

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The Thirteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1892

For the fourth time, Toronto hosted the Annual Regatta on Wednesday, July 20 and Thursday, July 21, 1892. It was decided ahead of time to hold the Regatta over two days to accommodate heats in the Junior and Senior Single Sculls. It was also decided in advance to use the Island course, with the start off the Wiman Baths on Ward's Island and the finish at Hanlan's Point, the same course that had been used on the first day of the First Regatta in 1880.



Toronto Archives Fonds 1244, Item 0175

Hanlan's Hotel on Hanlan's Point where the races finished. The start was one and a half miles [2,414 m] to the left, off Ward's Island. [The photo is dated both 1889 and 1909 on the same web site: <https://tayloronhistory.com/2015/12/29/the-lost-hanlans-hotel-on-the-toronto-islands/>]

The weather was comfortably warm and the water conditions were perfect, conditions which contributed to the size of the crowd, an estimated 8,000 spectators on Wednesday:

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The ladies and gentlemen in the elevated grand stand at Hanlan's Point would number about 2,000. Lining the boom, which had been stretched eastward from the point [at Ward's Island?] would be perhaps 2,000 more in row boats, canoes and small skiffs, while the *Viola*, *Abeona*, *Mascotte* and tug *Jackman* steamed along the course with several thousand more spectators. The *Greyhound*, which had been chartered by the association, carried about 700 interested subscribers, and other boats steamed along behind the oarsmen. [The *Toronto Globe*, July 20, 1892]

A unique feature of the 1892 Regatta was a half mile dash for singles. The prize was a gold medal donated by Ned Hanlan. It must have been an impressive sight with five of the best scullers from Canada and the United States flying down the course. The sentimental favourite was Edward Durnan of the Sunnyside Boating Club who was Ned Hanlan's nephew, but he broke an oarlock and finished third. The winner was Edwin Hedley of the Vesper B.C. in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was the first of a long succession of Vesper wins which continue to the present.

Although he didn't win the dash, Eddie Durnan was a sculler to be reckoned with at the 1892 Regatta. The *Globe* reporter dubbed him the "Sunnyside phenomenon." After the dash, he rowed in a heat for the Senior Single Sculls. When the Starter/Umpire, James Pearson, was having difficulty lining up the other three singles—it was a floating start without boat holders—Durnan took up his position behind the starting buoys. "When the starter shouted to him to pull up even with the rest [Durnan] replied: . . . 'That's all right, let her go.'" [The *Toronto Globe*, July 21, 1892] Although he started a length behind the others, he won his heat. At this point, a curious reader might be asking, "How did the *Globe* reporter know what Durnan said?" The answer: "The little steamer *Luella* was the referee's boat, and on her decks were the umpire, timers, scorers and representatives of the various newspapers." [The *Toronto Globe*, July 21, 1892] The *Globe* reporter would have been close enough to hear the exchange between Starter/Umpire Pearson and Durnan.

On Thursday, the course was smooth and the number of spectators was equal to or greater than the number on Wednesday.

The first race, the Senior Single Sculls, was the occasion of the first serious scandal in the 13-year history of the Association. At the centre of it was the "Sunnyside phenomenon," Edward Durnan. The race should have been a great one pitting the four best scullers from the heats against one another. Instead, it was something of a comedy. The winner, Edwin Hedley of the Vesper B.C., had won the Half-Mile Dash the day before, and led for most of the race. However, he stopped well before the finish to catch his breath. Meanwhile, John J. Ryan of the Sunnyside Boating Club who was second, left the course, hit a steam launch and then navigated his way through and around a fleet of small craft before getting back on the course. The Argonaut R.C.'s Fred Thompson also had steering problems and finished third. But it was Edward Durnan who came in for the greatest scrutiny. He had handily won his heat, and in the final race he was close to the front at the start, then slowed down, switched lanes and dropped to last place.

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So, the picture which the spectators, officials, press, and gamblers saw at the end of the race was this: Hedley was labouring to finish the race; Ryan was taking the scenic route; Thompson was trying to decide on a lane to row in; and Durnan was coasting.

It was Durnan's behaviour during the race and his last place finish which was the cause of some unfavourable speculation:

It is many a long day since there has been a race in Toronto which resulted in so much talk as the senior singles in this year's regatta. For several days the streets have had rumors that Durnan, whose trials made him a red hot favorite, would not be a "trier" and that Hedley would win. When the race was at hand there was plenty of money to back the field against him [Durnan]. Where it came from nobody knows, but there it was and Durnan's supporters picked it up like hot cakes and were sorry for it when the race was over. He "chucked it up" in the easiest possible style when he was collared [caught] in the race, and the whole affair will receive the attention of the officers of the association. His magnificent race with Ryan in the doubles [they won] intensified the feeling against him and whether he was or was not "out for it" in the singles the public belief is that he was not, and that a job of the first magnitude was worked in this race. [The Toronto *Globe*, July 22, 1892]

With a great deal of money backing Hedley to win, and Durnan's amazing race in the heat, his supporters thought it was easy money to take, so a large number of gamblers bet on Durnan only to be shocked at the outcome.

The Montreal *Daily Herald* carried this update:

A Scull Race that was Probably "Fixed."

Toronto, July 23.—The fiasco that Durnan made of the single scull race on Thursday is still the talk of the town. "It was a disgraceful affair," said Secretary W.A. [Littlejohn], of the C.A.A.O., this morning. "I know the whole story from the beginning to end, but I am not at liberty just now to make the full disclosure I would like. The executive of the Association will certainly have to deal with it." Two young men whose names are mentioned in connection with the matter, will no doubt be called upon to explain to their clubs and it is hinted the arrest of both or one, together with Durnan, on a charge of conspiracy to defraud is quite among the possibilities. Quite a number of those interested left for Saratoga [for the U.S. National Regatta] this afternoon and will lay before the National Regatta committee their views on the matter. It is quite likely that Durnan will not figure in the Saratoga events. [The Montreal *Daily Herald*, July 25, 1892]

In Saratoga, Durnan was one of two scullers called before the Executive Committee of the NAAO:

There was quite a lively meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen this evening. [July 25] Edward Durnan of the Sunny Side Boat Club of Toronto Canada, and Fred Hawkins, representing the Manhattans of New York, were charged with selling races. . . . Both men were called before the committee, and both denied the charges. The committee decided that both could row under protest pending an investigation by the Executive Committee of the association. [The New York *Sun*, July 26, 1892, p.5]

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However, Durnan did not race at Saratoga. On Tuesday, July 26, the Executive Committee of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen “held a meeting in the Lake Shore house. Information was received from Canada that the Sunnyside Boat Club had suspended three of their members for wrongdoing, and it was decided to reject Durnan’s entry.” [The New York *Sun*, July 27, 1892, p.5]

As a footnote to that regatta, the winner of the Senior Single Sculls was John J. Ryan of the Sunnyside Boating Club.

The final act of this drama was played out in October.

DURNAN DISQUALIFIED

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the C.A.A.O. was held Saturday afternoon [October 1] at the City hall, these members being present:—Col. Sweny, J.J. Stuart, James Pearson, R.W. Gouinlock, F. Lloyd, and W.A. Littlejohn.

The committee sat four hours investigating the Durnan race and the charges preferred by Thos. Mitchell against several members of the Toronto club. Edward Durnan and W.J. Bryce appeared before the committee, but Jno. Guinane was not present. A letter was read from his lawyers, stating that as their client had entered an action against the Sunnyside Rowing Club they had advised him not to appear.

The committee disqualified Durnan, and the case against Bryce was dismissed. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, October 3, 1892, p.2]

It is not stated who Thomas Mitchell was. Maybe he was a lawyer acting for the Sunnyside Boating Club.

Perhaps because of the pending legal action, the *Daily Mail* article omits the charge and its disposition against John Guinane, who happened to be Ned Hanlan’s cousin. However, an American newspaper on the other side of the continent was not under such a restriction:

The charge against John Guinane of inducing Durnan to sell the race and of dishonesty therewith was next considered. Mr. Guinane did not appear to answer the charge, but a letter was read from his solicitors, Messrs. Blake, Lash & Cassels, informing the committee that their client had entered an action against the Sunnyside Rowing Club for depriving him of his rights of membership, and that it would not be advisable for their client to make any statement while the matter was before the courts. The committee, in considering the case, went over the evidence against Guinane and arrived at the conclusion that it had no other recourse but to disqualify him from his position as an amateur. [The San Francisco *Morning Call*, October 11, 1892, p.3]

With the disqualification of Edward Durnan by the the Executive Committee of the CAAO, his career as an amateur was over and his career as a professional had begun.

We should remember that the Durnan incident was played out against a background that would have been familiar to every rowing fan, and many of the general public: fixed professional races. Durnan’s behaviour in the race was reminiscent of the actions of professional scullers who threw races for money. According to rowing

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historian William Lanouette, fixed races was the most significant contributing factor to the decline of professional sculling. [William Lanouette, *The Triumph of the Amateurs* (Latham: Lyons Press, 2021)] It was to prevent this kind of behaviour that the CAAO was founded in 1880.

Mercifully, none of the other races at the Thirteenth Regatta on Thursday, July 21, 1892 had as much drama attached to them as the Senior Single Sculls.

The Pair-Oars was won by Fred D. Standish and F.A. Lyon of the Detroit B.C. for the third year in a row. Their only competition in 1892 was the father and son pair from the Argonaut R.C., Robert McKay, Senior and Junior. Robert Senior had placed second in the first race at the First Regatta in 1880, the Single Sculls Inrigged, while his son had competed since 1888 in singles events.

The only problem after the Senior Single Sculls occurred about 140 metres from the finish line in the Senior Four-Oars race when the Toronto R.C. crew hit a steam yacht and was passed by the Don R.C. four. The Toronto crew finished third as a result and entered a protest which was not allowed.

The final race of the day, the Senior Double Sculls, featured crews containing three of the principals from the infamous Senior Single Sculls race which started the day. Edwin Hedley, who won that race and the Half-Mile Dash the day before, stroked the Vesper B.C. double to a second-place finish. The Sunnyside Boating Club double made up of John J. Ryan, bow, and Edward Durnan, stroke, won in a blistering time of 8:28.6. Their time was 6.2 seconds faster than the winning time for the Senior Four-Oars, won by the Argonaut R.C. four.

In addition to the Hop Bitters Trophy, Durnan and Ryan received CAAO medals. Below, in its presentation case, courtesy of Edward English, whose great grandfather was Edward Durnan's father, is the medal which Edward Durnan received in 1892.

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photo by Brittany Smith

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Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1892 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 * indicates entries in the Half-Mile Dash for Singles. The ** indicates the winner. It is clear that the Argonaut R.C. was the biggest and strongest club at the 1892 Regatta, and that Toronto, with five of the six Canadian clubs competing at the Regatta, was the rowing centre of Canada.

There is no consensus on the date when the Don Amateur R.C. dropped the "Amateur" from its name. However, the 1892, Regatta programme uses "Don R.C.." That is consistent with the fact that from 1893, it all but disappears from print.

Argonaut R.C.	(12/3)*x3	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(6/0)*	Toronto, Ontario
Don R.C.	(6/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Sunnyside Boating Club	(5/1)*x2	Toronto, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(6/0)*x2	Toronto, Ontario

American competitors came from:

Catlin B.C.	(1/0)	Chicago, Illinois
Detroit B.C.	(1/1)	Detroit, Michigan
Farragut B.C.	(2/0)*	Chicago, Illinois
Vesper B.C.	(3/2)**	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

All the winners and times for the Thirteenth 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 prizes were presented at the Toronto R.C.'s Island quarters by CAAO President, Colonel George A. Sweny, and Commodore Charles Catlin, President of the Mississippi Valley Rowing Association.

The annual meeting of the CAAO was held at the Argonaut R.C. on the morning of Thursday, July 21.

Here are the names of the Officers as they appeared in the 1893 programme. Presumably they were elected in 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.

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

Elected to the Executive Committee were: George F. Galt, Winnipeg R.C., C.E. Howard, Lachine Boating Club, W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C., and Frank Lloyd, Don R.C..

A couple of agenda items deserve to be mentioned:

London put in an application for the regatta for next year [1893]. It is Hamilton's turn by the usual rotation, and a communication has been received from the Hamilton Steamboat Company concerning the location of the regatta permanently at Burlington Beach. The question of next year's location was left to the Executive who will also prepare a report on the subject of a permanent course. [The Toronto *Globe*, July 22, 1892]

The idea of a permanent course, first proposed by the Argonaut R.C. in 1890, had obviously become a topic of discussion, and Hamilton was making the first serious bid.

Although Edward Durnan never returned to the CAAO Regatta to compete, he



continued to have a connection with the Regatta as the coach of his son John, among others. He was also a respected boat builder and supplied boats for several Henley winners. In 1988, Edward English, whose great grandfather was Edward Durnan's father, donated the Eddie Durnan Memorial Trophy to be presented to the winners of the Senior Women's Coxed Four at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta. The inaugural presentation was made by Hester "Bubbie" Durnan Hudson, Eddie Durnan's daughter. It continues to be competed for in the Senior Women's Four.

In a lovely irony, the woman holding the trophy in the photo is from the Vesper B.C., the same club Edwin Hedley belonged to when he beat Edward Durnan in the Half-Mile Dash and the Senior Single Sculls in 1892.

Eddie Durnan Memorial Trophy

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For more information about the Eddie Durnan Memorial Trophy and all the other trophies presented at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta, go to <http://goldmedalphotos.com/trophies.html> .

There was one more bizarre twist to the 1892 Regatta. Two years later, in 1894, a Canadian noticed a CAAO medal in the window of a Philadelphia pawnshop. It was one of the medals won by Edwin Hedley in 1892. When Hedley submitted his entry form for the Senior Single Sculls at the U.S. National Regatta in Saratoga in 1894, it was refused by the Regatta Committee. Hedley then appeared before the Executive Committee to have his case adjudicated. Their ruling was that because he had sold that medal and a prize won at another regatta, he was disqualified as an amateur. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, August 10, 1894, p.2]

That should have been the end of the affair, but Hedley and his supporters were persistent and badgered the NAAO to the point that the Association's President, Henry Whiting Garfield, wrote a synopsis of the proceedings and a defence of the NAAO's decision which filled two pages of the *1896 Minutes of Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting National Association Amateur Oarsmen* (pp.6 & 7) He summed up this way: "Hedley is guilty. We have the proof. People who haven't seen the proof and don't know the facts should stop bothering us." [President Garfield's proofreaders were not as sharp-eyed as mine are, because he misspells Hedley as "Headley" a serious, and I'm sure embarrassing gaff.]

So *that* was the end of it. Not quite. In January, 1899, Hedley had his amateur status reinstated, although he was barred from competing at the 1899 NAAO Regatta.

Finally, although the NAAO was convinced that he would never compete again, he won a gold medal in the Vesper B.C. eight which represented the United States at the Paris Summer Olympics in 1900.

1892

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The Fourteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1893

Rowing had been popular in London, Ontario since before the formation of the CAAO in 1880. In 1878, a dam and waterworks were constructed at Springbank Park to solve the city's sanitation problems. As a result, a potential rowing course on the main branch of the Thames River was created. Three rowing clubs were formed in short order, one of which, the Forest City R.C., had four entries at the First Regatta of the CAAO. One of those entries won the Double Sculls Inrigged event.

On April 11, 1891, a new club was formed: the London Rowing and Canoe Club. Club President, Lieutenant-Colonel Macbeth and one of the Committeemen, G.W. Marsh attended the annual CAAO meeting held at the 1892 Regatta and made an application to have the 1893 Regatta at London. The CAAO promised to consider the application and on April 15, 1893, two members toured the facilities. In the end, it was decided to give the Regatta to Hamilton/Burlington. There was speculation in the press that Hamilton/Burlington might become the permanent site for the Annual Regatta.

On Friday, August 4 and Saturday, August 5, the Fourteenth Regatta of the CAAO was held in Burlington. The Bay course was used on Friday and the Lake course on Saturday.

Friday's attendance was lower than normal, an estimated three to four thousand, probably because there was only one final—the Pair Oars—and six preliminary heats; two for the Junior Four-Oars, two for the Junior Single Sculls and two for the Senior Single Sculls.

The Pair Oars win by the Toronto R.C.'s W.J. Bryce and Joseph Wright was notable because they beat the Detroit B.C.'s Fred D. Standish and Frank A. Lyon who had won the event the three previous years. The win was not a fluke. The Toronto pair led from the start and won by four lengths.

On Saturday, an estimated six to ten thousand spectators watched the races. Unfortunately, the weather was a factor which had an impact on the programme. The day started out fine, but when the wind picked up, the water in Burlington Bay became too rough to row on, so the decision was made to row on Lake Ontario. However, during the third race, a thunderstorm struck and the races were postponed for an hour. When the racing resumed, the winds picked up again and another hour's postponement was ordered by the Starter/Referee, Major J.J. Stuart.

Aside from the weather and rough water, the other memorable feature of the afternoon was the number of fouls. Interestingly, it was Referee Stuart who was blamed for most of the problems. The litany of complaints goes like this: he started the crews too close together; he did not warn competitors when they were about to collide; and he did not alert crews when they were going off the course. Referees at previous Regattas had made the occasional blunder, but none was chastised in the press to the same degree as Referee Stuart.

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The first race of the day, the Junior Double Sculls, set the pattern for things to come. It was a three-boat race. The Don R.C. double, in the outside lane, led from the start, then moved into the Toronto R.C.'s water. Toronto, put on a spurt, and hit the Dons boat. The crews were stopped, and Dons were disqualified for being out of their water. The Argonaut R.C. double was a length and a half behind when the collision occurred. When the race resumed, Toronto held the lead and crossed the finish line first, but they were off the course and the Argonauts were awarded first place. The *Globe* put the result this way: "This race . . . went to the crew that was not the fastest among the starters." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 7, 1893, p.6] Referee Stuart was blamed for the fiasco, first for not warning the Toronto crew that they were going to hit the Dons boat, then for not warning the Toronto crew that they were going off the course and finally, for not awarding the win to the Toronto double. A visiting Referee, Mr. Stimpson, President of the New England Rowing Association, said that in a similar situation, as Judge, he had awarded the race to the crew which finished first, even though they were off the course. [Toronto *Daily Mail*, August 7, 1893] Referee Stuart thought otherwise. By now, it should be clear why the record books say "No time taken" for this race.

