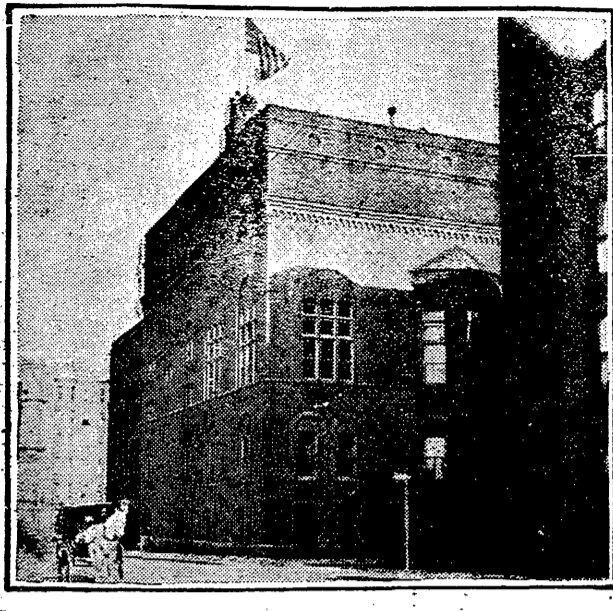


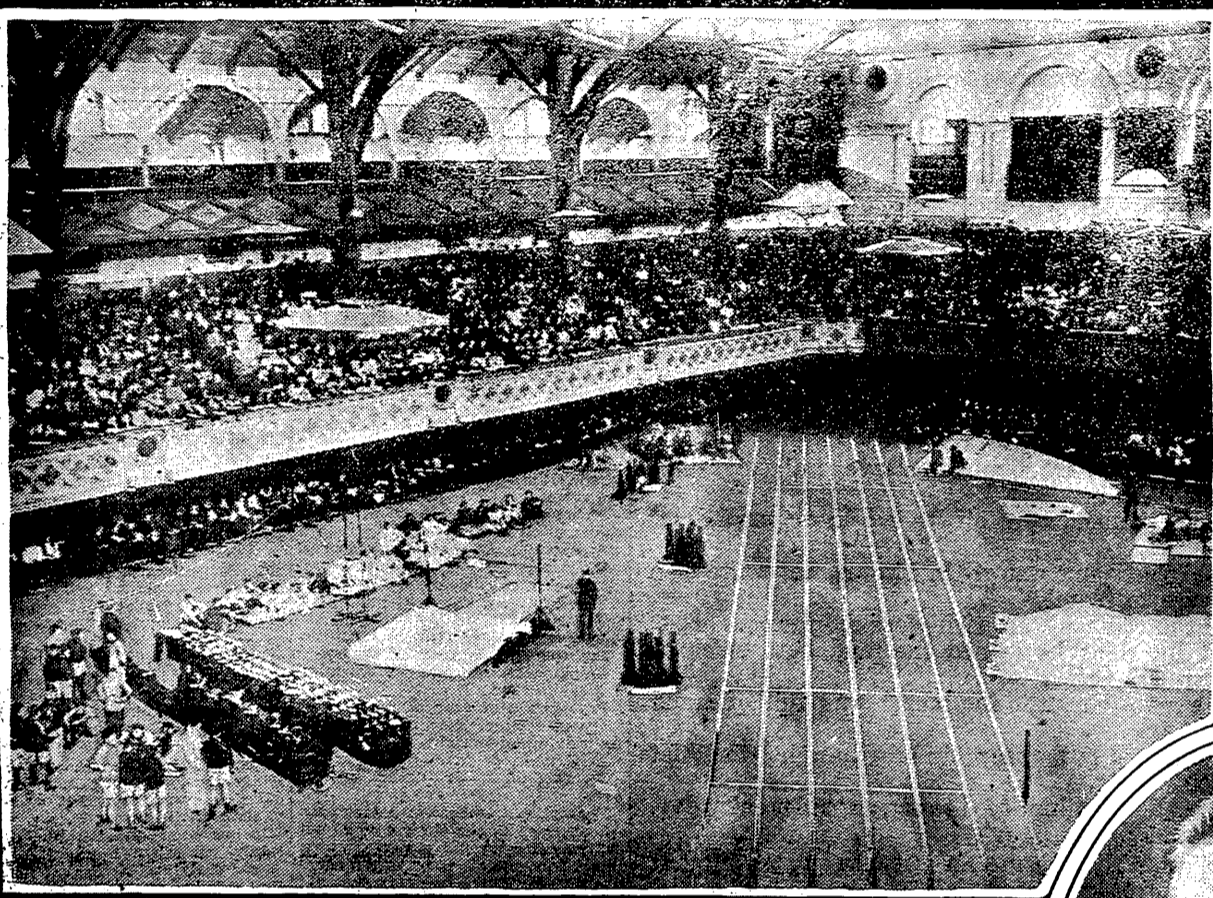
WHAT THE B. A. A. HAS DONE TO PROMOTE COMPETITION IN CLEAN AMATEUR SPORT



BOSTON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



MARATHON RUN OF 1909
ASHLAND TO BOSTON



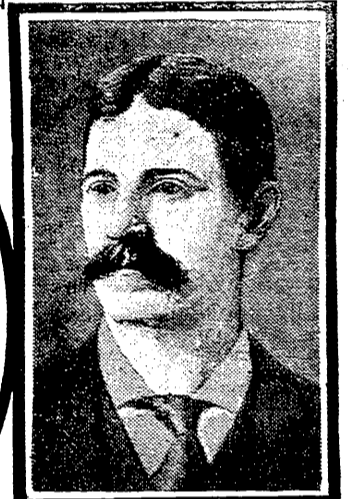
GENERAL SCENE OF THE FLOOR AT MECHANICS BUILDING DURING SCHOOLBOY ATHLETIC MEET



BOSTON ATH. ASSN.
OLYMPIC MARATHON
1ST PRIZE 1908



GEO. B. BILLINGS



GEO. B. MORRISON
PRES. OF THE B. A. A.

Was Pioneer in Marathon Runs, Conducts Best Indoor Meet of Year, Pays Special Attention to Schoolboys and Encourages a Dozen Different Branches.

YEAR after year, the principal athletic events of the winter season in Boston are the indoor track games held in Mechanics Hall early in February and March under the auspices of the Boston Athletic Association.

The B. A. A. games, general and interscholastic, are at present 20 years old. In that time thousands of boys and young men have taken part. So great in recent years has become the interest that the association has found it necessary to impose some restrictions. This year the number of entries for the general games will total 700, which taxes the facilities of the hall.

Article II of the constitution of the Boston Athletic Association reads: "The object of this association shall be to encourage all manly sports and promote physical culture."

