-President: Percy Sherwood, Ottawa R.C.

2nd Vice-President: W.B. Wells, Chatham R.C.

Secretary: William Ince, Argonaut R.C.

Treasurer: T.R. Gault, Argonaut R.C.

Executive Committee: A.J. Belcher, Peterboro R.C.; J. Davis, Beaver R.C.; Captain W. Dillon, Toronto R.C.; Walter Grant, Bayside R.C.; A.S. Jarvis, Ottawa R.C.; J.A. McKenzie, Leander R.C.; D.J. Pence, Hamilton R.C.; Robert Penk, Grand Trunk R.C.; S. Perrin, Chatham R.C.; John Stewart, Nautilus R.C.; H.D. Whitney, Lachine Boating Club.

The Third Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen was held at Lachine, Quebec on Lake St. Louis, along the southern shore of Montreal Island, on August 19 and 21, 1882. Having the Regatta at Lachine helped to legitimize the word "Canadian" in the Association's name. The Lachine Boating Club had been founded in 1863 and Lake St. Louis had been the site of many regattas, so the local organizers knew what they were doing.

Bad, or "lumpy" water meant that the races scheduled for Friday, August 18 had to be postponed, so the first day of racing was on Saturday, and the second on Monday. No explanation is given for the lack of racing on Sunday. However, since it was a decision made on Friday, there may have been restrictions on Sunday activities. Although the *Lord's Day Act* was not passed until 1906, there may have been local or provincial limitations in effect. The fact that the newspapers do not comment on the lack of racing on Sunday suggests that the reason was evident to their readers. The reason might have been a local by-law or a provincial act with which they were all familiar.

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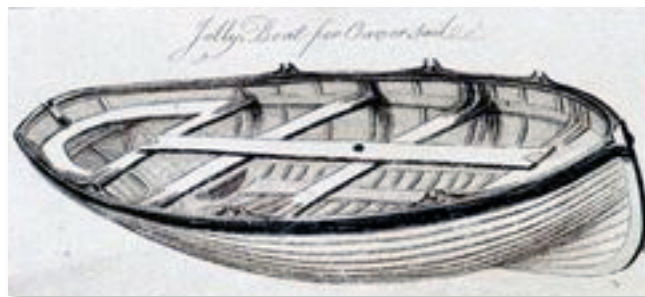
Although there were no rowing races on Friday, there was a 10 mile [16 km] sailing race in the morning. Two boats started; one boat, the *Panama*, finished. On Friday night, there were some activities organized by the Local Regatta Committee. Lanterns lit up the shoreline, there was a procession of small boats, and fireworks.

The Lachine regatta was the first CAAO Regatta to use heats to reduce the field of starters for the final. Two heats were run for the Junior Four-Oared race which had 11 entries, and the Senior Single which had 13 entries. The heats and finals for both events were all rowed on Saturday the 19th along with the Pair-Oared and Single Scull Inrigged races.

No reason is given for the use of heats. The first thought a modern reader might have is that the heats allowed the field to be reduced so that only the best crews competed in the final and thereby made the final an exciting one. However, another explanation might be that the gap between Dixie Island and the Lachine shore where the course was, allowed a maximum of eight lanes.

Also on Saturday, a special three-mile [4.8 km] race for Canadian fours was held. The finish buoys of the regular mile and a half races were used as half-way markers around which the fours turned. The prizes were a \$250 challenge cup, called the Lachine Boating Club Challenge Cup, and four silver medals. This race and challenge cup predated the founding of the CAAO. The race was instituted and the cup first presented in 1879. In 1882, the race was held in conjunction with the CAAO Regatta. A Chatham R.C. four won both this race and the Senior Four-Oars event.

There was also a Ship's Jolly Boat race for crews of the lake steamships anchored nearby. Eight crews entered. The crew from the S.S. *Tangiers* won the event which was rowed around Dixie Island and back, a distance of three miles [4.8 km].



Jolly Boat

1808 engraving from Wikipedia [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolly\\_boat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolly_boat)]

Saturday also featured a sailing race in the morning which was won easily by the *Maud* owned by Mr. J. Widmer Nelles of Pointe Claire.

Despite the disappointment of having Friday's events postponed, on Saturday, a large and enthusiastic crowd came out for the races. They lined the banks and filled gaily bedecked chartered steamers which were anchored along the course. At the Lachine Boating Club clubhouse the band of the Victoria Rifles entertained the crowd of

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members, oarsmen and friends, while on the water, a flotilla of canoes, skiffs and sailing boats congregated near the finish line. Between races, those out of earshot of the music could pass the time trying their luck at gambling. "On shore the proprietors of wheels of fortune, *rouge et noir* tables and other gambling schemes plied a busy trade, and managed to fleece considerable numbers of the unwary." [The Montreal *Gazette*, August 21, 1882, p.8]

Monday's programme included the Double Sculls and Double Sculls Inrigged races, plus two heats and the final of the Junior Single Sculls (there were 14 entries, six of whom scratched!) and the Senior Four-Oars race. A planned canoe race for Native Canadians did not happen.

Non-racing shell races would become part of the Henley programme when the number of entries plummeted during the Second World War, but they were always a part of the CAAO Regatta when it was held at Lachine.

Monday's races were rowed on near-perfect water, but in front of a small crowd.

A new club of note made its first appearance at this regatta. The Don Amateur R.C., which had been organized in 1878, had six entries, winning the Single Sculls Inrigged, the only win by a Toronto club. Conspicuous by their lack of entries was the host Lachine Boating Club.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1882 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. The number of entries may not be 100% accurate because the newspapers from which the data was obtained do not present the results in easy to follow tables for all finishers of all races.

The number of men competing increased to 116 from 104 in 1881.

The entry number includes entries in the special three mile [4.8 km] race for Canadian fours. An \* indicates clubs who entered. The \*\* denotes Chatham's win in that event.

Argonaut R.C.	(2/0)*	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(6/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Beaver R.C.	(2/0)*	Windsor, Ontario
Chatham R.C.	(5/2)**	Chatham, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(6/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Forest City R.C.	(2/0)	London, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(7/2)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(3/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(7/2)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(2/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Peterboro R.C.	(3/0)*	Peterboro, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(6/0)*	Toronto, Ontario

American crews came from:



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Excelsior B.C.	(1/1)	Detroit, Michigan
Narragansett B.C.	(3/0)	Providence, Rhode Island
Pawtucket R.C.	(2/0)	Pawtucket, Rhode Island
Portland R.C.	(3/1)	Portland, Maine

The Junior Four-Oars final was an exciting one, won by a Nautilus R.C. crew. What made the win more special was the fact that their boat had been badly damaged on Friday, so they rowed and won both their heat and the final in a shell borrowed from the Lachine Boating Club.

All the winners and times for the Third Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

The results of a couple of races will help to explain why researchers have grey hair. The Pair Oars was won by Excelsior R.C.. Everyone agrees on that. What there is disagreement on is the winning time. Both the *Montreal Gazette* and *Montreal Star* report a time of 8:41. The *Toronto Globe* says 8:43, and the 1890 edition of the *Constitution and By-Laws of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen*, which is the earliest edition I have access to, says 8:51. Four sources; three times. What's a researcher to do? We have to remember that the results were shouted through a megaphone, so I can imagine one of the Montreal reporters asking the other, "What did he say?" and the other replying, "I think he said '8 minutes, 41 seconds'." That would explain the agreement of those two newspapers. The *Globe* reporter obviously heard, "8 minutes, 43 seconds." As a general rule, I rely on the official times, my thinking being that if a typo were published, someone would have caught it and corrected it in the next edition of the *Constitution and By-Laws of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen*.

The results of the Single Sculls Inrigged illustrate a different problem. Everyone agrees that P. Van Iderstein of the Don Amateur R.C. won. Again, there is disagreement on the time, but I have opted to stick with the official time of 9:50. A more confusing problem is who finished second, third, fourth and fifth? The *Montreal Gazette* has Leander second, but doesn't give the positions of the others. The *Toronto Globe* also has Leander second, Bayside third, Grand Trunk fourth and another Don sculler fifth. However, The *Montreal Star* has the Bayside sculler second, the Leander sculler third, the other Don sculler fourth and Grand Trunk fifth. How can this be resolved? Since two newspapers have the Leander sculler second, that's what I've confidently gone with. Since there is no consensus on the rest, I've guessed. That's the best I can do with the data at hand. There is an identical problem in the Senior Four-Oars and I have not resolved that to my satisfaction. Some of the other results have discrepancies, but I was able to get two newspapers to agree, so I went with the consensus.

Reading the results of the races as published in the three newspapers I consulted is like reading the results of three different regattas. I fear that the results for regattas for which I have only one newspaper as a source must be questioned.

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All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The Lachine Boating Club was the site of the presentation of the prizes after Monday's races were completed.

In addition to reporting on the Regatta, The Montreal *Gazette* covered the meeting of the CAAO which was held on Saturday evening at the Lachine Boating Club. From that coverage, we get a glimpse at who was running the Association, and what some of the issues were. Arthur R. Boswell of the Toronto R.C. was the President and chaired the meeting.

A discussion was held on the advisability of continuing to have races for inrigged skiffs. The crux of the question seemed to be what constituted a skiff. Apparently some competitors were stretching the accepted definition and building boats that were becoming racing shells. In response, the Association codified the definition: "[A]n inrigged skiff shall be defined as one not more than 18 feet 6 inches [5.64 m] in length for single and 24 feet [7.32 m] for doubles, whose lap streak shall extend from keelson to gunwale, and around which a string stretched shall touch each streak." [The Montreal *Gazette*, August 21, 1882]

I have not found a photo of a nineteenth century racing skiff. However, this photo is probably a close approximation of what they looked like. Note the lack of riggers, hence the "inboard" description. Also visible are the fixed footstops and the lack of sliding seats. Skiff racing is still popular in Great Britain, which is where this photo was taken.



Sunbury Skiff and Punting Club photo from the Skiff Racing Association FaceBook page.

There was also a brief discussion at the CAAO meeting on the definition of a Junior, but it was decided to get input from the member clubs before proceeding.

The elected Officers for 1883 were:

President: Arthur R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.

1st Vice-President: Sydney Smith, Ottawa, R.C.

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2nd Vice-President: H.D. Whitney, Lachine Boating Club

Honourable Secretary: J.H. Fairweather, Ottawa R.C.

Executive Committee: Harold Lambe, Leander R.C., John Stewart, Nautilus R.C., Captain W. Dillon, Toronto R.C., W.R. Moffat, Argonaut R.C., Walter Grant, Bayside R.C., A.S. Jarvis, Ottawa R.C., A.J. Belcher, Peterboro R.C., S. Perrin, Chatham R.C., H.T. Wilgrass, Lachine Boating Club.

Captain Dillon and Mr. Moffatt were appointed Auditors.

Retiring Secretary A.C. Townsend was thanked for his work.

The Association formally offered the 1883 Regatta to Ottawa. The Ottawa R.C. accepted the offer in the spring.

# 1882



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### The Fourth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1883

The Fourth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen was held in Ottawa, on Wednesday, July 25, 1883. The races were on the Ottawa River, “a short distance below the city.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 26, 1883] The Ottawa R.C. was as old as Canada, having been founded in 1867, so there were men there with the expertise to put on a regatta. They had also sent crews to the first three regattas, so they were actively involved in the Association. For a change, “[t]he weather was all that could be desired, and the course was as smooth as glass.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 26, 1883] Ironically, with such ideal conditions, attendance was poor. It was estimated that no more than 3,000 spectators were on hand. The location of the course was the problem. It was not convenient for spectators to watch the races. To stress the importance of the Regatta, the *Globe* mentions the total value of the cups and medals: \$1,500.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1883 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. The number of entries is not complete because neither The Toronto *Globe* nor The Toronto *Mail* from which I obtained the data, named every crew in every race.

