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SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK AT SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT 1934-1940

John W. Lundin

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**SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK AT SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT
1934 - 1940**

COMPLETE VERSION



Snoqualmie Municipal Ski Park 1937. Photo courtesy of the Moffett family.

By John W. Lundin

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John is a lawyer who has done extensive research and writing about his family's history, and is a former member of the Sahalie Ski Club on Snoqualmie Pass. His mother, Margaret Odell, was part of Seattle's early ski scene in the late 1930s, and as advisor to the Queen Anne Ski Club from 1938 - 1940, she took her students by train every weekend to the Milwaukee Ski Bowl for ski lessons. John is a long time skier who learned to ski on Snoqualmie Pass, and has homes in Seattle and Sun Valley, Idaho. He was a founder of the Washington State Ski & Snowboard Museum and is on its Board. John's book, *Early Skiing on Snoqualmie Pass*, received a Skade award from the International Ski History Association as outstanding regional ski history book for 2017. A short version of this paper was published on HistoryLink.org, the on-line encyclopedia of Washington History.

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I. INTRODUCTION - NORTHWEST SKIING BEGINS IN THE 1920s & INCREASES IN POPULARITY IN THE 1930s

The Seattle Park Board opened its Municipal Ski Park at Snoqualmie Summit in January 1934, on U.S. Forest Service land, and operated it as a park facility through the ski season of 1940. This was likely the only municipally owned and operated ski area in the country at the time. The Ski Park was made possible by the availability of federal funds under programs adopted by the Roosevelt Administration to put people back to work in the Great Depression, and reflects how skiing had grown in popularity in the Northwest by the early 1930s.

Early Days of Skiing

Skiing has been a popular sport in Western Washington since the teens, initially the result of the number of people of Scandinavian origins living here. In its early days, skiing was organized around private ski clubs, and ski racing competitions were held most weekends in many areas accessible by car, including Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Cayuse Pass, and Snoqualmie Pass. The drive to these ski areas on two-lane icy roads was dangerous and difficult and required a real commitment to the sport. The interest in skiing can be seen by the extensive coverage of the sport in local newspapers.

Seattle Times newspapers dating back to 1900, have been scanned and are available on line, and give an insight into the life and times of the 1920s and 1930s. The Times had extensive coverage of skiing, demonstrating how important the sport was to the community. All winter, the paper carried articles about local skiing, ski club events, college skiing competitions, and skiing in local areas as well as in other parts of this country and even Europe. Local skiers competed against the best international skiers, and national championship ski tournaments were held in the Northwest.

Every weekend, snow conditions were published for the local ski areas, including Mount Baker Lodge, Paradise Valley (Mount Rainier), Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, Summit (Snoqualmie Pass), Chinook Pass, Stampede Pass, and Martin (a stop on the Northern Pacific line near Stampede Pass).

Winter sports began on Snoqualmie Pass in 1914, when the Mountaineers built a lodge just west of Snoqualmie Summit above Rockdale, the stop on the Milwaukee Railroad at the western end of its tunnel under the Pass. Starting in 1923, the Club sponsored cross-country skiing contests for men and women at the Pass.

Skiing in the 1920s - Ski Clubs Form

In 1921, the Cle Elum Ski Club (originally called the Summit Ski Club) was formed by local residents, opening the first organized ski area west of Denver, “a skiers paradise,” that attracted between 100 - 400 locals every weekend. The club sponsored ski races, jumping competitions, and special contests. From 1924 to 1933, the Cle Elum Ski Club held annual jumping tournaments that attracted competitors from all over the northwest, with Northern Pacific trains providing access from Yakima and Seattle. In 1931, more than 8,000 spectators attended the Cle Elum tournament.¹

In 1928, the Mountaineers built its Meany Ski Hut five minutes from Martin, a stop on the Great Northern Railroad near Stampede Pass, three miles by road from the Sunset Highway just below Lake Keechelus. The hut accommodated 52 people and was used just for skiing. In 1929, the Club began its first annual downhill and slalom races, which were the first on the Pass, and began giving ski instruction and tests based on British Ski Tests.²

¹ Lundin, *Cle Elum Ski Club, 1921 - 1933, Historylink* Essay 10169
http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=10169.