The premier sculling race of the day, the Senior Single Sculls, was also marred by collisions. Edwin Hedley, who had won the Half-Mile Dash for Singles and the controversial Senior Single Sculls in 1892 for the Vesper B.C., was now wearing Passaic R.C. colours and was leading when John J. Ryan of the Sunnyside Boating Club and Fred H. Thompson of the Argonaut R.C. collided. The race was stopped and the scullers returned to the starting line to try again. No one was disqualified because the Referee could not tell who was at fault and neither lodged a protest against the other, so both were allowed to race in the re-row. On the second attempt, Ryan took the lead at the start but was eventually overtaken by E.A. "Bush" Thompson of the Argonaut R.C.. When both Ryan and Hedley made a bid to catch Thompson they collided, then separated then renewed their attempt to catch Thompson, but were too late. Why were they allowed to continue after the collision? Where was the Referee? He was back at the start. His steamer had broken down. Since he was not present at the finish to stop his watch, the record books show "No time taken" for this race. Thompson beat Ryan by a length. Hedley was half a length

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behind Ryan. The fourth sculler in the race, “Bush” Thompson’s brother Fred, missed all the problems by finishing 15 lengths behind the others.

The controversy did not end with the finish.

Two other incidents, but of an entirely different character to those above mentioned [the race synopsis], were also features of this remarkable aquatic day. The first was a wordy warfare between Ryan and Hedley, each blaming the other for the foul. It looked like a fight between the champions, but they were eventually separated. Hedley, however, subsequently went into the boathouse where Ryan was and, losing his temper, struck the Sunnyside sculler, who retaliated with a stinger on Hedley’s optic. Friends then separated the scullers. [The *Toronto Daily Mail*, August 7, 1893]

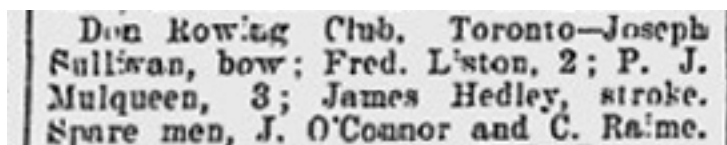
The *Globe* adds a detail to the boathouse confrontation not reported in the *Daily Mail*. “Ryan’s attendant doubled Hedley up by a kick in the stomach and he would have been pretty badly hurt [the word is not clear] but for the interference of his namesake [James Hedley] the stroke of the Dons four, who got him out of the way.” [The *Toronto Globe*, August 7, 1892, p.6]

And so, for the second year in a row, the Senior Single Sculls was tainted by controversy.

There were no collisions in the Senior Double Sculls. That race included a new club from Buffalo, New York, the Stars R.C.. They were the centre of the only mishap in that race; the bow man, John Grey, had problems with his slide and that cost them second place.

In the Junior Four-Oars, Ottawa R.C. fouled the Toronto R.C. four and were disqualified. Tecumseh R.C. from Walkerville, Ontario were the winners of the re-row.

The *Toronto Daily Mail* adds a detail that rarely appears in print. When listing the names of the crews in the Senior Four-Oars, the names of the spares are included. Here are the names of the winning crew including the spares as published in the *Daily Mail* August 5, 1893:



Dons Rowing Club, Toronto—Joseph Sullivan, bow; Fred L'ston, 2; P. J. Mulqueen, 3; James Hedley, stroke. Spare men, J. O'Connor and C. Raime.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1893 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. It is clear that the Argonauts and Torontos were the powerhouses in 1893, although Dons’ win in the premier race of the Regatta, the Senior Four-Oars should count for extra credit.

Argonaut R.C.	(9/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario

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Don R.C.	(6/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk R.C.	(1/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(1/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Sunnyside Boating Club	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Tecumseh R.C.	(2/1)	Walkerville, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(8/2)	Toronto, Ontario

American competitors came from:

Detroit B.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Hartford Rowing & Athletic Club	(1/0)	Hartford, Connecticut
Iroquois R.C.	(1/0)	Chicago, Illinois
Mutual B.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Passaic R.C.	(1/0)	Newark, New Jersey
Stars R.C.	(1/0)	Buffalo, New York
Vesper B.C.	(1/1)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wolverine R.C.	(2/0)	Detroit, Michigan

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The prizes were presented in the evening after Saturday's races at the new Royal Hamilton Yacht Club by the Chairman of the Local Regatta Committee, George E. Tuckett.

George E. Tuckett was also the Secretary and Treasurer of the Hamilton Steamboat Company. That company had approached the CAAO in 1892 and encouraged the Association to make Hamilton the permanent home of the Annual Regatta.

The Royal Hamilton Yacht Club was located on the Burlington Bay side of the Beach, just south of the canal, and across Beach Road from the Ocean House.

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ROYAL HAMILTON YACHT CLUB HOUSE.

The Royal Hamilton Yacht Club House ca. 1894. By Mott, Henry A. (Henry Augustus), 'The Yachts and yachtsmen of America [electronic resource] : a standard work of reference, being a history of yachting and of yacht clubs, as well as of the various yachts, with biographies of the founders and members of the different clubs of the United States and Canada' (International Yacht Pub. Co., New York, 1894) http://openlibrary.org/books/OL24446803M/The_Yachts_and_yachtsmen_of_America [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

On Friday, August 4, the annual meeting of the CAAO was held in the Board of Trade rooms. The Association was in good shape. Nine member clubs attended and three more were represented by proxy. Financially, they were flush, with Treasurer J.W. Hogg reporting a balance of \$1,002.15.

The following Officers were elected for 1894:

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

1st Vice-President: Major 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.

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New members of the Executive Committee: W.W. Osborne, George H. Gooderham, James Pearson, F.S. Killackey. The returning members of the Executive Committee are not listed in the Toronto *Daily Mail*.

However, the 1894 programme lists these names:

Retiring in 1894: J.A. Stewart, Montreal, John Laxton, Toronto, S.P. Grant, Toronto

Retiring in 1895: George F. Galt, Winnipeg, F.A. [sic] Killackey, Toronto, C.E. Howard, Montreal

Retiring in 1896: James Pearson, Toronto, W.W. Osborne, Hamilton, George H. Gooderham, Toronto

The August 5, 1893 edition of the Toronto *Globe* contained several engravings of prominent men associated with rowing. Poor quality prevents reproduction of them all, but with the reader's indulgence, here are President Sweny and 1st Vice-President Stuart of the CAAO:



The two main items on the agenda were the nomination of a permanent site for the Annual Regatta and the institution of a new class of competitor:

The meeting was unanimous in favor of Hamilton as a permanent course for the association regattas, and the matter of adopting this course was referred to the Executive Committee for action. The establishment of Intermediate classes for singles and fours was also referred to the

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committee, with instructions to formulate rules to govern them. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 5, 1892, p.18]

Neither item was new. A permanent location had been discussed since 1890, and the new class, a hot topic in the United States, had also come up in Canada. The latter item would continue to be discussed for years. However, the decision to make Hamilton the permanent site was settled before the 1894 Regatta.

1893

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The Fifteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1894

With the member clubs in favour of making Hamilton/Burlington the permanent home for the annual CAAO Regatta, Hamilton's Nautilus R.C. took an active role in promoting the idea:

THE PERMANENT COURSE

Hamilton. April 9.—A meeting of the Nautilus Rowing club was held to-night. It was resolved to coincide with the views of Secretary Littlejohn, of the C.A.A.O., with regard to the proposed fixing of the permanent course at the Beach, and of taxing each member of the Hamilton and Toronto clubs one dollar to defray the expenses incurred by the association at Hamilton.

The Hamilton Steamboat Company volunteer to build a boat-house to accommodate the visiting oarsmen. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, April 11, 1894]

Secretary William A. Littlejohn was also the person who suggested holding the Regatta in Barrie in 1891. It appears that he was in favour of the Hamilton/Burlington site and was lobbying the Hamilton clubs for their support. The \$1.00 tax was a novel idea. Previously, the cost of the Regatta was born by the Local Regatta Committee of each city. That method would be an unfair burden on Hamilton. However, spreading the cost among the Hamilton and Toronto club members would go a long way to pay for the Regatta. After all, it was the Toronto clubs, led by the Argonaut R.C. who wanted a permanent site close to Toronto. Which raises the question of why a site *in* Toronto was not chosen. Most likely, the heavy ship traffic in Toronto Bay made that site impractical to use.

It is not clear why the Hamilton Steamboat Company was a proponent of the project. In 1892, the Company had approached the CAAO about making the Hamilton/Burlington site the permanent home, and in 1894, the Company is offering to build a boathouse for the use of the competitors. The obvious reason might be that the Company's two steamers, the *Macassa* and the *Modjeska*, would carry the competitors, their equipment and their supporters on their twice daily trips between Toronto and Hamilton and back again. But that would only happen two days a year. There had to be more behind its interest. There is one firm link between the Hamilton Steamboat Company and rowing in Hamilton; George E. Tuckett, who was Chairman of the Local Regatta Committee in 1893, was also the Secretary and Treasurer of the Company. Members of his family had been involved with the founding of the Company in 1887. He was a successful businessman and in 1896 would be elected Mayor of Hamilton, so his civic pride may have had something to do with the Company's involvement in making Hamilton/Burlington the permanent site of the Annual Regatta in addition to whatever business reasons he had.

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On May 5, the city of Hamilton lent its financial support to the proposal, with a caveat:

FOR THE REGATTA.

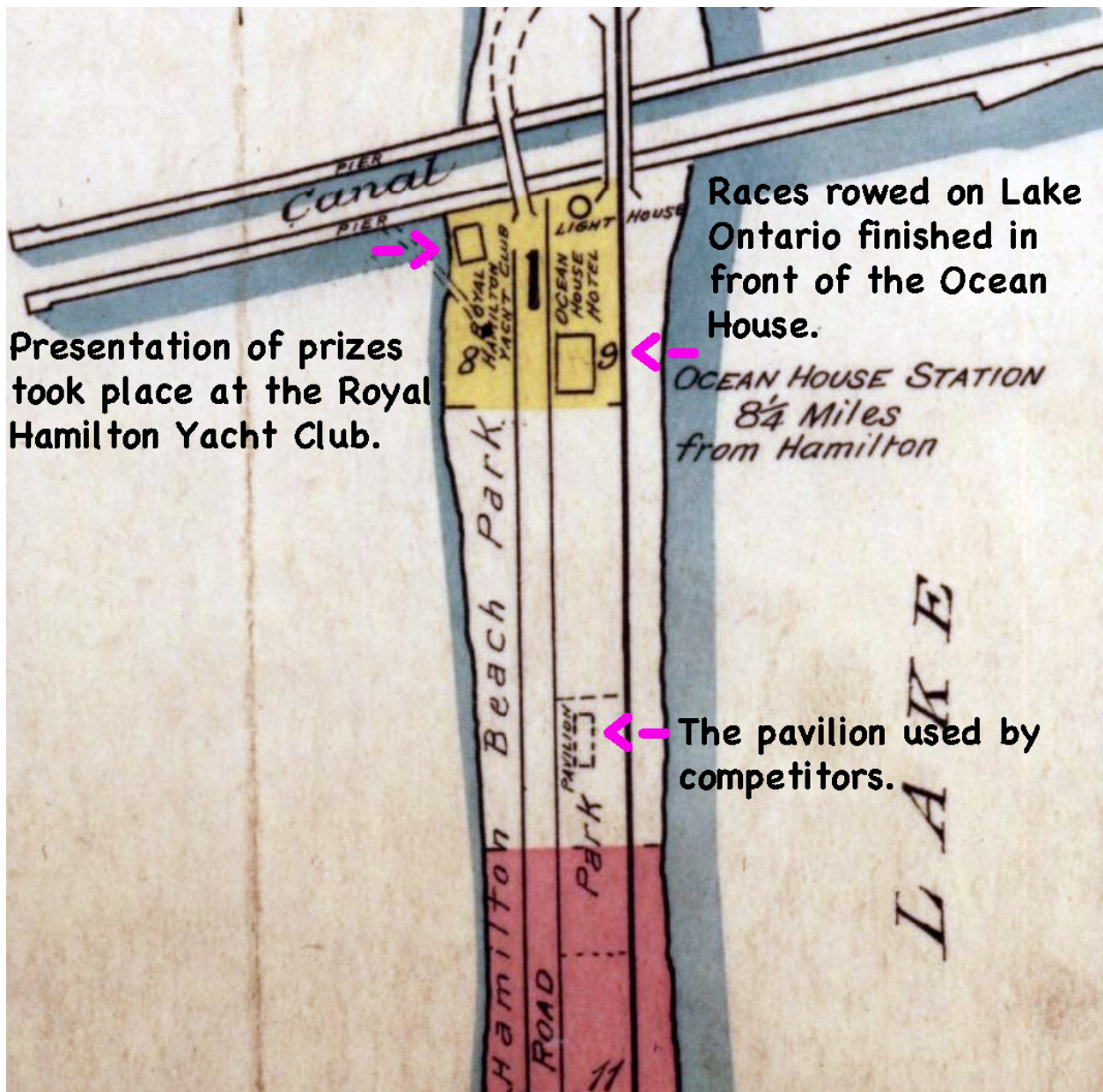
Hamilton. May 5.—To encourage the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen to hold its annual regatta at Hamilton Beach, the Parks Committee decided on Friday night to donate \$225 for the fitting-up of the pavilion there for the reception of boats of contestants. The committee stipulated that unless the annual regatta was held at the Beach for five continuous years the association would forfeit the \$225 expended. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, May 7, 1894]

The Parks Committee was obviously used to sports groups who took their money and ran!

It appears that the offer of the Hamilton Steamboat Company to build a boathouse was turned down in favour of refurbishing the existing pavilion.

Where, exactly, was that pavilion? Its location is not specified in print, but there exists some cartographic evidence. The detail below, from a 1900 Fire Insurance Plan, probably shows its location about 200 meters south of the Ocean House. It is the only pavilion on the Beach in 1900, so it is a strong candidate for being the one used by the oarsmen in 1894.

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Canadian Fire Insurance Plans. Burlington Beach Ont., 1900. Burlington Beach Wentworth & Halton Counties Ont. [sheet] 1 from <http://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A40681>

With the collective support of the city of Hamilton, the largest and most successful rowing club in Hamilton, the Hamilton Steamboat Company, member clubs and Officers of the CAO, it was inevitable that the Executive Committee at their meeting at the Queen's Hotel on Friday, May 11, would recommend that Hamilton/Burlington become the permanent home of the Annual Regatta.

However, it wasn't quite "permanent." The Association made the commitment for only five years. No reason is given in the press for that stipulation. Perhaps there were

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members of the Executive Committee who thought that they could do better and wanted a way out of the agreement.

In a related matter, the “Toronto and Hamilton rowing clubs agreed to an assessment of 50 cents per member to defray the expense of the regatta.” [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, May 12, 1894, p.4]

To organize the Regatta:

A Regatta Committee was elected as follows,—W.W. Osborne, J.J. Stuart, G.H. Gooderham, W.A. Littlejohn, and S.P. Grant, with power to add to their number. The Committee immediately added R. McKay and C.A. Mitchell, of Hamilton. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, May 12, 1894]

Osborne and Stuart were from the Leander R.C.. Mitchell was from the Nautilus R.C.. The rest of the Committee were from Toronto.

One other item was decided at the meeting. Club membership fees were reduced. Clubs in Ontario and Quebec would now pay \$10 a year, down from \$15. All other clubs would pay \$5, down from \$15.

With the decision on location made, all that was left to do was organize the Regatta. The Hamilton *Herald* gives us an glimpse into the accommodations at the refurbished pavilion:

The arrangements for the oarsmen at the Beach pavilion are better than they ever were before, and the oarsmen appreciate the fact. There are shower baths and dressing-rooms provided, and a caretaker is on duty day and night. [The Hamilton *Herald*, quoted in the Toronto *Daily Mail*, August 2, 1894]

On the first day of the Regatta, Friday, August 3, the weather was terrible, featuring strong winds and uncomfortably low temperatures. The Bay course had whitecaps, so the Lake course was used, but it was not much better. The wind was almost a direct head wind, coming from the north. Such weather was not conducive to watching races from small boats. As a result there were very few on the Lake.

The two heats of the Senior Single Sculls were postponed because of the conditions.

In the first heat of the Senior Four-Oars, two of the four entries scratched, so that was not much of a race.

In the second heat of the Senior Four-Oars, all three entries started and, considering the conditions, it was a good race. However, it was marred at the finish. The Argonaut R.C. four finished first by a length and a half. The gun sounded from the Judge’s boat as they crossed the finish line. At that point, the Detroit B.C. was second. Then, a second gun shot was fired from an unknown boat, and the Detroit crew thinking they had crossed the finish line, stopped rowing. When they looked around, they realized that they had not crossed the finish line and started to row again. However, while they were

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stopped, the Toronto R.C. four passed them and beat them for second place and a berth in the final.

There was only one final race on Friday, the Pair-Oars. It wasn't much of a race; Vesper B.C. beat the Argonaut R.C. by nearly 10 lengths.

The conditions on the Bay were still rough the next morning, Saturday, August 4, so the Lake course was used again.

Even so, the two postponed heats for the Senior Single Sculls were rowed in the morning into a stiff head wind with lumpy water at the start.

The smallest steamship in the Hamilton Steamboat Company's fleet, the *Mazeppa*, was used as the Referee's boat.

By the afternoon, the weather for the finals had greatly improved. As a consequence, several thousand spectators lined the course, and dozens of water craft, large and small, watched the races from vantage points on the Lake.

The Toronto *Daily Mail* reporter's description of the Regatta is a treat to read. Here is a sample of his florid prose:

[T]he scene on the Beach was a pretty one. The ladies were present in great numbers, and apparently took much interest in the races, many of them having friends or relatives among the contestants. During the progress of every race, large crowds of interested onlookers surged down to the shore, and as competing crews approached there broke forth shouts of encouragement urging the oarsmen to put forth their greatest skill and strength in the manly endeavour to cross the line as near the front as possible. Those in skiffs and canoes cheered their favourites on to victory, and their cries were echoed by the enthusiasts who stood on the verge of the water-line, quite unmindful in their excitement that the ripples from the lake were encroaching on their boot-tops and wetting their feet. As each race finished, the multitude surged back from the edge, and gathered in groups to discuss why the crew it had backed had failed to win. [The Toronto *Daily Mail*, August 6, 1894, p.2]

All that is missing from that description is an oarsman named Mr. Darcy and a spectator named Miss Bennet.

The middle race of the seven-final programme was the Junior Four-Oars. It was won by a Don R.C. crew made up of M. Kenny, A.J. Trayling, W. Nelson, and L. Kennedy. Pictured here is the medal won by W. Nelson.

