

HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE STATE BONSPIEL

On January 11, 12, 13, 1954 The Schenectady Women Curlers held its second annual two event bonspiel. It was poorly attended, only five clubs entered rinks. That year the Utica Glengarries canceled their bonspiel due to lack of entries. The Westchester Wicks held their bonspiel, but had difficulty filling it. It was apparent that too many clubs were planning yearly Bonspiels.

Mrs. John Fitzgerald of Utica was very concerned about this and decided something should be done. She contacted the Chairwomen of the Westchester Wicks, Mrs. John Fowler, and Mrs. Timothy P. Ryan, of the Schenectady Women Curlers, to inquire if their clubs would be interested in considering a combined bonspiel of the three clubs. The bonspiel would rotate among the three New York State Clubs. She felt this would interest enough outside teams to have one well attended, successful bonspiel a year.

The boards of the three clubs thought enough of Mrs. Fitzgerald's idea to arrange a meeting of representatives from each of the three clubs to be held in New York City at the same time the U.S.W.C.A. was meeting there.

This meeting was held at the Ambassador East Hotel on May 5, 1954. Present were Mrs. Ronald Brownell and Mrs. Edgar Lortz of Utica; Mrs. Timothy Ryan and Mrs. Ashton Swick of Schenectady; Mrs. John F. Fowler, Jr., Mrs. Rene Clarke, and Mrs. Lincoln Siebert of the Westchester Wicks. (Following the meeting of the U. S. W. C. A., Mrs. James Lotridge of Schenectady and Mrs. Fitzgerald of Utica joined the discussion).

The main purpose of the meeting was to formulate ideas regarding a rotating bonspiel to submit to the respective clubs for consideration. The name "Empire State Bonspiel" was suggested by Dr. Robert Hurd of Utica. Everyone present agreed it was very appropriate.

The following were suggestions made at this meeting:

(1) **Enter into a three year agreement to try this plan:**

- 1st year, 1955, to be held at St. Andrew's Golf Club
- 2nd year, 1956, to be held at Utica Curling Club
- 3rd year, 1957, to be held at Schenectady Curling Club

(2) **Club Trophies:**

Everyone agreed it was essential that each club maintain the identity of its own trophy and Mrs. Ryan suggested that trophies rotate with the Bonspiel. Whichever club is hostess, will have its trophy as the first event, the following hostess club will be the second event, and the last club will be the third event. A new medal, to be known as the Empire State Bonspiel medal, shall be awarded the Bonspiel winners, in addition to the first event medal.