² Mountaineer’s Application for Pacific Northwest Ski Association Membership, 1936, in Bresko Collection of Cle Elum Ski Club materials.

The Leavenworth Winter Sports Club began in 1928, and became one of the premier sites for competitive jumping. The area could be reached from Seattle on Great Northern trains. In 1930, the club opened a hill for downhill skiing.

In 1929, skiing increased on Snoqualmie Pass because of efforts of Norwegian ski jumpers who founded the Seattle Ski Club. They used an abandoned construction camp as its base, and built a ski jump at Beaver Lake Hill, now part of Snoqualmie Pass Ski Area. The club obtained a ten year lease on one acre of land from Northern Pacific for a lodge and camp at “minimal consideration,” by paying the taxes assessed against the property. The land was close to Snoqualmie Summit, accessible to the Milwaukee Railway and the Sunset Highway, and close to a ski runway and jump on Government land.³ Their cabin was a steep 1 1/4 mile hike from the old Denny Creek Ranger Station in the summer, or a 1 2/3 mile struggle over a snow covered trail from the Milwaukee Road’s Rockdale railroad station in winter. Beginning in 1930, the club held annual jumping competitions organized by Olav Ulland, which along with tournaments at Leavenworth and Cle Elum, attracted national caliber competitors. Jumpers traveled to all three to compete, and at Snoqualmie, skiers hiked up the hill using skins to go off the jump. In 1931, its lodge was described as “an abandoned construction camp in Snoqualmie Pass, where its members, including almost the whole Norwegian colony, have built a timber jump with one of the steepest landings in the world - a hill three or four degrees steeper than the famous Hollmenkollen Hill in Norway.” Its 1931 tournament was a tryout

³ Northern Pacific was contacted by a gentleman with the Norwegian-American Steamship Line that controlled considerable passenger business, “and the Traffic Department is interested in seeing that the lease be granted.” The land had no value to the railroad except for a deposit of lime rock that might be developed in the future, and the use by the Ski Club would not interfere with the operation of the lime rock quarry. Northern Pacific Archives, Minneapolis Minnesota, Box 134.K.4.10 (C), letter of December 23, 1929, to Mr. Donnelly from J. M. Hughes, Land Commissioner.

for the 1932 Olympic games at Lake Placid, New York, and the Milwaukee Road provided a special train to the event. The club hosted the U.S. Olympic jumping trials in 1947, and the U.S. championships in 1948, held at the Milwaukee Bowl. The Club built a four story lodge at the Summit at the old Milwaukee Road Laconia rail stop in 1931.⁴

Skiing Increases in Popularity in the 1930s

In the early 1930s, several private homes were built at Snoqualmie Summit by skiing enthusiasts, and more ski lodges were built by institutions.

In 1930, the Kendall Peak Lodge was built on the south side of the highway near the summit, by a number of Seattle skiing couples “who gave up their weekends and vacations to the strenuous work.” The lodge had two and a half stories, accommodated twenty persons, and “soon will be filled with enthusiastic skiers.”⁵ Kendall Peak Lodge was located close to where Seattle’s Ski Park was opened in 1934, and they had the advantage of “a clear smooth ski run to practice ‘S’ turn, Christianias and Telemarks, swings to the right and left, and the whole country around which to explore.” In 1932, “The Ski Hut,” a log home was built by Mr. and Mrs. James O. Gallagher and Mrs. Lochren Donnelly in the heart of the forest on the edge of Surveyors Lake. There was no road or path to the hut, but a line of red banners marked the long walk to the site. Also in 1932, a Swiss

⁴ Galvin, Dave, *Ski Clubs in Washington Over the Last 100 Years*, Sahalie Historical Note #1; *Whence Goes Western Haut Monde for Skiing*, Seattle Times, January 25, 1931, (page 25); *Old Snoqualmie Lodge*, Mountaineers Annual, 1956, page 58, Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/.