The race that stands out at the 1894 Regatta was the Senior Single Sculls. It had all the elements of a great race. The four best scullers from the two heats were in it. They had a good start, and all four stayed in their own lane, and for the first half mile, they were even. Then, slowly, the Argonaut, E.A. "Bush" Thompson, who had won the event in 1893, took the lead, followed closely by J. Alfred "Banty" Russell from the Toronto R.C.. The other two scullers, Charles L. Van Damme, from the Nautilus R.C. in Detroit and W.S. McDowell from the Delaware B.C. could not keep pace



Jim Minards collection.

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and fell back, making it a two-boat race. Thompson crept ahead, but Russell stayed with him. With 100 yards to go, Russell began to gain on Thompson, until the bow of his shell edged past the bow of Thompson's shell. At the finish line, Russell won by half a length. The time for such a hotly-contested race was only 10:53.4. That gives us an idea of how strong the head wind was.

The last race of the Regatta was won by the same two men who had won the first race: George Van Vliet and Frank Baltz of the Vesper B.C.. On Friday they had won the Pair Oars, and on Saturday, the Senior Double Sculls. The other five finals were won by Toronto clubs.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1894 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. Argonauts had a boat in every race, but managed only one win: the Senior Four-Oars. Dons had only four entries, but won three events—the three Junior events—so that makes them regatta champions. Including entries in the heats that did not make it to the finals, there were 45 entries.

Argonaut R.C.	(12/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Bayside R.C.	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Don R.C.	(4/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Leander R.C.	(5/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
London Rowing & Canoe Club	(1/0)	London, Ontario
Nautilus R.C.	(1/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(9/1)	Toronto, Ontario

American competitors came from:

Delaware B.C.	(1/0)	Chicago, Illinois
Detroit B.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Hartford Rowing & Athletic Club	(1/0)	Hartford, Connecticut
Minnesota B.C.	(2/0)	St. Paul, Minnesota
Nautilus R.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
New York A.C.	(1/0)	New York, New York
Vesper B.C.	(3/2)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The prizes were presented in the evening at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club by President Peter D. Crerar of the Local Regatta Committee, and his wife, Marion. A modern reader might cringe when the Toronto *Globe's* reporter describes Marion Crerar as "one of Hamilton's most beautiful women." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1894]

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All the winners and times for the Fifteenth 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held in the Hamilton Board of Trade rooms on Friday August 3. Eight clubs were represented.

The Officers for 1895 were the same as 1894:

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

1st Vice-President: Major 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.

Elected to the Executive Committee were: S.P. Grant, Bayside R.C., J.A. Stewart, Grand Trunk B.C., and C.A. Mitchell, Nautilus R.C..

The Association had \$901 in the bank.

The 1895 edition of the *Rowing Guide* of the U.S. National Association of Amateur Oarsmen gives the winners of the 1894 CAAO Regatta, the 1894 Officers, and a "Roll of Membership" of the CAAO, a list not found elsewhere:

Argonaut Rowing ClubToronto, Ont.
Bayside Rowing Club "
Burrard Inlet Rowing ClubVancouver, B. C.
Don Rowing ClubToronto, Ont.
Grand Trunk Boat ClubMontreal, Quebec
James Bay Athletic AssociationVictoria , B.C.
Lachine Boat ClubLachine, Quebec.
Leander Rowing ClubHamilton, Ont.
London Rowing ClubLondon, Ont.
Nautilus Rowing ClubHamilton, Ont.
Ottawa Rowing ClubOttawa, Ont.
Sunnyside Rowing ClubToronto, Ont.
Tecumseh Rowing ClubWalkerville, Ont.
Toronto Rowing ClubToronto, Ont.
Vancouver Rowing ClubVancouver, B. C.
Winnipeg Rowing ClubWinnipeg, Manitoba

[*Minutes of Twenty-third Annual Meeting National Association of Amateur Oarsmen*, American Sports Publishing Co., New York, 1895, p.74]

It is interesting to note that there were three member clubs in British Columbia which had not yet competed at the the Annual Regatta.

1894

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The Sixteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1895

The 1885 Hamilton Regatta had something of a pall hanging over it. Two of the founding members of the CAAO had disbanded.

One was the hometown Nautilus R.C., established in 1878 to serve the needs of employees of the Hamilton Glass Company. It had had no success since 1889 when it won two events with five entries. For the next five years, the number of entries at the Annual Regattas fell to one or none. It was clear that the Club was faltering.

As a goodly number of the members of the Nautilus Rowing Club were employees of the glass factory, the boat club died when the glass industry ceased to function. It definitely closed its doors in 1895. [Robert S. Hunter, *Rowing in Canada Since 1848* (Hamilton: Davis-Lisson, 1933) p.74]

The Bayside R.C., established in 1880 as an offshoot of the Toronto R.C. had lost some of its members to the Sunnyside Boating Club when it was founded in 1891. Others returned to the Toronto R.C.. At its annual meeting on May 17, instead of electing a new executive, the members of the Bayside R.C. voted to amalgamate with the Toronto R.C.. [The Toronto *Evening Star*, May 18, 1895, p.2] It, like the Nautilus R.C. closed.

In addition, The Ocean House had been destroyed by fire on July 19. It was “the only first class hotel at the beach.” [The Hamilton *Spectator*, July 20, 1895] It had been a favourite place for spectators to watch the finishes of races when they were held on the Lake, and it was the hotel of choice for visiting competitors to stay at during the Regatta.

On the positive side, the 1895 Regatta saw the introduction of the Intermediate class. As the name suggests, it was a class between Junior and Senior. It gave the winners of Junior races an option; instead of forcing them into Senior races, they could choose to race in Intermediate events. In 1895, only two events had Intermediate races; Singles and Fours.

Here are the definitions of the Junior and Intermediate classes as they appeared 10 years later in the 1905 Henley programme:

An Intermediate Oarsman is one who has never been a winning oarsman in an intermediate or senior race.

An Intermediate Sculler is one who has never won an intermediate or senior sculling race.

A Junior Oarsman is one who has never pulled an oar in a senior race, or been a winning oarsman in an intermediate or junior race.

A Junior Sculler is one who has never pulled in a senior or won an intermediate or junior sculling race.

[Royal Canadian Henley Regatta programme, 1905, p.19]

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It was a small Regatta, not just because Nautilus and Bayside were missing. There was a shortage of American crews as well. This was attributed to the fact that the U.S. National Regatta was held in the middle of July in 1895 instead of after the CAAO Regatta as had been the order in other years. The implication was that the Americans saw their Nationals as the end of their season, and were not willing to train for two more weeks to compete in Hamilton. However, that does not account for the missing Canadian clubs. Leander R.C. had two entries, but the three Toronto clubs accounted for 22 of the Regatta's 25 entries. Only four of 14 Canadian clubs competed. Something was not right.

Even the Toronto *Globe* reporter speculates:

The entry list was not a long one. None of the big regattas, where class counts, have had big entries this year, and oarsmen ask if the love of the sport is dying out; but the fair answer seems be that this is only one of the years of depression in rowing. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 3, 1895, p.18]

On Friday, August 2, although there was only a light breeze from the south-west, which contributed to the fast times, the Lake course was used. Spectators came from Toronto on a special train and the steamer *Steinhoff*, plus two Hamilton Steamboat Company steamers, *Macassa* and *Modjeska*.

The first Intermediate race at an Association Regatta pitted two Don R.C. scullers against one another; James O'Connor who had won the Junior Single Sculls in 1894, and Len Marsh, who had won the Junior Single Sculls earlier that day. O'Connor won in a respectable 9:52.4.

On Saturday, August 3, after a morning downpour, water conditions were excellent on Burlington Bay, so that course was used. The rain probably affected the attendance. Nevertheless, between 7,000 and 8,000 spectators were on hand.

Those spectators must have been bored by the Pair-Oars event which was a row-over. That was followed by the Senior Double Sculls in which an Argonaut R.C. double made up of two men who had never sculled a double together, Robert N. Johnson, winner of the Senior Single Sculls earlier that afternoon, and Fred Thompson went out to give the Toronto R.C. boat a race. The winning Toronto double was composed of John Rumohr, who had finished second in the Senior Single Sculls and John J. Ryan, four-time winner of the Senior Single Sculls for the Bayside R.C. and Toronto R.C., who had also sculled for the Sunnyside Boating Club. Robert Johnson had also competed at the NAAO Championship Regatta at Saratoga, New York, but at that regatta he wore Burrard Inlet R.C. colours. [The San Francisco *Call*, July 18, 1895, p.2] Johnson turned professional the following year, but did not have much success.

The final race of the day was the Senior Four-Oars won by the same Don R.C. crew that won the Intermediate race: J. O'Connor, W. Nelson, A.J. Trayling, and L. Kennedy. Pictured below are the two distinctive prizes won by W. Nelson that day.

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Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1895 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. Dons were the clear Regatta winners, taking five of the nine races. The Toronto R.C.'s two wins are tainted since one was a row-over and the other was against a improvised double who competed so that it would not be a row-over.

Argonaut R.C.	(5/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Don R.C.	(11/5)	Toronto, Ontario
Leander R.C.	(2/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(6/2)	Toronto, Ontario

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One American sculler came from:

Delaware B.C. (1/0) Chicago, Illinois

All the winners and times for the Sixteenth 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held in the Hamilton Board of Trade rooms on Friday August 2. Six member clubs were represented.

The Officers for 1896 were the same as 1894 and 1895:

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

1st Vice-President: Major 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.

New members of the Executive were Peter D. Crerar, Leander R.C., W.C. Kennedy, Toronto R.C., and Alex Boyd, Don R.C.. They replaced George Frederick Galt, Winnipeg R.C., F.S. Killackey, Toronto R.C., and C.E. Howard, Lachine Boating & Canoeing Club.

1895

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The Seventeenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1896

In early 1896, we see the first hints in print that things were not well at the permanent site of the Annual Regatta in Hamilton:

The Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen may have to abandon the Beach as the course for its annual regattas. Last year's regatta was a failure financially. The burning of the Ocean house militated against its success. A majority of the competing oarsmen prefer to stay at the Beach, it being more convenient than staying in the city. Another reason is that the local rowing clubs have gone back, the members showing little interest in the sport. Let the rowing enthusiasts get together and boom matters. [The Hamilton *Spectator*, quoted in the Toronto *Mail and Empire*, February 11, 1896]

A few days later, an unidentified envoy from a new club, the Brockville R.C. approached the CAAO with a proposal:

BROCKVILLE WANTS THE REGATTA

A representative of the Brockville Rowing Club interviewed Mr. W.A. Littlejohn, the secretary of the C.A.A.O., yesterday relative to securing the regatta this year for the St. Lawrence river town. Mr. Littlejohn told his caller that the association could not and would not violate its agreement with the Hamilton clubs and its citizens, under which the annual regattas of the association were to be held there for five years, and which still has two years to run. If, however, Hamilton is willing to waive its claim to the regatta, Mr. Littlejohn said that he would support Brockville's application provided it was backed up with the necessary guarantees.

The Brockville club was wired the result of this meeting, and steps have been taken to raise the sum of \$800 to defray the expenses of the regatta. If Hamilton consents to turn the regatta over to Brockville a meeting of the Executive of the C.A.A.O. will be held to sanction the move. [The Toronto *Mail and Empire*, February 14, 1896]

It was a bold initiative taken by a club that had been formed only two years before, in 1894, and whose clubhouse had been opened in 1895.

It was too bold for most Club members in Brockville who thought that raising the required money would be too difficult, and it was decided not to pursue the Regatta at that time. However, at a business meeting of the Club on April 3, Mr. C.F. Ross addressed the members. To allay their fears about the cost,

he submitted a statement of the receipts and expenditures in connection with the last regatta of the association, held at Hamilton. From this it appeared that the actual outlay was about \$750, and Mr. Ross thought even this amount could be reduced. He further stated that at a recent meeting of the association executive, a strong desire to have the regatta held at Brockville this year was manifested. Many of the members felt that the holding of the regattas every year at

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either Toronto or Hamilton, was militating against the interest taken in amateur rowing at other places, and a change would have a tendency to lead to a better condition of things all round. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, April 4, 1896]

Who was C.F. Ross? The newspaper article tells us only that he was a banker from Toronto and a former resident of Brockville. The fact that he was in town on the same day that a business meeting was being held seems more than a coincidence, given that he was prepared to address the meeting. He seems to have been an envoy of the CAAO sent to persuade Brockville to take on the 1896 Regatta. Unlike Secretary Littlejohn who was bound by the agreement with Hamilton, Mr. Ross appears to have had the freedom to say what the Association really thought.

He goes on to cite Ned Hanlan, who was then a coach at the Argonaut R.C.. According to Mr. Ross, at a recent Association meeting, Hanlan

had also spoken very favorably of the Brockville course, while letters received from several American crews, and likewise from the Ottawa organization, intimated that the holding of the regatta at Brockville would insure the presence of representatives from those clubs. All these facts had so strongly impressed the association in favor of Brockville that it was felt desirable to ascertain how much money could be raised here, and in the event of a reasonable amount being secured, the association would put up the balance, if any was needed. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, April 4, 1896]

So, in public, or at least in the Toronto newspapers, the Association is saying that it “could not and would not violate its agreement with the Hamilton clubs and its citizens,” but in Brockville, according to Mr. Ross, it is saying, “everyone wants to come to Brockville, and we will even help you out financially.” How could Brockville say “no?” As a result of Mr. Ross’ presentation, a committee was formed to raise funds.

(Aside to conspiracy theory lovers: Was Mr. Ross the anonymous interviewer of Secretary Littlejohn in February? If so, who put him up to it? Who at the Brockville R.C. received the telegram about raising \$800? When the Club balked at raising the money, was Mr. Ross sent to Brockville to persuade the Club that they could do it? Was the inside man at the meeting, and Mr. Ross’ contact David S. Booth the man who moved the motion to form the committee to raise the money?) (We’ll never know.)

At a meeting of the Brockville R.C. on April 13, the Club clearly stated its position: given its precarious financial situation, it would take care of entertaining the visiting oarsmen, nothing more. All the other expenses, and any debts would have to be borne by the Local Regatta Committee.

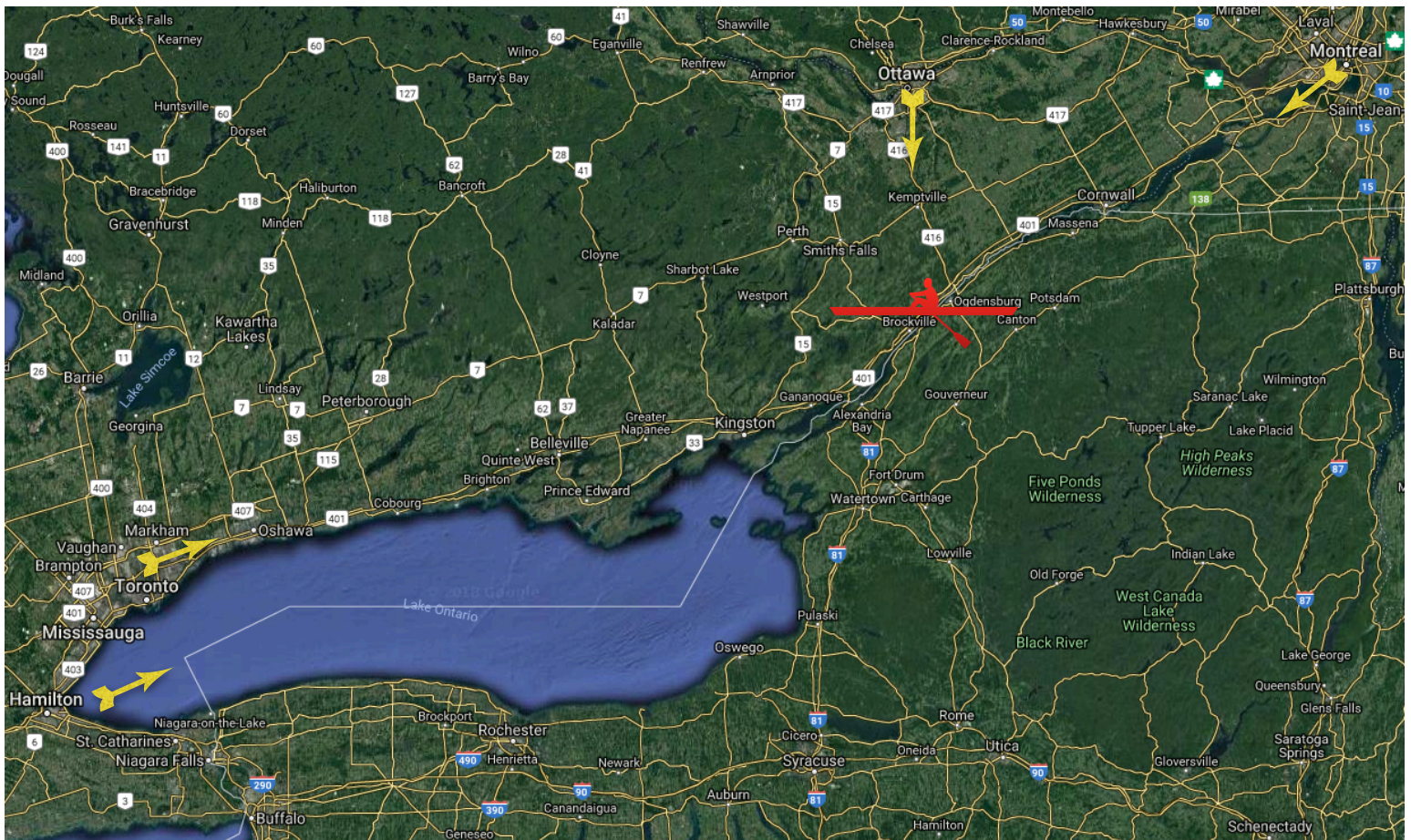
Raising the \$800 was not a problem. Former Mayor, David S. Booth, a prominent contractor and President of the Brockville Boating Club which had merged with the Brockville R.C. in 1895 offered to guarantee the \$800. That was one obstacle overcome. All that remained was for Hamilton to waive its claim, which it did—for one year. And so, on May 1, the Executive of the CAAO, chose Brockville to host the 1896 Regatta.

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The final sum of subscriptions was \$1,500, almost double what the CAAO required. It was obvious that the people of Brockville were enthusiastically behind the Regatta, no one more so than David S. Booth who was named Chairman of the Local Regatta Committee.

