In Ireland the 1-wall version of handball using hands is reported to have started between the 1500s and the 1700s. It appears that many landowners have donated sites for the construction of courts.

At the same time, in London, hundreds of palm game (tennis) courts (with a racket) have been built and some have to be booked by the hour or by the day, for more fortunate players. Handball could be played using the walls. Many Irishmen, railway and mining workers, brought back in Ireland the model of the palm game courts (two side walls). They did the same thing when they migrated to Australia and America. However, as local people were often excluded from these more expensive facilities, they continued to play on the walls in the streets or use the ruins of castles and churches (see photos).

In 1910, still in England, the school inspectorate reported that handball was the activity most frequently mentioned in the field of leisure. The game has become a popular street sport.

As in Quebec, the promotion of handball has been done by the Christian brothers in schools and boarding schools. It was around 1880 that we saw the first matches between Ireland and the United States. A Quebec daily newspaper has reported the performances of a local player during a tournament in the United States. The first international tournament was reportedly held in the United States in 1897 and the rubber ball was being used. The first official edition of the rules of the game dates from 1895 (list of regulations below).

Thanks to : Tom O'Connor, WPH, USHA, Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Of The World and Kathleen Bédard.

Next theme: Handball in America

VIDEOS AND PICTURES

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Some rules of the time:
• An alley (court) must be 60 feet long;
• For courts with clay the short line will be two-thirds of the length from the front wall and for concrete floors it will be halfway;
• Kicking the ball during rallies is a fair shot in tournaments;
• Three short or long balls on the serve result in a loss of serve;
• Best of seven 21 points games determines the winner;
• The service box was introduced later.

https://youtu.be/guvd0PWysYQ

With such long courts the Irish have developed the "Irish Whip" which allows the player to hit hard with less strain on the arms. This final (2018 All-Ireland), between Eoin Kennedy and Robbie McCarthy in a 60 feet X 30 feet alley, is a good example of the whip mainly with the big ball.

Basque Pelota (#2)

Brad Warren: we have 3 Fronton guys playing in Toronto.

Thanks to *Andrew Short* (St-John's, NL) who mentions the 2 frontons located in the St-Pierre-et-Miquelon islands (French Territorial Collectivity located in the Gulf of St-Laurence). See pictures and a 1954 Gil LaRoche film from the NFB.

https://youtu.be/XwWLSUp2zQs (minutes 8:14 - basque pelota)

1906 – ZAZPIAX-BAT   TXOKO BERRI

<u>CHINA</u>
From 1849 to 1946 there was a French concession in Shanghai, China, and the Basque game was very popular there, particularly because of Chinese betting. A sports complex (tracks, grandstand and club) was built that could accommodate 50,000 people. Players from the Basque Country, Mexico and Cuba were invited to play. After an unconvincing start, the club's financial situation flourished to such an extent that in 1934 the facility was extended to accommodate 3000 people in premises with air conditioning, heating and a French restaurant with an excellent wine list. A percentage of the profits were donated to the Municipality, allowing it to finance education, care and hygiene in the French concession. Activities continued until the end of the concession in 1943, and the enthusiasm for the Basque pelota subsequently collapsed. There remains a 1-wall version of handball in China in which the ball must touch the floor BEFORE reaching the front wall. The other rules are the same as the usual 1-wall game.

https://youtu.be/4O8uIKt5yk0 (example of the Chinese 1-wall)