Argonaut R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(2/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Chatham R.C.	(1/0)	Chatham, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(4/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Galt R.C.	(1/0)	Galt, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(2/1)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(3/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(3/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/1)	Toronto, Ontario

American crews came from:

Portland R.C.	(3/1)	Portland, Maine
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After years of increases, the number of competitors dropped significantly from 116 men in 1882 to 66. In comparison, there had been 82 at the First Regatta in 1880.

A part of the reason for the decline in the number of competitors may have been the fact that there were only seven races at Ottawa. There were no entries for the Pair-Oars event. It was becoming obvious that that event was not popular with Canadian

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clubs. Of those seven races, Don Amateur R.C. won three. They were the powerhouse in 1883.

All the winners and times for the Third Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html> . Note that the 1890 edition of the *Constitution and By-Laws of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen* contains this caveat at the end of its records pages: “The time of the races of 1883 is uncertain, owing to supposed shifting of the starting buoys.” [p.24]

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The elected officers for 1883, as they are listed in the 1884 programme were:

President: Mayor Arthur R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.  
1st Vice-President: Sydney Smith, Ottawa, R.C.  
2nd Vice-President: A.C. Townsend, Grand Trunk R.C.  
Secretary: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.  
Treasurer: Oliver Morphy, Toronto R.C.

# 1883

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### The Fifth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1884

The Fifth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen was held in

Toronto, on Tuesday, July 29, 1884. Since the wind and water conditions were perfect, the City course was used, rowing from east to west with the finish past the new waterworks near the foot of John St.. The start was

at the Don Breakwater. Here eight stake-boats were anchored out in a line with Berkeley street, about 30 yards apart with a man in each boat to hold the stern of the boats occupied by competitors in the races until the gun was fired to go. The system of starting was to order the competitors to their places, and when they were in order, to sound a bugle to call them to attention. Then, the starting gun was fired within 20 seconds afterwards. This worked to perfection. [The Toronto Daily Mail, July 30, 1884, p.6]

Unfortunately, there was no bugle or gun or any other noise-making apparatus at the finish.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1884 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the

number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Toronto R.C. had entries in all but one race and won three, although the Senior Four-Oars was a row over.

Argonaut R.C. (3/0) Toronto, Ontario



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Bayside R.C.	(3/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Chatham R.C.	(1/0)	Chatham, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(4/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(5/1)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(2/1)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(5/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Peterboro R.C.	(2/0)	Peterboro, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(6/3)	Toronto, Ontario

One American crew came from:

Excelsior R.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
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They were entered in the Senior Four-Oars, but scratched. Guests of the CAAO were identified by the green ribbons they wore.

While the wind and water caused no problems at the Fifth Regatta, the officiating did. The first problem occurred at the end of the first race, Double Sculls Inrigged:

The arrangements at the finish were very unsatisfactory. There was no gun on the *Madcap*, the judge's yacht, and competitors were expected to distinguish the judge dipping a small flag on a yacht surrounded by hundreds of small boats, and undistinguishable of itself from a dozen other yachts like it. Of course when men were rowing a hard race, they could not do this, and in the first race the competitors went a quarter of a mile beyond the finish, not knowing they had crossed the line. [The *Toronto Globe*, July 30, 1884]

The second race, the Junior Single Sculls, was started as a steamer, the *Maggie Mason*, was crossing the race course as it did frequently throughout the afternoon. It was directly in front of the Nautilus sculler, John B. Lovell in Lane 8—the extreme outside lane—when the race was started. Then, when he was clear of the swells of the *Maggie Mason*, he had to row around a stone-hooker—a boat fishing for stones on the bottom of the Bay—which was in his way. C. Lockhart, in Lane 7, one of the two Bayside scullers, also fell victim to the *Maggie Mason's* swells. The *Globe* reporter did not mince words: “. . . the stupidity of the persons in charge thus shut him [Lockhart] out of the race at the start.” [The *Toronto Globe*, July 30, 1884] Despite his problems at the start, Lowell was able to move up to second place behind the Don sculler, Sam Scholes, but at the finish, he fell victim to the phantom finish line and lost second place. He could not find the line and stopped before he had crossed it, thinking that he *had* crossed it. Meanwhile, the Toronto R.C. sculler, J. Harkley, overtook him and crossed the line before Lowell, thus relegating him to third place.



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The Senior Four-Oars was meant to be the premier race of the day. However, it turned out to be a farce. If the Keystone Kops were to take up rowing and the Three Stooges were to officiate their race, the outcome would have been something like what happened that July afternoon in 1884—at least that’s the impression one gets reading the *Globe’s* account. When the race was over, “even the winners were not satisfied because some of their competitors were dissatisfied.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884]

It was a seven-boat race—an eighth crew, Excelsior B.C. scratched. The field was composed of two Argonaut R.C. crews, and crews from the Chatham R.C., Lachine Boating Club, Leander R.C., Nautilus R.C. and Toronto R.C..

The Nautilus crew began in Lane 8, the outside lane, and the Leanders began in Lane 4.

The No. 1 Argonaut crew in Lane 5 took the lead at the start ahead of Leanders who were having trouble steering and moved from their lane to the outside lane. The third place Nautilus crew, to avoid some small boats, moved from the outside to the inside, presumably to the lane vacated by Leanders.

As the race progressed, Nautilus crept ahead of Argonauts No.1, followed by Toronto R.C. in Lane 6, two lengths behind.

The *Globe* account does not give the position of the other crews, other than to say that Leanders were outside, and Chatham, Argonauts No.2, and Lachine were far behind.

“At the Water-works the trouble began.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884] The Water-works were about 500 to 600 metres from the finish. It was at that point that the Nautilus and Argonaut No.1 boats collided. The Argonauts’ bow was broken, and the Nautilus shell lost its rudder. The Toronto R.C. crew was not involved in the collision, but stopped rowing. Meanwhile, Leanders—remember them on the outside and having steering problems?—passed the three stopped crews and crossed the finish line first, in a time of 9 minutes. Chatham, in Lane 3, also passed the accident scene and finished second.

That should have been the end of the race, however, at the crash site, the referee, Lieutenant Colonel William D. Otter, who had also refereed the First Regatta in 1880, was meting out justice. Although Nautilus were ahead at the time of the crash, he disqualified them for being out of their lane. Apparently, having their course blocked by small boats was not sufficient reason for leaving their lane. He also ordered the Argonaut crew and the Toronto crew to re-row the race at the end of the day. None of the other crews, including the Leander and Chatham boats who had finished first and second were to be included in the re-row.

Things got even more bizarre once everyone returned to shore. An hour after the collision, when Referee Otter went to their clubhouses, the Argonaut crew had racked their shell without making any attempt to repair it, changed into their street clothes and said they could not row because their boat was broken. The Toronto R.C. crew told the Referee that they could not get together at any other time and refused to agree to a postponement of the re-row. After some futile negotiations, Referee Otter ordered the crews to be at the starting buoys at 8:15 P.M.. At 8:24 P.M., the Argonauts had not

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arrived, and the re-row was started without them. About half way down the course, the Argonaut crew appeared, but of course, they were too late.

Although the Argonauts accused the Toronto R.C. crew of “ungentlemanly and unsportsmanlike conduct,” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884] it is the Toronto R.C. crew whose name appears in the record books, with a respectable time of 8:34.2.

To add to the bitter feelings among the spectators, money was involved, since betting on this race had been heavy.

But this drama was not over. The *dénouement* took place at the prize presentations later that evening at the Toronto R.C. clubhouse. Before the prizes for the Senior Four-Oars were presented, Harold Lambe of the Leander R.C. protested that since Leanders finished first, they should be the winners. The prize presenter, President of the CAAO, and member of the Toronto R.C., Toronto Mayor Arthur R. Boswell tried unsuccessfully to silence him, but Mr. Lambe did not stop until he had finished what he had to say. “Hisses and cheers followed.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884]

No sooner was order restored when C.E. Stewart of the Don Amateur R.C. complained that their protest in the Junior Four-Oars had been ignored. Their boat had been fouled twice by the Toronto R.C. before Toronto was finally disqualified, and it was Dons’ feeling that they had not been treated fairly.

Finally the prizes were presented for the Senior Four-Oars, but J.W. O’Hara from the Toronto R.C. could not leave things alone and proceeded to stir them up again by announcing that if Leanders weren’t happy with the result, his crew was willing to race against them again—remember that Leanders were fourth when the collision happened. A Leander, with the loud approval of some Nautilus supporters asked Mr. O’Hara if that invitation extended to the Nautilus crew—they were leading when the collision occurred. Mr. O’Hara said it did not.

D.R. Dewey, President of the Nautilus R.C. protested that the Argonauts had committed the foul and that the Nautilus crew should have been included in the re-row and, presumably, in the re-match Mr. O’Hara was proposing.

Nothing came of any of the protests or challenges.

The Referee, who described himself as “about the best abused man in town,” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884] Lieutenant Colonel William D. Otter, did aver that if it were not for the foul, the Nautilus R.C. four would have won. He also revealed that the Argonaut R.C. were entering legal proceedings against him because of his decisions. To conclude the day of controversy, even though he did not think it was his responsibility, he “declared off all bets on the senior four.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884]

“On the whole the presentation was a much more lively and much less unanimous affair than such affairs generally are.” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 30, 1884]

All the winners and times for the Fifth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html> .

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

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The annual meeting of the C.A.A.O. was held the day before the Regatta, July 28, 1884 at the Argonaut R.C..

The elected officers for 1885 were:

President: Mayor Arthur R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.

1st Vice-President: Sydney Smith, Ottawa, R.C.

2nd Vice-President: Harold Lambe, Leander R.C.

Secretary: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: Oliver Morphy, Toronto R.C.

Executive Committee: J.G. Monk, Lachine Boating Club, J.W. O'Hara, Toronto R.C., Hume Blake, Argonaut R.C., J.H. Fairweather, Ottawa R.C., S. Brown, Bayside R.C., J.J. Toomey, Grand Trunk R.C., W.B. Wells, Chatham R.C., A.E. Jarvis, Leander R.C., F.J. Harris, Nautilus R.C..

# 1884



## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

### **The Sixth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1885**

The Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen returned to Hamilton/Burlington for their Sixth Regatta on Wednesday, August 5, 1885. The morning began with rain and gusty winds but as the day advanced, the rain stopped, the winds died and the sun appeared. The breeze which remained was from slightly east of south, so, the Burlington Bay course was selected.

There was a large crowd on shore, and a large number of steam yachts, sailing yachts, sail boats, skiffs and canoes from Hamilton and Toronto on the water.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1885 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club.

With the entry of a Senior Four from the Winnipeg R.C., the Canadian Association now included members from three provinces.

Argonaut R.C.	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(2/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(4/1)	Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Winnipeg R.C.	(1/0)	Winnipeg, Manitoba

American crews returned to the 1885 Regatta after a one-year absence.

Excelsior R.C.	(1/1)	Detroit, Michigan
Modoc R.C.	(1/0)	St. Louis, Missouri
New York A.C.	(1/0)	New York, New York
Wah-Wah-Tah-Shee Club	(1/0)	Ecorse, Michigan

The 1885 programme was slightly different from previous years. The two inrigged skiff races were omitted and since the Pair-Oars had two entries, it was run for the first time since 1882.

The programme had six races listed. However, the Senior Doubles had only two entries, so, when the Bayside R.C. entry damaged their shell the night before and could not compete, that race was not held. As a result, the Toronto R.C. entry had a row-over.

The Pair-Oars was the first race of the day. It began almost on schedule, shortly after 2:00 p.m.. It was an all-American event, with Excelsior R.C. beating the New York A.C..