Before Hamilton waived its claim and the Regatta was awarded to Brockville, this observation appeared in print:

There have been no competitors from the east for some time, as it has been found very inconvenient coming so far west, but with the prospect of having the regatta in such a convenient place as Brockville, with its facilities for rowing and accommodation for visitors, it will have the effect of booming rowing in the East, and be a great benefit to the sport. [The *Toronto Mail and Empire*, February 18, 1896]



www.maps-streetview.com/Canada/Brockville

Brockville's central location on the St. Lawrence River was convenient for the member clubs from Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton. Regular train and steamer service made access easy. However, the 1896 Regatta had no entries from Ottawa, and only three from Montreal; so much for "booming rowing in the East."

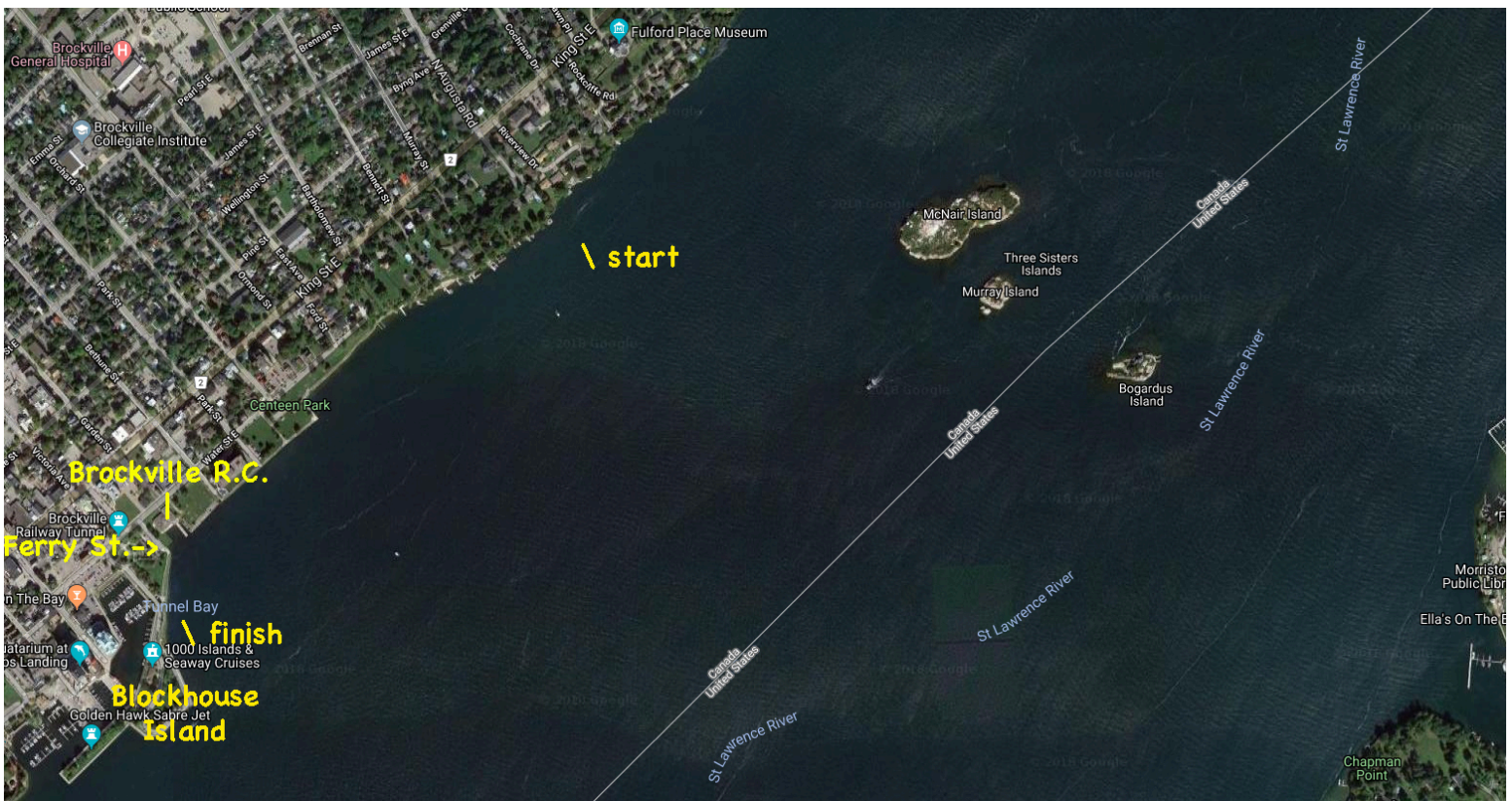
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The 1896 Regatta included a large degree of pomp that had been missing in recent years. There was a night-time procession of boats past the clubhouse, a fire raft, a concert, entertainments between races to keep the crowds amused, plus a bicycle race, and a lacrosse game. To finish off the week, on Saturday, the day after the Regatta a yacht race and canoe races were scheduled. Even a grandstand had been built on Blockhouse Island for the spectators.

All the races will be one and one half miles straightaway, the start being made from a point near J.J. Henderson's boathouse down the river and the finish in front of the C.P.R. dock, just south of the freight offices. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 4, 1896]

In a later article, we are given additional information about the finish line. It was "in front of the Boating Club's quarters near the C.P.R. dock." [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 7, 1896]

The map below illustrates a very rough approximation of where the 1896 course might have been. It is not meant to be accurate.



<https://www.maps-streetview.com/Canada/Brockville/satelliteview.php>

The newspapers all comment on the number of spectators at all the Regattas. For the 1896 Regatta, we have a photograph which gives us our first glimpse of a Regatta crowd. One source says that the view is westward from the foot of Ferry St., which

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means that we are looking towards the finish area with the clubhouse and starting line at our backs. The caption under the photo in Donald H. Swayne's book, *The Brockville Rowing Club: 100 Years of Rowing* (1994) says, "Note grandstand on Blockhouse Island." [p.13] I assume that's the skeletal structure in the distance.



Brockville Rowing Club archives photo. Used with permission.

Here's the scene in words. On Thursday, August 6,

[t]he shore was thronged with thousands of enthusiastic onlookers and the water fairly covered with craft of every description, from the humble punt to the magnificent steam yacht. The course was a mile and a half straightaway up the stream, and in addition to the slight current

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the oarsmen to-day had to tackle a head wind which grew so strong that it finally put an end to the programme when only three races were brought off. [The Toronto *Globe*. August 6, 1896]

How strong was that head wind? Before August 6, 1896, the slowest time recorded at an Annual Regatta had been 12:30.8. That time had been set by Isaac Price from the Leslieville R.C. in the Single Sculls Inrigged, the first race at the First Regatta of the CAAO in 1880. That was also the time of the row-over of the Pair-Oars by the Toronto R.C. in 1895. On August 6, 1896, William Bright from the Argonaut R.C. won the Junior Single Sculls rowing against the St. Lawrence River current and against the wind in the time of 14:58.6. Someone with better math skills than I should check my calculations, but I think that would be equivalent to 12:24.5 for 2,000 meters! The time for the first heat of the Senior Single Sculls was faster; James O'Connor of the Don R.C. won in 13:01. The second heat was postponed until the next morning because of the deteriorating conditions.

The conditions were only slightly improved on Friday, August 7. Added to the current and the head wind, the competitors had to suffer in temperatures described as "blazing hot." [The Toronto *Globe*. August 8, 1896]

The heat may have been a factor in the Pair-Oars. The Toronto R.C. pair "were leading for nearly a mile and a quarter, but the stroke was taken sick in the boat and when the Argos made their spurt there was no response, the Argonauts winning by half a dozen lengths." [The Toronto *Globe*. August 8, 1896]

The Vesper B.C. sculler in the Senior Single Sculls, Edward Marsh, had already won in the Senior Double Sculls.

The race in the doubles had taken a lot out of him and the pace in the singles was so fast that he was quickly exhausted. He was away back last when his efforts told on him to such an extent that he collapsed and fell out of his boat. The plunge revived him so that he was able to seize a life preserver thrown from the umpire's boat, and was quickly picked up. After an hour's attention he was able to be about again, but very weak. [The Toronto *Globe*. August 8, 1896]

The heat had claimed another victim.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1896 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. Argonauts with an entry in every race and four wins was the strongest club. Perhaps the biggest surprise was the Toronto R.C. which had ten entries but failed to win a single race.

The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, but not the Toronto newspapers includes local sculler George E. McGlade and Leander R.C. sculler W.E. Wark in the Junior and Intermediate Single Sculls. Neither appeared for the races, so we must assume that they scratched.

Argonaut R.C.	(12/4)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(2/0)	Brockville, Ontario

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Don R.C.	(8/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk B.C.	(3/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(2/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(10/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Winnipeg R.C.	(1/1)	Winnipeg, Manitoba

Two American scullers came from:

Vesper B.C.	(2/1)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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All the winners and times for the Seventeenth 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 CAAO held their annual meeting at the Revere House on the evening of Thursday, August 6. Six member clubs were represented.

The Officers elected for 1897 were:

President: Peter D. Crerar, Leander R.C.

1st Vice-President: George H. Gooderham, Don R.C.

2nd Vice-President: T. Percy Galt, Argonaut R.C.

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

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

Vacancies on the Executive Committee were filled by Harold Muntz, Argonaut R.C., W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C., J.B. Jenkins, Grand Trunk B.C., and William S. Buell, Brockville R.C..

Colonel George A. Sweny, who had been President since 1891 had been absent for more meetings than he was present for, so it is no surprise that he was not re-elected. The new President, Peter Crerar, and his wife Marion, were what today might be called a "power couple."

William A. Littlejohn initially declined the nomination to the post he had held since 1884, but accepted with the understanding that a new Secretary would be found within a year.

J.W. Hogg reported that the Association had \$923 in the bank.

The major item on the agenda was a proposal by Percy Galt to change the Regatta course from its traditional configuration of a mile and a half straightaway to three-quarters of a mile and return. This had been, and continued to be a hotly debated topic in the United States. The most persuasive argument for turning races was that because the start and the finish were the same point, such races were more exciting for the spectators. The consensus of the men at that meeting was in favour of turning races, and it was left to the Executive Committee to make the final decision.

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The Eighteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1897

—Hamilton has the refusal of the C.A.A.O. regatta again this year, under its agreement with the association, but unless something is done in the direction of providing accommodation for the oarsmen at the Beach it may go by default. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, April 27, 1897]

The problems at Hamilton were not rectified and the Association began looking for a site. “It seems that Prescott first took up the matter but could not see its way clear to raise the \$700 guarantee demanded by the association. . . .” [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, May 12, 1897] At that news, someone at the Brockville R.C. suggested holding the Regatta there again.

On June 9, 1897, the CAAO awarded the Eighteenth Regatta to Brockville. Unlike 1896 when some arm twisting and behind-the-scene negotiation was involved to get the Brockville R.C. on board, the 1897 request was made with the full support of the Club by William S. Buell, 2nd Vice-President, who was also a member of the CAAO Executive Committee.

On his return home, Mr. Buell gave an interview which gives us a glimpse into the workings of the Association. Brockville was not the only city in the hunt for the Regatta. Mr. Buell

admitted that considerable competition was developed. About the only place which offered competition, however, was Toronto and but for the oarsmen themselves it would undoubtedly have been selected. The city council not only made a grant of \$400 to the oarsmen for the regatta, but an additional grant of \$200 was offered by the Ferry Co., while Mr. Buell only had authority to offer a sum little larger than the [Toronto] council granted itself. The oarsmen, however, decided in favor of Brockville for the reason that it affords a straight and clear course while that on Toronto Bay is constantly being crossed and re-crossed with steamers. The association officers, especially the treasurer, made a vigorous protest for some time but in the end capitulated and Brockville was selected. There is no doubt however, but that the treatment which Brockville last year accorded both the rowers and their friends, had something to do with the final decision. The leading men of the association all openly expressed their admiration for the push and spirit exhibited by those interested in aquatics here [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, June 11, 1897]

Mr. Buell’s account of the meeting hints at a split between the Association’s Officers, notably Treasurer J.W. Hogg and what he calls the “oarsmen” i.e. the Executive Committee. The account also reveals that there was some bidding involved, although in this instance, the Regatta did not go to the highest bidder.

Where did the money go? We get a peek from this account of a Local Regatta Committee meeting:

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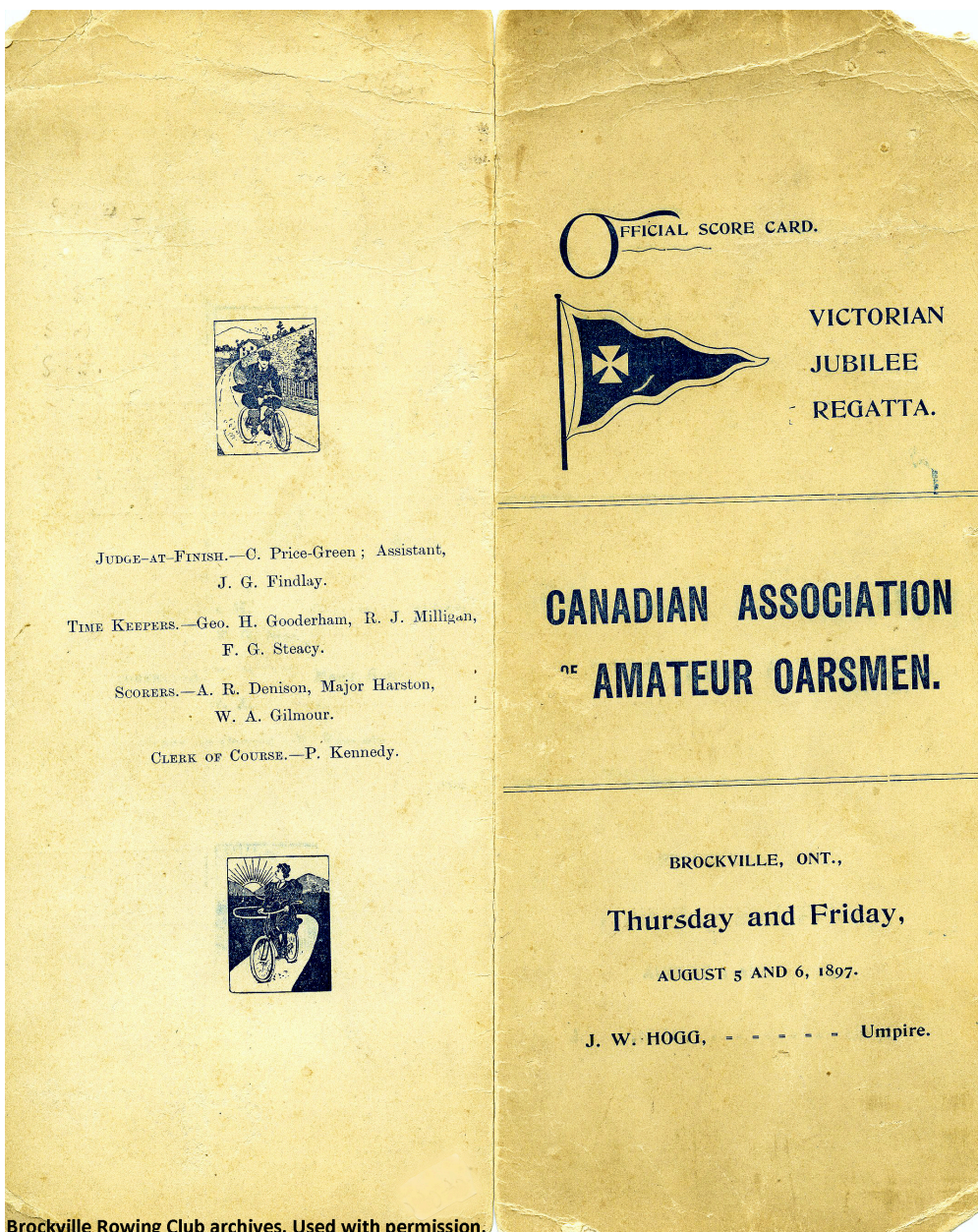
It was announced that about \$650 had been raised by local subscription but as \$450 of this was needed for the regatta guarantee, more will be needed to carry on the special features with which it is proposed to fill in the time between the regular races. These include the war canoe and four other canoe races and besides, there will be the expense of advertising, securing badges, medals, etc., and the rental of a large tent on the club lawn for the use of the visiting oarsmen. The prize in the war canoe class will be an expensive silk banner, while medals will be given for the other canoe races. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, July 24, 1897]

Canoe races were to be an integral part of the Regatta. Rowing clubs such as the Argonauts and Grand Trunk were bringing contingents of paddlers. Even the Ottawa R.C., which had not sent rowing crews to a CAAO Regatta since 1892, was promising to send canoe crews. Having rowing and canoeing races together was common practice at

regattas, and since the Brockville R.C. had been formed by joining with a canoeing club, it was natural that canoe races would be an important feature at any Brockville regatta.

While most competitors arrived in Brockville by train, the Argonauts chartered a boat, the steamer *A.J. Tymon*. They left Toronto on Tuesday at about 8:00 P.M. and arrived in Brockville twenty hours later. "The party included between fifty and sixty representatives of the Argonaut, Don and Toronto Rowing Clubs, with their friends. They had sixteen shells with them . . ." [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 5, 1897]

The Argonauts were more than a group who liked to make an entrance on a



Brockville Rowing Club archives. Used with permission.

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steamer. They were also very good oarsmen. On Thursday, August 5, They won all four final races, and also qualified for two finals on Friday.

An east wind created rough water which forced a two-hour postponement on Thursday. Nevertheless, “[e]xcursion steamers and small boats galore covered the river, and the club house and wharves along the course were packed with eager spectators.” [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1897]

The Regatta was called the “Victorian Jubilee Regatta” to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

The Argonauts were the dominant club on Thursday, but the individual star of the Club that day was C.E.A. Goldman. He won the first race of the programme, the Junior Single Sculls, the fourth race, the Intermediate Single Sculls, and that win got him a place in the second heat of the Senior Single Sculls in which he came second. That qualified him for the final on Friday. In his heat for the Senior Single Sculls, he beat fellow Argonaut, E.A. “Bush” Thompson, two-time winner of the Senior Single Sculls, and John J. Ryan, a four-time winner.

The most exciting news among Brockville fans on Thursday was that their four qualified for the final of the Junior Four-Oars. On Friday, they placed third in both the Junior and Intermediate Four-Oars events. Both of those races were won by the same Argonaut R.C. four.

Official Score Card—First Day.

Course, one and one-half miles straight away.
Positions number from the shore.
Colors are as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
GREEN	RED	WHITE	BLUE	YELLOW

Notice to contestants.—Winners will only be distinguished at finish by their allotted colors.
Empire's boat will go up centre of course.

