

Sports in Lancaster County History:

Rink Skating and Lawn Tennis

Edited by Frank W. Landis

Roller skating in rinks was quite “the thing” for youthful Lancaster Countians in the late nineteenth century. We think the sampling of articles in the local newspapers will provide a good look into the sport in Columbia.

The Metropolitan Roller Skating Rink Company will erect a ring in Columbia.

Intelligencer, 4 September 1884

Kramer and Paules, contractors, received the contract for building the Metropolitan Rink Association’s rink in Columbia, and commenced work this morning. It will be erected on the lot beyond Mr. A. Haldeman’s on South 6th Street, and will be opened on the 15th of October.

Intelligencer, 8 September 1884

Instead of using a brass band the Columbia Orchestra will probably be engaged to furnish music at the Columbia Skating Rink.

Intelligencer, 8 September 1884

The Columbia Skating Rink floor is larger than the Lancaster (rink). Taken as a whole it is said Columbia's Rink is the handsomest in the state. Work is now being done at night so it can be opened at the specified time—October 25.

Intelligencer, 15 October 1884

Fully 1200 persons attended the opening of the Columbia Rink, on Saturday evening. It was a most enjoyable affair. Expert skaters from Lancaster, Harrisburg and York were present, while with those from Columbia made the total number of persons skating at once 450. Professor Fred Norris of Toledo, Ohio, and an 8-year old Miss from Lancaster astonished their audiences with a wonderful exhibition of fancy skating. The order kept was not of the best, but the crowd was so large that the misdemeanor committee must be overlooked for this once. The Columbia Orchestra did its best—at least it looked as though it was—but could seldom be heard.

Intelligencer, 27 October 1884

Kreider and Wilson did not desert the Manheim Rink for want of attendance but they sold out to Mr. Charles Hahn of Manheim so they can place on their attention on the new rink which is to be opened in Columbia in Armory Hall. If the floor can be in readiness the new rink, to be known as the Columbia Skating Rink Association, managed and controlled by five Columbia gentlemen, will be opened next Saturday evening. Prof. Davis of Elmira, will be present and give an exhibition of fancy skating, while the music will be furnished by the Ironville Band.

Intelligencer, 20 November 1884

Metropolitan Rink was crowded on Saturday evening with between 600 and 700 persons being present, half of whom skated. The Columbia Band furnished music. The Columbia Rink opened Saturday evening to a fair-sized audience. Ironville has a small rink accomodating about a half dozen couples.

Intelligencer, 24 November 1884

The Metropolitan Rink has formed two polo clubs, one of which is captained by Byron Stape, the other by John Musser. The members are teaching daily and are becoming quite proficient in the use of their polo sticks. On the 19th instant a club composed of seven players picked from the two teams will visit York and play a match game with the York Club. A return game will be played in Columbia during the holidays.

Intelligencer, 9 December 1884

As was expected the fancy dress carnival was the event of the season in Columbia. The attendance was larger than on the opening night of the

rink when 1200 persons were present. It was a gorgeous sight presented to the audience as the beautifully and elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen whirled around the floor. Costumes of all kinds were in use. The manager offered two prizes: a pair of lady's skates and a season ticket for the fanciest man's costume. As the costumed skaters passed the judges in the grand march, led by Miss Edith Wike and Mr. John Simpson, it was the most beautiful march ever witnessed in Columbia. The lucky ones were Miss Wike and Mr. Atwood Irwin.

Intelligencer, 13 February 1885

The Columbia Athletic Association held a meeting at which time all arrangements for purchase of the Metropolitan Rink from the owner, Mr. M. S. Shuman, were completed. The Association will occupy the building at once.

New Era, 11 October 1888

The Columbia Athletic Association will meet in the Rink this evening. Its membership is now 130.

New Era, 17 October 1888

The old Metropolitan Rink on South 6th Street will be torn down, and the owners will use the materials in the construction of a row of frame houses near the wagon works.

New Era, 8 August 1889

A great improvement! Near the wagon works is a row of 12 houses, situated along Plane Street, and known as Rinktown. Several months ago the Metropolitan Skating Rink was purchased by some young men who made an effort to organize an athletic association. As this effort failed the owners of the building concluded to erect a row of houses out of the material, largely for the accomodation of the employees of the wagon works. The rink was soon torn down and from the (salvaged) material a row of 12 cottages have been constructed, presenting a very handsome appearance.

New Era, 10 March 1890

(The rink had been situated on South Sixth Street just below Locust Street. It was 75 feet by 150 feet in size. The 12 houses erected from its material are located at 800 to 822 Plane Street.)

Lawn Tennis, Anyone?

The sport of lawn tennis was "big" in the late nineteenth century in Lancaster County. From the following excerpts found in the local newspapers we can get a fairly good idea of how important this game was to

Lancaster Countians in the "good old days."

On Saturday afternoon, a game of lawn tennis lasting three hours was played on Mr. John Fendrich's grounds. The sides were D.B. Case of Marietta and Will Fendrich of Columbia who opposed Simon B. Cameron of Donegal Springs and Frank B. Hiestand of Marietta. Forty five games were played. The former gentlemen recorded 29 points; the latter 16.

Intelligencer, 9 October 1882

Contest at Lawn Tennis

On Saturday Mr. Will Fendrich of Columbia defeated Mr. Frank Marshall of Oxford College in England in a lively contested game of lawn tennis by a score of 6 to 5. Another match was played between Mr. Marshall and a lady companion, and Mr. Fendrich and a lady companion. The former represented England, and latter America. America won by a score of 6 to 5 after the most interesting game ever played in Columbia. The Columbia Lawn Tennis Club is jubilant over the victory of their members.

Columbia News, _____ 1884

A game of tennis was played yesterday between Hiestand and Rich of Marietta, and Russell and Stoner of Columbia. The visitors were victorious by a score of 7 to 5, 6 to 2.

Intelligencer, 13 October 1884

A match game of tennis was played on the grounds of the Columbia Tennis Club on Chestnut Street, on Tuesday evening. John S. Dean and Clarence D. Stoner of Columbia played against Harry Rich and George Hiestand of Marietta. The former won.

Daily New Era. 29 September 1888