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Photo by Stephen Malbouef, Detroit Boat Club Crew.

Fred Standish collection.

The Excelsior R.C. crew from Detroit, Michigan, was made up of two men who dominated pairs races in that era, Fred Standish and John Clegg. Pictured is the medal won by Fred Standish.

The Junior Four-Oars marked the debut of the Wah-Wah-Tah-Shee Club from Ecorse, Michigan. They were the predecessors of the Ecorse R.C.. [ <http://www.ecorserowingclub.com/history.php> ] The *Globe* account of that race gives us some rowing terminology which is no longer used. What we call "lanes," were called "berths" in 1885. In that race, Leander R.C. had the "Inside Berth," Toronto R.C., "Berth No.2," Wah-Wah-Tah-Shee Club, "Berth No.3," Don Amateur R.C., "Berth No.4," Nautilus R.C., "Berth No.5," and Argonaut R.C., the "Outside Berth." At previous regattas, the outside berth was usually the poorest, having the roughest water, however, on Burlington Bay, the inside berth was the one that caused problems for the Toronto R.C. four. Although they started in Berth No.2, they moved into the Inside Berth to take advantage of the slightly calmer water, but then they got into a bed of rushes which slowed them down just enough to let the Don Amateur R.C. four extend their lead. Dons won by a length.

The opinion of the *Globe's* reporter regarding the Senior Single Sculls race was simply: "This contest was not particularly

interesting." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1885] He based his view on the fact that the Toronto R.C. sculler, William O'Connor, led from the start to the finish. That race saw the debut of another American club; Fred Gastrich came fifth for the Modoc R.C. from St. Louis, Missouri. O'Connor turned professional and had some success both in the single and as Ned Hanlan's doubles partner.

Betting was still a part of the races. The *Globe* account of the regatta includes the odds for each race. For example, here are the odds for the Senior Single Sculls: "Betting - 10 to 7 against Donohoe; 10 to 7 against O'Connor; 10 to 6 against Scholes; 10 to 5 against Enright; 20 to 5 each against Leroux and Gastrich." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1885]

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The entry of the Senior Four from Winnipeg marked that club's first visit to the Canadian Championships. The stroke of the boat, George Frederick Galt, was one of the founders of the Winnipeg R.C. in 1881. Galt was no stranger to the CAAO Regattas. He had stroked the Argonaut R.C. fours which won the Senior Four-Oars events at the First and Second Regattas in 1880 and 1881. Although his Winnipeg crew did not win in 1885, he may have taken some consolation in beating the crew from his old club. Galt would go on to have a long involvement in rowing in Winnipeg and Canada. In 1929, the Winnipeg R.C. donated the George F. Galt Memorial Trophy to the CAAO to be competed for in the Championship Singles. It is still in annual competition at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta.

To learn more about the George F. Galt Memorial Trophy, and all the other trophies which are presented at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta, go to: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/trophies.html>

All the 1885 winners and their winning times may be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The presentation of prizes was held that evening at Dundurn Park with entertainment provided by the band of the 13th Battalion. The Chairman of the event was Major Moore, with some laudatory remarks being made by the Mayor of Hamilton, John James Mason. The prizes were distributed by the wives of Major Moore and Mayor Mason.

# 1885

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

### **The Seventh Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1886**

The Lachine Boating Club was the host for the Seventh Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen held on Saturday, August 7, 1886.

The Montreal *Gazette* account is filled with glowing observations: the sun was shining, the water was smooth, 10,000 spectators watched from the shore, the water was covered with small boats filled with spectators. A special train, albeit behind schedule, travelled the 13 km from Montreal with 15 cars filled with passengers going to the Regatta. The officiating was excellent, and of course, the media were well served having the *Swan* at their disposal to follow every race. The reporter from the Montreal *Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* provides some details which the other reporters covering the Regatta omit. They give us a good picture of the spectacle which was part of the Regatta. After complaining about the poor train service provided by the Grand Trunk Railway, he continues:

On reaching Lachine the usual complement of roulette and gaming tables were observed on the grounds, and the owners seemed to be finding plenty of patrons, or victims, and were driving a very lucrative trade. The town, generally, presented a holiday appearance. Bunting was floating from nearly every residence and from the steamers, launches, yachts and crafts of every description, which sailed and paddled around and fringed the course on either side. Special tents were erected along the shore for the accommodation of the contestants and visitors, and Hanna's Hotel and Mr. Harvey's Lake View House were taxed to their utmost capacity in providing for the bodily and "spiritual" wants of their patrons. [The Montreal *Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette*, August 9, 1886, p.8]

Clearly, there was more to the Regatta than racing.

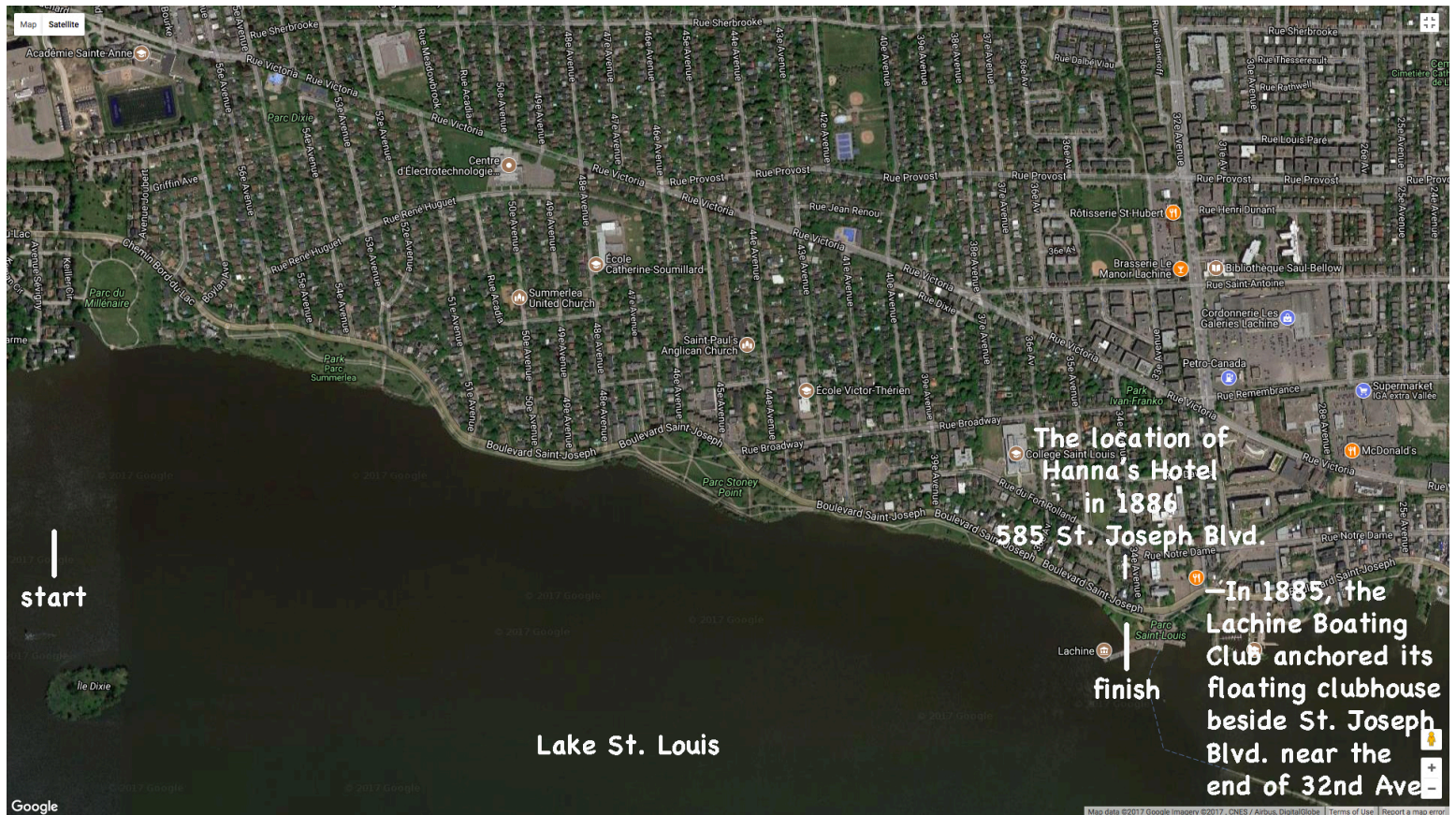
The *Gazette* reporter goes into great detail about the rules, in the course of which he mentions that there were seven lanes, each identified by a buoy with a distinctive colour. The bow men were provided with caps which matched the colour of the lane they were in, and, at the finish, the winner was identified by the judge or umpire holding up a flag of the same colour as the winner was wearing. This system, or a variation of it, was used in the previous regattas, but only here is it described in detail.

The course was 1.5 miles [2,414 m] straightaway, with the current, roughly west to east, "from the buoy a little above Dixie Island to the judge's boat opposite Hanna's hotel." [The Montreal *Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette*, August 9, 1886, p.8] The current favoured competitors in the "outside station." Because the waterfront has changed so much since 1886, it is difficult for a modern reader to visualize the course, but we know that it ended at "the judge's boat opposite Hanna's hotel" and we know that Hanna's Hotel was located at 585 St. Joseph Blvd, just west of 34th Ave.. Fixing the location of the start is more challenging. We are told that the races began at "the buoy a



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little above Dixie Island.” Although we don’t know where exactly that buoy was, we can speculate that the course probably looked something like this:



Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1886 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Note that five of the Grand Trunk R.C. entries and both of its wins were in the much-disparaged inrigged events.

Argonaut R.C.	(3/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(2/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Chatham R.C.	(1/0)	Chatham, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(2/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(7/2)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(2/1)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(2/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(2/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(2/1)	Toronto, Ontario



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American crews came from:

Albany R.C.	(1/1)	Albany, New York
Metropolitan R.C.	(3/1)	New York, New York

The first of the eight races was scheduled to start at 1:30 P.M., but, of course it did not, and no reason is given for the delay.

A new event, the Junior Doubles Sculls was supposed to start the programme, but only an Argonaut R.C. double were entered, so that event did not make its debut until the following year, 1887.

To their credit, that Argonaut double, at the request of the CAAO, competed in the Senior event, which also had one entry, a Metropolitan R.C. crew from New York City. The Argonauts lost by 24 ½ seconds; they were clearly out of their league.

There was no Pair-Oars race, but the inrigged events made their return to the programme for the first time since 1884. However, they were not popular among the press. In the Single Sculls Inrigged race, all three entries were from the Grand Trunk R.C., and there was not much competition in the race. Because of that, both the *Montreal Gazette's* and the *Toronto Globe's* reporters suggested that that event should be permanently removed from the programme.

The *Gazette* reporter was clearly not a fan of inrigged boat races. The Double Sculls Inrigged had two entries, both from the Grand Trunk R.C.. In his opinion this race was "another sample of the inrigged foolishness." [The *Montreal Gazette*, August 9, 1886] The *Globe's* reporter used an even stronger word, calling the race a "farce." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 9, 1886] For some unexplained reason, the CAAO records do not have a time for the race, while both the *Montreal Star* and the *The Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* give a time of 9:48. Perhaps that time was inaccurate and as a result the CAAO did not include it.

The winner of the Senior Single Sculls was John J. Ryan from the Bayside R.C.. He had won the Junior Single Sculls the year before, 1885. He would win the Senior three more times in the next four years.

The Junior Four-Oars race was notable for some erratic steering by the Leander R.C. crew. They were leading comfortably until a quarter of a mile [about 400 m] to the finish when suddenly "they started out almost at right angles to their course losing all prospect of victory." [The *Montreal Gazette*, August 9, 1886] Because they were off the course, they were disqualified. No explanation is given for their erratic steering. Clearly there was a problem with the rudder, or possibly the fin. This allowed the Albany R.C. four to win. The reporter from the *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* says that it was the Argonaut crew who finished second but were disqualified for leaving the course, but the other reporters saw Leanders having steering problems.

