



Skating Through Time

by Lexie Schroeder Kobb



George Philips, *New Year's Day at Diamond Lake (1938)* –In center with 'B' on sweater for Beiger School. [2013-12(q)/11]

During the months of January and February, I spend a little extra time in contemplation. My mind wanders to the people that came before me. The hardworking Midwesterners that raised families here in Northern Indiana inspire my imagination and I wonder how they chose to spend their leisure time on such cold winter days. I think about a family gathered around the hearth with hand-work and books, swapping stories to pass the time on a long winter night. Or maybe they were busy working around the kitchen stove and talking about recipes and plans for gardens in the coming year - as I enjoy doing with my family today.

But on even the coldest of days, I am inspired by the sunshine to head outdoors. This got me thinking about some of the strange leisure

activities we enjoy in the open air this time of year. We grab flat pieces of plastic or air filled tubes and hurl ourselves down hills at great speed. We use our excessive snow to build forts, men and angels. And strangest of all, we wear shoes with metal blades attached to the bottom of our feet in order to glide gracefully along frozen ponds and rinks.

If you are wondering how this odd activity of skating on ice came about, you can thank the ancestors from our very distant past! The earliest form of ice skating most likely began in southern Finland. The exact date is unknown but it is believed to have been around 5,000 years ago.

The oldest pair of skates found, date back to about 3000 B.C. They were discovered at the bottom of

a lake in Switzerland. The skates look different from what we think of today. They are made from the sharpened and flattened leg bones of large animals. Holes were bored at each end of the bone. Leather straps were then threaded through these holes and used to tie the skates onto the wearer's foot. The earliest skaters most likely took up the activity out of necessity. Skating provided a quick means of transportation during those long winters with short hours of sunlight, allowing the skater to cover more territory.

Interestingly, these early skaters originally glided on top of the ice rather than skating on it. This would involve the skater pushing themselves across the surface of the ice with a sharpened pole. The skating motion that we are familiar with today emerged when skate construction began to utilize steel blades with sharpened edges. Adding edges to ice skates is believed to have been invented by the Dutch in the 13th or 14th century. The construction of ice-skates today has remained largely the same since this time.

A famed incident involving the use of ice skates occurred in 1572 during a battle in Amsterdam. The Spanish attacked some Dutch ships frozen in the ice of the canal. The Hollanders surprised the more powerful Spaniards by donning ice skates for combat. This was such a successful maneuver that they were able to push the Spaniards back and ice skating became a tactical skill of repute among the Spanish.

Museum Calendar

September 2014 – May 2015

Fire Fighting, Mishawaka

See a collection of objects related to Mishawaka's fire fighting history, including an 1865 hand-pulled chemical fire truck, fire extinguisher from the 1909, firefighter's uniform from 1918 and photos of our local firefighters at work from 1868 through today.

November 25, 2014 – May, 2015

St. Joseph County Learning: A Portrait of Students from the Late 1800's to the Early 1900's

The exhibit features photographs from the Museum's collection of local area students.

March 31, 2015

Clothing Store Reopening

After 2 years, hundreds of volunteer hours and the financial support of our Museum Artifacts and a grant from the Mishawaka Business Association, the Museum's Clothing Store will reopen!

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Give Local St. Joseph County Day

Support HLCM with a donation that will take on a greater impact through a match coordinated by the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County.

Coming soon...

An exhibit featuring famous Mishawakans! From sports and film stars to famous inventors and civic leaders, learn about these Mishawaka citizens that have taken the national stage and left an indelible legacy.

Did you know

The 200th Anniversary of Indiana's statehood is approaching in 2016! Stay tuned in for more information to come.

It is believed that ice skating may have been brought to England from the Netherlands, where James II was briefly exiled in the 17th century. When he returned to England, the sport was introduced to the British aristocracy, and was soon enjoyed by people from all walks of life.

In 1848, America added its mark to skate technology with the invention of the first all steel clamp for skates by E. V. Bushnell of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This strapless skate clipped directly to the boot and revolutionized ice skating because skaters could then twist, turn, spin and leap without losing their ice skate blades.

Ice skating took on a new face in Canada in the 1800's. While the game's origins lie elsewhere, Montreal was at the center of the development of the sport of contemporary ice hockey. On March 3, 1875, the first organized indoor game was played at Montreal's Victoria Skating Rink between two nine-player teams. Instead of a ball or bung, the game featured a new game object that was described as a "flat circular piece of wood." This design was adopted to keep the object in the

rink and in so doing, protect spectators. This was the design that would lead to the modern ice hockey puck.