Hence the "B. A. A. meet" for athletes generally, the Marathon run on April 19 of each year, outdoor track athletics, amateur sparring bouts, fencing, tennis, squash racquets, football, shooting, wrestling, gymnastics, swimming and, in other days, bicycle racing, cricket, football and baseball. It is no lack of appreciation of efforts by other organizations in this vicinity to say that without such support as the B. A. A. has offered these sports locally in the last 20 years they would have stumbled over more than one difficult obstacle.

Since its establishment in 1887, the Athletic Club, as its members commonly refer to it, has always maintained an active committee on athletics whose duty it is to devise ways and means of making article II. exemplify precisely what it says. Men interested in the development of sport in Boston have been placed on each succeeding committee, and it has come to be considered obligatory for each member to give a great deal of time and attention to his tasks. Thanks to such men as George Billings, chairman of the athletic committee; Charles H. Carter, George W. Beals and other well known members of the association, the burden has been carried intelligently.

Prior to the establishment of the association, indoor track meets in this neighborhood were great novelties. Amateur sparring bouts were

conducted haphazardly and without system and control. There was no Marathon racing. Interscholastic rowing was a thing unheard of. The city had no central body to whom persons interested in the promotion of sport could turn with assurance that something would be done. Innumerable athletic organizations existed for special purposes but had no common aim or understanding.