The Empire intends starting the races promptly. Crews must be on hand at time set.
Empire will start by gun shot after asking "Are you ready?" once.
If the Empire considers the start false, he shall at once recall the boats to their stations, by one whistle from the Empire's boat, and any refusing to start again shall be disqualified.
Any boat not at its post at the time specified, shall be liable to be disqualified by the Empire.
Three or more starting in any heat, the first and second qualify in final heat.

2.00 P.M. JUNIOR SINGLE SCULLS.—FINAL.

GREEN	RED	WHITE	BLUE	YELLOW
	Grand Trunk Boat Club. W. Laing.	Argonaut Rowing Club. C. E. A. Goldman.		
Winner	<i>Goldman</i>	Second	<i>Laing</i>	Time
				11.21 ¹ / ₅

2.30 P.M. PAIR OARS.—FINAL.

Argonaut Rowing Club. Jos. Wright, stroke. F. H. Thompson, bow.	Pennsylvania Barge Club. C. B. Dix, stroke. A. J. Ingraham, bow.
Winner	<i>Argonauts</i>
	Second
	<i>Pennsylvania</i>
	Time
	10.46 ² / ₅

3.00 P.M. JUNIOR FOURS.—FIRST HEAT.

Lachine B. and C. Club. F. A. C. Bickerdike, stroke. H. N. Baird, 3. F. H. Jeffrey, 2. H. Baby, bow.	Argonaut Rowing Club. J. N. Mackenzie, stroke. H. C. Kingstone, 3. H. W. Duggan, 2. G. H. Doherty, bow.
Winner	<i>Argonaut</i>
	Second
	<i>Lachine</i>
	Time
	9.25

3.30 P.M. INTERMEDIATE SINGLE SCULLS.—FINAL.

Argonaut Rowing Club. C. E. A. Goldman.	Don Rowing Club. Thos. Kenny.	Grand Trunk Boat Club. W. Laing.	Toronto Rowing Club. F. E. Russell.	Toronto Rowing Club. W. J. Nelson.
Winner	<i>Goldman</i>	Second	<i>Nelson</i>	Time
				10.35

4.00 P.M. JUNIOR DOUBLE SCULLS.—FINAL.

Argonaut Rowing Club. H. W. A. Dixon, stroke. R. W. Hoskin, bow.	Don Rowing Club. F. Liston, stroke. A. N. Heintzman, bow.
Winner	<i>Argonaut</i>
	Second
	Time
	9.54

4.30 P.M. SENIOR SINGLE SCULLS.—FIRST HEAT.

Don Rowing Club. L. Marsh.	Argonaut Rowing Club. W. M. Bright.	Toronto Rowing Club. F. Alward.
Winner	<i>Marsh</i>	Second
	<i>Alward</i>	Time

5.00 P.M. JUNIOR FOUR OARS.—SECOND HEAT.

Grand Trunk Boat Club. P. Raymond, stroke. F. Auburn, 3. O. Harwood, 2. F. Scott, bow.	Ottawa Rowing Club. W. T. Lawless, stroke. D. Arey Scott, 3. J. A. McDougall, 2. J. P. Wright, bow.	Brockville Rowing Club. C. T. Wilkinson, stroke. F. I. Ritchie, 3. Geo. Sheriff, 2. J. C. Ritchie, bow.
Winner	<i>Grand Trunk</i>	Second
	<i>Brockville</i>	Time
		9.30

5.30 P.M. SENIOR SINGLE SCULLS.—SECOND HEAT.

Don Rowing Club. Jas. O'Connor.	Toronto Rowing Club. J. J. Ryan.	Winner of Intermediate Single Sculls.	Argonaut Rowing Club. E. A. Thompson.
Winner	<i>O'Connor</i>	Second	<i>Goldman</i>
			Time
			10.23

Brockville Rowing Club archives. Used with permission.

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Brockville Rowing Club archives photo. Used with permission.

The photo above appears twice in the Brockville R.C. archives. The caption on one reads: “Regatta day, Brockville Rowing Club 1897. Note Lindsay sign on building.” The second caption is: “A picture of the Brockville waterfront from the river during the CAAO regatta of 1897. An army tent was procured to provided [sic] shelter for the racing shells and a grandstand was erected at the right. (Brockville Museum)” What follows is predicated on a single word in the newspaper accounts of the 1897 Regatta. That word is “east.” Both the *Toronto Globe* and the *Brockville Evening Recorder* reports say that on the first day of the Regatta, Thursday, August 5, the wind was from the east and caused rough water. *[I find it impossible to resist the temptation to quote the Evening Recorder reporter who must have been paid by the word: “. . . the water was very choppy and a brisk east breeze was keeping it agitated in an aggravating manner.” [The Brockville*

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Evening Recorder, August 6, 1897]] The flags in the photo are not being moved by a wind from the east, which is to the right, and the water is not rough. That rules out Thursday, and leaves Friday: "There was quite a stiff breeze blowing, but it was off shore and scarcely raised more than a ripple on the water. The sun shone brightly . . ." [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 7, 1897] On Friday, there was only one singles race, the Senior Singles Sculls. This photo shows the finish of that race. Coming first, on the far side of what appears a buoy, but what is actually a pennant flying from the stern of the punt on the left, is Fred Alward of the Toronto R.C.. Two lengths behind is Len Marsh from the Don R.C.. The description of the finish in the *Globe* does not quite match the photo. It reads: "Alward . . . crossed a short length in front of Marsh, who was about two feet ahead of [James] O'Connor." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1897] The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the reporter was in the Umpire's yacht, the *Dortha*, following the race, so his perspective of the finish was different from the photographer's, who was on the finish line. [Perhaps that flag on the stern of the punt was the finish marker.]

The only regrettable incident of the afternoon's sport occurred in the senior double event when [Len] Marsh, of the Dons, broke an oar. It was looked upon for a time as an accident pure and simple, but a closer examination of the broken oar leads to the suspicion that it had been tampered with. The blade certainly looks as though it had been partially cut with a chisel and an investigation will likely be held by the association. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 7, 1897]

Such skulduggery was common in professional rowing, but extremely rare in the amateur sport. It does not appear that the Association conducted an investigation, which suggests that everyone was satisfied that it was an accident.

The prizes were presented on Friday evening at the Brockville R.C. clubhouse by Mrs. George T. Fulford, wife of the Club's President.

Why were the Argonauts so successful? It was a question which a lot of people were asking, and at the presentation of the prizes, Argonaut President Percy Galt was persuaded to make a speech in which he addressed that topic:

He said he had often been asked how it was that the Argonauts were so successful in winning prizes and desired to say in answer that it was mainly by hard work. . . . The Argonauts, however, undoubtedly had advantages which many of the clubs in the association did not enjoy. Principal among these was the benefit accruing from the services, as trainers, of Edward Hanlan and Mr. Rice, both of whom had no superiors in that line. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 7, 1897]

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1897 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. Argonauts with an entry in eight of the nine events and wins in seven of those was by far the strongest club.

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Argonaut R.C.	(10/7)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(2/0)	Brockville, Ontario
Don R.C.	(7/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk B.C.	(4/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating & Canoeing Club		
	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Ottawa R.C.	(2/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(5/2)	Toronto, Ontario

An American pair came from:

Pennsylvania Barge Club (1/0) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

All the winners and times for the Eighteenth 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 Annual Meeting of the CAAO was held on Thursday, August 5, at the Revere House. Seven clubs were represented.

The Officers elected for 1898 were the same as 1897:

President: Peter D. Crerar, Leander R.C.

1st Vice-President: George H. Gooderham, Don R.C.

2nd Vice-President: T. Percy Galt, Argonaut R.C.

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

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

The newly elected members of the Executive Committee were: S.P. Grant, Toronto R.C., D'Arcy Scott, Ottawa R.C. and J.H. Hunter, Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club.

Secretary Littlejohn reminded the meeting that he wanted to retire and that the Association had promised to appoint a successor. He said "that he had lost the active interest in rowing which he once had" [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 6, 1897] and it was in the best interests of the Association to appoint someone else. When he was promised an assistant, he agreed to stay on until the end of his term.

Then, representing the Local Regatta Committee, he gave a report of the finances from which we get a glimpse at the fiscal side of running a Regatta:

Secretary Littlejohn announced that the receipts for this year were at least \$100 less than last year. . . . There would probably be a slight deficit, not more, he thought, than \$40 or \$50, and he would ask for the granting of authority to the treasurer to pay this out of association funds.

. . . .

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In outlining the items of expense, Secretary Littlejohn said the medals offered for competition cost \$400, banners \$65, and incidentals made up the balance. [The Brockville *Evening Recorder*, August 6, 1897]

The Association agreed to cover any deficit incurred. However, that may not have been necessary because the final amount raised was \$759.51. [The Toronto *Daily Mail and Empire*, September 22, 1897, p.2]

A letter from the London Rowing and Canoe Club in which it tendered its resignation from the Association was then read. No reason was given, and since they had not paid their dues for three years, and owed \$30.00, the Association revoked their membership.

Treasurer J.W. Hogg also noted that the Nautilus R.C. was three years in arrears, but Secretary Littlejohn reported that the club was defunct, and its name was also removed from the membership list.

Treasurer Hogg reported a balance of \$927.75.

After the formal business was concluded, there was a presentation to the Association's long-serving Secretary. "On behalf of the association, Mr. Gooderham presented him with a valuable gold watch as a testament of the regard felt for him by all the rowing men." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1897]

1897

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The Nineteenth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1898

In 1897, Toronto clubs won all nine events at the CAAO Regatta in Brockville; Argonaut R.C. won seven finals and Toronto R.C. won two. It was only natural that they would want to display their prowess to their hometown.

At the meeting of the CAAO Executive Committee on Tuesday, April 26 at the Queen's Hotel, it was decided to hold the 1898 Regatta in Toronto. The Local Regatta Committee promised to raise \$800, a promise made by Ned Hanlan, who was now a City Alderman.

Another important item on the agenda was the appointment of G. Harold Muntz from the Argonaut R.C. as Treasurer to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of J.W. Hogg, who had held that post since 1889.

Raising the \$800 to secure the Regatta was done by a group called the Citizens' Regatta Committee. It was made up of representatives from several organizations and politicians who met at the Toronto R.C. on May 10 to discuss putting on a huge aquatic sports festival in addition to the CAAO Regatta. The week would also include the Northwestern Amateur Rowing Association Regatta, plus yacht, sailing, skiff and canoe races. A fund-raising committee was formed and another meeting with representatives from the other sports was scheduled. On May 31, at a meeting of the CAAO Regatta Committee, the Citizens' Regatta Committee confirmed having raised the \$800 required by the CAAO. As a result, it was official: the Nineteenth Regatta of the CAAO was to be held in Toronto. It would be the fifth time that the Regatta was held there, the first since 1892.

Perhaps the first thing a reader might ask regarding the plans of the Citizens' Regatta Committee is: what's the connection between the CAAO and the Northwestern Amateur Rowing Association? At first glance, there appears to be no link. According to the 1898 *NAAO Rowing Guide*, in 1897, the NARA was made up of 24 clubs, most of which were located in Michigan. However, the roll of members also includes six clubs from Ontario, five of which were in Toronto. (The list needed to be updated because it included the defunct Bayside R.C.. and the moribund Sunnyside Boating Club.) An even bigger surprise is that in 1894, the NARA Vice-President was William A. Littlejohn, the Secretary of the CAAO, and in 1895, he was President. He is not listed as an Officer in 1897, but Alex Fraser from Toronto is Vice-President. Presumably, he was instrumental in having the NARA Regatta in Toronto although his name does not appear in the newspaper coverage of the Citizens' Regatta Committee.

The CAAO Regatta was scheduled for August 8 and 9, to be followed by the NARA Regatta on August 10 and 11. The latter had more events than the Canadian Regatta. Its programme consisted of Junior and Senior Singles, Doubles, Pairs and Fours, plus Single and Double Canoe races and a Four-Oared Gig.

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The biggest benefit to having the NARA Regatta in conjunction with the CAAO Regatta was that American clubs that normally did not participate in the Canadian Regatta would have the opportunity to enter races of the host Association.

In a break from previous practice, the races of the Nineteenth Regatta were run on neither the Island nor City Course:

The course will be almost in the centre of the bay, starting 200 yards east of the Gap and finishing opposite Mugg's Landing, the small island in Block House Bay, It is a mile and a half straightaway. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1898, p.21]

The Citizens' Regatta Committee received complaints about the location of that course. It was pointed out that the races could not be easily seen from the shore. The Committee responded that the course location was chosen by the CAAO. Furthermore, subscribers of \$5.00 or more to the Regatta fund would be accommodated on the *John Hanlan*, from which they could watch the races. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 8, 1898, p.6] The *John Hanlan*, named for Ned's father, was a tiny passenger ferry.

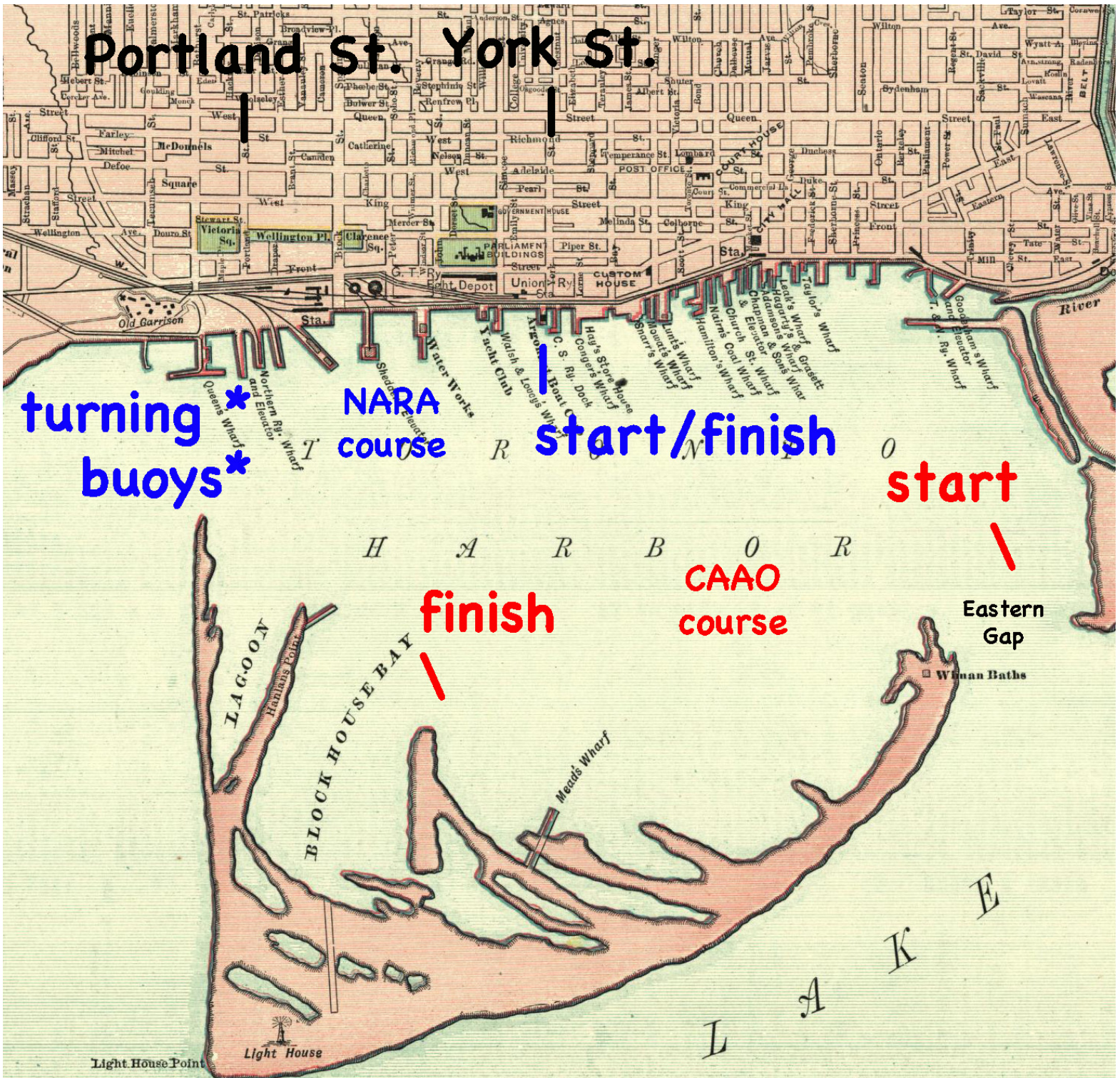
Watching the NARA races was not a problem. Those races were three-quarters of a mile and return, starting and finishing at the foot of York St, in front of the Argonaut and Toronto Rowing Clubs, with the turning buoys located near the foot of Portland St.. There were plenty of vantage points along the waterfront from which to watch those races, including the balconies of the rowing clubs.

The photo below, probably taken in 1897, shows where most visiting competitors to both regattas stored their equipment. The Argonaut R.C. put up the Leander R.C., Vesper B.C.,

Mutual B.C. and Detroit B.C.. The Toronto R.C. housed the Grand Trunk B.C., Pennsylvania Barge Club, Wachusett B.C., and Catlin B.C.. The Don R.C., located about 2.5 km to the east on the Don River at the Queen St. bridge, hosted the Brockville R.C. and Ecorse B.C.. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 3, 1898, p. 10]



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Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1901; from *The Enlarged Business Atlas and Shippers Guide*.
<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/canada/Toronto.html>

The above map shows the approximate locations of the two courses used at the 1898 Regattas. The NARA course had two solid anchor points: York St. and Portland St..

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That course as marked above should be close to being accurate. The CAAO course is more problematic. The *Globe* says that it ran from “200 yards east of the Gap . . . finishing opposite Mugg’s Landing, the small island in Block House Bay.” Two hundred yards east of the Gap, would put the start on dry land. However, if we work from the finish to the start, we probably get a start location close to the one the reporter had in mind. Mugg’s Landing does not appear on this map, but the long, thin peninsula to the right of “Block House Bay” on the map is identified as Mugg’s Island on later maps. If the finish was off the tip of that “island,” then the start was one and a half miles to the east, roughly 200 yards off the tip of the main Island.

As is the case everywhere and at all times, it was the weather which became a problem. The first day, Monday, August 8, saw strong southwest winds and rough water on Toronto Bay, conditions which resulted in a postponement. However, the water was still rough when the programme began. Two singles in the Junior Single Sculls, A.E. Wark from the Leander R.C. and J. Cooper Mason from the Argonaut R.C. swamped on their way to the start and had to go ashore to empty their shells. In the race, they managed to stay afloat with Mason winning, but Frank Ward of the Don R.C. capsized.

