

The Way We Were

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Pitch 'Em, and have some fun!

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Park City loves to play. In fact, Park City was reborn after the collapse of the mining industry thanks to recreation. Locals and tourists alike have a veritable outdoor playground at their fingertips. Even before Park City was a world class recreation destination, Parkites found ways to have fun. Indoor games were a popular way to stay entertained during the long winters. Board games such as Checkers, Backgammon and Parcheesi helped pass the time pleasantly, while games like Puzzle Peg and spelling boards challenged young minds.

The Park City Museum has several examples of indoor games in its collection. One such example is "*Pitch 'Em – The Game of Indoor Horseshoes*," which would have provided hours of family entertainment during a snowstorm, or any time it was inconvenient to be outside. An advertisement in the December 1927 issue of *Boy's Life* magazine describes the game as "the great American game of pitching horseshoes; lots of fun and harmless exercise that develops your skill and trains your eye." It was available for purchase from the Wolverine Supply & Manufacturing Co. for \$1.00.

The Wolverine Company was founded in 1903 and by 1920 had become a major toy manufacturer in the United States. Some of the first toys produced by the company were made of mechanical tin or pressed steel, and most famously, the Sandy Andy line of sand-operated toys. The Pitch 'Em game was manufactured for many years during the first half of the twentieth century. It was a lighter weight version of Horseshoes, designed to be played indoors or outdoors, by girls, boys and adults. The game came with four rubber horseshoes (two red and two green) reinforced with steel wire and two green enameled metal plates with nickel-plated pegs. The rules of Pitch 'Em were similar to those of Horseshoes, only modified for indoor play. The company also produced "Gym Horseshoes" which were larger, heavier and designed to be used in a gym or outdoors.

The Pitch 'Em game in the Park City Museum's collection came from the Martin family who lived on Rossi Hill. Edith and Lawrence Martin had two daughters, Florence and Mary, aged ten years apart. The game was probably purchased in the 1920s or 1930s to keep the sisters and their friends entertained. The one in our collection has dozens of scuff marks on the green metal bases, attesting that this was a much loved and often used game. Our example came with the original box with instructions on the inside lid, and is in generally good condition except for some signs of wear.

To learn more about children's play and playgrounds, stop by the Park City Museum to see *Once Upon a Playground*, an exhibit that takes visitors on a nostalgic trip through the playgrounds of the past. Time is running out! This exhibit is only open until October 16.

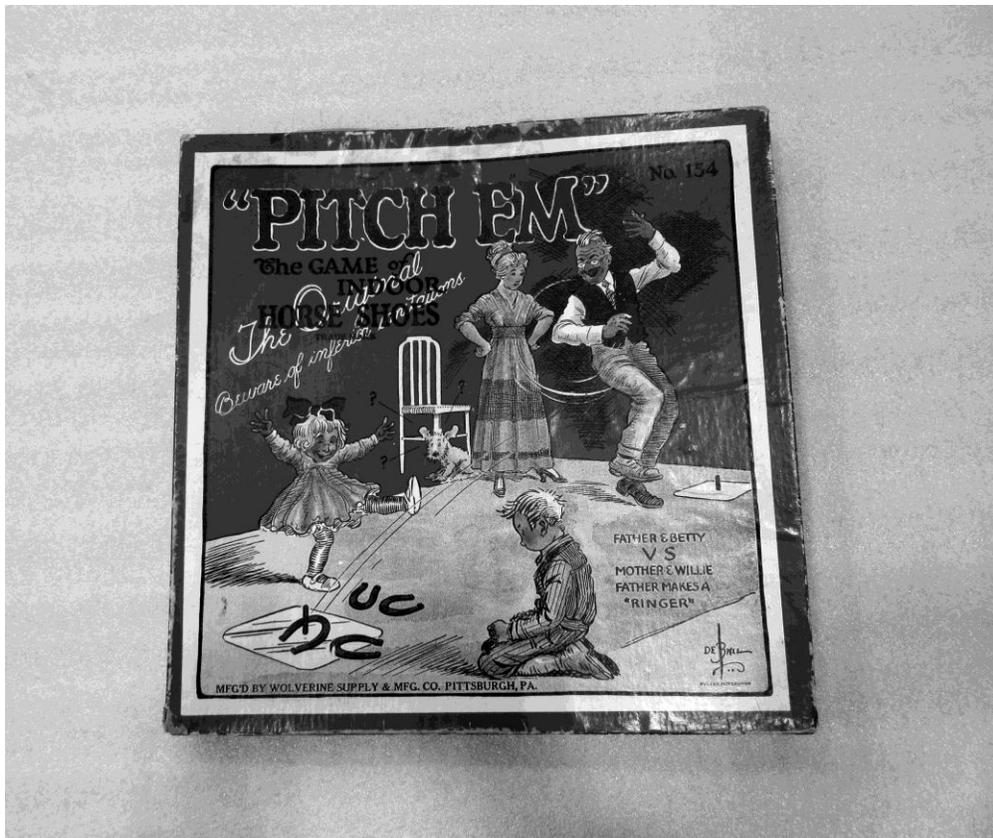


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Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum

Caption: This game of "Pitch 'Em," now in the Park City Museum's permanent collection, once belonged to the Martin family who lived on Rossie Hill in the 1920s.