The Senior Four-Oars concluded the programme. It was a spirited four-boat race in which, after a poor start, the Lachine Boating Club crew took the lead and never relinquished it. The *Montreal Star's* reporter points out that the Lachine crew were understroking the Argonaut crew, while the *Montreal Gazette's* reporter adds, "The

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Argonauts were rowing 38 and the Lachine 33 strokes to the minute.” [The *Montreal Gazette*, August 9, 1886] Lachine’s time of 7:50 equalled the time of the Emerald B.C. four from Detroit which set the U.S. record under similar conditions at Detroit in 1877.

All the winners and times for the Seventh Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The awards ceremony was held in the evening at Hanna’s Hotel. After some remarks by CAAO President Arthur R. Boswell, the prizes were presented by Mr. H.D. Whitney, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee, with the assistance of several Lachine ladies.

Meanwhile, on the waterfront, Chinese lanterns and coloured lights illuminated a three kilometre stretch of the shore, and fireworks were set off from a number of locations.

The reporter from the *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette* ends his coverage of the Regatta the way he began it, with a long, vivid description of the scene he saw:

In the evening a grand illumination took place, nearly every residence in the village being hung with Chinese lanterns, &c. The boat house was especially noticable [sic], being literally one blaze of colored light. The fire works were magnificent. All along the shore the houses, trees and every available point were hung with lights. By far the prettiest scene of the evening, however, was the torchlight procession of boats, which started from the boat house about 9 p.m. and proceeded up the river till near Dorval Island, where they formed in line stretching nearly half way accross [sic]. About 300 crafts of all kinds must have been on the water at one time, and as each was illuminated, the scene was one never to be forgotten. The steam launches and yachts had their riggings covered with lanterns, and as the whole fleet sailed slowly down, discharging sky rockets, colored balls of fire, &c., at each other, the brilliance of the scene was beyond description. Several floating barrels of coal oil, &c., blazing in the water, also added brightness to the scene and illuminated the river for miles. Altogether such a display of magnificence, brilliancy and effectiveness has seldom if ever been see in this part of the country, and the whole “reflected” much credit on the illumination committee. The fleet arrived home about 11 p.m., and most of the visitors took the 11.30 train to the city. [The *Montreal Herald and Daily Commercial Gazette*, August 9, 1886, p.8]

And so ended the Seventh Regatta of the CAAO.

The photo below is dated August 8, 1886, which means that it was taken on the day after the Seventh Regatta. It appears that the post-Regatta festivities were still in progress on the observation deck of the Lachine Boating Club.



Lachine Historical Society photo. Used with permission.

# 1886

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### **The Eighth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1887**

On Saturday, August 6, 1887, Ottawa was again the host for the CAAO Regatta. It was a part of a summer-long celebration in Ottawa of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. In some newspaper articles, it was referred to as the “Jubilee Regatta.”

In 1883, the course had been located on a part of the Ottawa River which was not convenient for spectators. The 1887 Regatta Committee decided to remedy that problem and set the course in full view of the city. “The course commences just above [i.e. upstream of] the Gatineau river, and finishes opposite Nepean Point grandstand.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 6, 1887, p.14]

The grandstand, which could seat about 2,000 spectators, had a unique prospect of the course. It “was erected upon Nepean Point, a high bluff below the Parliament Hill, from which each race could be viewed from start to finish.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 8, 1887, p.3] It was a temporary structure, erected by Alex Jacques. Admission was 25¢ for adults and 10¢ for children.

At water level, the Judges’ barge gave donors of \$5.00 or more to the Regatta fund a close up view of the finishes.

Also unique to the Ottawa River were the floating hazards. There were pulp and paper mills on both sides of the river, so the river contained the detritus of the various factories. Moreover, the river was normally clogged with booms of logs. However, on this day, the lumbermen moved the booms and the weather helped to blow away the air pollution and keep the course clear. “The thunderstorm of last night had cleared the atmosphere and a stiff northeast wind was blowing which while it made the water somewhat choppy, served to keep the course free of driftwood and sawdust.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 8, 1887, p.3]

The *Globe’s* coverage continues:

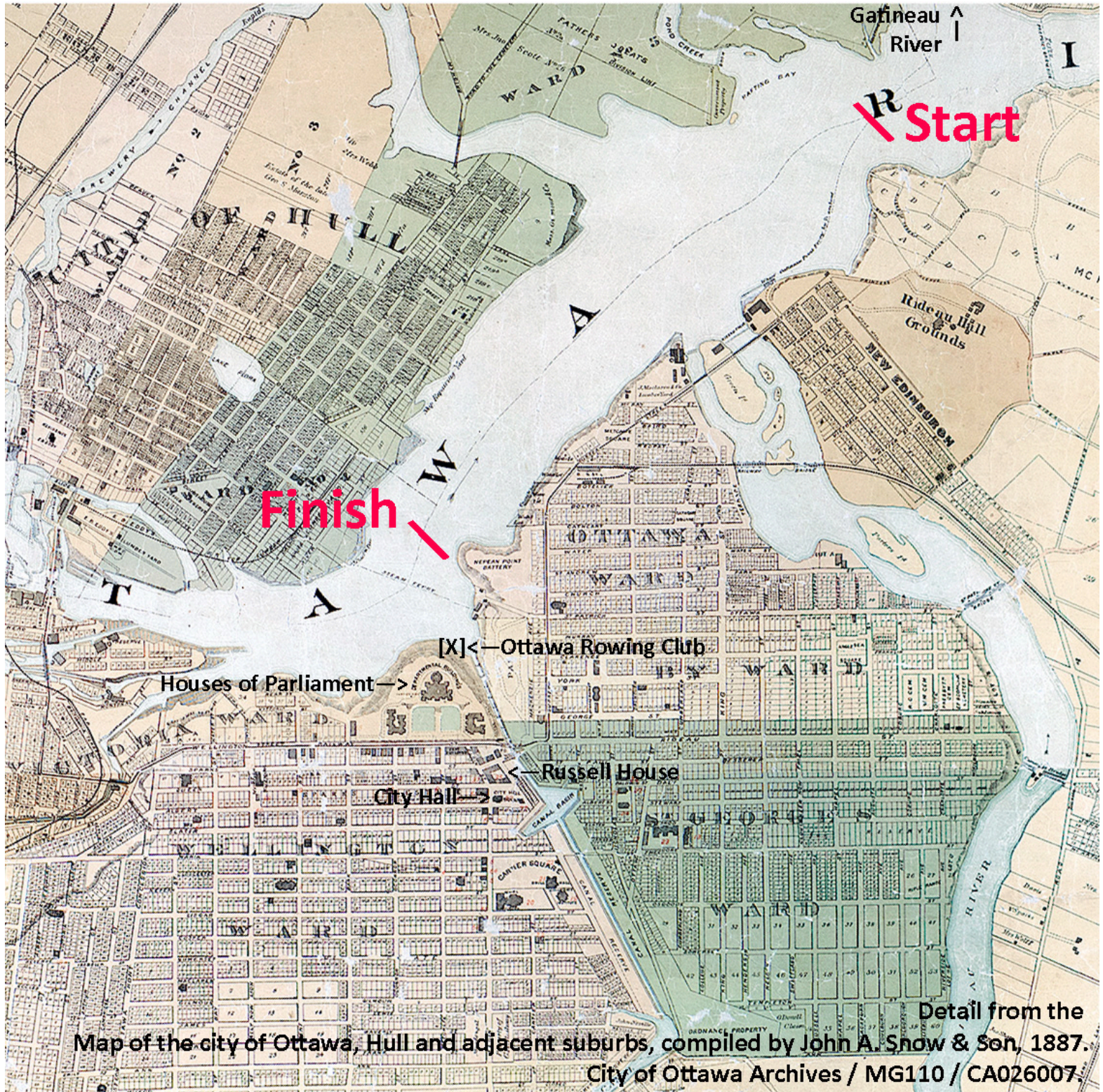
As the hour for starting the first race approached, the river became covered with yachts and small pleasure boats while the banks were covered with spectators. The starting point was opposite New Edinburgh and the finish near Nepean Point, so that the course was a mile and a half straightaway up stream. [The *Toronto Globe*, August 8, 1887, p.3]

Published the same year as the Eighth Regatta, the map below illustrates one of the selling points of holding the races on this stretch of the river; the public could easily see the races along the entire length of the course, something which had not been possible in 1883.

Although we do not know their exact locations, the start and finish lines on the map are pretty safe guesses. We know that the temporary grandstand was set up on Nepean Point to view the finish, and we know that the start was one and a half miles down river, “just above the Gatineau river.”



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The location of the Ottawa R.C. is a guess, based on the opinion of Wes Kuran, Past President of the Canadian Amateur Rowing Association and Ottawa R.C. historian [Kuran, Wes. "Re: ORC wins." Message to Stan Lapinski. January 14, 2023. Email], a



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Wikipedia article, and one of the photos in that article. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottawa\\_Rowing\\_Club](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottawa_Rowing_Club)] It, like many clubs of the day, moved around, so, pinpointing its location in a given year is a challenge.

Weeks before the Regatta, there was some debate about the location of the course. The Argonaut R.C. objected to the crews having to race upstream. Their objection was based on the fact that the Argonaut crews were lightweights and would be at a disadvantage rowing against the current against heavyweight crews. Fred Colson, Secretary of the Regatta Committee responded that the current at that point in the river was “practically nil” and “almost imperceptible.” [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, July 21, 1887, p.4] The Argonauts also protested that the Ottawa crews would have an advantage because they were familiar with the course’s eddies and currents, to which Mr. Colson responded by reminding the Argonauts that positions were assigned by lot; every crew had the same chance of getting the best lane. He also reiterated that this was the best location for the spectators. Not satisfied, the Toronto club representatives raised the issue at the meeting of the CAAO on July 21. The Association’s Executive declined to get involved, saying that it was something the Ottawa Regatta Committee had to deal with. The Regatta Committee refused to bow to Toronto pressure; the course would be the one originally proposed. In the days before the Regatta, when visiting crews had a chance to row on the course, although they commented on the amount of sawdust on the river, not one complained about the current, which, they had to admit, was practically nil. Ironically, on the day of the races, it was not the current or the floating hazards which were problems for the competitors, but a strong head wind.

For the second year in a row, there was no Pair Oars race. However, a new event was added to the programme in 1887: the Junior Double Sculls. The winners of the inaugural race were a Don Amateur R.C. crew.

There was some controversy in the Junior Four-Oars race. The Winnipeg R.C. four came first, Argonaut R.C. second, Ottawa R.C. third, and the Lachine Boating Club four did not finish because the stroke broke his oar lock. After the race, Ottawa protested that the Argonauts had fouled them twice in the race. After listening to the presentations of the crews, the Referee, Sheriff John Sweetland, disqualified the Argonauts and ordered the Winnipeg and Ottawa crews to row the race again to decide first place. Winnipeg were unwilling to do this and Ottawa, being good sports, agreed to accept second place.