In addition to the wind and rough water, oarsmen had to contend with swells caused by the steamer traffic in the Bay:

The course was a mile and a half straightaway, starting from a line east of the eastern gap, and it was kept free from interference except by the swells of crossing steamers. The *Hiawatha* was the most serious offender in this respect, the masters of the other boats doing everything to avoid trouble to the contestants. [The *Toronto Globe*, August 9, 1898, p.8]

It is normal for the hometown press to paint a Regatta scene which flatters the host city, but when a visitor does it, it sounds more pleasing:

Many private yachts, dressed in holiday attire, as well as club barges from the boathouses, lined up at the finish, making a picture to be equalled only at Poughkeepsie or New-London at the time of an intercollegiate race. To-day [August 8] being a civic holiday, thousands of people availed themselves of the opportunity to spend the day on the bay and along the shore. [The *New York Tribune*, August 9, 1898]

In the spring of 1898, three Toronto clubs were shopping for eight-oared shells. Toronto R.C. had no luck finding a used boat for sale. Don R.C. did find one in the United States, but it was sold before they could make an offer. Only the Argonaut R.C. had any luck obtaining one. They had theirs built in England by John Clasper. It was such a novelty and significant addition to their fleet that invitations were issued to view the launch. The crew was made up of the members of the two fours which had won the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Four-Oars events at Brockville in 1897. It was stroked by “Bush” Thompson, with his brother Fred in seven-seat and Joe Wright in four-seat. They competed and lost at the U.S. National Regatta but with the addition of a Senior Eight-

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

Oars event to the CAAO Regatta programme, they were ready to try again. The New York *Tribune* reporter fully grasped the significance of this crew and this race:

The sun had set long before this race, and when the Vesper eight and the Argonaut eight came for the word go darkness had overcast the bay, and the people on shore could not see the first eight-oared shell race ever rowed at Toronto.

The Canadians sent from the Argonaut Rowing Club to the recent regatta of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen in Philadelphia, the first eight-oared shell crew from Canada. That crew was beaten by the Pennsylvania Barge Club crack senior eight by but four feet. It was thought here the Argonauts would win by lengths and lengths from the Vespers, but they had but a length and a half to spare, which they gained in the last twenty strokes. It was too bad this race was not rowed in daylight, for only those on the referee's boat could see the contest. It was after 8 o'clock when the last stroke was pulled. [The New York *Tribune*, August 9, 1898]

The winning time into a head wind for the first eight-oared race at a CAAO Regatta was 8:01.

The wind did not let up on Tuesday, August 9. Lumpy water and a head wind kept times slow.

The winner of the Senior Single Sculls, Edward Hanlan Ten Eyck from the Wachusett B.C. in Worcester, Mass. had some of the same speed as the ex-World Champion for whom he was named. He had won the Diamond Challenge Sculls at the Henley Royal Regatta in 1897, and he would also win the Senior Single Sculls at the NARA Regatta, and with C.H. Lewis he would win another CAAO medal in the Senior Double Sculls.

Rough water caused serious damage to the Mutual B.C. shell in the Senior Four-Oars race. It filled with water and broke in two. The crew were rescued by a police boat.

The Intermediate Single Sculls was an exciting race with a close finish featuring three scullers who "sculled in the gamest possible fashion, and were all up in a bunch when they crossed the finish line . . ." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 10, 1898, p.8] Pictured is the prize won by the winner, W. Nelson, a former Don R.C. oarsman who was now sculling for the Toronto R.C.. Thanks to the Treasurer's report for the 1897 Regatta, we know that these little works of art cost about \$19.00 each.

The last final of the Regatta, the Intermediate Four-Oars was a demolition derby. First Brockville and Grand Trunk collided and each crew claimed a foul. While the Brockville crew was stopped with their arms in the air claiming a foul, they were passed by Leander. Brockville resumed rowing in third place, but Leander collided with them, and the Brockville stroke-man broke his oar, while the Leander shell lost its rudder. Leander kept rowing and finished in second place after Grand Trunk.



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Umpire Peter D. Crerar (from Leander R.C.) disqualified Leander and ordered Brockville and Grand Trunk to race on Wednesday morning. Toronto, Don and Ecorse were well back and not in contention when the collisions were taking place so they were excluded



Photo by Patricia Marshall, Brockville R.C.. Used with permission.

from the re-row, a decision which did not sit well with everyone. The next morning, Brockville beat Grand Trunk by a length and a half in “a ding-dong race to the end . . .” [The Toronto, *Globe*, August 11, 1898, p.10] Pictured, is the banner won by the Brockville R.C. intermediate four. Although we aren’t told the cost of the 1898 banners, in 1897, they cost a little over \$7.00 each.

Banners had been awarded at American regattas for many years. However, the first mention of banners at the Canadian Annual Regatta does not appear until 1888 when the Association, at its annual meeting, decided to supply banners for the 1889 Regatta. In 1903, sturdy wooden plaques took the place of the delicate cloth banners.

The strong wind and rough water plagued the Northwestern Regatta on Wednesday and Thursday, with a number of shells filling with water and/or overturning. However, the American journalists were pleased with the size of the crowds.

Canadians dominated the CAAO Regatta, winning eight of the ten events. They also did well at the NARA Regatta. J. Cooper Mason of the Argonaut R.C. followed up his win of the Canadian Junior Single Sculls with a win in the same event at the Northwestern Regatta. Brockville R.C. won both the Junior Double Sculls and the Junior Four-Oars, while Argonaut R.C. repeated their wins in the Senior Four-Oars and the Senior Pair-Oars. We should remember that while the Canadian races were straightaway, the Northwestern races were a mile and a half with a turn. The same Brockville four won the CAAO Intermediate Four-Oars in the morning rowing straightaway, and the NARA Junior Four-Oars in the afternoon turning around a buoy at the halfway point.

Gig races were a part of the NARA Regatta programme on Wednesday, while the canoes raced on Wednesday and Thursday. More canoe races and swimming races took place on Friday, and the yacht races were held on Saturday to cap off a full week of aquatic sports.

Prizes for both regattas were presented on Thursday evening at a “monster smoking concert” [The Toronto *Globe*, August 8, 1898, p.6] at the Toronto Athletic Club.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1898 CAAO 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. was by far the strongest club, winning four of the ten events.

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Argonaut R.C.	(8/4)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(3/1)	Brockville, Ontario
Don R.C.	(7/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk B.C.	(2/1)	Montreal, Quebec
Leander R.C.	(2/0)	Hamilton, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(4/1)	Toronto, Ontario

American entries came from:

Catlin B.C.	(1/0)	Chicago, Illinois
Detroit B.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Ecorse B.C.	(2/0)	Ecorse, Michigan
Mutual B.C.	(2/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Pennsylvania Barge Club	(2/0)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Vesper B.C.	(3/0)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wachusett B.C.	(2/2)	Worcester, Massachusetts

All the winners and times for the Nineteenth 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.

At the Annual Meeting of the CAAO, several changes to the Executive Committee were made. William S. Buell, Brockville R.C. and Alex Boyd, Don R.C. were re-elected to the Executive Committee. P.J. Smyth and W.H. Bunting were elected to succeed W.C. Kennedy, Toronto R.C. and G. Harold Muntz, Argonaut R.C., who had replaced J.W. Hogg as Treasurer.

Given that the Northwestern Amateur Rowing Association Regatta used the mile and a half with a turn course for its events, it is not surprising that turning races were a topic of discussion at the Annual Meeting of the CAAO. The NAAO had also begun using courses with a turn. The decision at this meeting was to ask the clubs to present their views to the Executive Committee.

1898

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The Twentieth Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1899

The Executive Committee of the CAAO awarded the 1899 Regatta to Brockville.

Brockville guaranteed all expenses and as there was no other applicant their offer was accepted. Turning races are desired by the Brockville people, and the Executive will accede to the request if that city will defray the expenses of laying out the course in a manner satisfactory to the C.A.A.O. [The Toronto *Globe*, May 10, 1899, p.9]

The dates chosen were July 20 and 21 although they were later changed to August 3 and 4. It would be the third time in four years that the Regatta was held in Brockville. It would be the first CAAO Regatta to use a three-quarters-of-a-mile turning course, a format which had become popular at many regattas, including the NAAO Championship Regatta.

In other Brockville rowing news, Edward Durnan had been hired as trainer at the Brockville R.C.. His crews would be competing against the crews of Ned Hanlan who was now coaching in Ottawa, and Jim Rice who had coached the winning Brockville R.C. Intermediate four in 1898 and was now at the Detroit B.C..

For a change, the weather on the first day of the Regatta was perfect. Instead of starting late, the competitors for the first race, the first heat of the Junior Single Sculls were lined up before the time posted for their race.

The only negative talk concerned the new course:

A new feature of this year's regatta is the placing of buoys in the centre of the course and making crews keep their own water from start to finish. Considerable controversy has arisen among the oarsmen in regard to this change. [The Ottawa *Citizen*, August 4, 1899, p.6]

Staying in one's lane seems to have been a revolutionary concept. This had a bearing on the order of finish in the Junior Double Sculls. Brockville R.C. finished second to the Detroit B.C., "but were disqualified for not keeping their course . . ." [The Ottawa *Citizen*, August 4, 1899, p.6] Ottawa R.C. was given second place. A modern reader may not immediately see the issue. We have to remember that the Regattas were held on large bodies of water: rivers, lakes, bays and harbours. Usually, the outside lanes were rougher than the lanes close to shore. As a result, even when the courses had buoys marking lanes, it was part of the race strategy of the day for competitors in the outside lanes to make for the shore. This often resulted in collisions, damaged equipment, disqualifications and re-rows, but these were accepted parts of competitive rowing. The innovation at Brockville in 1899 was an attempt to redress the problems by forcing the competitors to turn around their own buoy at the three-quarter mile mark.

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The weather on Friday, August 4 was more typical with a strong southwest wind which created rough water and caused a brief postponement late in the afternoon.

The big news on Friday—for Brockville supporters—was Harold “Barney” Fraser’s win in the Junior Single Sculls. It was the first of many wins at a CAAO Regatta for the Brockville R.C..

Len Marsh’s win for the Don R.C. in the Senior Single Sculls was his first of four wins in that event. In 1899, his most difficult opponent was J. Cooper Mason from the Argonaut R.C.. He had won the Intermediate Single Sculls earlier that afternoon and thus qualified for the Senior event in which he placed second. His only rest between races was the time it took to run a War Canoe race.



Photo by Stephen Malbouef.

Detroit Boat Club Crew collection.

The Detroit B.C. won the Junior Double Sculls on Thursday. That’s their pennant at left. However, the big story of the Regatta was the Detroit B.C. four made up of Joe Lyon, bow, Walter Mower, 2-seat, Divie Duffield, 3-seat and Harry Leonard, stroke. On Thursday, they won the Junior Four-Oars, on Friday, they won the Intermediate Four-Oars which qualified them for the Senior Four-Oars event, which they also won—by two lengths. They were responsible for three of the five wins by Detroit B.C. competitors.

There were no entries for the Senior Eight-Oars event. That event would not return to the programme until 1903 when the Regatta moved permanently to St. Catharines.

On Friday evening, the prizes were awarded in the Brockville R.C. clubhouse.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1899 CAAO 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 Jim Rice-coached Detroit B.C. was the dominant powerhouse, winning five of the nine events. Add the Delaware B.C.’s win in the Senior Double Sculls to that total and that made six wins for American crews, the first time in its twenty-year history that Canadian clubs had not dominated the Regatta.

Argonaut R.C.	(3/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(5/1)	Brockville, Ontario
Don R.C.	(6/1)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk B.C.	(5/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Lachine Boating & Canoeing Club		

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	(1/0)	Lachine, Quebec
Ottawa R.C.	(4/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(6/0)	Toronto, Ontario

American entries came from:

Delaware B.C.	(1/1)	Chicago, Illinois
Detroit B.C.	(6/5)	Detroit, Michigan
Mutual B.C.	(1/0)	Detroit, Michigan
Pennsylvania Barge Club	(1/0)	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

All the winners and times for the Twentieth 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held on the evening of Thursday, August 3.

The Officers elected for 1900 were:

President: George H. Gooderham, Don R.C.

1st Vice-President: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

2nd Vice-President: G. Harold Muntz, Argonaut R.C.

Secretary: A. Claude Macdonell, Argonaut R.C.

Treasurer: Alex Boyd, Don R.C.

Elected for a three-year term on the Executive Committee were: W.H. Bunting, Argonaut R.C., W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C., F.E. Starke, Grand Trunk B.C..

Frank Lloyd, Don R.C. was elected to replace Alex Boyd, and joined William S. Buell, Brockville R.C., and P.J. Smyth, Toronto R.C., who had two years remaining in their term.

S.P. Grant, Toronto R.C., D'Arcy Scott, Ottawa R.C. and J.H. Hunter, Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club were in their last year on the Executive Committee.

William Littlejohn was finally relieved of his duties as Secretary, but instead of retiring, as he suggested he wanted to do, he was elected 1st Vice-President.

The only major piece of business was an application from the Detroit B.C. to join the CAAO. It was referred to the Executive Committee to determine if such an action would upset the U.S. National Association of Amateur Oarsmen with whom the CAAO had a good relationship.

1899

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The Twenty-First Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1900

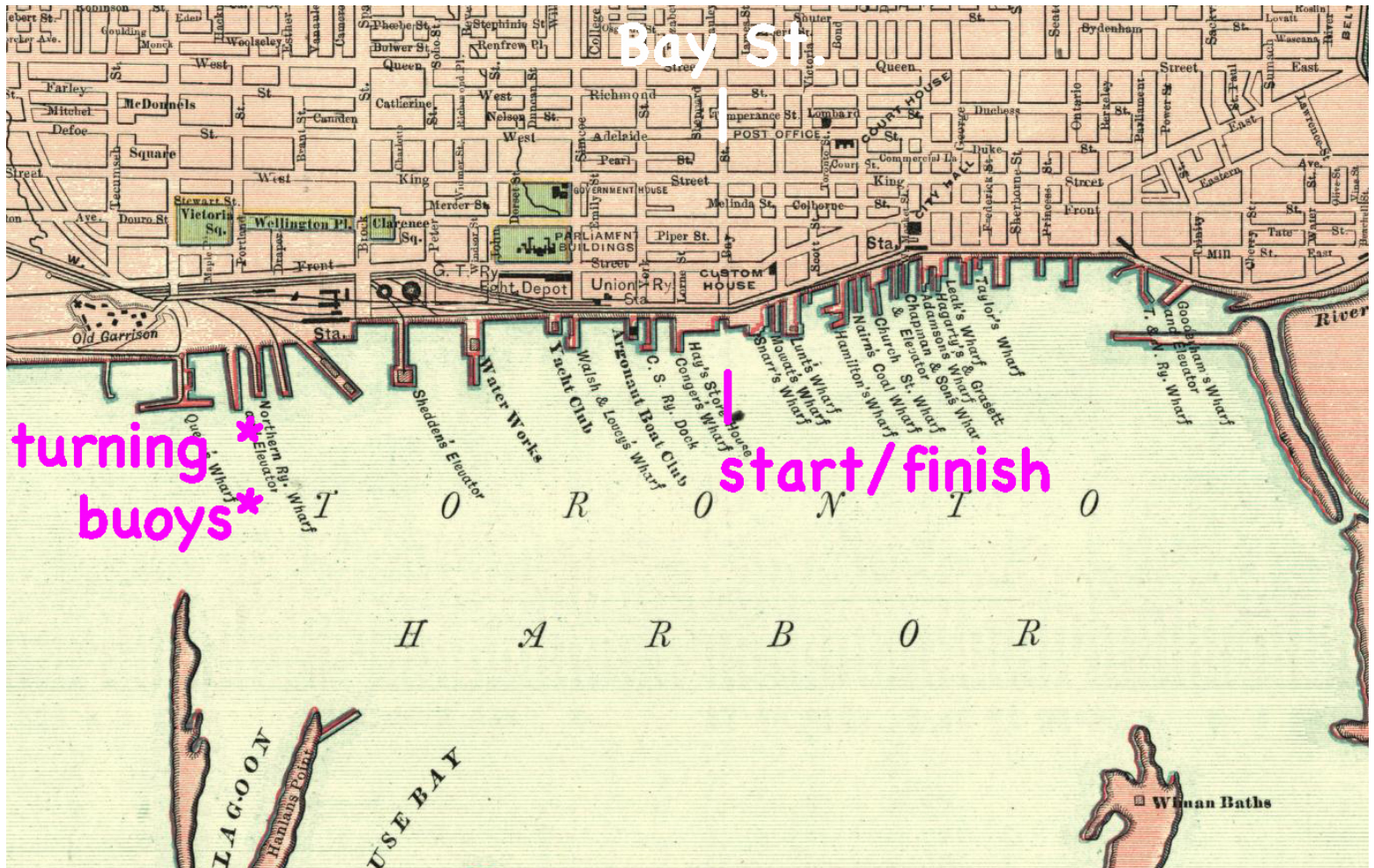
Toronto Bay was selected as the site of the 1900 CAAO Regatta. It was the sixth and final time that the Regatta would be hosted by Toronto. The dates chosen were Saturday, June 30 and Monday, July 2. It would also be called the Seventh Annual Dominion Day Regatta, and as such, would include some canoe races.

The C.A.A.O. regatta will be held in Toronto this year. The Victoria Yacht Club of Ottawa was the only other applicant, but as it was the intention to hold the event on Lake Deschenes if they were successful, the Executive decided in favor of Toronto in view of the inaccessibility of the course mentioned. [The Toronto *Globe*, May 14, 1900, p.10]

Ironically, in spite of its inaccessibility, Lake Deschenes would be the site of the 1901 Regatta.

The Ottawa R.C. opposed the early date for the Regatta, pointing out that they were not able to begin training until June 1. [The Ottawa *Citizen*, May 18, 1900, p.6]

The mile and a half turning course was laid out from the new city dock at the foot of Bay St. west to the Northern Railway Wharf and Elevator and back.



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Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1901; from *The Enlarged Business Atlas and Shippers Guide*.
<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/canada/Toronto.html>

Bad weather and rough water forced the postponement of Saturday's races, so the entire programme was run on Monday.

