

## POOL HALLS

Pool and billiards developed as an indoor option for games such as croquet which were played outside on lawns. The term “pool room” now means a place where billiards is played, but in the 19th century a pool room was a betting parlor for horse racing. Pool tables were installed so patrons could pass the time between races.

King Louis XI of France purchased his first pool table in 1470. Dedicated venues began to appear in the 19th century, and by the early 20th century, billiard and pool halls were common in many countries; in 1915 there were 830 in Chicago.

In North America, in the 1950s and 1960s especially, pool halls in particular were perceived as a social ill by many, and laws were passed in many jurisdictions to set age limits at pool halls and restrict gambling and the sale of alcohol. The song "Trouble" in the 1957 hit musical *The Music Man* lampooned this prejudice (even contrasting carom billiards, requiring "judgement, brains, and maturity", versus pool, said to be a gateway to laziness, gambling, smoking and philandering). Public perception had become less critical by the 1990s.

By the 2010s, with competition from a growing number of competing entertainment venues, as well as the availability of online gambling, revenue from the operation of billiard halls in the United States had declined significantly. In Korea, on the other hand, the pool halls are becoming more popular after years of decline. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billiard\\_hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billiard_hall)]

Orton's, in Wilmington, NC, is America's oldest pool hall; it was established in 1888. There are some 1,113 pool halls in the U.S.

