

Rolling Through Time

Official Newsletter of:

The National Museum of Roller Skating

4730 South Street, Lincoln, NE 68506

(402) 483-7551 ex. 16

 @rollersk8museum

Prepared by Peggy Young

Bi-Monthly

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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 display cases, the museum educates the public on all aspects of roller skating, which dates back to the first patented skate from 1819.

Museum Hours of Operation: Open 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday-Friday - closed Holidays. Group tours can be scheduled by calling 402) 483-7551, ext. 16

Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) – In the Beginning

Our last Museum newsletter included the formation of the RSROA, which took place at a restaurant in 1937, following the first National Speed Roller Skating Championships at the Arena Gardens Roller Skating Rink in Detroit, Michigan. The organization was formed by 17 rink owners to promote roller skating business and sport in America.



It included brief reports on the early history of Fred Martin, who was elected as the first RSROA Secretary-Treasurer, and Victor J. Brown, who was elected as the first RSROA President. The entire list of 17 founders of the RSROA follows:

Frank Bacon, Philadelphia, PA

Victor Brown, Newark, NJ

William H. Carpenter, Providence, RI

Alfred M. Dexter, Niagara Falls, New York

Robert Fisher, Traverse City, MI

Donald Groesser, Traverse City, MI

Harold F. Jennison, Bay City, MI

Alfred W. Kish, Toledo, OH

Charles McCormack, Chicago, IL

Jules Mahl, Chicago, IL

Fred A. Martin, Detroit, MI
Rodney R. Peters, St. Louis, MO
Jonathon Riggle, Pontiac, MI
William F. Sefferino, Cincinnati, OH
Jack Shuman, Huron, OH
Earl Van Horn, Mineola, NY
Earl J. Von Hagen, Columbus, OH

The competitive experiences and the stories of their lives are interesting to acknowledge.

Frank Bacon of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Information taken from the "Skater's History on Ice and Roller Skating", authorized by the Western Skating Association in Chicago, published in 1916 and "The History of Roller Skating" by James Turner in collaboration with Michael Zaidman.

Noted as one of the fastest professional roller skater in the country. He won the "Billboard" medal at Coney Island, New York in 1908, defeating a large field of fast skaters. He competed in all the noted long and short distance races and championships held during the past 10 years (taken from info printed in 1916) and is one of the greatest 24-hour skaters in the business.



In particular, it is interesting that Fred Martin and Frank Bacon teamed up in March of 1915 and entered the 24 hour race at the Convention Hall Rink in Washington D.C. They placed second to the World Champion Team of Roland Cioni and Arthur Eglington. Martin and Bacon again placed second to Cioni and Eglington in the 100 Mile American Derby that year.

In the spring of 1916 Bacon took to exhibition dancing on roller skates and "put up a wonderful act". His first engagement was for 20 weeks at the

Griswold Café, Detroit, Michigan. In 1916 he was recognized as an expert skate man who knew the rink business from start to finish.



EARL VAN HORN

**Earl Inez Van Horn.
Mineola, New York**

Earl was born in 1897, and as far back as he could recall he was a skater. At six he was a proficient performer. At seven he was giving free style exhibitions at the old Exposition Rink in his native city of Portland,

Oregon. An older brother of Earl's was a manager of a rink, so young Earl had the opportunity to practice frequently. When he was thirteen, Van Horn teamed with Clarence Ammer. From then until World War I, they played rinks and theaters, and were generally recognized as a first class Vaudeville roller skating duo. The first World War broke up the team. Both members went together to the enlistment center. Ammer was accepted and Van Horn was rejected because of flat feet.



MRS. EARL VAN HORN

Earl went on to manage the Oaks Rink, in Portland, where a young 16 year old girl went roller skating for the first time. In those days a girl under 18 had to be escorted to any public place at night, and this was a special night because it was a Halloween costume party. That girl, Inez Sibley, won the first place award

during the rink's Halloween costume party, and became a regular at the rink. Earl met the young, beautiful Inez, and they were married within the year. That was in 1918 and a new team was born. Inez would share many years of his life and play the dual role of wife and business partner.

The years 1918 to 1934 were ones of great success for this talented team. Years of names in lights -- of

applause -- of spotlights. Earl and Inez played leading theaters in this country. They performed for two years with Leon Erroll in "Yours Truly", a Broadway musical comedy. They played the American and European night clubs. They toured



Canada, England, France, Germany, Sweden and other countries. They skated for the kings of England, Spain and Sweden. They performed before the Prince of Wales at a private party. They were applauded by the wealth at the fashionable Riviera resorts of Cannes, Nice and Deauxville.

They played New York City's famous Palace Theater 22 times, a record never approached by any other roller skating acts. They became the highest paid roller skating team in Vaudeville. Their act consisted of artistic, dance and novelty skating. They were considered great spinners. Several intricate techniques were developed including the swivel-neck spin and skating on top of a table eight feet in diameter, set four feet above the floor.

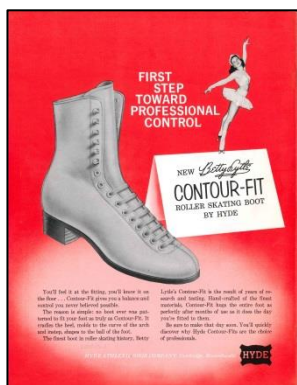
Once for servicemen on Governor's Island, in New York City's harbor, they gave a daring exhibition on a rail-less platform, thirty feet above the swirling waters of New York's East River. They were featured in Pathe newsreels and shorts. They appeared in the first sound reel ever made in England.