⁵ Kendall Peak Lodge was built by Cecil Willis, Lee Hinman, Donald P. Thomas, Kenneth J. Morford, J. Bartow Fite, W. Steven Tucker, Jean Saunders, Maurice Vining, and L. M. Forbes. “Their wives are now basking in the comforts of the luxurious mountain home radiating warmth and hospitality.” *Hardy Mountaineers Build Own Homes, Cabins Going Up in Wilderness for Fun to Come When Winter Snows Lay Deep at Snoqualmie*, Seattle Times, November 6, 1932 (page 14).

chalet was built by Phillip Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. John Scafford Mauk, Arthur O'Shea, and Mr. Daniel at the Summit. "Both will shortly be filled with happy weekend guests."⁶ The College Club lodge was built above Lake Ketchelus by club members was initially called Mountain Goat Lodge, and was renamed the Roaring Creek Lodge. In the winter of 1934, the newest private winter dwelling on Snoqualmie Pass was the Helen Bush School Lodge, owned by the school and available to pupils and their friends who spent their weekends skiing there.⁷ The Mountaineer's Snoqualmie Lodge was the oldest at the pass, and the club had another lodge at Martin, the Meany Ski Hut, "where one goes up on the train and where skiing is best of all." A few miles beyond Martin were the box cars the Washington Alpine Club uses, beside its grand new lodge build last year, just three miles below the summit. The Seattle Ski Club had a lodge at the summit, and some of the best skiers in the Northwest. The Commonwealth Club had an imposing lodge with the added comfort of steam heat.⁸

⁶ *Hardy Mountaineers Build Own Homes, Cabins Going Up in Wilderness for Fun to Come When Winter Snows Lay Deep at Snoqualmie*, Seattle Times, November 6, 1932 (page 14).

⁷ In the fall of 1933, Helen Bush School built a log ski cabin designed by architect Carl F. Gould, "just off the old road." It was built on a hill with a ski run on the meadow below on three acres of woodland and meadow, with a view balcony which overlooks Snoqualmie and Guye Peaks. There were built in bunks, tables of cedar slabs, and a large cobblestone fireplace. "This cabin is one of the prides of the Bush School students." A house warming for the new cabin was held on Halloween weekend. *Helen Bush Lodge Will Hold House Warming*, Seattle Times, November 2, 1933 (page 18). Mrs. John K. Bush, head of the Helen Bush school, opened the lodge where she and her Bush students spend weekends. There was a rumor that she became an expert skier in Switzerland. However, Mrs. Bush confessed she was a neophyte skier who had only skied once in Switzerland. When she was at St. Moritz, her party took her to a high hill that had been prepared for the world's most expert skiers. She lost her footing and went down the steep incline out of control. She kept on her skis, skied into the hotel door, knocked several people down, made her apologies and left everyone gasping. *Walk a Little Faster*, Seattle Times, February 2, 1934 (page 17).

⁸ *Practice Yodeling, for Ski Days are at Hand, With Virginia Boren, Skiing High, Skiing Low*, Seattle Times, November 10, 1933 (page 20); *Snow is Falling! Paradise Ski Club Forms*, December 7, 1933 (page 17).

Kendall Peak Lodge was built in 1930, by Seattle winter sports enthusiasts near Snoqualmie Summit. The lodge had two and a half stories and accommodated twenty persons. It was located close to where Seattle's Ski Park was opened in 1934, and they had the advantage of "a clear smooth ski run to practice 'S' turn, Christianias and Telemarks, swings to the right and left, and the whole country around which to explore."⁹

In the winter of 1931, the Snoqualmie Pass highway was plowed and remained open for the first time throughout the winter, providing access by car for Seattle area skiers coming to the Pass for winter recreation. Skiing at the Pass increased significantly afterwards. By 1934, the highway was paved from Seattle to Snoqualmie Pass allowing members of the ski clubs easier access to their facilities.¹⁰