The coverage of the Regatta by the *Ottawa Evening Journal* contains several instances of listing the weights of the competitors. Below are the names and weights of the four entries in the Senior Four-Oars race:

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

<i>Toronto.</i>	<i>Ottawa.</i>
J. E. Knox, bow, 156 pounds.....	H. B. Lane, bow, 148 pounds.....
E. A. Thompson, No. 2, 172 pounds.....	A. C. Lewis, No. 2, 152 pounds.....
F. H. Thompson, No. 3, 170 pounds.....	W. J. Johnstone, No. 3, 158 pounds.....
J. Wright, stroke, 178 pounds.....	P. D. Ross, stroke, 155 pounds.....
Average weight—169	Average weight—153
<i>Winnipeg.</i>	<i>Argonauts.</i>
W. A. Thompson, bow 143 pounds.....	R. McKay, bow, 145 pounds.....
J. A. Campbell, No. 2, 166 pounds.....	A. Barker, No. 2, 148 pounds.....
B. Caldwell, No. 3, 163 pounds.....	S. Sewell, No. 3, 148 pounds.....
G. F. Galt, stroke, 163 pounds.....	J. W. Hogg, stroke, 152 pounds.....
Average weight—159	Average weight—148

[The Ottawa Evening Journal, August 8, 1887, p.4]

The crews finished in order of weight, the heaviest, Toronto R.C., first, and the lightest, Argonaut R.C., fourth.

All the winners and times for the Eighth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1887 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club.

Compared to previous Regattas, this one was small. Only nine clubs competed. There were no crews from Hamilton—although the Leander R.C. had submitted an entry—and only one American sculler. The shortage of American crews was attributed to the

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

success of Canadians at American regattas earlier in the season. The speculation was that the Americans thought that they did not stand a chance of winning in Ottawa, so they stayed away. The eight races contained a total of 26 entries. Three of the races were row-overs: the Double Sculls, the Single Sculls and the Single Sculls Inrigged.

Argonaut R.C.	(4/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(2/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(3/1)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Ottawa R.C.	(5/1)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Winnipeg R.C.	(3/2)	Winnipeg, Manitoba

Only one American sculler entered, but scratched from the Senior Single Sculls.

Shawmut R.C.	(1/0)	Boston, Massachusetts
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Getting to regattas was a challenge in the 19th century. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* of August 8 gives us a glimpse into what was involved in the Winnipeg R.C.'s 2,100 km journey to Ottawa. Their three crews, comprising 12 oarsmen, plus three paper boats built by E. Waters & Sons of Troy, New York, travelled three nights and two days via the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Winnipegers, who are a manly and handsome lot of fellows, left home Saturday night. They had an enjoyable time on the way down as they had a Pullmann [sic] car all to themselves. The weather in the Lake Superior district was delightfully cool, and the party reached Ottawa in excellent condition despite the long journey. [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 2, 1887, p.4]

Prizes were presented at the Ottawa City Hall by Mrs. Sydney Smith, wife of the Captain of the Ottawa R.C.. The silver cups were manufactured by Messrs. Watson and Pelton of Montreal.

When the Ottawa R.C. and the city of Ottawa took on the Regatta, they were tasked with raising \$1,500 to defray the cost. Donations were solicited from many private citizens, business owners and politicians, including the Prime Minister: "Sir John A. Macdonald, through his private secretary, has very generously donated a ten dollar bill towards a swelling Ottawa Rowing club fund for the Regatta." [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, April 16, 1887, p.4]

Although Sir John A. Macdonald did his part, the Regatta Committee only raised a little more than half the \$1,500 that they were aiming for. For this Regatta, we have the Treasurer's summary which gives us an insight into what was involved in putting on a national regatta in the 19th century:

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

SUMMARY OF TREASURER'S STATEMENT.	
<i>Receipts.</i>	
Subscriptions to regatta fund.....	\$ 848 00
Entrance fees.....	147 50
Grand stand on Nepean Point.....	42 85
Sale of programmes.....	23 60
	<hr/>
	\$1,061 95
<i>Expenditure.</i>	
Cups for prizes.....	\$ 600 00
Rent of Ratte's boat house. etc.....	135 16
Printing .....	58 85
Tugs, barges, etc.....	55 45
Guards Band.....	32 50
Cartage of boats.....	25 00
Survey of course.....	12 00
Entertainment of visiting oarsmen.....	29 00
Badges.....	11 90
Expenses on course day of regatta.....	21 70
Telegrams, postages, telephoning, messengers, cabhire, etc.,.....	68 20
Sundries.....	12 19
	<hr/>
	\$1,061 05

[The Ottawa *Evening Journal*, September 30, 1887, p.4]

No, they did not make a profit of 90¢. That's a typo.

At the annual meeting of the CAAO held at the Russell House at the corner of Sparks and Elgin Sts., on August 5, the following officers were elected for 1888:

President: Arthur R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.

1st Vice-President: Sydney Smith, Ottawa R.C.

2nd Vice-President: J.J. Stuart, Leander R.C.

Secretary: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: Oliver Morphy, Toronto R.C.

Executive Committee: R.W. Gouinlock, Toronto R.C., James Pearson, Argonaut R.C., R. Hobson, Leander R.C., who were newly elected, plus six more, who are not named in the press

The Association was in good financial condition, with a surplus of \$500.

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One other notable item on the agenda was the resignation of one of the founding clubs of the Association: the Chatham R.C.. The Association's definition of an amateur had been amended earlier in 1887, and the Chatham R.C. were not satisfied with the definition. In their opinion, it wasn't restrictive enough, so they resigned from the Association in protest. "The resignation is on account of the Association having refused to adopt an amateur definition which would exclude mechanics." [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 6, 1887, p.8] In the 19th century, "mechanics" were men who had a manual occupation, or worked at a trade. What the Chatham R.C. was proposing was a system which was still in effect in England where working men were not allowed to compete because they were not gentlemen.

Inrigged events were losing popularity. There were only three entries in the Single Sculls Inrigged, two of which scratched, and the Double Sculls Inrigged had two entries. This poor showing prompted a Toronto *Globe* reporter to opine:

Inrigged skiff racing at Canadian regattas has probably been seen for the last time. This style of rowing should have been omitted long ago and a race for eight-oared crews substituted. It is true there is not an eight-oared shell in Canada, but there are a number of clubs able to buy such boats and turn out strong crews, and with a little encouragement eight-oared racing can be made a great feature of the regattas. [The *Toronto Globe*, August 10, 1887, p.3]

Inrigged events held on for one more year, but the first race for eights at an Annual Regatta would not be held until 1898.

# 1887



## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

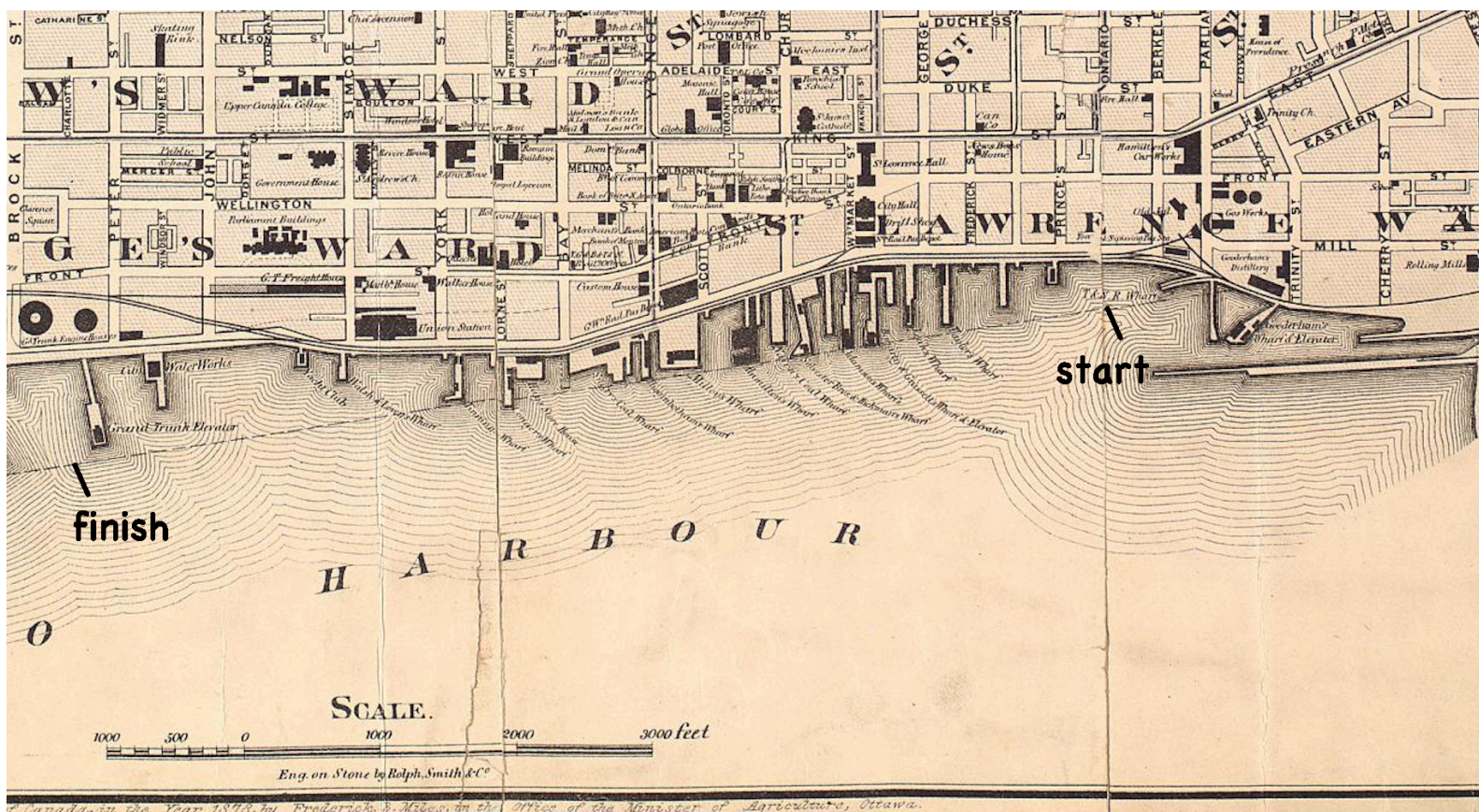
### The Ninth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1888

The CAAO returned to Toronto for the Ninth Regatta, the third time the Regatta had been held on Toronto Bay. The races took place on the course close to the city on Thursday, August 2, 1888. "The course was from north of the breakwater along the city front to a line between the yachts *Condor* and *Rivet*, which were moored west of the Grand Trunk elevator." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 3, 1888] That location was between the foot of Peter St. and the foot of Brock St. The finish line was probably the same location it had been in 1884, although that year the *Globe* described it as being past the new waterworks.

No reason is given, either in 1884 or 1888, for running the races east to west. Perhaps the direction of the prevailing winds had something to do with it.

All races were one and a half miles [2,414 m] straightaway.

Although this map was ten years old in 1888, it nicely shows approximately where the 1884 and 1888 course was.



Drawn by A.T. Cotterell, revised by H.J. & W.A. Browne, 1878. Toronto Public Library: [T1878/4Msm](#)

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

Weather and water conditions were perfect and a large crowd watched the races from the shore along the entire length of the course. In addition a flotilla of boats were on the water. Everything from big steamers to tiny gigs carried more spectators. “The Regatta Committee’s arrangements were, taken all in all, first-class. The afternoon’s programme went off without a hitch.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 3, 1888]

The *Globe* reporter glosses over one mishap in the Senior Four-Oars race which illustrates one of the perils of rowing on an active waterfront. A half mile [800 m] into the race, the Toronto R.C. crew were leading, but being challenged by the Nautilus R.C. four. At that point, two small steamers entered the course ahead of the race and threw up a wash that the Toronto crew had to row through for the rest of the race. The reporter says that Toronto could not have beat Nautilus in any case, and there is no mention of a protest, so he may have been right.

