

## IN THE BEGINNING...

- Where is the Queen City?
- Why was it built?
- How did an organized pool league come about and last, without interruption, for more than 50 years?

[Manchester, New Hampshire](#) was built, brick by brick, along the east and west banks of the Merrimack River. The Merrimack generated the power to produce textiles at the turn of the century. Thousands of immigrants from Canada and Europe came to Manchester seeking employment in the [Amoskeag Corporation's](#) factories.

To relieve the drudgery of working long hours, the various ethnic groups formed [social clubs where they could relax](#), if even for a few short hours. It was in these clubs that the early traces of The Queen City Pool League can be found. Some of the names of these ethnic clubs were [The Davignon](#), [DUVERNAY \(Straight Pool Photo\)](#), Montcalm, [CANADIEN \(Straight Pool Photo\)](#), Cercle National, Alpine, Mont Royal, [LAFAYETTE](#), Casimir, Pulaski, TTK (Thaddeus Kosciusko), [BELGIUM](#), Turn Verein (Turner Hall), Pericles, British American, Syrian American and Russian American.

Each of these social clubs owned at least one pocket billiards table and a few others with Belgian or German affiliations such as Turn Verein, Harugari, [BELGIUM](#) and Workmen's clubs also sported a [billiards table](#) without pockets for three-cushion or carom play.

Of course, public pool halls such as Vaughn's, Auerbach's, J.B. Conners' and [others also existed for younger enthusiasts](#) not yet having attained their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays and for those adults not inclined to seek membership in the social clubs. Pool was popular all over the country in the early 1900s and the Queen City was no exception.



## “AROUND-THE-WORLD” I SEARCHED FOR YOU, ...”

### 1. DEFINITION OF ‘AROUND-THE-WORLD’

The object of the pocket billiards game called Around-the-World is to pocket the one (1) ball in each of the six pockets, in proper order (rotation), before the opposing player does so; the other fourteen balls may be pocketed to gain position on the one (1) ball. To begin the game, the one (1) ball is placed in the middle of the third row of balls in the rack.”

*[From the Queen City Pool League’s Table Rules](#)*

The exact origin of the pool game known as “Around-the-World” has proven to be elusive. The game’s older players, now in their late seventies and early eighties, agree that “Around-the-World” started on [Manchester’s West Side](#) in the French speaking social clubs. It has been established that the Laval, Rimmon, Cercle National, and Alpine Clubs were the earliest settings for the playing of “Around-the-World”. The following are accounts of the game’s beginning.

The first version of where the game came from is that, in the early 1940’s, two gentlemen from Quebec were visiting relatives on [Manchester’s West Side](#). One evening, the two stopped by the Rimmon Club and engaged in a game never before seen by the players in attendance. The cue ball and the one ball were the only balls used and were placed on the table’s top and bottom spots; the object of the game was to pocket the 1 ball in each of the six pockets, in order, before one’s opponent did so. The club’s members, who have unfortunately remained indeterminable despite efforts to ascertain their identities, were intrigued by what they saw and, after the visitors from Canada had left, attempted to duplicate what they had observed.

After numerous attempts and considerable frustration, the players decided to make the game somewhat easier. The game was given a distinctive Manchester “flavour” by racking all 15 balls and allowing players the advantage of pocketing balls 2 through 15 to obtain position to shoot the 1 ball into the intended pocket.

A second version of the game’s origin comes from a group of “old-timers” who insist “Around-the-World” derived from the game called Golf and was created by players from the Laval Club (formerly on Boutwell Street and the current site of Jutras Post) and the Alpine Club. According to Hector Richer, a pool playing member of the Laval and Rimmon Clubs for nearly 30 years, the members responsible for “brainstorming” this new game could well have been Laval and Alpine “regulars Oliver Lemire, Paul Boucher, Babe Lesmerises, and Herve “Toto” Lacerte. In any event, whichever rendition, or combination thereof, one chooses to accept, it was time for straight pool to move over in the City of Manchester. There was a new kid in town!

Venerable pool notable, [ARMAND CHAPUT](#) states that it took nearly a year before anyone was able to accomplish the feat of running all six pockets in a row without giving up his turn at the table because of a miss. For years, league play saw only 2 or 3 “six pocket runs” during an entire season. However, this new game with its flair for 3 bank shots, double crosses, up-and-downs, back scuttles, and similarly wondrous accomplishments, was slowly infiltrating Manchester’s social clubs. It eventually unseated straight pool as the game of choice around the Queen City.

Gradually, Around-the-World was carried to pool tables in [Hooksett](#) and [Suncook](#) by players who lived in these towns and worked in Manchester’s millyards. If a game of pool was being played in a social club in Manchester, [Hooksett](#), or [Suncook](#) after the mid-fifties, it was almost certain to be “Roundy”.

Manchester’s pool players started their involvement in the game with Straight Pool. However, with the advent of Around-The-World, many participated in both the licensed Social Club Straight Pool League and the Franco-American Around-The-World Pool League. The combination of straight pool and Around-The-World developed the skill levels of the participants.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The question often arises: "Where did the name Around-The World come from?". Logical extensions of this question are: "Why weren't the names 'Around-The-Table' or 'All-of-the-Pockets' chosen? Wouldn't they make more sense?".

The game's older players are unable to pinpoint the origin of the name "Around-the-World" but state that it was already in use when the Franco-American Pool League began in 1947. Perhaps the following fictionalized story comes close to explaining the name of the game and "from whence it came".

It must be remembered that in the early 1940s a person could, in a manner of speaking, travel "around the world" by visiting the various ethnic neighborhoods making up the City of Manchester. [The west side offered a rich French tradition](#). A walk along the streets near Granite Square resulted in greetings from people of German and Belgian extraction. The Polish population was concentrated in "Skeag" just west of the Amoskeag Bridge near Front Street as well as Birch Street (now Kosciusko Street) in the downtown area. Greek was spoken in the stores and coffee houses along Spruce Street while the North End of the city was inhabited by Anglo-Saxon descendants of the city's founding fathers. The Queen City, Notre Dame and Amoskeag bridges linked the [East side](#) of the city to the West side.

As time passed, the Licensed Social Club Straight Pool League and its successors, the Franco-American Around-the-World Pool League and the Queen City Pool League, also brought people of different backgrounds together. When a team from one social club visited another for a match, the players were not only going to another part of the city but, perhaps, another part of the "world". A different language might be heard or a distinctive food might be served by the host club.

For those preoccupied with playing pool, the pool table became a large part of their "world". The pocketing of the 1 ball in each of the six pockets or "ports of call" on the table was viewed as a journey around this "world". It is no wonder that players spending considerable time to make the six pockets felt as if they had just gone "around the world"- their own personal world of the pool table.

In summary, there were two pool related phenomena taking place in Manchester in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Players were traveling from one "world" to another when visiting various parts of the city to engage in playing pool; once arriving at their destinations, they set upon another journey around a table which was the setting or "world" for the game they were playing. With "Around-the-Table", "All the Pockets" and similar titles as options, the logical choice for Manchester's new game was "Around-the World".

It is somewhat ironic that a game with such an expansive name as "Around-the-World" is only played in a restricted area- Manchester, [Hooksett](#) and [Suncook](#). Be that as it may, the new pool game became Manchester's most popular and is still being played into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the many players who never tire of the excitement and challenge that "Around-the-World" offers, it is the pool world's best kept secret.



"I've traveled all over the country and this is the only place I've ever seen this game played"- [Norm Farmer](#), pool professional.