

## *The Boston Marathon: Images of Sports*

BY RICHARD A. JOHNSON & ROBERT HAMILTON JOHNSON

Arcadia Publishing has published some 5000 extremely localized books (all in the \$20 range for a trade paperback) across the country. Your local area probably has one or two or three of them. They are heavy on vintage photographs and captions and light on copy. They have now expanded into sports and their collection of Boston Marathon photos is a treasure trove of black & white photos going back to the beginning of the race and coming up to 2008. The book is divided into five eras: 1890s to 1930, 1930 to 1950, 1950 to 1970, 1970 to 1990, and 1990 to 2008.

The late John J. Kelley does an Introduction for the first edition, and it is classic 'Kel': warm molasses prose and a memory for detail like a spurned wife.

From the very first photo on page 11 of the Boston Athletic Association's 1896 Olympic team through to the end, the book is overflowing with photos worth studying twice. Especially those from the more ancient days.

A point of trivia: Did you know that Ronald MacDonald won the second (1898) Boston Marathon. And no, he wasn't dressed like a clown.

If you are into the swank running clothing of today, you'll have to compare them to what Sam Mellor was wearing (page 13) when he won the race in 1902. Check out the spiffy cop standing behind him; nice helmet.

One of my favorite early Boston winners (1921) was Frank Zuna (page 21), who seven-time Boston winner Clarence DeMar referred to as a "bohemian." Zuna served under General "Black Jack" Pershing in both Mexico and France.

Paul deBruyn, a German working shoveling coal into a furnace at a New York City hotel, wanted a beer after he crossed the finish line (page 33) in 1932, but America was still in the middle of Prohibition and he had to settle for a ginger ale. He would later run in the Olympics for Germany in 1932 and 1936; he eventually became an American citizen and served in the Navy during World War II where he was wounded badly enough that he was unable to resume his running career after the war.

Of course there are plenty of photos of John A. Kelley (one of him playing the piano and singing with his wife and sisters; page 41), Clarence DeMar, and Tarzan Brown.

Another of our favorites was four-time winner Gerard Cote (page 42), a Canadian who liked to smoke a cigar and drink some hard stuff after a Boston victory, and who once gave a post-race interview to the press while he sat in a bathtub smoking a stogie and drinking whiskey from the bottle

If you've explored the history of the sport closely, you've seen most of the images in this book, but even for the avid historian, there are a few that you probably have not seen before. But those, combined with the ones with which you are familiar, bring back warm, fuzzy memories of the long-gone days when long distance running was simple, unencumbered, and romantic—and likely to rub your thighs raw, give you bagel-sized blisters, and make you ask just what the hell you were doing to yourself...