It was the late John Boyle O'Reilly, always an enthusiastic sportsman, who conceived the idea of an athletic association under the management and control of such men of influence and standing as would ensure a large practical encouragement to sport. With R. F. Clark the famous oarsman of the 50's and later police commissioner, Eugene D. Greenleaf, Thomas Nelson, F. W. Sargent, Dr. Maurice Richardson, Gen. R. H. Stevenson, Dr. Charles Harrington and F. V. Crocker, the project was discussed at some length and then placed before other friends.

Marathon running, interscholastic rowing hereabouts, indoor track meets and other soundly established branches of sport owe a great deal to a meeting which took place in the Parker House in January 1887. A subsequent meeting in the office of Mr. Clark resulted in the appointment of a committee of three to make a postal card canvass of men who might be interested in the formation of an athletic club. A few weeks later, a third meeting showed a prospective membership of 80 men. On this basis the club was formally organized. George B. Morrison, the present head of the association, George W. Beals, the secretary and George B. Billings, the head of the athletic committee, were all enthusiastic charter members.

In what respects the B. A. A. could carry out Article II. the program of activities soon showed. On Feb. 14, 1891, in conjunction with the First Regiment, distinctively indoor track games, after the manner of the New York A. C.—which indeed was the model for the Boston Athletic Association—were held in the armory. About 100 athletes competed. There was an attendance of several hundred spectators. The affair was a pronounced success. As a rule previous opportunities for runners and jumpers to compete indoors had been supplied mainly by exhibitions mixed in nature, having a little of running, a little of jumping, some wrestling, perhaps fencing, tug-of-war, rope climbing feats, bar work and other gymnastic features.

From the time when the Boston Athletic Association undertook to encourage sports hereabouts the programs of these indoor gatherings, with the exception of the tug-of-war, became track athletics. The gymnasium specialties were cut out. On the first card of events, in 1891, were the 40, 250 and 440 yard dashes, the 200 yard hurdles, 880 yard and mile runs, the high jump, pole vault, shot put and one mile walk.

The response to the introduction of distinctively track games was immediate among the athletes of the city. After 1892, the association decided to run the games without aid from any other organization. Athletes were notified that the meet would be held in Mechanics Hall and the entries poured in on the management. The figures of 1891 were doubled. To stimulate competition invitations were sent to some of the notable performers in New York and other centres of sports in the Middle states. In that year a special train was run from New York to Boston for the convenience of the visiting delegation.

The year 1892 marked the beginning of the long history of successful track games in Mechanics Hall. As a landmark in Boston track athletics that building stands without a rival. School boys and college men from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, are familiar with its hard floor and raised corners. No history of relay racing in this country can be complete without a long special chapter on the classic contests which have taken place over the 130-yard course in Mechanics Hall.

Relay racing, now one of the most popular features of all indoor track games anywhere in the country, got its start in New England in the Mechanics building. There, too, raised corners were first used in Boston. Harry Cornish, the first athletic manager at the B. A. A., inaugurated this feature. This was back in the early 90's. John Graham, Cornish's successor at the club, gave relay racing further impetus. Under the present management of George V. Brown these contests are as prominent as ever in the annual February gathering.

Next to the number of contestants in the annual indoor games, the B. A. A. prizes are the quality. All the colleges in New England, as well as many institutions in the Middle states, enter their most promising track athletes. Ever since the first games there have been special events. Conspicuous men are invited to participate in a 40-yard invitation, perhaps a 300-yard invitation, frequently a middle-distance race, in two and five mile runs, in the shot put and high jump. It is an honor for which every local school and college athlete strives to be asked to compete in these special contests.

Thanks to the handicap system which has been in force in B. A. A. games since their earliest days, novices and performers of undeveloped or mediocre ability are enabled to compete with fair chance of getting placed. No annual meet under the auspices of the athletic club takes place without surprises in a large proportion of the events. Some comparatively unknown man on the 7 or

9 foot mark wins the 40-yard dash; an equally unheard-of middle distance man captures the cup in the 600. Thus ambitious young athletes, placed on even terms at the outset with veteran competitors, are encouraged to take part. The handicap system alone is responsible for a large part of the present great interest in indoor and outdoor track athletics among schoolboys, college men and others.