The weather was perfect and favored the oarsmen. As a result there were some exciting races and creditable time. The Argonaut, R.C.Y.C. [Royal Canadian Yacht Club], Toronto Canoe and other club houses and the wharves which gave a view of the events were packed with spectators, who cheered wildly as their favorites won. [The Toronto *Globe*, July 3, 1900, p.10]

The big story at the 1899 Regatta was the sweep of the three four-oared races by the same Detroit B.C. crew. In 1900, an Argonaut R.C. four did the same thing—sort of. At 10:00 A.M., the Argonaut four made up of R.F. Blair, bow, J.R. Bunting, 2-seat, P. Hardisty, 3-seat, and T.P. Birchall, stroke won the first race of the day, the Junior four-Oars. At 3:30 P.M., they won the sixth race of the day, the Intermediate Four-Oars, and at 6:00 P.M., they won the ninth and last race of the day, the Senior Four-Oars. However, while they and their many supporters were celebrating their accomplishment, the Detroit B.C. crew—the same crew who had won the three races the year before—were lodging a protest with Umpire W.W. Osborne. They had been fouled by a rowboat on the course after they had made the turn. The Umpire allowed the protest and the race was re-rowed at 7:30 P.M.. The Argonaut crew made a creditable effort in their fourth race of the day, but the the Detroit crew beat them by 10 feet.

By coincidence, the only other incident of the day also involved a Detroit B.C. crew and to compound the coincidence, it involved two men from the four. In the Junior Double Sculls, the Detroit double had to stop rowing to allow a ferry to pass in front of them and the Ottawa R.C. double were interfered with by the Referee's boat, so the race was re-rowed, with the Don R.C. double winning as they had done in the first race. The Detroit double was forced to scratch because the two men had to re-row the Senior Four-Oars which was held immediately after the Junior Double Sculls re-row.

The prizes were presented after the last race on Monday at the Argonaut R.C. clubhouse.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1900 CAAO 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. and Don R.C. with a total of 21 entries between them, and each with four wins, dominated.

Argonaut R.C.	(10/4)	Toronto, Ontario
Don R.C.	(11/4)	Toronto, Ontario
Grand Trunk B.C.	(1/0)	Montreal, Quebec
Ottawa R.C.	(1/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(1/0)	Toronto, Ontario

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

American entries came from:

Detroit B.C. (5/1) Detroit, Michigan

All the winners and times for the Twenty-First 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held on the evening of Saturday, June 30 at the Queen's Hotel. Eight clubs were represented, including the Vancouver R.C. and the Winnipeg R.C..

The Officers elected for 1901 were the same as the year before:

President: George H. Gooderham, Don R.C.

1st Vice-President: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

2nd Vice-President: G. Harold Muntz, Argonaut R.C.

Secretary: A. Claude Macdonell, Argonaut R.C.

Treasurer: Alex Boyd, Don R.C.

Re-elected for another three-year term on the Executive Committee were: S.P. Grant, Toronto R.C., D'Arcy Scott, Ottawa R.C. and J.H. Hunter, Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club.

W.H. Bunting, Argonaut R.C., W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C., and F.E. Starke, Grand Trunk B.C. were in their second year.

Frank Lloyd, Don R.C., William S. Buell, Brockville R.C., and P.J. Smyth, Toronto R.C., were in their last year on the Executive Committee.

The Association had a healthy bank balance of \$885.00.

The matter of admitting clubs from outside of Canada—a response to the request by the Detroit B.C.—was not endorsed.

The main item for discussion was an item first mentioned at the 1899 meeting, a proposal “to exclude senior oarsmen or scullers from entering events already won twice . . .” [The Toronto *Globe*, July 2, 1900, p.10] That someone would propose such a restriction is shocking, but perhaps even more shocking is the fact—according to the *Globe*—that there was “a lengthy discussion” before the proposal was withdrawn. To put this in a context, if such a restriction were adopted, Len Marsh would be barred from competing in the Senior Single Sculls in 1901, since he had already won that event twice. The same restriction would apply to the Detroit B.C. four, who had won the Senior Four-Oars two years in a row.

The final order of business was a recommendation that the 1901 Regatta be held in Ottawa.

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The coverage of the CAAO annual meeting by the *Daily Mail and Empire* includes a list of “members in good standing.” [The Toronto *Daily Mail and Empire*, July 2, 1900, p.8] The roll includes:

- Argonaut Rowing Club
- Brockville Rowing Club
- Burrard Inlet Rowing Club
- Don Rowing Club
- Grand Trunk Boat Club
- James Bay Athletic Association
- Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club
- Leander Rowing Club
- Ottawa Rowing Club
- Toronto Rowing Club
- Vancouver Rowing Club
- Winnipeg Rowing Club

1900

Chapter 2: 1880 to 1902: The Peripatetic Years

The Twenty-Second Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1901

Aquatic

Toronto, April 16 — The executive committee of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen met at the Queen's hotel, Saturday afternoon, Vice-President W. Littlejohn being in the chair. The only business taken up was the granting of the annual regatta. There were several applicants but as Ottawa was practically promised it last year that city was given it this season. D'Arcy Scott, of Ottawa, addressed the meeting, and made, on behalf of that city, the necessary guarantee. He asked that the dates be August 3 and 5, Saturday and Monday, the latter being Ottawa's civic holiday. The regatta will be held on the Aylmer course, Lake Deschene [sic]. [The *Winnipeg Tribune*, April 18, 1901, p.3]

In March, before the CAAO made the decision, the Ottawa R.C. had two courses in mind: the Lake Deschenes site, which had been rejected by the CAAO the year before, and a site on the Ottawa River near the Rockcliffe Rifle Range and Kettle Island. [The *Ottawa Journal*, March 29, 1901, p.10]

Both the *Winnipeg Tribune* article quoted above and the *Toronto Globe* report of the CAAO meeting state unequivocally the the site would be Lake Deschenes. However, at the annual meeting of the Ottawa R.C. held on April 30, one of the main topics of discussion was the selection of the location of the course. The members were under the impression that they had a say in where the Regatta would be held.

The one person who knew all the facts and could make the situation clear, was D'Arcy Scott. He was President of the Ottawa R.C., a member of the CAAO Executive Committee, and had made the offer to hold the Regatta to that committee on behalf of the Ottawa R.C.. However, "an important business engagement prevented him from attending the annul meeting of the Rowing Club" [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, May 1, 1901, p.10] on April 31. In an interview with the newspaper the next morning, he offered this clarification:

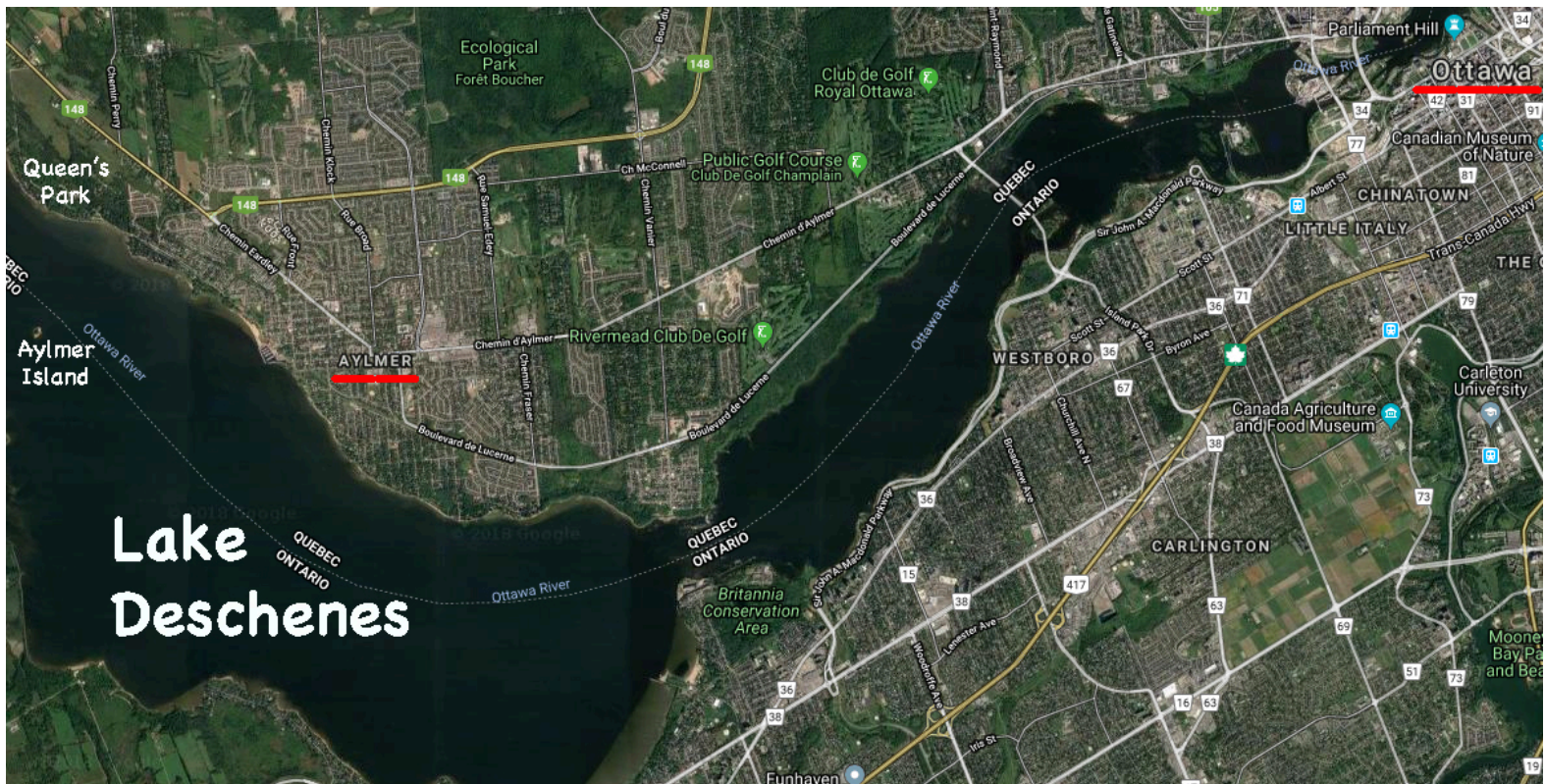
Mr. Scott says the question of what course should be used in the event of Ottawa getting the regatta was discussed at several meetings of the Rowing Club Executive, but the only decision arrived at was that we would wait till we got the regatta for Ottawa and then decide what course the races would be held on. At the meeting of the C.A.A.O., however, when the question of what course we would use came up for discussion, Mr. Scott says that when he told the meeting that the Ottawa Rowing Club wished to pick the course later, he was at once informed that the only condition upon which Ottawa could get the regatta was that it should be held at Lake Deschenes. Several of those at the meeting said that they had been at the last C.A.A.O. regatta at Ottawa and that they would never consent to race on the Ottawa River, as the current and sawdust were both very objectionable.

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Mr. Scott says he saw no alternative but to accept the condition imposed by the meeting and therefore consented to have the regatta on Lake Deschenes. [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, May 1, 1901, p.10]

And so, the Ottawa R.C. was coerced by the CAAO to use Lake Deschenes. These were the same men who had objected to that site on the grounds that it was inaccessible when it was proposed the year before. Moreover, one of the objections to a course closer to the city, the river current, was specious. In 1887, the Argonaut R.C. had raised the current as an objection before they actually rowed on the course, but when visiting crews began using the course, they all commented on the lack of current. Sawdust, however, was a real problem.

Lake Deschenes is part of the Ottawa River, west of Ottawa, and Aylmer, Quebec is about 12 km from the Capital.



Adapted from Google: <http://disween.com/ottawa-on-ca/aylmer-qc-ca>

The location question did not go away quietly. It came up for lengthy discussion at an Ottawa R.C. executive meeting on May 16. Some members wanted to accede to the demand of the CAAO; some wanted to ask the CAAO to reconsider; and some wanted to drop the Regatta altogether. In the end, it was decided to go along with the Lake Deschenes site mandated by the CAAO. [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, May 16, 1901, p. 10]

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Preparations for the Regatta went smoothly. The course was surveyed free of charge by G.C. Rainboth, Mayor of Aylmer. A grandstand capable of seating 600 was erected. Entries were received from six clubs. All was well until three days before the Regatta, when the Argonaut R.C. dropped a bombshell.

Toronto, August 1.—At a protracted meeting of the executive of the Argonaut Rowing Club last night, it was decided to cancel the club's entries in the junior double sculls, junior single sculls, senior double sculls and senior pairs events at the Lake Deschenes regatta Saturday and Monday next. This motion was taken on account of the exorbitant rates of railways for transportation of boats to the scene of the regatta.

. . . .

S.[P.] Grant, secretary of the regatta committee, before leaving here last night commented generally on the arbitrary action of the railways, which is largely responsible for the decline of interest in rowing. There are no gate receipts, and with the exception of small municipal help the expenses are borne by participants and lovers of sport. This necessitates a minimum of expense, yet railways insist on heavy charges for conveying boats and full rates for rowers. [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 1, 1901, p.9]

On the morning of August 1, Secretary Grant had some additional comments when he arrived in Ottawa from Toronto. He

said last night he had been with the president of the Argonaut Club, and he had heard nothing about the Argonauts refusing to come to Ottawa. . . . He said that the usual arrangements were made as regards rates with the railway companies, and a special car had been engaged to bring the western boats here. However, there appeared to be some internal trouble in the Argonaut Club, and perhaps this was the cause of their deciding not to come to Ottawa. . . . [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 1, 1901, p.9]

The *Globe* report includes one more comment from Secretary Grant about railway rates worth quoting: "So far as the railway rates were concerned, while they were high, they were no higher than were always paid." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 2, 1901, p.8] Today, we might say that something did not pass the smell test. The biggest and wealthiest rowing club in Canada was, at the eleventh hour, balking at the cost of shipping shells on a rail car that had already been reserved. Surely rail costs were not the problem. If it wasn't the railway rates that caused the Argonauts to scratch four crews, it must have been the "internal trouble in the Argonaut Club." What that was, we are not told. However, two days after the crisis began, it ended. "It was a great relief today to receive word from Toronto that the Argonauts had reconsidered their decision and decided to be represented by a junior four, a double and a single in addition to the senior fours. . . ." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 3, 1901, p.22] There is one tantalizing hint as to what precipitated the "internal trouble in the Argonaut Club." The senior four which would represent the Club was not the one that had been training for the Regatta but one that was made up on August 1 when the crisis began. That may be what caused the mess. We are told that the senior four "has not practised much and is out of

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training" [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 1, 1901, p.9] and "[t]he crew at first chosen for this event have by reason of a misunderstanding indulged in little or no practice, and have got out of training." [The *Toronto Globe*, August 2, 1901, p.8] Was their lack of preparation and the decision of the Club to send another crew in their place the spark which ignited the crisis? We'll never know.

With the Argonaut calamity over, things returned to normal at the Regatta site.



The Victoria Yacht Club from the collection of the Symmes Inn Museum (Gatineau, QC). Used with permission.

The Victoria Yacht Club was "Regatta Central" on Lake Deschenes. That's where the Ottawa R.C. stored their shells before and during the Regatta and it's where the spectators had the best view of the start and finish of the races. Established in 1891,

[i]t had up to 300 members and was described as being a "very exclusive club". It was next door to "Queen's Park", an amusement park with an elaborate water slide, an impressive merry-go-round, a roller skating rink, a maze, and other activities. All this was located in an area just north of Aylmer Island. [<http://sailquest.com/ottawa/v-cvgr.htm>]

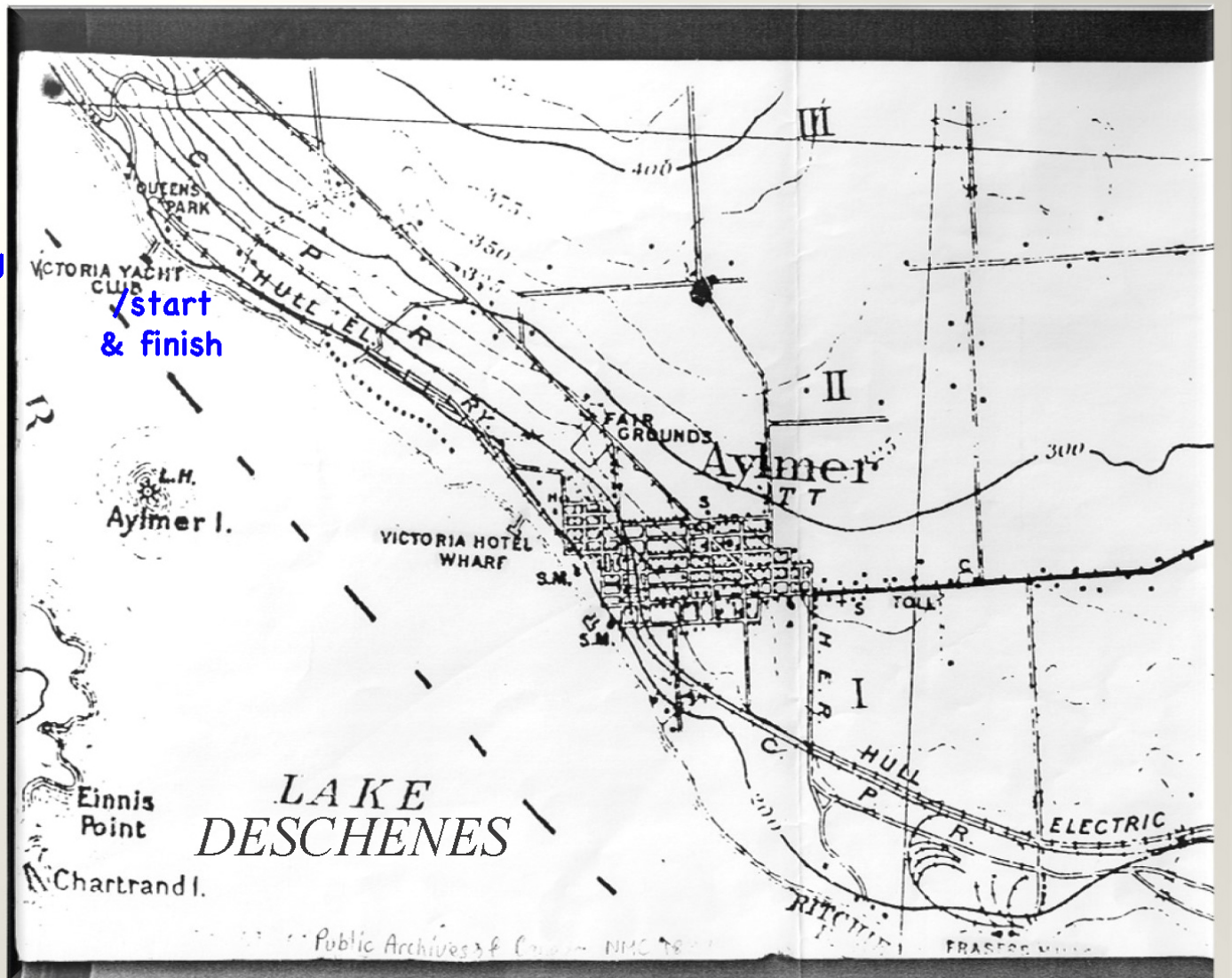
There was a lot to entertain the Regatta spectators at Queen's Park while waiting for the races to be run.

