

# Skate Anthology: Part 2

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National Museum of Roller Skating

We now continue with our three part series describing and showcasing the many roller skates housed in the National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, Neb. The following are three more examples of skates appearing in circulation in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Our first parlor skate was patented on July 25, 1865, by Washington Parker Gregg. Purchased by the Museum, this skate has a wheel at either end of the wooden plate with an additional wheel on either side. This is one of our only skates thus constructed. The heel rests in a brace while the leather straps at the front keep the toe secure.

According to his patent papers, Gregg claims his skates, "thus constructed, run with ease and rapidity, and do not injuriously sprain the feet nor weary the limbs, and they will not easily tip backward or forward, and they impart from the first an unusual feeling of security to the skater in all possible movements. This skate is well adapted to hard sidewalks, large halls, gymnasiums, and skating schools, and in suitable places for traveling purposes." This is one of the oldest variations of the modern quad skate, post-Plimpton production.

A second parlor skate has a similar construction blueprint. Patented in March of 1877, this Louis H. Gano skate also has two wheels in the middle between the wheels on either end. The wheels located on the ends

were placed on curved posts so they could turn freely around. This way the wheels can follow with the motions of the foot. The wheels in the center, being larger, are connected to

wheels. The Spalding Company served many smaller companies as a distributor, supplying skating equipment to the public in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It also was one



Pictured are the 1877 Louis H. Gano skate (top), donated by the Van Roekel family, and the 1865 skate patented by Washington Parker Gregg (bottom).

a bracket which allows them the freedom to rock side to side slightly, giving the skater the extra assistance in turning corners.

A third skate shows that while mainstream skates had progressed to the new quad design, there were still companies manufacturing the original design of inline skates. This model of an A.G. Spalding & Brothers athletic goods company skate used rubber

of the first roller skating manufacturing firms in America. Made in 1876, this skate arrived at the Museum as a donation from Chester Fried.

*Correction: The photo of a skate in the November-December 2011 Museum column was misidentified as the 1869 AJ Gibson model. It is actually the Hutton Skate from 1877.*

The National Museum of Roller Skating has begun a bi-monthly, e-newsletter. This newsletter allows Museum members another way of staying current with activities and new donations. While this is a perk of becoming a Museum member, the Museum will temporarily send our latest issue of the newsletter to whoever contacts the Museum and requests one. They will only be sent via email, so a working email address must be submitted to receive our newsletter.

If you enjoy the newsletter and want to continue receiving it, please sign up for a Museum membership, which also garners you access to the Museum-only section of our website. This includes past newsletter issues, programs of national championships, and old roller skating magazines to download at your convenience. Members also receive a one year subscription to USA Roller Sports magazine and a 30th anniversary pin. Please consider joining the Museum.

Your support guarantees the history of the great sport of roller skating will remain in the public eye for years to come.

**Visit us at:**  
48th and South Streets,  
Lincoln, Nebraska  
Museum hours: Mon.-Fri., 9-5  
Admission: FREE!  
[www.rollerskatingmuseum.com](http://www.rollerskatingmuseum.com)

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