

Primary Source: First Modern Olympic Games

from Boston Daily Advertiser, March 24, 1896

This newspaper article from the Boston Daily Advertiser, March 24, 1896 tells of the first modern Olympic Games which were held in Athens, Greece on April 6, 1896.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The departure of eight American athletes for the Olympic games is a notable event in American Athletics. Of the eight American representatives four, from the Boston Athletic Association, will represent American athletic clubs while four, from Princeton, will represent in a way the development of intercollegiate athletics in this country. It is probable that the Americans will bring back with them some prizes, to show what American pluck and skill and endurance can accomplish.

The revival of the Olympic games, after an interval of so many centuries, is due to a movement which began in 1894, at an international congress of athletic organizations, that congress being held in Paris under the auspices of the "Union of French Athletic Sports." At the international congress the decision was made to limit all contests to amateur events, and if care is taken to exclude every element of professionalism in the games, there should be a number of new and noteworthy amateur records resultant.

The Greek people have taken hold of the movement enthusiastically; and while the modern Olympic games will naturally recognize the athletic rules and standards now in force, rather than those of ancient times, an effort will be made to copy many features of the old Grecian games. Thus, the old stadium at Athens has been restored at a heavy cost and is to be used in its original dimensions, and it is there that most of the track events will be held: the bicycle races and the long distance run being naturally assigned to a longer course.

Probably one of the most interesting events of the games will be the long-distance run from Marathon to Athens; but there will also be all kinds of athletic sports, gymnastics, rifle shooting, and water events, from swimming races and "water football" to yachting and rowing races. Even such modern things as bicycle races, tennis, cricket and golf matches will be held, and if the present revival of the games proves financially successful, it may be that the records of the new Olympic Games will surpass those of the ancient days.

Questions

1. According to the article, how many Americans participated in the 1896 Olympic Games?
2. Name a sport in the 1896 Olympics that is still a sport in the most recent games.
3. Name a sport in the 1896 Olympics that is not a sport in the most recent games.
4. What does *pluck* mean here: "to show what American pluck and skill and endurance can accomplish"?