The surprise of the day was the Double Sculls Inrigged race. Even though it was only a two-boat race between Don Amateur R.C.—the eventual winners—and Toronto R.C.. The *Globe* reporter raves about the competitiveness throughout. Unlike the disparaging comments on the inrigged skiff races in previous years, the *Globe* sings the praises of this contest: “A better or a more gamely rowed race no man has seen on Toronto Bay — or for that matter on any other bay. . . . It was the best race of the day.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 3, 1888] Although this race may have been the highlight of the day, it was still only a two-boat race. That had also been the case in 1886 and 1887, and the Single Sculls Inrigged was a row-over, as it had been in 1887. It was clear that these events were not popular. As a result, this was the last year that inrigged skiff races were a part of the CAAO Regatta programme.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1888 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Using those criteria, the Don Amateur R.C. was the strongest club at the Ninth Regatta of the CAAO, winning three of the seven races they were in.

Argonaut R.C.	(5/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(2/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(7/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(1/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(6/1)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(3/1)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(9/2)	Toronto, Ontario

American scullers came from:

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Cohoes R.C.	(1/0)	Cohoes, New York
Farragut B.C.	(1/0)	Chicago, Illinois
Nonpareil R.C.	(1/0)	Brooklyn, New York
Passaic R.C.	(1/0)	Newark, New Jersey
Sylvans B.C.	(1/0)	Moline, Illinois

The prizes were presented at the Argonaut clubhouse by Colonel George A. Sweny, Chairman of the Local Regatta Committee, and H.W. Garfield, President of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen in the United States.

There was some controversy at the 1888 Regatta concerning the Senior Single Sculls race. The rumour was that J.F. Corbett of the Farragut R.C. had held back and allowed John J. Ryan of the Bayside R.C. to win because Farragut's friends had bet against him to win. By coming second, his friends won some money. The *Globe* reporter avers that Farragut was not a better sculler than Ryan and could not beat him, and then adds that Farragut's "amateur standing will bear a little investigation." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 3, 1888]

All the winners and times for the Ninth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The 1888 Annual Meeting of the CAAO was held at the Queen's Hotel on Tuesday, August 31. Nine member clubs were represented. Of the five Officers, only Second Vice-President J.J. Stuart and Secretary, William A. Littlejohn were present. Treasurer Oliver Morphy resigned and J.W. Hogg was elected in his place. H.J. McAllister of the Nautilus R.C., William Plunkett of the Don Amateur R.C., and George Frederick Galt from the Winnipeg R.C., the retiring members of the Executive, were re-elected.

It was decided to hold next year's regatta at Hamilton if the clubs of that city will take it. The Association will furnish banners for the winning clubs in four events next year, provided the Regatta Committee supply banners for the remaining events, except skiff races. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 1, 1888, p.3]

This is the first mention of banners in the press and seems to imply that 1889 would be the first year they would be presented, although they had been presented at United States regattas for years. Since there were seven events on the programme, the host Regatta Committee would be responsible for three banners.

The final agenda item was a query from the Don Amateur R.C. Junior double: if they won the Junior Double Sculls, would one of the crew, G.A. Strickland, be allowed to race in the Junior Single Sculls which came later in the programme. The decision was that if Strickland won in the double, he would be a Senior and ineligible for the single. They chose to scratch the double, and Strickland won the single.



## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

### The Tenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1889

The Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen returned to Hamilton/Burlington for the Tenth Regatta. It was held on Tuesday, August 20 in conjunction with the Hamilton Summer Carnival. Because there was a gentle east wind blowing, the Burlington Bay course was used, although the Lake course had been laid out as well. It was the third time that the Regatta was hosted by the Hamilton rowing clubs. Because there was no rowing club at the Beach, the pavilion was used as a boathouse for the competitors' equipment. It was secured by a fence and a guard.

Two Hamilton Steamboat Company steamers, the *Macassa* and the *Modjeska*, plus two more steamers chartered by the Argonaut R.C. brought hundreds of fans from Toronto who joined the thousands of spectators lining the course in smaller boats and standing on the shore.

The inrigged events were not on the programme and would not be part of the Annual Regatta again until 1907 when a Work Boat Four event was initiated.

However, the Pair-Oars event made its return for the first time since 1885, the last time the Regatta was held in Hamilton/Burlington. With no fanfare, a new trophy, the Challenge Cup for Pairs, was added as a prize. The Association was probably the donor since the CAAO monogram is very prominent on the front. In spite of the incentive of a sterling silver challenge cup, the Pair-Oars was still not popular with Canadian clubs. Only two crews entered, both from the Toronto R.C.. The first winners of the trophy were Frederick H. Thompson and Joseph Wright.

For information about this and many other retired, plus all the current Henley trophies, go to <http://goldmedalphotos.com/trophies.html>



## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The 1889 Regatta was distinguished by the number of collisions and bad steering.

The Senior Single Sculls was interesting for several reasons, including poor steering. John J. Ryan, who had won the event the previous three years for the Bayside R.C., was now sculling for the Toronto R.C.. His third place finish was due in part to his fellow Toronto R.C. sculler, A. Grinstead. Grinstead, starting in the fifth lane from the shore, took a lead at the start, and immediately began to steer towards the shore. He cut in front of Ryan in the fourth lane, and Ryan had to stop. That may have cost him first place. Grinstead then cut in front of M. Shea of the Don Amateur R.C. in the third lane, and Shea had to slow down.

Grinstead finally settled on the second lane behind Jeremiah J. Donohue from the Nautilus R.C., who at that point was leading. All this happened in the first quarter mile [400 m]. Eventually, Jeremiah's younger brother, Dennis, took over the lead. Dennis had won the Senior Single Sculls at the U.S. National Regatta in Pullman, Illinois, earlier that summer, and on Burlington Bay he had had the good luck of starting in the sixth lane from the shore, and so, was not disturbed by the poor steering of Grinstead. As a footnote, Grinstead came fifth in the race only because the sculler who had been in fifth place, G.A. Strickland of the Don Amateur R.C., the winner of the Junior Single Sculls in 1888, stopped short of the finish line and could not regain fifth place after Grinstead passed him.

Dennis Donohue—his surname is often misspelled Donahue or Donahoe—was a powerhouse for the Nautilus R.C.. He won both the American and Canadian Senior Single Sculls in 1889. Dennis and his older brother Jeremiah, or “Jerry,” who, with C. Furlong, had won the Double Sculls Inrigged for the Forest City R.C., in 1880, and the Double Sculls for the Nautilus R.C. in 1881, occasionally competed together in a double and the two were half of a powerful four which won the Senior Four-Oars in 1885, 1888 and 1889. The 1885 crew also won the American Senior Four-Oars in Boston, Massachusetts. The other members of that crew were Moses Furlong and William Wark.



Wiki Tree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Donohue-155>



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The description of the Junior Four-Oars race reads like the description of a demolition derby. Leanders jumped out at the start and pushed the Toronto R.C. four into the Bayside four. Bayside took the brunt of Leanders' poor steering, acquiring a hole in their bow which began to fill up with water. Leanders don't deserve all the blame, because the Toronto R.C. crew had broken their rudder rope before the start of the race and without the use of their rudder, they headed out into the Bay where they encountered wakes from steamers. At that point, they gave up and returned to the boathouse. Meanwhile, on the other side of the course, the Argonaut No.2 crew were struggling through the shallow water next to the shore. At the half way mark, two of the Nautilus oars hit the three-quarter mile buoy, but it probably didn't affect their position at the finish, since the Argonaut No.1 crew was in front. Nevertheless, after the race, the Nautilus crew claimed a foul against the Argonaut No.1 crew, and the Baysides claimed a foul against the Toronto R.C. who put the hole in their bow. Neither protest was allowed by Referee J.J. Stuart.

Poor steering might be expected in a Junior race, but not a Senior race. The Senior Four-Oars had a bizarre twist. The Ottawa R.C. crew caused problems even before the race began. The *Globe* account describes a problem with the stake boats at the start. The lad holding the stern of the Ottawa shell was in the stern of his stake boat, while the boys holding the sterns of the other two shells were at the bows of their stake boats, next to the starting buoys. That meant that the Ottawa crew was ahead of the other two crews by the length of the stake boat. The officials sorted that out and all crews started even. Once the race was under way, Ottawa's poor steering caused problems for the other two boats in the race. As the *Globe* put it, "Ottawa's steering would have shamed a blind man . . ." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 21, 1888] First, they went off the marked course, then they came back and crowded the Toronto R.C. crew into the Nautilus four, who, in turn had to move over. In spite of their erratic steering, Ottawa led at the quarter mile [400 m]. The Nautilus four—who had also won in 1885 and 1888—won in 9:09.2. So, why doesn't that time appear in the official records? After the race, the Toronto R.C. claimed a foul against the Ottawa R.C. four. Referee J.J. Stuart allowed the claim and disqualified Ottawa. He then ordered Toronto and Nautilus to re-row the race at the end of the day. The Nautilus crew protested, that they were being punished for something they had no part in. The Referee held firm and the two crews rowed in the dark after the other races had been completed, and no time was taken, although everyone agreed that Nautilus won, for the second time that day. It was the third race of the day for the Donohue brothers, Dennis and Jeremiah, and the third win for Dennis, although he only had two medals to show for it.

The theme of collisions was continued in the Junior Single Sculls. It was a clean start, but before they had covered 100 yards [90 m] F.H.F. Mercer from the Ottawa R.C. and Robert McKay, Jr. from the Argonaut R.C. collided. Referee J.J. Stuart stopped the race and ordered that it be started again. The second attempt went without incident with Charles Gormally of the Toronto R.C. winning decisively in 10:24, ten seconds faster than Thomas Murray from the Don Amateur R.C.. There was a whiff of scandal surrounding one of the Junior scullers, James Rice from the Bayside R.C.. He had

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participated in a water-walking contest for money at Saratoga, New York and the Ottawa R.C. threatened to protest his inclusion in an amateur race. However, the protest was not lodged. Rice finished sixth.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1889 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Toronto R.C. was the biggest club at the Ninth Regatta with eight entries in the seven races, producing two wins, but it was the hometown Nautilus R.C. who were most efficient, achieving two wins from five entries, three wins if we count the Senior Four-Oars which they won twice.

Argonaut R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(5/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(1/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(5/2)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(3/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(8/2)	Toronto, Ontario

American scullers came from:

New York A.C.	(2/0)	New York, New York
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Ned Hanlan was on hand for the Regatta. Between the Junior Four-Oars race and the Junior Double Sculls, he got into a shell and sculled over the course to the delight of the thousands of spectators on the shore and in the boats along the course.

The prizes were presented at the Burlington Beach pavilion by Mrs. William Doran, wife of the Mayor of Hamilton, and Mrs. A.H. Moore, wife of the Chairman of the Regatta Committee.

All the winners and times for the Tenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

The 1889 Annual Meeting of the CAAO was held at the Board of Trade on Monday, August 19. Seven member clubs were represented. Of the five Officers, only two were present: Secretary, William A. Littlejohn and Treasurer, J.W. Hogg. The terms on the Executive of J.G. Monk, L.F. Taylor, and William Plunkett expired and they were replaced by new members P.D. Ross of the Ottawa R.C., F. Lloyd of the Don Amateur R.C., and re-elected J.G. Monk from the Lachine Boating Club.

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### The Eleventh Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1890

Lachine's Lake St. Louis was the site of the 1890 Regatta of the CAAO, scheduled for Saturday, August 9, but, as had happened in 1882, bad weather forced the Regatta to be carried over to Monday, August 11.