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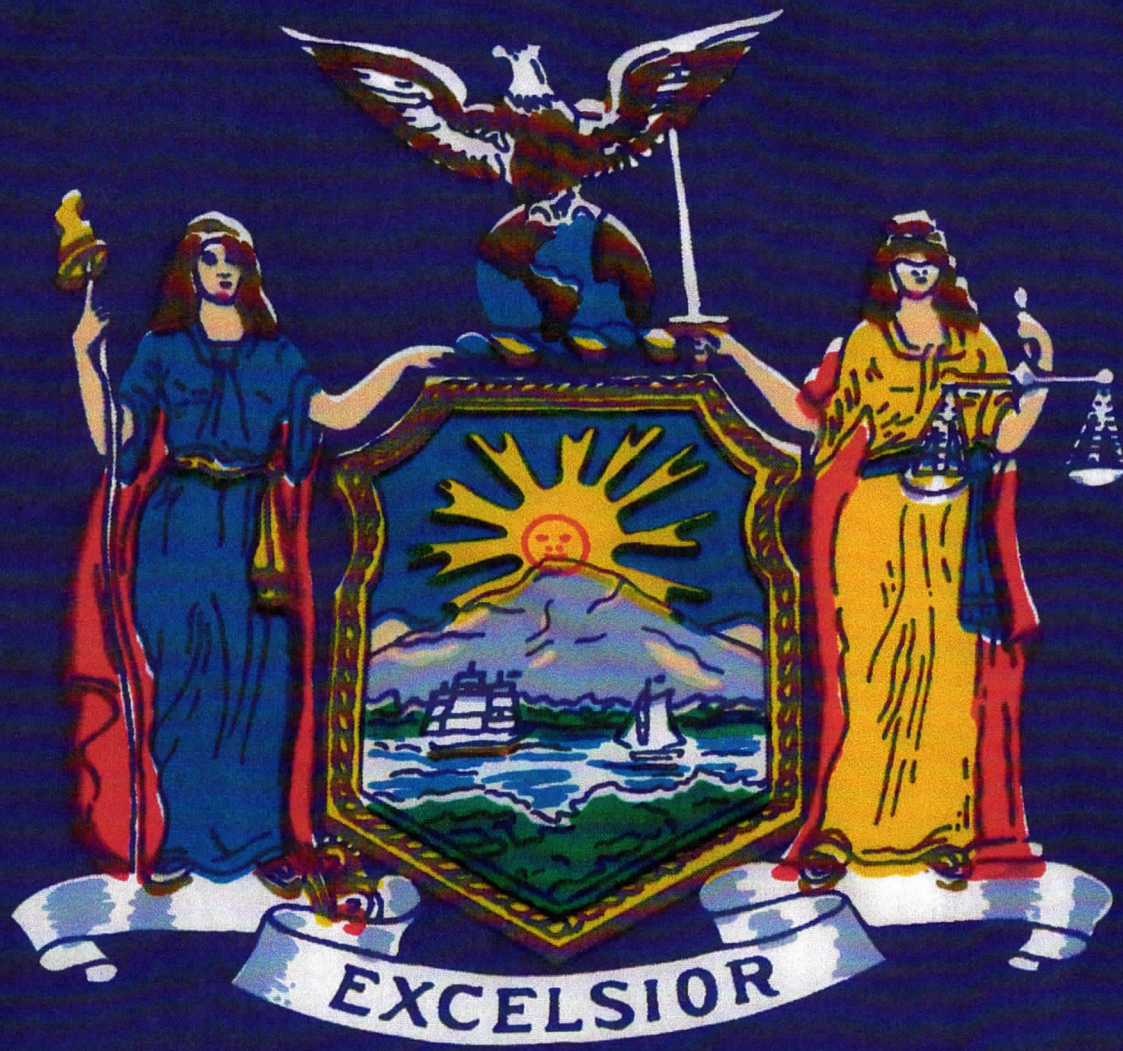
- (3) The dates for the first Empire were set for February 8, 9, 10, 11, 1955. The Westchester Wicks felt they could accommodate only sixteen rinks as the bonspiel was to be kept "social", with no evening curling.
- (4) There should be no limit to the number of teams invited, and the size of the bonspiel should be at the discretion of the club involved, determined by the number of sheets available.

The club Chairwomen took these ideas to their clubs and they were accepted by all three clubs. The plan was to be tried for three years.

