

Rolling Thru Time
Newsletter

The National Museum of Roller Skating



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Important Museum Fundraiser in May

The Lincoln Community Foundation will give away \$500,000 this year to Lincoln charities, including the National Museum of Roller Skating. Each entity receives a proportional share of money based on the amount of financial support each organization receives from its supporters. This is the best way to make the most out of your donation dollar. Go to www.givetolincoln.com and follow the prompts and type "National Museum of Roller Skating" in the "Find a nonprofit" search bar.

LCF is encouraging everyone this year to donate online. You may give between May 1 and May 28 online. If you prefer to send a check, address it to Lincoln Community Foundation, and put the National Museum of Roller Skating in the memo line. It must be postmarked by May 23 to Lincoln Community Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall S, Lincoln, NE 68508.

This year anyone donating \$35 or more will also receive the benefit of museum membership.

Memorial Donations

For donations made in memorial or in recognition of a specific person, please email that information to pyoung@rollerskatingmuseum.org, so we can be certain your thoughtfulness is properly acknowledged. Memorial donations will be recognized in the museum's newsletter. We will need an email or physical address where we can send notification to the family.

The skating industry's donations are critical to funding the operations of the museum. Thank you for your support.

Museum's Annual Meeting, Raffle

The RSA's national convention has been postponed to August 24-27. This has delayed the raffle until then, but not the annual meeting of the museum trustees. It is still scheduled for Sunday, April 26, but will take place by teleconference.

In Memoriam: Frank Cernik



Frank Cernik, former museum trustee, grew his business from running a traveling tent rink in 1946, to multiple rink ownerships, culminating in SkateDaze of Omaha, Nebraska. It was rated one of the top ten rinks in the U.S. by USA Today. In 2013 he matched up to 100 raffle tickets purchased during the RSA convention's President's Dinner. The tickets sold because of his generosity made that year's fundraiser one of the largest ever.

- * Rink Operator of the Year 1989
- * RSA Life Membership 1990
- * RSA Hall of Fame in 2005

To read more about Frank and his contributions to the industry, [CLICK HERE](#)

[HERE](#)

*Left:
Marge and Jim Wall*

*Right:
Frank and Phyllis Cernik*



This photo, perhaps of Frank Cernik's first tent rink, would nevertheless be similar to it.



PNW Pioneer Receives Recognition

Weston Betts, who joined the RSROA in 1937, was honored along with his descendants at a recent city ceremony along the boardwalk in Redondo Beach, near Tacoma, WA. Betts, an early RSROA board member, was one of the first four Life Members of the RSROA in 1951. His descendants who are still in the roller-skating business consists of the Pattison, Englund, Acklus and King families.

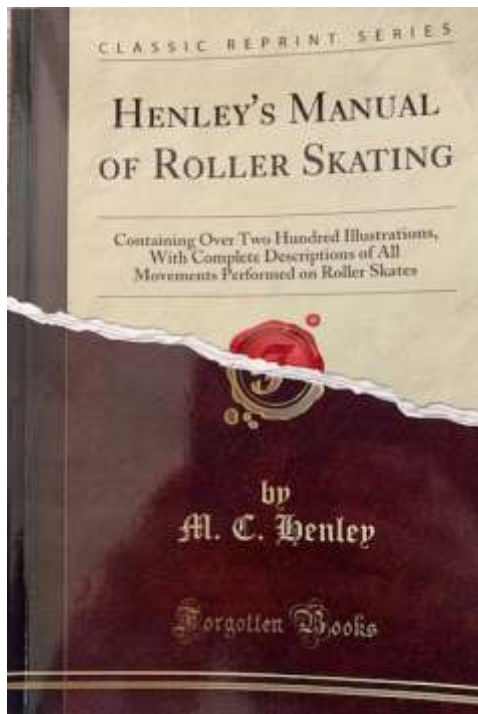




Weston Betts converted this Redondo Beach building into a roller skating rink in 1936. It was one of the premier roller skating rinks in the Pacific Northwest and the entire country at the time. It burned down in 1951. For more about this historic roller skating family, [CLICK HERE](#).

Henley's Manual of Roller Skating: 1885

Review by Alan Bacon



Forgotten Books, a British company that reproduces out-of-print historical works, reprinted Henley's 1885 manual, which greatly adds to the available writings on the early history of roller skating.