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Although there was some discussion about laying out a course that was a mile and a half straightaway to accommodate an eights race between the Argonaut eight and the Vesper crew which had won the gold medal for the United States at the 1900 Paris Olympic Games, nothing came of that.

The ordinary course will commence a mile and a half up the lake, and will finish at the Victoria Yacht Clubhouse. It will be only three-quarters of a mile, with the start and finish at the eastern line of the clubhouse. This will afford spectators every chance to see the men get away and the finish will not be missed. [The *Toronto Globe*, July 27, 1901, p.21.]

*
*
turning
buoys



Modified map from the collection of the Symmes Inn Museum (Gatineau, QC). Used with permission.

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“The course of each race . . . was one and a half miles with turn, the first part of the contest being up the lake and the rest back over the same course.” [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 6, 1901, p.7]

In addition to the Victoria Yacht Club, spectators were able to view the races from the grandstand constructed for the occasion and from the Hull Electric Company’s pier. Entertainment on Saturday was provided by the 43rd Regiment Band, whose services were courtesy of the Ottawa Electric Railway Company.

Access to the Regatta site from Ottawa was via the Hull-Aylmer line of the Hull Electric Railway Company.

The *Ottawa Evening Journal* gives us a reminder of how competitors were distinguished without the use of lane numbers:

The contestants in each race will have distinctive colors. These will be shown on the official programme. The winners in each event will be made known by the hoisting on the umpire’s boat and pier of flags corresponding in color to the colors worn by the winners. In this way it will be an easy matter for spectators to see how things go. [The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 2, 1901, p.3]

Unfortunately, things did not go well on Saturday, August 3. The weather forced a long delay and only three of the four scheduled races were completed. The Intermediate Single Sculls was postponed until Monday. If that weren’t enough to demoralize the organizers, the Umpire’s boat, Alex Taylor’s steam yacht *Thistle*, loaded with officials and members of the press, could not keep up with the competitors.

Here’s how one member of the press saw the Regatta on Saturday:

Ottawa, Aug.4.—(Special.)—The 22nd annual regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen opened yesterday on the three-quarters of a mile course on Lake Deschenes, opposite the park at Aylmer. From early in the morning a stiff south-west wind had been blowing, and it was soon seen that the lake was in fine condition for yachting, but that a shell could not long live afloat. There are many things that favor Lake Deschenes for a race course, but there are several against it. The situation is pretty, and the Victoria Yacht Club provide most comfortable quarters, and the members did everything in their power to make both visitors and competitors comfortable, but the spot is far from the city [i.e. Ottawa], and a poor car service means an hour and a half each way in reaching the course. Then again the least wind makes Lake Deschenes unfit for shells, and from a spectator’s standpoint the view is extremely poor. The start is made opposite the Yacht Club house to the turn three-quarters of a mile up the lake. Those at the club house and on the pier see the start and finish; the balance of the race no one can see. It is likely that in any future year that Ottawa have the races they will be held on an Ottawa River course, as in 1887. [The *Toronto Globe*, August 5, 1901, p.8]

One has to wonder how members of the Ottawa R.C. executive reacted to that article, especially those who had been opposed to the Lake Deschenes site.

A unique feature at this Regatta was a 35 km cruise up the Ottawa River to a notable tourist attraction, Chats Falls, on Sunday. The steamer *G.B. Greene*, owned by

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the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company, took several hundred people—visiting oarsmen, members of the Ottawa R.C. and the Victoria Yacht Club and their friends—free of charge, on the afternoon excursion.

Although the weather was almost perfect on Monday, August 5, the *Globe* reporter repeated his litany of complaints, adding one more: the press were not accommodated on the Umpire's yacht. To his credit, he also had some positive things to say:

The car service to Aylmer is wretched in the extreme, the cars in most cases taking an hour and a half to go the ten miles. Then, again, the races were hard to see, except the start and finish, and the officials had made no provision for the press to follow the races in the judges' boat. The weather was splendid, a bright hot day, with just a faint breeze made the course look its prettiest, and it was as smooth as glass. The attendance was large and select, and the bookmakers did considerable business on the different events, which were also put through by the committee in excellent time. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 6, 1901, p.9]

The Ottawa *Evening Journal* reporter fills in some of the gaps left by the *Globe* reporter and paints a slightly different picture of the view of the races available to the spectators. He mentions that there were several thousand spectators watching the races on both Saturday and Monday, and that on Monday, the first race began before the scheduled time.

Spectators were able to see what was done from the Victoria Yacht Club house and from part of the pier at Queen's Park. Matters were made additionally pleasant at the club house by the Governor General's Foot Guards Band furnishing music Saturday, and by an orchestra playing yesterday. Many people watched the racing from the shore of Queen's Park, and from boats out in the lake. [The Ottawa *Evening Journal*, August 6, 1901, p7.]

It's reasonable to expect that given the ideal racing conditions on Monday, in a race involving three experienced scullers there would be no problems. However, that was not the case. In the Senior Single Sculls, Lou Scholes from the Don R.C. turned around the buoy of William Bright from the Argonaut R.C.. Their sculls touched and they stopped. Scholes finished second but was disqualified for turning around the wrong buoy. The winner, for the third year in a row was Len Marsh from the Don R.C..

As had happened in 1900, an Argonaut R.C. four won both the Junior and Intermediate Four-Oars events and was beaten by half a length in the Senior Four-Oars by another Argonaut crew, the one formed four days earlier.

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1901 CAAO 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. Don R.C.'s four wins from eight entries made them the most successful club.

Argonaut R.C.	(9/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(5/1)	Brockville, Ontario

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Don R.C.	(8/4)	Toronto, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(6/0)	Ottawa, Ontario
Toronto R.C.	(3/0)	Toronto, Ontario

American entries came from:

Detroit B.C.	(2/1)	Detroit, Michigan
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All the winners and times for the Twenty-Second 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held on the morning of Monday, August 5 at the Victoria Hotel in Aylmer. Nine clubs were represented.

The Officers elected for 1901 were:

President: George H. Gooderham, Don R.C.

1st Vice-President: William A. Littlejohn, Toronto R.C.

2nd Vice-President: A. Claude Macdonell, Argonaut R.C.

Secretary: S.P. Grant, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: Alex Boyd, Don R.C.

There were several changes to the Executive Committee:

Frank Lloyd, Don R.C. and William S. Buell, Brockville R.C. were re-elected for another three-year term along with new member Arthur R. Stell, Toronto R.C..

D'Arcy Scott, Ottawa R.C. and J.H. Hunter, Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club were in their second of three years and were joined by new member Capt. R.K. Barker, Argonaut R.C..

W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C. and F.E. Starke, Grand Trunk B.C. were in their third year and were joined by new member Fred H. Thompson, a member of the Argonaut R.C. four that would win the Senior Four-Oars race later that day.

The Association was flush with a healthy bank balance of \$1,100.00.

Two items were on the agenda: election of members to the Executive Committee for one instead of three years and the site of the 1902 Regatta. No decision was made on either item.

A casual conversation at the 1901 Regatta was not reported by the press at the time, but it had far-reaching consequences. The conversation was between Norris King, formerly of St. Catharines and Fred Thompson, newly-elected member of the Executive Committee. Mr. King made a suggestion to Mr. Thompson regarding a permanent site for the CAAO Regatta:

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To the late “Norrie” King, an old St. Catharines boy, must be given the credit of first suggesting the old canal, on whose waters he had spent his boyhood. At the regatta of 1901, at Ottawa, when the subject was first mentioned of a permanent course in order to get over the difficulty of rough water, he suggested to Mr. F.H. Thompson that excellent water could always be obtained at St. Catharines on the old canal, and that he thought it would be a splendid place at which to hold the C.A.A.O. regatta. [The *Toronto News*, quoted in The St. Catharines *Daily Standard*, July 3, 1903, p.2]

A year later, in October, 1902, Mr. Thompson and a committee of Officers and Executive of the CAAO paid the site recommended by Mr. King a visit, and liked what they saw.

1901

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The Twenty-Third Regatta of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen 1902

The Brockville R.C. indicated as early as February that they wanted to host the 1902 CAAO Regatta and in May, the Executive Committee decided in their favour. The dates chosen were Saturday August 2 and Monday August 4. The 4th was Brockville's civic holiday.

It was Brockville's fourth time hosting the Regatta. The course was one and a half miles with a turn.

Saturday "was clear after a morning shower, but the water at times was lumpy, postponements having to be made so that the last event of [Saturday's] programme was not run off until nearly dark." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 4, 1902, p.8]

The highlight of Saturday's four finals was Len Marsh's fourth consecutive win for the Don R.C. in the Senior Single Sculls. It would be his last win in that event.

Brockville had always put on events to entertain the visitors, but the only function mentioned in the 1902 press was a "hop" on Saturday night. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 4, 1902, p.8]

Monday's racing conditions were ideal and the events were run on time. Since it was Brockville's civic holiday, "[t]he attendance was large. . . ." [The Toronto *Globe*, August 5, 1902, p.10]

The Pair-Oars had had only two entries in 1901, one of which scratched, and in 1902, only a Winnipeg R.C. crew were entered, so the race was not held. The Pair-Oars was not a popular event in Canada.

Although the wins of the Winnipeg R.C. sculler, R.E. Richards in both the Junior and Intermediate Singles Sculls was a notable accomplishment, it was over-shadowed by the Argonaut R.C. four who won the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Four-Oars. Their win in the Senior was a combination of good oarsmanship and good luck, since the crack Winnipeg R.C. four who were touted to win and who were quick off the start, lost several lengths at the turn because they apparently did not know which buoy to turn around. The Argonaut four was composed of: L.M. Dixon, bow, H.L. Hoyles, two-seat, C.W. "Pussy" Darling, three-seat and D.W. Oliver, stroke. Theirs were the only wins by Argonauts at the 1902 Regatta

Below is a list of the participating clubs at the 1902 CAAO 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 Winnipeg R.C.'s three wins from six entries made them the most successful club.

Argonaut R.C.	(7/3)	Toronto, Ontario
Brockville R.C.	(3/0)	Brockville, Ontario
Don R.C.	(6/2)	Toronto, Ontario
Ottawa R.C.	(4/0)	Ottawa, Ontario

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Toronto R.C.	(2/0)	Toronto, Ontario
Winnipeg R.C.	(6/3)	Winnipeg, Manitoba

There was one American entry in the Senior Double Sculls, but they did not appear:

First Bohemian B.C.	(1/0)	New York, New York
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All the winners and times for the Twenty-Third 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 annual meeting of the CAAO was held on Monday, August 4.

The Officers elected for 1902 were:

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

1st Vice-President: A. Claude Macdonell, Argonaut R.C.

2nd Vice-President: George Frederick Galt, Winnipeg R.C.

Secretary: S.P. Grant, Toronto R.C.

Treasurer: Alex Boyd, Don R.C.

There was one change to the Executive Committee:

W.W. Osborne, Leander R.C. and Fred H. Thompson, Argonaut R.C., were re-elected for another three-year term, and were joined by new member Freemont B. Cossitt, Brockville R.C..

Frank Lloyd, Don R.C., William S. Buell, Brockville R.C. and Arthur R. Stell, Toronto R.C. were in their second year.

D'Arcy Scott, Ottawa R.C., J.H. Hunter, Lachine Boating and Canoeing Club and Capt. R.K. Barker, Argonaut R.C.. were in their third year.

There was one major item on the agenda: secure a permanent course.

A resolution was passed approving of the securing of a permanent course. The Executive were urged to take the matter up. At a meeting of the Executive held later, the following committee was appointed to consider the matter: —A.C. Macdonell, F.H. Thompson, W.S. Buell, R. Steel [*sic. It should be A.R. Stell.*], S.P. Grant. [The Toronto *Globe*, August 5, 1902, p.10]

No action was taken until October.

It appears that Fred Thompson remembered Norris King's suggestion from their conversation at the 1901 Regatta.

PERMANENT COURSE FOR C.A.A.O.

At last the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen has awakened to the fact that a permanent course for the annual regattas is a necessity, and to-day President Littlejohn, Vice-

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President Macdonell, Secretary Cy. Grant and Fred Thompson of the Executive will visit St. Catharines and have a look at the Welland Canal. It is believed that a first-class course could be laid out on the canal, which is ideally situated for the purpose, being only a few hours away from Toronto, Buffalo, Hamilton, and easily accessible by water or rail. Last year the regatta was held at Brockville, but the course there was not of the best and the races were spoiled by the roughness of the water. [The Toronto *Globe*, October 31, 1902, p.8]

It was a front page story in The St. Catharines *Daily Standard*. The local paper added some details which its readers would understand:

MAY HAVE REGATTA HERE.

—

Proposal to Lay Out a Course on the
Old Canal.

St. Catharines people will be interested to learn that it is possible that rowing contests may be seen here soon under the auspices of the C.A.A.O. The level of the old canal between lock 2 and Port Dalhousie. [sic]

Members of the association have had their eyes on this level as a favorable location, and on Friday, President Littlejohn, Vice-President Macdonell, Secretary Cy. Grant, and Fred Thompson, of the C.A.A.O. Executive, came over from Toronto on a trip of inspection. It is believed that a first-class course for the annual regatta could be laid out on the canal, which is ideally situated for the purpose, being only a few hours away from Toronto, Buffalo, Hamilton, and easily accessible by water or rail. If the course is secured a pavilion and club-house will be built at lock two, just at the outskirts of the city, and will be the means of booming this sport in St. Catharines. [The St. Catharines *Daily Standard*, November 1, 1902, p.1]

The members of the CAAO committee, may have been accompanied by G.W. Hodgetts, whom Robert S. Hunter credits with suggesting the old Welland Canal as the permanent site for the CAAO Regattas, although, as has been pointed out, it was Norris King who first put the idea into Fred Thompson's head in 1901:

The practice of holding regattas at different cities each year was not proving satisfactory to the C.A.A.O., and they were glad to receive from Mr. C.W. Hodgetts, manager of the Bank of Toronto, St. Catharines, a suggestion that they look over the old Welland Canal. A committee was appointed by Mr. A.C. MacDonnell [sic], president [sic] of the C.A.A.O., to view the proposed course. The one and one-half miles of smooth water with its high, wooded banks was voted ideal. [Robert S. Hunter, *Rowing in Canada Since 1848* (Hamilton: Davis-Lisson, 1933) p. 68]

We know for certain that St. Catharines lawyer, G.B. Burson was on the tour. [The St. Catharines *Daily Standard*, April 22, 1903, pp.1 and 6]

The view pictured below is similar to what the committee saw as they stood on the remnants of the tow path of the old Welland Canal. The view is south, towards the future site of the starting line and clubhouse of the St. Catharines Rowing and Canoe Club. Where the steamer is at the left was to be the site of the grandstand.

NEW COURSE FOR THE ROWING MEN

The Old Canal at Port Dalhousie
Finds Favor With C. A. A. O.
Officials.

GOOD WATER FOR SCULLING

Likelihood That the Committee Will
Recommend the Establishment of
a Permanent Course:

The members of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Amateur Association of Oarsmen, who went to St. Catharines Friday afternoon will likely recommend to the association that a permanent course for the annual regatta be laid out on the old canal.

President W. A. Littlejohn, Robert McKay, Fred. Thompson, Claude Macdonnell, and "Cy." Grant composed the party. They secured a naphtha launch, and went over the proposed course. There has been an overflow from the old canal, which has formed a little lake from Port Dalhousie almost to St. Catharines, and which is used regularly by the steamboats.

On this lake the course will be laid out, commencing about half a mile below the trolley bridge. It will be one and a half miles in length, with the finish at the Port Dalhousie end. The course for the mile and a half races, with a turn, which include all the championship events but the eights, will begin and end at the Port Dalhousie terminus. At this point stands will be erected for the accommodation of those who desire to have a close view of the finish.

A view of the races may be obtained all along the course, the adjoining hills providing some very good places for spectators.

The main consideration is the fact that good rowing water will be always available, and the different events can be pulled off on scheduled time, and not be subjected to the caprices of the weather and the wind. The water is never rough enough there to interfere with the oarsmen.

Most of the committee thought that while the course was not perfect by any means, it was probably the best to be obtained anywhere in Canada.



The tour was a success, and the decision was made. At this point, it seems that the one mile and a half races were to continue.

Rowers, coaches and officials familiar with the course may smile at the assertion that "[t]he water is never rough enough there to interfere with the oarsmen," but we have to remember that in its first 23 years, the Regatta was held on lakes, rivers, bays and harbours, and the racing shells were at the mercy of lumpy water, winds, currents and often, steamers. Those were the memories the committee members had as they looked over the placid scene at Port Dalhousie. There was a negligible current, and there were steamers occasionally going to and from the Muir Dry Dock off the right side of the photo above, but the high banks lining most of the pond boded calm water—definitely calmer water than they were used to.

The Toronto *Daily Star*, November 3, 1902, p.8.

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The naphtha launch used by the committee was probably smaller than the one pictured here.

R.H. Trueman & Co. Photo, Vancouver, B.C.. City of Vancouver Archives. AM1589-: CVA 2 - 70

Months later, the *Toronto News* added another detail to the selection process:

Last year when a committee was formed to consider the sites Mr. Thompson, mindful of Mr. King's suggestion, brought forward the claims of St. Catharines.

It was visited among other places and finally selected as the course on which to decide the amateur rowing championships of Canada. [The *Toronto News*, quoted in The *St. Catharines Daily Standard*, July 3, 1903, p.2]

Where those "other places" were, we are not told. In any case, the committee opted to pick what "was probably the best [course] to be obtained anywhere in Canada."

1902

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Which were the strongest clubs in the first 23 years of the Annual CAAO Regatta?
Listed below are the six winningest clubs. The number after the name is the number of wins by that club between 1880 and 1902:

1. Don Amateur R.C. / Don R.C. 41
2. Argonaut R.C. 40
3. Toronto R.C. 23
4. Bayside R.C., Detroit B.C., and Grand Trunk R.C./B.C. 10

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 April 17, 2024. If you find errors or omissions, use the Contact link at <http://goldmedalphotos.com/> to point them out to me. Stan Lapinski.