



Charles Ingraham Gorman

"Canada's Boy"



H.F. 980.6-3 : skate, speed, 1927 C - leather; metal, steel, nickel plated; fibre, felt - Ht:22 x L:37 x W:9 x cm

Inscription

Description

Black and brown leather boots, lined with felt, 30 eyelets per boot, black laces affixed to 37 cm blades

Narrative

Belonged to Charles Gorman, "The Winged Wonder", when he set his world records in the 220 meter 440 meter speed skating finals.

This statement can be found on all records pertaining to these skates but there is no source provided for the provenance. Presume it was stated, or accompanied the skates, when sold by Tim Isaac Auctions in 1980. The statement also indicates that Gorman owned the skates but not that these were, necessarily, the skates worn when the two records were set. Also, some question around use of meters as most races of this era, especially those staged in the United States, were measured in yards or miles and not in meters.

In an attempt to establish the exact year that these skates were in Gorman's possession, regardless of when/if they were worn during competition, records pertaining to Gorman were consulted. There seems to be no definitive summary of Gorman's career: all of the events in which he competed, his placing in same nor a summary of the world records times set.

While he did set a world record in the 440 (1924) no documentation can be found which supports the claim that he set a world record in the 220 at any time. It is possible that the above statement refers to the event in 1925 where he tied (not set) the indoor record (not necessarily the world record) for the 440 and won the 220 (but not setting a world record in so doing).

1921 tied world record of 37.6 seconds for the 440 at the International Outdoor Championship in Lake Placid, New York

1924 set world record of 36.6 seconds for the 440 at the U.S. National Outdoor Championship in Saranac Lake, New York

1925 tied the indoor record for the 440 and won the 220 at the U.S. National (Indoor) Championship in Pittsburgh

drawn from "The Legend of Lily Lake" by Nathan Dreskin and appearing in the February 1976 issue of The Reader's Digest

June 2006 - An in-depth review of the written records pertaining to Charles Gorman's career was undertaken by Martin Kaye. His research indicates that these skates, likely, date to @1927



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if the information provided during their sale is in anyway accurate. This may be in question as well because Charlie set a 440 yard (not meter) record in 1927 (Lake Sarnac) BUT only tied - not set - the 220 yard (not meter) record at Lake Placid. For this reason, the year 1927 has been linked to these skates, at this time.

K. Ross, Curator/Exhibits Director

Manufacturer's name: Johnsen vs. Johnson

The original records indicate only "Alfred's Ice King" in association with the identity of the manufacturer. It is quite apparent that the name refers to a particular make of skate produced by a company as opposed to the company's name. Research uncovered an article from the Spring Edition of the History Bulletin, published by the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick (Vol. XIII, No.1) concerning the Lester Bridges Collection. The cover of the this issue features a b/w photograph of a trophy, with the caption: "The Alfred Johnsen Skate Co. Trophy." The forward, by Lloyd Muir, opens: "The picture on the cover of this Bulletin is of the Chicago-based Alfred Johnsen Skate Co. Trophy won by Charles I. Gorman for the speed-skating Maritime Championship of 1921 and 1922."

Hoping to learn more about the history of the company and, ideally, the various types of skates produced, a search of the web was undertaken using various terms. The only "hit" was found in the on-line Encyclopedia of Chicago, under Skating, Ice: ". . . home to three major skate manufacturers: F.W. Planert & Sons, Nes (? - truncated) Johnson Mfg. Co., and Alfred Johnson Skate Company." There is little doubt that Johnsen and Johnson are the same company but the question remains as to the correct spelling of the manufacture's name.