The B. A. A. indoor games serve as a school of experience. For the last 20 years everybody who has ever amounted to anything in his track athletics has shed his first nervousness on the hardwood floor of Mechanics Hall. Easily 90 per cent. of the entry list in the B. A. A. games each year is made up of schoolboys. From the beginning, these games have been managed in such a satisfactory manner that they have served as the model for all other indoor games hereabouts. Naturally, their success and popularity have inspired other organizations to similar undertakings, and the schedule of events, the system of floor management, duties of officials and control of the athletics are invariably after the manner of the B. A. A. Information on how to run such affairs is cheerfully supplied by the members of the athletic committee and by the athletic manager of the association. Every possible encouragement is offered other organizations who plan to hold indoor games. The members of the athletic committee have always felt that it was part of their duty to co-operate with other organizations in the spread of manly athletics among the youth of this vicinity.

As a result of its own large experience in the management of track games, the B. A. A. has come to be looked on as a bureau of information. Innumerable school, college, Y. M. C. A. and other athletic organizations throughout New England and in many other localities of the country—have fallen into the habit of applying to the club for particulars and for officials. With the appointment of Harry Cornish as athletic manager at the

association, a man of marked executive ability and experience in the management of athletic games was brought to this vicinity. He had obtained his training at the New York and Chicago athletic clubs. He introduced ship-shape methods into the management of track games locally. After him came John Graham, whose position as an authority on track athletics and their management was unchallenged so long as he remained with the association. He succeeded Cornish in 1894, and was in turn succeeded in 1901 by Herbert Holton. Mr. Holton relinquished the post in 1905 to George V. Brown.

The relation of these men to track athletics in New England has been peculiarly important. By reason of their official connection they have had charge of the largest single sets of games hereabouts each year. On their shoulders has fallen the burden of arrangement for them and for the annual Marathon run. One has only to understand the opportunities which are thus provided for their training, Mr. Billings' connection with athletics in this vicinity goes back a score of years. He was one of the charter members of the association, and began serving as an official at the time it was held in 1887. It took place on a course between Stamford, Ct. and New York city. It was not a large effort and made little impression. But in the following spring the B. A. A. took up this specialty in long distance running. There were 15 entries and 12 men came to the tape. Many thousands of people stood along the roads from Ashland to Exeter street, hundreds followed the runners over the course, and everybody was very enthusiastic.

So successful have been these runs that they have never been dropped from the yearly program of events under the auspices of the athletic club. Last April there were 162 starters. It is estimated that nearly half a million persons saw the race. Marathons are now held in many places in America, and every 10-year-old schoolboy is familiar with the meaning of the expression, "Marathon race." Professional "Marathons" have within 12 months attracted attendances in the five figures, and at the present time this country is the mecca of all the best long distance runners in the world.

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letes on the ground. Among them were James E. Connolly of South Boston, now a well known author, and Robert Garrett, captain of the Princeton track team of 1896.

In competition with the European athletes the B. A. A. men won end of glory for their country. Tom Burke was first in the 100, 200 and 400 metre races. Corliss was first in the hurdles, Arthur Blake led in the Marathon for 15 miles. Sumner Paine beat the crack marksmen of the old countries. Hoyt won the pole vault. Ellery Clark captured the high and broad jumps and the shot. J. B. Connolly won the hop, step-and-jump. The visitors made a notable impression on their hosts and were entertained in magnificent fashion. Ever since that year the Boston Athletic Association has been very influential in American track athletics.

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are today. Here, again, the B. A. A. system of management has been generally copied by other organizations which have promoted runs. James E. Sullivan, president of the Amateur Athletic Union, is authority for the statement that the local "Marathon" is the classic "Marathon" of them all. Two years ago, when it became necessary to select a team of Marathon runners for the Olympic games at Shepherd's Bush the B. A. A. "Marathon" was selected as the official try-out.