In 1931 and 1932, the Sahalie Ski Club (originally the Commonwealth Ski Club) built a lodge on 45 acres of land purchased from the Northern Pacific Railroad on what is now the Alpental road. The Washington Alpine Club (founded in 1916) built its Guye Cabin nearby the Commonwealth Lodge in 1932. Both lodges were near the north loop of the old Milwaukee Railroad tracks before the tunnel was built. In the early 1930s, John Woodward, with a group from Garfield High School, built a cabin on Forest Service land just below the summit for the Torvig Ski Club, which in 1933, moved to Mount Rainier. More ski clubs formed in the early 1930s, all over the northwest, and held

⁹ *Practice Yodeling, for Ski Days are at Hand*, with Virginia Boren, Seattle Times, November 10, 1933 (page 20).

¹⁰ During this time frame, the Sunset Highway received official designations as State Road No. 2, Primary State Route No. 2, and U.S. Highway 10. The old Sunset Highway.pfd; Snoqualmie Pass Becomes a Highway: From Indian Trail, to Wagon Road, to Interstate| Suite101.com <http://elizabeth-gibson.suite101.com/snoqualmie-pass-becomes-a-highway>.

ski competitions against each other on many weekends that were covered by Seattle papers.¹¹

In January 1932, the Seattle Times said “the whole world seems suddenly to have gone skiing.” A few years before, skiers at Snoqualmie Pass had the hills to themselves, but then along came Ben Thompson “and skiing began to rise in importance.” Ben and his mates at the Seattle Ski Club built facilities and gathered jumpers, and “crowds began to grow where no crowds ever were before, that is, before the advent of skiing.” Now, those crowds “plunge into the mountains Sunday after Sunday in quest of snow.” A few years before, it was hard to find ski equipment to buy, but in 1932, one Seattle store sold 2,000 pairs of skis in one month, and another store stocked thousands of dollars of skis, straps, mountain clothing, etc.¹²

The Seattle Times of January 18, 1933, announced *Thousands Hit Snow Trails*, and described the huge numbers of skiers that were traveling to the mountains every weekend.

Spread along Snoqualmie Pass from North Bend to Cle Elum were automobiles Sunday and Saturday - and from those machines, etched in the snow, criss-crossed and twisted, were thousands of parallel grooves, mute testimony to a Washington yen for skiing. “You never

¹¹ The Sahalie lodge was designed by noted Seattle architect Arthur Loveless, was “three stories in height with a full basement, built in the form of two L’s, with a three flue chimney thrust through the center,” and slept 40. In 1933, the new lodge was called “very imposing, to the left as one approaches the Summit. It has the added comfort of steam heat, so we’ve been told,” and it was later referred to as “pretentious.” “Commonwealth Ski Club began offering ski lessons for its members in the 1933/34 season. This was a major step forward, since early skiing was mostly cross]country, and when new skiers tried to go downhill, there were a lot of injuries. ‘Controlled’ skiing using turns was a relatively new concept being pushed by ski promoters. Commonwealth employed some of the best skiers available: the initial teachers were Ben Thompson, Hans Grage and Don Fraser, all huge names in early Northwest skiing. Skiers learned “to do level running, execute kick turns, exhibit proper handling of ski poles and descend a slight slope in various fundamental positions.” Galvin, *The Original Lodge of the 1930s*, Sahalie Historical Note #4; Galvin, *The Snoqualmie Pass Ski Lodges*, Sahalie Historical Note # 7; Galvin, *Ski Clubs in Washington Over the Last 100 Years*, Sahalie Historical Note #16; Woodward, John, <http://www.alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/misc/ancient-skiers-1984.html>.

¹² *It Isn’t News, But!*, by Alex Shults, Seattle Times, January 17, 1932 (page 24).

saw anything like it,” Ray Snyder of Summit and Jack McGrath of North Bend, who keep an er to the ground..”Crowds have been anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 every week-end since the first snow fell - and they grow larger every Sunday.

