Collection Corner: Ice Skates

Ice skating began in Scandinavia. The first skates were made from the bones of elk, oxen, or reindeer. Until the middle of the 19th century, the metal portion of the skate was attached to a footplate which fastened to the foot with leather straps. In 1850, E.W. Bushnell of Philadelphia, introduced the all-steel skate—replacing the wooden footplate.

Recreational ice skating has been popular on the canals of the Netherlands since the Middle Ages. Skating on frozen ponds was popular in England in the 17th century.
The development of refrigerated ice rinks transformed ice skating from a seasonal pastime to year-round entertainment. The first mechanically frozen rink, the Glaciarium, opened in London in 1876. The United States installed their first rink in the old Madison Square Garden of New York City in 1879.

Ice Skating has given rise to three distinctive sports: figure skating, speed skating and ice hockey. Figure skating involves the performance of various jumps, spins, and technical movements. Speed skating and short-track speed skating are both forms of racing on ice skates. Ice hockey is the best-known skating team sport. All three of these sports are part of the winter Olympics.

Have you ever been ice skating?
Where did you go ice skating? Was it difficult to learn?
If not, would you like to try ice skating one day?

Ice Skates from the Collection

These ice skates are part of the Carroll County Farm Museum's collection. They have been donated from members of the community. We rotate these ice skate pairs on display each year during our Holiday Tour.

Ice Skate Craft

1. Print out the ice skate template on page 4 of this document. Cardstock is preferred, but regular paper will work as well.
2. Use scissors to cut out the shoe portion and the blade portion of the ice skates.
3. Using markers, crayons, or paint color and decorate the shoe portion any way you would like. Ice skates were primarily brown, black, or white, but today they come in a variety of bright colors. Figure skaters even add designs to match their outfits.
4. Use a hole punch to punch the shoelace holes on the shoe portion. Wrap yarn or ribbon through the holes to look like laces and tie a bow at the top.
5. Color the skate portion gray or silver. Bonus: Instead of coloring the skate portion, use glue and silver glitter to make it sparkle.
6. Glue the shoe portion to the top of the skate portion to make your ice skate.
7. Optional: Print out another ice skate template to make a second ice skate so you have a pair. Add an additional hole-punch to the top of each ice skate and use yarn to tie them together.

Ice Skate Template

Use the template below for the ice skate craft.
Print the template onto cardstock if you have it available.