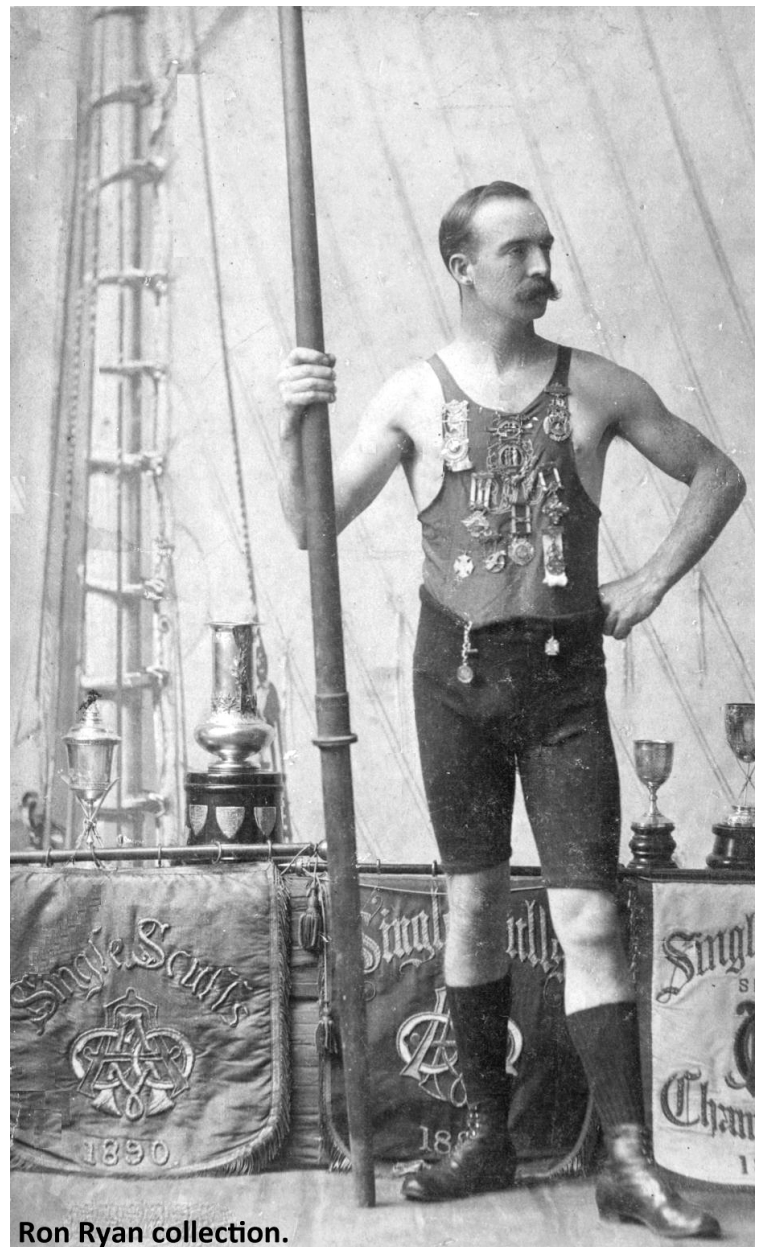
On Saturday, the races were postponed by the combination of a strong wind, which grew stronger as the day went on, and rough, or "lumpy" water, which grew rougher and more lumpy as the day went on. However, conditions improved towards the late afternoon, so the estimated crowd of between 5,000 [The Toronto *Globe*, August 11, 1890] and 6,000 [The Toronto *Mail*, August 11, 1890, p.2] were able to see three races. A fourth race, the Junior Double Sculls had only one entry from the Don Amateur R.C., so it was cancelled.

The Senior Single Sculls was called at 4:30. The wind was still a factor, so the three scullers had difficulty getting to the starting buoys, then the Starter, R.J. Ross, had difficulty aligning the shells for the start. John J. Ryan of the Toronto R.C. won in the time of 9:42 which suggests that there was a strong tail wind. Ryan had also won the Senior Single Sculls in 1886, 1887 and 1888.

On the right, is part of a photo, which was taken in 1892 or 1893. It shows John J. Ryan with some of his cups, banners and medals. To the left of the scull are both the Challenge Cup for Single Sculls and the banner which he won in 1890. Presumably, his medal is somewhere on his chest.

The Junior Single Sculls was won by Augustus "Gus" P. Burritt from the Argonaut R.C.. The record books do not give a time for the unique reason that the Timer's/Press boat did not get to the start before the race was started.

The final race on Saturday was the



Ron Ryan collection.

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

Senior Four-Oars. It had a bit of everything: collisions, disqualification of the favourite crew, threats, a restart, sinking shells, a come-from-behind win, and even an act of piracy. Of the three newspaper sources available to me, by far, the most entertaining and complete description of the race is contained in the *Montreal Gazette*:

The most disastrous race of the lot was the senior fours, although it promised to be the most interesting. When the crews rowed up to the starting buoys the water was lumpy and ugly looking and their [sic] was a very nasty and treacherous wind blowing. It was easily seen that if the race was to be rowed no time was to be lost, but when the boats had just got into line a white painted yacht made a general nuisance of itself by getting in everybody's way, with no other apparent object than running down some inoffending smaller craft. It succeeded in carrying away the flag staff of the umpire's boat. It might possibly have been very amusing for the gentlemen on board the yacht, but it was decidedly inconvenient, not to say dangerous, to everybody else, whose ideas of humor have some relation to a wholesome appreciation of self-preservation. . . . When the gun was fired the Argonauts took the water first and had a lead of half a boat length from the Torontos. The Dons came to grief at the same [sic] spar buoy, and immediately afterwards the Torontos ran into the Argonauts, and both crews had to stop rowing. The Ottawas were the only ones clear in their course, and if the race had been rowed out they must have won, bar accident; but the umpire [C.P. Sclater] blew his whistle, and all four crews were sent back to the starting point. Starter [R.J.] Ross was asked to examine the steering gear of the Toronto's crew. He reported it all right, and immediately that crew was disqualified for fouling. Mr. [Joseph] Wright, who stroked the crew, lost his temper and threatened never to row in Montreal again, but the threats did not count to any great extent, and the favorite crew was out of it. When the second start was made, the Argonauts got away with the lead, and when about half a mile had been covered they had three lengths the best of the Dons, with Ottawa dividing them. The Ottawa shell was shipping water and going slow. The water had become very rough, there was no such thing as feathering and the amount of splashing would have done credit to the veriest novices. Then the Ottawas seemed to go to pieces, and before the mile had been covered, the Dons had passed them. The latter crew having the shore side, had whatever benefit there was from calmer water, and they settled down to some business. Gradually they drew up on the Argonauts, and a quarter of a mile from home they passed them and were still gaining. For a couple of minutes it was a splendid race between the leading crews, when suddenly all attention was diverted to the Ottawas. It was plainly seen that they were being swamped, and a moment after all four men were in the water. Every available craft immediately went to their assistance, and hardly had they been got safely aboard when the Argonauts did likewise, leaving the Dons to finish the race alone. The time was 9:51. [The *Montreal Gazette*, August 11, 1890]

With the onset of darkness and increasingly strong winds and rough water, the officials decided that the remaining races would be rowed on Monday, August 11.

As had been the case in 1882, no reason is given in the press for not finishing the Regatta on Sunday. There must have been a local ordinance preventing racing.

The three races on Monday were viewed by a sparse crowd, made sparser by the fact that the races scheduled to begin at 10:30 A.M., were postponed because of rough water until 2:30 P.M..



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The Senior Double Sculls and Pair Oars were completed without incident.

However, the Junior Four-Oars race was reminiscent of Saturday's Senior Four-Oars race. After a few dozen strokes, the Grand Trunk R.C. four collided with the Ottawa R.C. boat. The race was stopped, the Grand Trunk crew was disqualified and the race was started again. However, the Ottawa boat had sustained some damage in the collision and had to stop. Then, the Toronto R.C. four fouled the Leander R.C. boat and were disqualified, but that was not a factor in the finish, between the only two unscathed boats in the race, Lachine Boating Club and Argonaut R.C.. The latter won by three lengths in 8:38.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1890 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Argonaut R.C. with two wins from four entries was the strongest club in 1890.

Argonaut R.C.	(4/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(1/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(4/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(3/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(2/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/1)	Toronto, Ontario

American scullers came from:

Detroit B.C.	(1/1)	Detroit, Michigan
Minnesota B.C.	(2/0)	St. Paul, Minnesota

To put Toronto R.C.'s four entries and one win into a context which shows how strong they were, we know that in 1890, the Club had 36 members, including non-competitors. [The *Toronto Daily Mail*, March 10, 1891, p.2] By comparison, the Argonaut R.C. had 255 active members which did not include life, honorary or inactive members. [The *Toronto Daily Mail*, March 14, 1891, p.12]

After the races, the prizes were presented by members of the Lachine Regatta Committee: J.G. Monk, Chairman, J.S. Ballick, Secretary-Treasurer, A.J. Dawes, and C.R. Christie.

All the winners and times for the Eleventh Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The day before the Regatta, August 8, the following Officers of the CAAO were elected for 1891:

President: Arthur R. Boswell, Toronto R.C.

1st Vice-President: George A. Sweny, Argonaut R.C.

2nd Vice-President: J.J. Stuart, Leander R.C.

Secretary: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: J.W. Hogg, Argonaut R.C.

Executive Committee: to serve for one year [in their first of three years]: George F. Galt, Winnipeg R.C., Walter Moss, Bayside R.C., Henry McAllister, Nautilus R.C.

to serve for two years [in their second of three years]: P.D. Ross, Ottawa R.C., J.G. Monk, Lachine Boating & Canoe Club, F. Lloyd, Don Amateur R.C.

to serve for three years [in their third of three years]: R.W. Gouinlock, Toronto R.C., James Pearson, Argonaut R.C., R. Hobson, Leander R.C..

The above list of Officers is taken from the 1890 edition of the *Constitution and By-Laws of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen*, which also contains the earliest definition of a Junior that I have found. In the "Regatta Rules" section, item 18 reads:

A junior sculler is one who has never pulled in a senior nor won a junior sculling race. A junior oarsman is one who has never pulled an oar in a senior race, nor been a winning oarsman in a junior race. Competitions among members of his own Club, or a private match, will not affect the standing as a junior of any oarsman or sculler. A junior oarsman or sculler shall be qualified to row as a junior until he wins a final heat. [p.15]

I include this because it is the core definition, which is only slightly reworded over time, that defines Juniors until the name of the class is changed to Intermediate in 1986.

We can get idea of what was going on in clubs from an account of the annual meeting of the Argonaut R.C. which included these agenda items: there was a discussion about buying an eight for training; it was decided to hire a coach, or as he was then called, a trainer; and "Mr. A.C. Macdonnell, [sic] upon being re-elected to the position of captain, took occasion to advocate the selection of a permanent course for regattas." [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, March 14, 1891, p.12] He was not alone in voicing an opinion about the need for a permanent course. Colonel George A. Sweny, the President of the Club, had this to say in his annual address:

I look forward with hope to the selection to some central permanent race course which will obviate the necessity of sending crews to compete on waters at long distances, which are altogether unsuitable for regattas, and which consequently render a large expenditure inevitable. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, March 14, 1891, p.12]

In other words: we need a permanent course near Toronto.

We should remember that this idea is coming from the same club that first proposed the formation of the Association in 1880, and that it was the biggest rowing

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club in Canada, so their opinion mattered. Moreover, there were three other active rowing clubs in Toronto on whom the Argonauts could count for support; Bayside, Dons and Toronto. In addition, a new club, the Sunnyside Boating Club was about to make its debut in 1891. If all this potential support were not enough, Colonel Sweny was going to be elected President of the CAAO in August, 1891, so he would have ample opportunity to promote his idea, an idea which would not come to fruition until 1903, when the Regatta would take up permanent residency on an unused portion of the Welland Canal in Port Dalhousie, just outside St. Catharines.