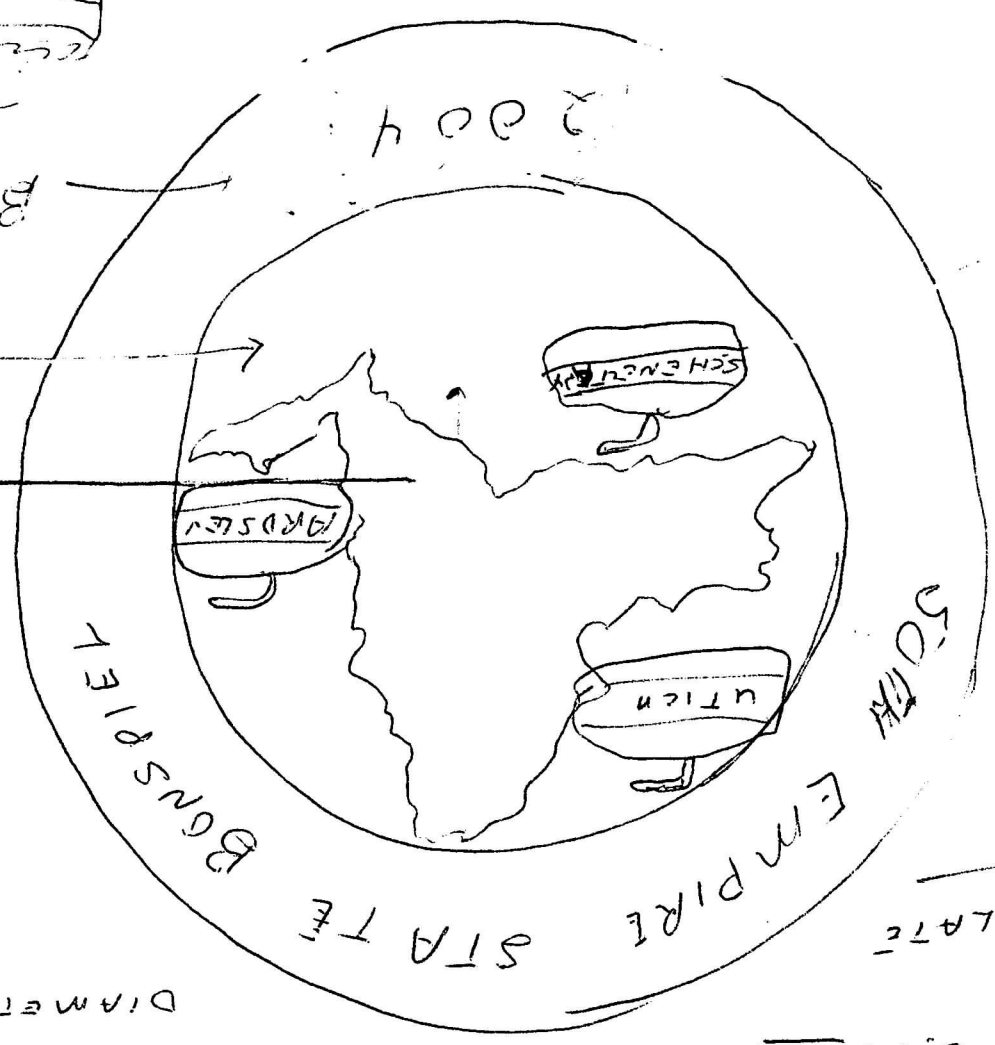
On May 22, 1954, Mrs. Swick contacted the State for permission to use the State seal. This was denied, but it was suggested that she should get in touch with Bastion Brothers of Rochester who did work for New York State and was familiar with the restrictions on the use of the seal in its entirety. She was informed we might use a portion of the seal and they sent sketches for our approval. This correspondence took much of the summer. They hoped to have samples for the next meeting of the representatives. The second meeting was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City on October 19, 1954. The same representatives were present.

- (1) All clubs approved the design submitted by Bastion Brothers. The price of the die was \$196.00 plus \$3.69 per pin with the cost to be shared equally by the clubs. A three year supply of the pins was ordered.
- (2) Mrs. Clarke presented a sketch of the bonspiel pin to be sold to the participants of the bonspiel. The design for this pin had been done by her husband, Rene. It was decided to use a different color enamel for each club, green for Utica, blue for Westchester Wicks, and red for Schenectady. (later changed)
- (3) Each club suggested names of teams to be invited to the first Empire which would serve as a nucleus for coming years. These were: Heathers of Chicago, St. George of Montreal, Winter Club of Quebec, The Country Club, Nashua, Toronto Granite Club, Hamilton Thistles, Indian Hill, Milwaukee Kilties, Lindsay Ontario, Madison Tories, Winchester, Wauwatosa, Skokie, plus the three hostess clubs. Alternates were Exmoor, Glenview, Ottawa, and Chanticleer.
- (4) Each of the three New York State Clubs was to be represented by two teams at all times.
- (5) If substitute teams were necessary, the first shall come from the hostess club, the second from the next hostess, and the third from the third hostess club.
- (6) Each hostess club was to arrange and run the social end of the bonspiel.

(This history was compiled by Jean Ryan)



For further see note below 7
~~Weight~~ date from bottom of hand
 Remains 50% from hand



Yellow or gold
 Yellow
 Blue Backgrnd

BLUE
 silver

WHITE
 GOLD

OVERALL SIZE
 DIAMETER - 1 1/2"

100 LING - 100
 EACH PIECE - 100 or more
 6.50 each
 GOLD PLATE