In 1865, Jackson Haines, a famous American skater, developed the two plate all metal blade. The blade was attached directly to Haines' boots. The skater became famous for his new dance moves, jumps and spins. Haines added the first toe pick to skates in the 1870's, making toe pick jumps possible and taking figure skating into a new age.

Ice has always played an important role in the Olympic Games and interest in ice sports only seems to have grown with time. In 1908, figure skating was made an official Olympic sport. Men's ice hockey has been an Olympic sport since 1920. Men's speed skating became an Olympic sport during the first Winter Games in 1924. Most recently, ice dancing became an Olympic sport in 1976.

As you consider your winter recreational options, you might spare a thought for those ingenious people that came before us who made the leisure activity of gliding gracefully (or falling often) on ice possible today.



Marion Bullock in Buffalo, NY (1913) – In center with gray sweater. [2000-22/31]

Museum Mystery Object



HLCM's 3rd grade tour can include a critical thinking portion which challenges students to think about how technology has changed and what life was like before electricity. One mystery object included during the winter is shown in the image (left). The class is asked what they think this object was used for. The guesses range from wildly creative to incredibly insightful. We've heard answers like: lantern, mouse trap, cake tin, bird cage and many more. The answer to this mysterious ques-

tion is 'a foot warmer!' A small door swings open on hinges at the front. Inside is a tin cup that was designed to be filled with hot coals, then replaced in the warmer. The person using the warmer sits and places their feet on top of the warmer letting the heat rise and comfort cold feet. Would you have guessed this object is something different? You can explore more mystery objects of pre-electric technology on display in the Museum's General Store.

More Museum Mystery Objects

Take a guess. What these objects be used for? Check your answers at the bottom of the page by turning this page upside-down.

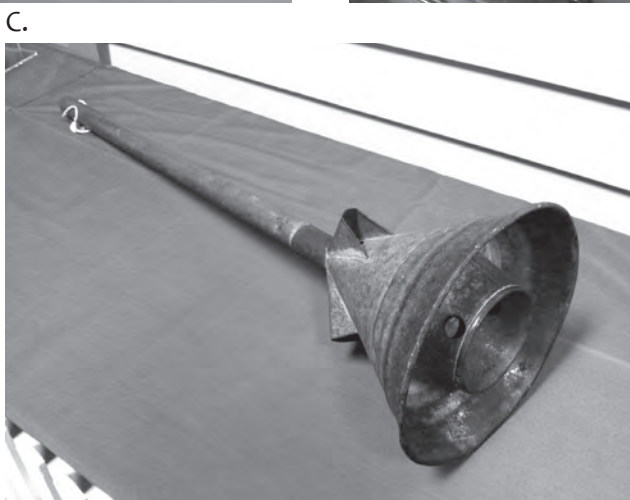


MAY 5, 2015
GIVE LOCAL

St. Joseph County

Please support HLCM on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 on Give Local St. Joseph County Day! This is a unique opportunity to increase your gift's impact through a match coordinated by the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County. Gifts donated on this day will be used to support HLCM's endowment fund and the creation of a new Museum Education Kit about the upcoming 200th anniversary of Indiana's Statehood. The Museum Education Kit will provide supplemental learning tools to teachers and students by traveling to classrooms in the St. Joseph County area.

Past Museum Education Kits have contained lesson plans, books, worksheets, dvds, cds, games, puzzles and other hands-on learning material that can be used in the classroom to support learning on a variety of subjects. We are excited to offer a new learning tool to our community and your donation on May 5th will make it possible!



A. Zoetrope – early moving picture technology B. Adding Machine – a calculator of sorts C. Washing Plunger – used to wash clothes

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Museum hours:

Tues. – Fri. 9 AM to noon & 1 PM to 4 PM,
(closed whenever school is not in session in SCM)

Admission charges: \$1.00 – Children ages 2 – 4
\$2.00 – Seniors ages 62+ & students ages 5 – 17
\$3.00 – Adults
Free Admission for Museum Members



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your support!**



*The mission of the Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum
is to provide a collection of unique artifacts that encourages families to
explore, learn, and enjoy the history of the Mishawaka area.*