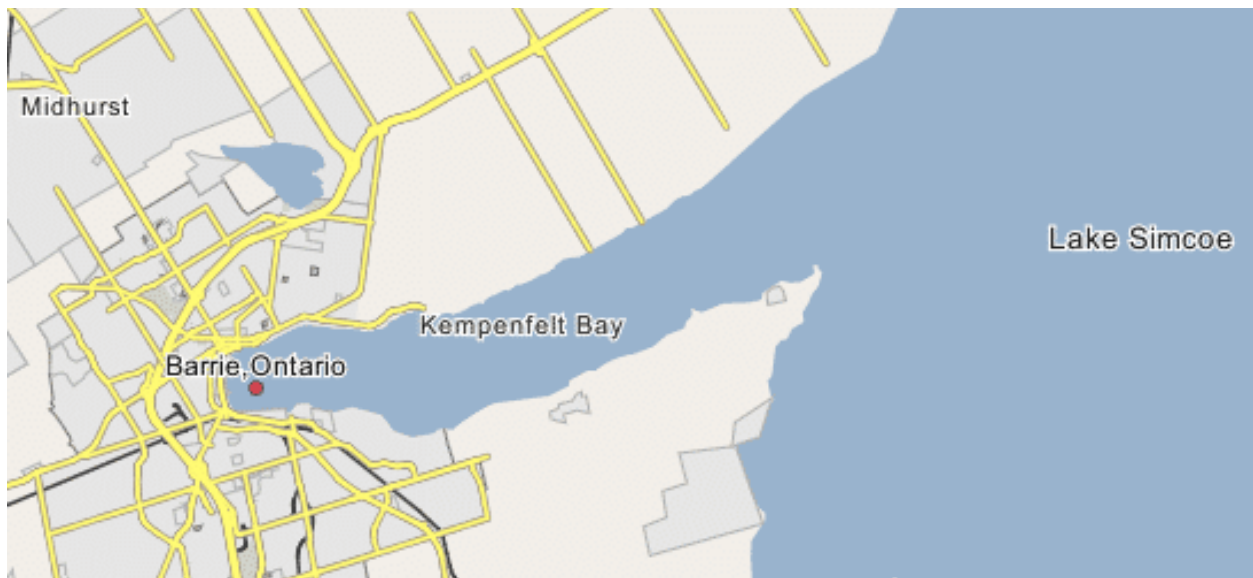
# 1890

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### **The Twelfth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1891**

In the first 11 years of its existence, the CAAO had held its Annual Regatta at Toronto three times, Hamilton/Burlington three times, Lachine three times, and Ottawa twice. If the rotation had been followed, the Twelfth Regatta should have been held in Ottawa. However, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Association held in Toronto at the Queen's Hotel, on Saturday, April 25, 1891, the representative from the Ottawa R.C., "Mr. P.D. Ross stated that Ottawa was reluctantly forced to decline the regatta this year. The declination was due to the bad course on the Ottawa river and the unsatisfactory financial condition of the Ottawa rowing club." [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, April 27, 1891] The Association's Secretary, William A. Littlejohn, proposed Barrie, but there was no one from Barrie (or any other city) at the meeting to apply for the Regatta, and so, after some discussion, it was decided to offer the Regatta to Toronto, since it was the next city in the rotation after Ottawa. At a meeting of the Regatta Committee on Friday, May 1, the Toronto clubs did not respond because the big news was that Barrie had offered to host the Regatta. The formal acceptance was put off until the member clubs were consulted and a formal proposal from Barrie was obtained. On the following Friday, May 8, the Regatta Committee gave the Regatta to Barrie, contingent on that city raising the \$700 required to host it.

That condition was met, and so, the sheltered waters of Kempenfeldt Bay, the western tip of Lake Simcoe, were selected for the Twelfth Regatta.



<http://wikimapia.org/2152024/Kempenfeldt-Bay>



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Although there were no member clubs in Barrie to host the Regatta, races had been held there before, including two involving Ned Hanlan in 1878 and 1879 so there must have been a nucleus of men in town who could put on a regatta. In addition, some members of the CAAO Executive served as race officials. It was decided in advance to make it a two-day Regatta, Monday, August 10 and Tuesday, August 11.

The map below is based mostly on speculation, and should not be considered an accurate representation of where the course in Barrie was located.



<https://mapcarta.com/Barrie/Map>

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We know that the course was one and a half miles long and six lanes wide. We are told that the course ran close to the shore, starting off Fisherman's Point and ending in front of the Grand Trunk Railway depot at the western end of the Bay. This location gave the thousands of spectators on shore and in the grandstand a good view of the races. We also know that on Monday, a wind from the east caused a delay in the programme, but also contributed to some very fast times. In particular, the Catlin B.C.'s blistering time of 8:46.4 in the Senior Double Sculls led to speculation that more than a tail wind was responsible. There were suggestions that the course was short, an accusation denied by the Local Organizing Committee who responded that the course had been measured three times. There were still some doubters who pointed out that the course had not been measured in winter on the ice, a practice followed elsewhere.

Excursion trains from Toronto and Hamilton brought hundreds of supporters from those cities. Barrie's population in the 1891 census was 5,550 and it was suggested by the press that that number doubled during the Regatta.

The bay presented a lively appearance, boats of all sorts covering its surface. The tug Kendrick was assigned to the press and the members of the committee and a few specially invited. On board were the representatives of the Empire, Globe, Mail and the local press, and Captain Ramsay did all he could to afford those on board the opportunity of witnessing the various races from start to finish but it was found almost impossible to do so because of the intervention of the other boats. The Orillia, the Enterprise, the Lillie, the Camilla and a number of smaller steam yachts kept plying between the starting point which was near Fisherman's point and the finishing point, which was opposite the Grand Trunk Railway station. [The Barrie *Northern Advance*, August 13, 1891, p.1]

Honoured guests in the press boat on Monday were Ned Hanlan and William O'Connor who had won the professional doubles race at Hamilton the Saturday before.

Monday's four heats, two in the Junior Single Sculls and two in the Junior Four-Oars were run with a minimum of difficulty, but the finals in the Senior and Junior Double Sculls were postponed by 45 minutes because of rough water. However, the big news on the first day was the lack of consideration by the powered craft on the Bay. "... one boat in particular, which charged 10 cents per head for a run down with the scullers in each race, gave the later [sic] the backwash, thereby affecting the time, . . . ." [The Montreal *Herald*, August 11, 1891, p.2]

By far the most notorious steamer was the *Orillia*.

In all but the last two races the competitors were greatly interfered with by the swells of steamers, whose captains persisted in running on the course. The Orillia was the most obnoxious in this respect, and she wound up the day by running down the Grand Trunk senior four and nearly drowning the crew. Their boat, a brand-new paper shell, was cut completely in two at the bows. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 11, 1891]

The Montreal *Herald's* account gives some additional details under the heading "Was It an Accident?":

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An unfortunate and regrettable accident happened [to] the Grand Trunk four-oared crew about dusk to-night [Monday]. After the boys went on the bay for a spin in their shell, and while spurling were run down by the steamboat Orillia, which had been somewhat of a nuisance all day. The new shell was cut in two and the crew were precipitated in the water, only being rescued after much delay and when almost exhausted. The boat is now completely useless. There is no excuse to be offered by the captain of the steamer, she had only one light and gave no warning whatever to the oarsmen. The club will institute an action for damages to-morrow. The crew are to row in the finals and it is probable that the other clubs, who feel aggrieved at the Orillia's negligence and sorry at the loss sustained by the Grand Trunks, will offer them the use of a shell. The boys are downhearted now since things were looking so bright for them. [The Montreal *Herald*, August 11, 1891, pp.2 & 5]

The Barrie *Northern Advance*, carried a slightly different version of the collision, in which Captain McInnes of the *Orillia* spreads the blame around:

In the evening of the first day the Orillia ran into the Grand Trunk boat and cut it in two. Captain McInnes says he was going down the bay about 9 o'clock the Kendrick also going at the same time. The Grand Trunk avoided the Kendrick but went directly across the bow of the Orillia evidently expecting it could shoot across without colliding. It was very unfortunate. [The Barrie *Northern Advance*, August 13, 1891, p.1]

We might have some sympathy for Captain McInnes if it weren't for the fact that he and the *Orillia* had harassed the racing shells earlier in the day.

It would make a satisfying end to the story to say that the Grand Trunk crew rowed a borrowed boat to a first-place finish, but that did not happen. They did row a borrowed shell, but finished second to the Don Amateur R.C..

The Senior Single Sculls had an interesting group of competitors who put on a great race. Fred H. Thompson of the Argonaut R.C. had won the Junior Single Sculls earlier in the day, and led for most of the Senior race, trading the lead with John J. Ryan who had won the Senior Single Sculls four out of the previous five years, three times with Bayside R.C. and in 1890 with the Toronto R.C.. In 1891, he was sculling for the Sunnyside Boating Club. However, in this race, he faded to fifth, and Thompson burned himself out and did not finish. The winner was James Henderson of the Catlin B.C. from Chicago, Illinois. Henderson and his partner Edward L. Case had won the Senior Double Sculls the day before. Second place was taken by the Argonaut R.C. sculler, Augustus P. Burritt, who had won the Junior Single Sculls the year before.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1891 Regatta. In the parentheses are the number of entries, which gives an idea of the relative size of the club, followed by the number of wins, which suggests the relative strength of the club. Most noticeable on the list is the number of American clubs. Also of note, two new Canadian clubs, Sunnyside and Tecumseh made their debut at the 1891 Regatta.

Argonaut R.C.	(11/2)	Toronto, Ontario
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Bayside R.C.	(4/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Don Amateur R.C.	(6/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(4/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating Club	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Sunnyside Boating Club	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Tecumseh R.C.	(1/0)	Walkerville, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/0)	Toronto, Ontario

American competitors came from:

Catlin B.C.	(2/2)	Chicago, Illinois
Detroit B.C.	(2/1)	Detroit, Michigan
Dubuque R.C.	(1/0)	Dubuque, Iowa
Manhattan R.C.	(1/0)	New York, New York
Wolverine R.C.	(2/0)	Detroit, Michigan

Medals and prizes were distributed on the evening of Tuesday, August 11 at the Queen's Hotel.

All the winners and times for the Twelfth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen can be found in tabular form at: <http://goldmedalphotos.com/records.html>

All the results from all the races in all the Regattas from 1880 to 1902 are available in an appendix at the end of Chapter 2.

On the evening of Monday, August 10, the annual meeting of the CAAO was held and the following Officers were elected for 1892:

President: Colonel George A. Sweny, Argonaut R.C.

1st Vice-President: J.J. Stuart, Leander R.C.

2nd Vice-President: P.D. Ross, Ottawa R.C.

Secretary: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: J.W. Hogg, Argonaut R.C.

Executive Committee: J.A. Stewart, Grand Trunk R.C., John Laxton, Sunnyside Boating Club, S.P. Grant, Bayside R.C., George F. Galt, Argonaut [sic. not Winnipeg] R.C.. The returning members of the Executive Committee are not listed in the Toronto *Daily Mail*.

The election of Colonel Sweny to the presidency, brought to an end the tenure of Arthur R. Boswell who had held the position for ten years, from 1882 to 1891.

People who live in cities that have put on large amateur athletic events will identify with this footnote to the 1891 Regatta. On July 20, the Barrie Town Council granted a contingency fund of \$150 to the Regatta Committee to be used if there was a shortfall in receipts. Apparently there was, because at the meeting of the Town Council



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on September 21, the matter came up for discussion. “Dr. Wells [First Deputy Reeve] asked the Mayor [Pepler] what he thought about the payment of the \$150 to the regatta. His Worship said that it might not have been legal but at the same time he thought it was justifiable.” [The Barrie *Northern Advance*, September 24, 1891, p.1]

# 1891

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 March 23, 2024. If you find errors or omissions, use the Contact link at <http://goldmedalphotos.com/> to point them out to me. Stan Lapinski.