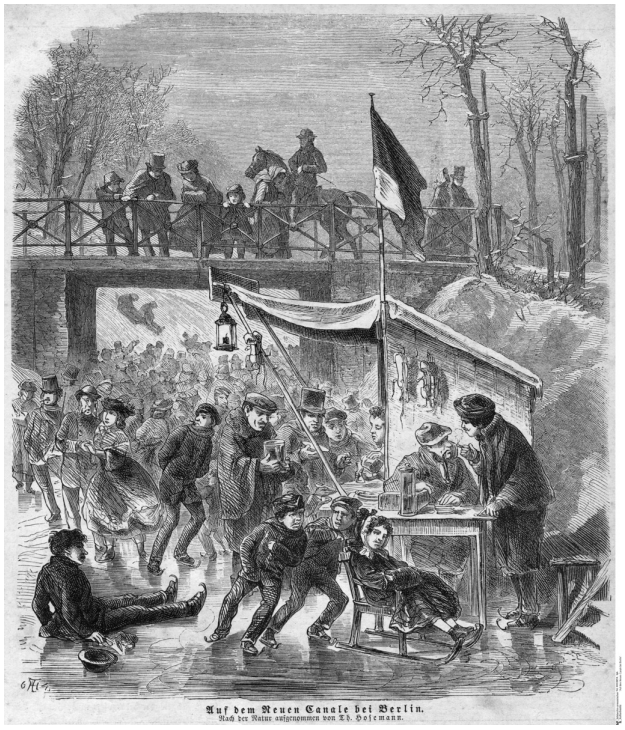
On the New Canal near Berlin (1864)

Abstract

As the wage levels of ordinary Germans rose more steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century, and as the beginnings of fundamental democratization started to emerge, leisure activities ceased to be the exclusive preserve of the aristocracy and the wealthy classes. The scene below, which features a motley crowd of skaters on a canal near Berlin, makes clear that public recreational activities brought together representatives of different age groups and social strata. The abundance of men's hats represented here is but one indication of the social diversity of the skaters themselves. (Basic caps, for example, appear alongside bowlers and top hats.) The operators of the small stand on the edge of the ice have seized the opportunity presented by this concentration of customers to sell liquor, hot soup, and possibly tobacco products. Wood engraving after a drawing by Theodor Hosemann (1795–1875), 1864.

Source



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