And that was only one sector of the skiing front. Ben Thompson, Paradise Lodge manager and ski veteran, made an added report from the foot of Mount Rainier. “There never have been such crowds of skiers as we’ve seen this year,” he said. “They come Saturday and ski all night. They have what used to be nice, unmarked snow crossed and criss-crossed and sometimes tumbled where they took an easy spill - and they keep coming in bigger numbers.”

Six or seven years ago, skiing was limited to “those from the old country who had skiing as a heritage, but the idea caught on. Once propped on a pair of skis, the enthusiast couldn’t let go. He couldn’t even keep quiet about it. He insisted on others trying it.” The Times was cooperating by publishing ski photos, which have “as lovely a pictorial composition as may be had.” The prior Sunday’s turnout at Snoqualmie Pass, Paradise Valley, Stampede on the Northern Pacific Line, and Mount Baker “was tremendous.”

Contrary to suspicion, the sport isn’t dangerous. Not that the embryo skier should essay a 200-foot jump, or even a 30-foot jump, without the ability to do it. Or that one should try night-skiing unless equipped with landing lights and a knowledge of the trail. But the ordinary ski fall is much more trivial than tripping over a curb. Snow yields. Concrete doesn’t.¹³

In September 1933, the Seattle Ski Club decided to add slalom events to the Pacific Northwest Ski Association winter racing schedule. Until then, the organization’s tournaments had been limited to nordic events, either jumping or cross-country. Slalom skiing, “which calls for the highest sort of skill,” had been introduced by Ben Thompson when he was in charge of winter sports operations the prior winter at Rainier National Park, and “caught on by wildfire.”

The race is entirely a downhill affair between staggered sets of flags. A skier, hurling down as speeds as great as fifty miles an hour, is compelled to pass between the narrow rows of flags, make right-angle turns at full speed, whip and swivel his way down the twisting trail

¹³ *Thousands Hit Ski Trails, Summit, Paradise Valley Jammed with Skiers*, Seattle Times, January 18, 1933 (page 16).

to the bottom. Spills are frequent. Matchless grace is necessary.

Members of the Seattle Ski Club were planning to work on its jumping hill and string electric lights in the small prairie back of its clubhouse at Snoqualmie Summit.¹⁴

Later in September 1933, the Washington Ski Club gave citations to 14 of its members who made first mountain ascents on skis, “a feat of mountaineering far more difficult in the field than the equally strenuous but firmer method of foot climbing.” Bob Sperlin and Ed Loners were cited for their notable climb of Mount Baker on skis four years before, where they experienced glaciers that had to be avoided and glare ice. Their climb became known only after Hans Otto Giese and Don Fraser climbed Baker the prior summer, and the Times carried a story saying that it was the first uninterrupted ski climb to the summit and back. W. J. Bill Maxwell was credited with having climbed the highest on Mount Rainier on skis, to 12,500 feet up Emmons Glacier, where he was stopped by a blizzard. He also made the first known ascent of Denny Mountain on skis in May 1926, a feat he repeated March 1933. All the ascents were made entirely on skis without the use of climbing equipment except for rough-locks, sealskins and ski poles.¹⁵

On November 10, 1933, the Seattle Times described the excitement over the upcoming ski season, which was expected to be bigger than ever.

It’s the time of year now when the skiing season is upon us, when thoughts turn to the dips and the thrills and the challenge of this swiftest of outdoor sports. It’s the time when all roads - even those you plow through on snowshoes - lead to Paradise, Mount Rainier National Park, for that is to the West what the Bavarian Alps, the Austrian Tyrol is to Europeans, and it’s the Lake Placid region of the west. St. Moritz is not a far cry from us yodelers and skiers!

¹⁴ *Slalom Racing Incorporated in Ski Program*, Seattle Times, September 20, 1933 (page 16).

