

# Junk store bargain buy adds to Hanlon history

VICTORIA, B.C. (CP) — A 50-cent book, purchased in a dusty junk shop here, may contain the only full account of Ned Hanlon's first international victory as a world-class oarsman.

Hanlon's feats during his four years as world champion are well known, but only scant mention had been made of his victory in the single sculls at the Grand International Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876.

That was four years before Hanlon, a Toronto oarsman, won the world title in 1880 over a 4½-mile course and defended it successfully six times before losing it in 1884 in Australia.

Rowing in Canada has become synonymous with the name of Hanlon, who lost only six times in 350 races and is credited with inventing the sliding seat before his death in 1908.

## KNOWN AS NED

Most Canadians know him as Ned Hanlan, for whom Hanlan's Point on Toronto Island was named, but Hanlon was the correct spelling of the family name.

Hanlon's career really began at the Philadelphia exhibition, and his feat has been faithfully recorded in the 874-page book, part of whose title is *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, published in

1876. The rest of the title by author James D. McCabe takes up most of a page.

Hanlon wasn't the only Canadian to win honors at the exhibition where one Richard J. Gatling of Hartford, Conn., displayed his new invention known as the Gatling rapid-fire gun. Runner-up in the single sculls was Alex Brayley of Saint John, N.B.

And, although the writer confuses the issue by referring to the Toronto oarsman only as T. Hanlon throughout, his first name was Edward and he may then have been known as Ted, the facts bear it out as Ned Hanlon's first international victory.

The Torontonians were never really headed during the three days of international rowing competition at this early version of a world's fair. McCabe recorded that in the first heat Hanlon rowed against England's Henry Thomas and Harry Coulter of Pittsburgh.

"Hanlon ... at once pulled away, Coulter second and the Londoner well to the rear, and he drew out before the island was passed. The Canadian was far ahead before the mile post was reached. ... Coulter appeared to have no vim, and was apparently making no extra exertion to win the race."

Hanlon covered the three-mile distance in 21:34, Coulter in 22:24.

In the second heat, Brayley came in alone in 22:26½ after his two opponents drew out McCabe's term for packing up.

On the second day, Hanlon recorded 21:54½ in beating two American opponents while Brayley, with 22:06½, defeated Ellis Ward of New York in a two-man contest.

Hanlon's closest competitor, Fred Plaisted of New York, "made a desperate spurt and closed up considerable," writes McCabe. "Right here was seen the difference between the two men as Hanlon for the first time in the race set himself to work, and with the most consummate ease drew away from Plaisted as if he had been a plaything. ...

## ONE OF THE BEST

In the other race there was a close battle between the Canadian and the New Yorker, but "Brayley was much the stronger man and best oarsman of the two, and crossed the line 17 seconds ahead of the once-famous oarsman of Cornwall-on-the-Hudson."



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That made for an all-Canadian final in the single sculls.

"There is but little to say about this race, except that Hanlon, who has proved himself to be one of the best single scullers in America, won from the start from Brayley. The latter pulled a most plucky stern chase, but he is evidently not the equal of his younger and more scienced opponent."

Hanlon's time in the final was the best of the meet—21:09, compared with Brayley's excellent time of 21:16¾.

**The publication referred to,  
*The Illustrated History of  
The Centennial Exhibition*  
is available on used-book  
websites, both as original  
first editions or as current  
replica editions.**

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