During the early 1930's, they performed at rinks in the United States, usually staying for some time at each to coach skaters, to teach



organists the proper tempo for dance skating, and to institute a general reorganization program. Toward the end of their performing days, Betty Lytle was

part of the act. Betty went on to teach at Vic Brown's famous Dreamland Arena in Newark, New Jersey, and was the Hyde Roller Boots main logo, with its ad of her in a spread-eagle position.



On July 2 1934, Earl & Inez, together with Harry Bickmeyer, opened the Mineola Roller Rink in

Mineola, New York. They had pot-bellied stoves for heat, and only 43 people inside, four employees and 39 cash customers. Having once been a cattle exhibition barn, the building that housed the rink received several improvements over the years. In 1937 they enlarged the rink and redecorated everything. Some such improvements included a silver ceiling and walls covered in blue silk.



Mineola was the first rink to have a Hammond organ and Novachord installed and was the first to feature twin organs and a separate beginners' rink. Earl and Inez wanted to "clean up" the image of roller rinks. They wanted to bring the rink up from the level of the pool hall "hangout" and make it a place of recreation for adults and children. They organized the first dance and figure roller skating club in the country for the average skater. They made Mineola the home of dance skating, and started the dance skating craze which swept the country in the late 1930's.

By 1939, dance skating had caught a firm enough hold for Mineola to sponsor the first United States Dance Skating contest. In 1941 they produced the first roller skating carnival in New York's Madison Square Garden, and many in rink shows. Earl & Inez produced bumper crops of champions and professionals, such as Bill and Dot Opatrny, Betty Lytle, Eddie O'Neill, Cliff and Mildred Wilkins, Cliff and Mildred Neschke, Barbara Killip Gallagher and

many additional stars. They were generally credited with being the founders of skate dancing in this country. Earl manufactured the Liberty roller skate during the 1940's, and it was a top-seller. At one time the Mineola Rink had a paid membership of 7,000 members, with 60 individual clubs regarding the famous rink as home. At that time the Blue Laws for business open on Sundays were very strict, so Earl had regular patrons join the club, and it was run they ran as a private "club only" session on Sundays.



Shortly after World War II ended, Van and Inez were divorced, and he married Jean White, his champion figure skating pupil, who later became one of his rink professionals. Earl and Inez remained on friendly terms and Inez stayed on at Mineola to assist Earl with management of the rink. In October of 1959 he died, having been shot by his wife.

The rink was razed the following August to make way for construction of the new Nassau County courthouse, causing the rest of the Mineola legend to pass into history, but not be forgotten. Earl and Inez were inducted into the USARS Coaches Hall of Fame in 1994.

Inez remarried to a Mr. Paul Wepy. They lived in St. James Long Island, New York.

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Waldeck-Rollen laufen für Weltmeister!

Höchste
Schnelligkeit und
Griffigkeit

Waldeck

Maxi 60 ⌀

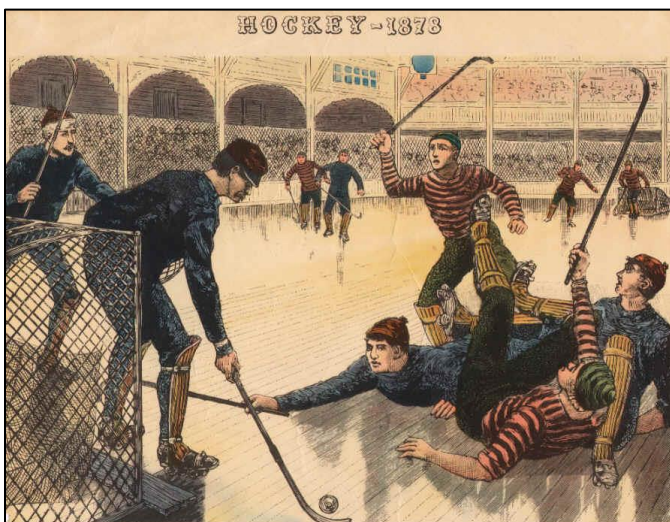
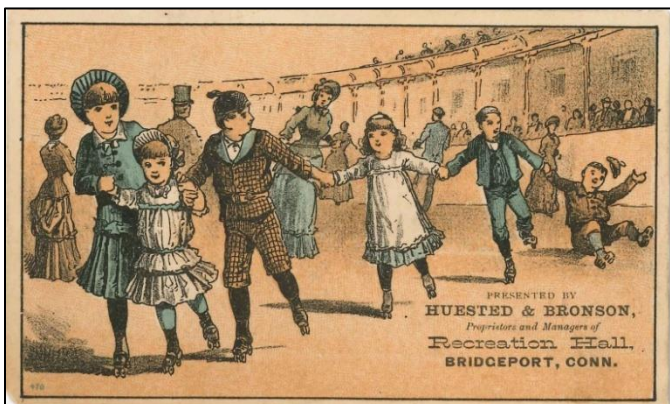
Midi 55 ⌀

3-fach
verlängerte
Haltbarkeit

Mini 51 ⌀

Karl Waldeck · Sportartikel · 46 Dortmund · Am Knappenberg 53

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