¹⁵ *Ski Ascents of Peaks Cited by Climbing Club*, Seattle Times, September 23, 1933 (page 7).

Sharing honors with Rainier is the Summit, another playground for winter sports.

A fast new sport called slalom was becoming popular, which was

a sport for swift skills and certain nerves. You start at the top of a 2,000 foot slide. There are flags placed at intervals along the 2,000 feet and you steer dexterously in and out of this path of flags. Fine, if you know how to do it! The skiers in their bright colored clothes, winding in and out of the flags, darting like flamingo winged birds to the bottom of the slide, reminded one somewhat of the highly colored balls in a pushball game being released from their grooves. It's decidedly a sport for the young and adventurous, is this slalom.

For the ski season of 1932, Mount Rainier National Park opened 15 cabins, and 42 new cabins opened in 1933. Dozens of Seattle couples had leased quarters for the 1934 ski season at the new 35 room Winter Lodge, along with 37 rooms in the old Mt. Rainier lodge. "There's dancing in the lobby at night, there's skiing on the side hills in the gleam of a big searchlight that plays on the snowbanks, giving the whole scene the effect of a tinselled Christmas postcard." The Paradise Ski Club, a Paradise Valley Mount Rainier product, formed in the fall of 1933, and had "thirty members and rapidly recruiting." Ken Syverson of Tacoma was elected president.¹⁶

However, in spite of the growth of interest in skiing, and the increased number of ski clubs with lodges and hills available to members, there were few ski areas for the general public on Snoqualmie Pass. A Seattle Park Board report written in the spring of 1934, highlighted the problem. "Before the development of the municipal ski course, various clubs and outdoor groups maintained camps and cabins there [Snoqualmie Pass] but there were no facilities for the general public, and only a small number of persons could be accommodated." The Municipal Ski Park was opened to address that problem.

¹⁶ *Practice Yodeling, for Ski Days are at Hand*, with Virginia Boren, Seattle Times, November 10, 1933 (page 20); *Snow is Falling! Paradise Ski Club Forms*, December 7, 1933 (page 17).

Seattle's Municipal Ski Park opened in January of 1934, and was a significant leap of faith taken in the middle of the Great Depression. In 1934, the economy was in free fall, money was scarce, budgets were being cut, and employees were being laid off. Yet, in spite of all of these problems, the city of Seattle opened a public winter recreation area 60 miles outside its borders, and operated it with Park Department staff until 1940. Seattle's daring and visionary project was made possible by its ability to get the use of Forest Service land for free, and obtain free labor (at least to the city) provided by workers from the Civil Works Administration (C.W.A.) who cleared the hill in December 1933, built the warming hut, and got the area ready for public use in January 1934. The dedicated work of Mayor John Dore, and Seattle Park Board employees such as Ben Evans, Director of Playgrounds, was critical to the project, and members of local ski clubs donated their labor to help make the Ski Park a reality.

Documents and photos of the Municipal Ski Park can be found in the Seattle Municipal Archives.¹⁷

¹⁷ Seattle's Municipal photo archives can be found at Seattle.gov. Documents can be found in the Seattle Municipal Archives, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, (5801-01), and the Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, (5801-02). clerk.seattle.gov/~public/fold1.htm.

II. 1934 - SEATTLE'S MUNICIPAL SKI PARK OPENS

In the winter of 1934, the city of Seattle made national news when it opened one of the first municipal ski areas in the country at Snoqualmie Summit, located at the old Milwaukee Railroad stop of Laconia at Snoqualmie Summit, and an indoor ski arena in downtown Seattle where residents could take free ski lessons to learn the new sport. Seattle also held a Winter Sports Week in February 1934, to promote the sport of skiing.¹⁸

The Seattle Park Board, under the leadership of Ben Evans, Director of Playfields, opened and managed the Ski Park from 1934 through the ski season of 1940. Seattle's innovative efforts were led by Mayor John F. Dore, a skier himself who envisioned the project as one that could lift his city's spirits during the midst of the Great Depression and put men back to work using federal funds. Showing his interest in skiing, in January 1933, Mayor Dore had been an honored guest of the Seattle Ski Club's annual jumping competition at its Big Hill at the Summit, along with the Norwegian Consul.¹⁹