M.C. Henley (1856-1927) was one of the most important early manufacturers of roller skates after James Plimpton. He not only produced roller skates in Richmond, Indiana, but also bicycles and other products. In his manual he claimed his company was the largest manufacturer of roller skates in the world. His factory produced "2,000 pairs of Rink Skates, and 500 pairs of Club Skates per day, and [gave] employment to 300 skilled and efficient workmen." For more information of his biography, [CLICK HERE](#)

Much of the 159-page manual deals with skating moves and technique: The Roll, The Compound Curve, The Lap-Foot, etc. This review will focus on the endorsement he cited from physicians and clergy on the benefits of roller skating. In the writing style and sensibilities of the late 1800s, the manual offers a fascinating insight into the early history of roller skating in the height of its first boom.

Concerning roller skating mid-1880s popularity, Henley said: "Within the last few years roller skating has taken such a popular hold upon the people of this country that now there is a skating rink in every city and town, and every village of a few hundred inhabitants."

Concerning its health value, Henley wrote: "But comparing skating on even terms with other amusements, we are of the opinion that it is superior to all of them, roller skating especially."



This is a Henley "Improved" roller skate of 1883 with its characteristic high curve arch. This skate is represented in the museum's logo. It can be found in the NMRS book *The First Fifty Years: American Roller Skates 1860-1910* which can be purchased from the museum. This 1983 book with 50 photos of historic skates that are in the museum's collection, was the first book the museum published.

This is an early Henley skate from 1881. It was the first to use a screw to adjust the tension of the truck. This photo is of a pair I bought a few weeks ago when researching this story. I googled Henley to find background information on the man, and up popped an eBay ad for the wood skate. It's my first 1880's skate for my rink's showcase of historical skates.

Henley quoted physicians who gave very specific descriptions of the health benefits of skating. They claimed that skating is the best form of exercise and amusement, with amusement being important to one's health.

Henley quoted some physicians: Campe, "I know not of a more pleasant or beneficial exercise, and every child, boy or girl, ought to learn it"; Salman, "It exercises such pleasure in the mind of the performer, that I should recommend it as the most efficacious remedy to the misanthrope and hypochondriac"; an unnamed physician, "Nothing has ever taken with our best citizens as roller skating . . ." ; and Dr. T. L. Brown from an address in 1885 at the forty-second anniversary of the American Institute of Homoeopathy, Brown commented on the value of roller skating to him personally: "I have never seen a year of as good nutrition and sound sleep as the past year, under the influence of roller skating."

Henley cited specific indicators of skating's health benefits: "There is no extraordinary strain on any one muscle . . . Skating sends the blood to the surface of the body in healthy circulation . . . and Skating induces a graceful carriage, expands the chest; teaches self-reliance."

Besides Henley quoting physicians, he also quoted the clergy about the moral benefits of roller skating. Under a chapter subtitle *Moral View of the Skating Rink*, it said of traveling men: " (they) now know where to go in a strange city without going to a saloon or billiard hall . . . There are instances known where the rinks have injured the saloon business so that the saloon keepers want the rinks taxed."

Henley quoted Bishop McTyeire from a letter to the *Christian Advocate*. "Allow me to commend to you and your readers, roller skating. It can and should substitute dancing as an exercise and amusement for the young people of both sexes. . . I wish there was a skating rink in every village and boarding school."

In chapter X, under the title *A Prominent Pastor's Opinion of Roller Skating*, Henley quoted Rev. John L. Scudder, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Minneapolis. "Instead of denouncing the roller rinks, I take pleasure in stating that I consider them a means of grace. . . In my judgment a minister can find no

better preparation for his Sunday work than to take his wife and children to the rink on Saturday night . . . There are some amusements upon which the devil has not as yet placed his poisonous fingers, and roller skating is one of them.”

Henley’s last chapter summed up the optimism he displayed about roller skating. “The past year has been a very eventful one in the history of Roller Skating. This attractive, healthful, and innocent recreation has taken such a firm and permanent hold on the American people that is now fully recognized and established as the great National Amusement.”

Rules and Regulations for Roller Rinks

(3 of 18 Henley listed)

*Skating begins with one stroke of the gong, and ceases at two strokes of the Gong

*Gentlemen will not soil the floor with tobacco

* . . . while skating in couples should be practiced as much as possible by all sufficiently advanced, as there is no way in which a lady and gentleman can make so graceful and attractive an appearance



STAY CONNECTED

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The National Museum of Roller Skating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Lincoln, Nebraska. It is the only dedicated roller skating museum in the world. We are committed to the preservation of the

history of roller skating. With over 50 displays cases, the museum educates the public on all aspects of roller skating, which dates back to the first patented skate from 1819.

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