When the B. A. A. first gave this subject its attention the schoolboys had no facilities. It was suggested that the athletic club provide the boys with a certain number of shells. The boys were also furnished with one of the best instructors of rowing in America, Richard Glendon, now coach at the United States Naval Academy.

In this movement for the encouragement of schoolboy rowing the B. A. A. has had the co-operation of the Union Boat Club. Without such patronage as these two organizations have given it would not have been possible for the public schools at least to take part in local aquatic. The sport is now firmly established and is growing more popular each year.

The efforts of the B. A. A. to live up to the letter of article II. of its constitution are summarized in their annual schedule. Here is a characteristic summary:
April 9—Annual boys' day in the tank; swimming exhibitions.
April 15—Annual boys' day in the gymnasium.
April 20—Annual American Marathon run from Ashland to Boston.
June 15—Members' track games at Technology Field, Brookline.
Oct. 22—Annual handicap and championship golf tournament.
Nov. 25—Annual Thanksgiving day shoot at Riverside.
Feb. 6—Indoor track games in Mechanics building.
Feb. 27—Interscholastic indoor track games in Mechanics building.
March 17—Exhibition by Harvard and Amherst gymnastic teams.
March 23—New England boxing championships in Mechanics building.

In addition to such a schedule as is given briefly above the club is represented at all the important outdoor track contests which are held hereabouts and in New York, has a series of sparring matches through the winter, has interclub and intercity squash, racquets and fencing matches, is represented in all local rowing regattas, has a big field day at Riverside and is actively represented by its members in innumerable contests in various branches of sport.

Some notable active athletes who are members of the club are: Ernest Nelson, probably the fastest sprinter in America today, and regarded as a coming record holder in the 100-yard dash; N. J. Sherman, the Dartmouth sprinter; Joseph Eallard, the junior and senior champion mile runner; Herbert W. Gidney, a scratch man in all high jumping contests; E. K. Merrifew, the quarter-mile; Victor P. Kennard of Harvard-Yale football fame; H. P. Lawless, the interscholastic champion mile runner; Robert U. Leavitt of Olympic fame in hurdlings; W. W. Coe, the shot putter; Carl Gram, Loring Young, H. K. Fesyear, H. W. Kelley, Frank R. Marceau, W. J. Bingham, W. C. Prout, F. P. Bradley, William J. Bradley, W. M. Rand and Laurence Dodge, former Harvard track team captains, and a score or more of other conspicuous college athletes, of the last half-dozen years.

Although the Athletic Club is one of the leading social clubs of Boston, it has never permitted article II. of its constitution to assume secondary importance. Its membership is constantly recruited among the best known athletes of this vicinity and among men especially prominent in the advocacy of athletics, and more and more, as local sports have become complicated, followers of athletics have come to expect the B. A. A. to act as sponsor for athletic undertakings or to take the initiative in introducing young men to enjoyable athletic competitions.

One is apt to be swayed by his Friendship and His Enmities. A person should always make up his mind more carefully upon a matter in which an enemy is interested than where the personal element is no part of it. Unless he does this he will be apt to think his enemy is wrong. His prejudice then, rather than his judgment, will rule. And the case is the same if a friend is interested. That one fact may control one's judgment. It is ordinary experience for a man to take sides with his friend, and it is often done without considering whether he is right or not, in which case a man regards friendship as stronger than truth.

Friendship is the most beautiful fact in human experience, and to say "he is my friend" is saying a great deal more to say "he is right," and stand by him for that, than solely for friendship's sake. This does not make friendship cold-hearted. As Cassius said to Brutus: "A friend will bear a friend's infirmities," and even those infirmities out of which faults grow, but not the faults.

But our great concern should be in dealing with those whom we do not like, lest our opinion is swayed by prejudice or malice. Truth should be the arbiter in all cases. There is nothing so fine in a man's character as frankness to a friend or enemy. Such a trait always proves its high merit, by the sense of pleasure it gives one when it is exercised. One of the best things to make a man think is to be frank with him; if he is right, to say so; if he is wrong, to say so, whether he is a friend or enemy. And this, not in any controversial spirit, but simply as the expression of one's good will which is always in order.—Ohio State Journal