¹⁸ The Milwaukee Road completed its tracks over Snoqualmie Summit in 1909, linking Seattle with Chicago. Its Laconia stop was at Snoqualmie Summit. The Milwaukee Road completed a 2.3 mile tunnel under Snoqualmie Pass in 1914, and it abandoned its surface right of way over the Pass. In 1915, a two-lane road over Snoqualmie Pass was built on Milwaukee Road's old surface route, called the Sunset Highway, creating a permanent transportation route connecting eastern and western Washington. Galvin, *The Railroads*, Sahalie Historical Note No. 12; *The old Sunset Highway.pfd*; *Snoqualmie Pass Becomes a Highway: From Indian Trail, to Wagon Road, to Interstate*, Suite101.com <http://elizabeth-gibson.suite101.com/snoqualmie-pass-becomes-a-highway>.

¹⁹ *Gay Week-End Parties to Attend Ski Contests*, Seattle Times, January 26, 1933 (page 10). John F. Dore was born in Boston in 1881, but his family moved to Seattle when he was 12. He was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, returning to Seattle in 1903 to work as a journalist, working for the Seattle P.I and other papers. He studied law while working as a journalist and was admitted to the bar in 1910, after which he became a successful trial attorney. In 1924, he was appointed to the Seattle Park Board. After losing his bid to be King County Prosecuting Attorney in 1930, he was elected Mayor of Seattle in 1932. He

The Seattle Times called the Ski Park “an unprecedented enterprise.” “It marks the first known time in America a city has ventured into the recreational skiing field in such a first-class manner.” Prior to the Snoqualmie Pass highway being kept open for the first time in the winter of 1931, only a “few venturesome skiers visited there in winter months.” That situation soon changed.²⁰

A. PLANNING FOR THE SKI PARK

It is not clear when Seattle first considered opening a winter recreation area on Snoqualmie Pass. Even though it was run by the Seattle Park Board, there is no mention of the ski park in the Board’s Minutes in 1932 or 1933, until notice was given in December of 1933, that it had permission from the Forest Service that it could begin clearing the hill. There are no articles in the Seattle Times about the ski park until December 1933. This is odd since this was the middle of the depression when funds for any new activity were scarce, and the city was slashing its budgets, actions reflected in the minutes of the Seattle Park Board. On July 28, 1932, Mayor Dore ordered the Park Board to reduce

promptly appointed a new police chief to “clean up the city.” He supported various “business approaches” to get relief for the city’s citizens during the depression. In May 1934, during the last month of his first term, Dore had to deal with the Longshoreman’s Strike that closed ports up and down the coast. Dore returned to the practice of law after his term ended in 1934, but he was reelected in March of 1936, with the strong labor support by Dave Beck and the Teamsters, along with the American Federation of Labor. Dore died on April 18, 1938. *Dore, John Francis*, Historylink.org Essay 2720.

²⁰ *Ski Program for Week is Filled*, Seattle Times, January 17, 1934 (page 14).

Winter Park, Colorado, the country’s best known municipally operated ski area, came under public management in 1950. In 1923, the Moffet Railroad tunnel was completed linking Denver to the western slope of the Rockies. The tunnel ended at West Portal, and skiing began near there in the 1920. In the early 1930s, the head of the Denver Park and Recreation Department proposed a plan to create a winter sports area at West Portal. In 1936, a rope tow was built at the top of nearby Berthoud Pass. In 1937, the Forest Service built a ski jump at West Portal, along with a few trails, and ski trains began operating from Denver. In 1939, West Portal was renamed Winter Park, and a privately run ski area was begun. In 1950, the city and county of Denver formed a non-profit agency to run the Winter Park Ski area. Coloradoskihhistory.com.

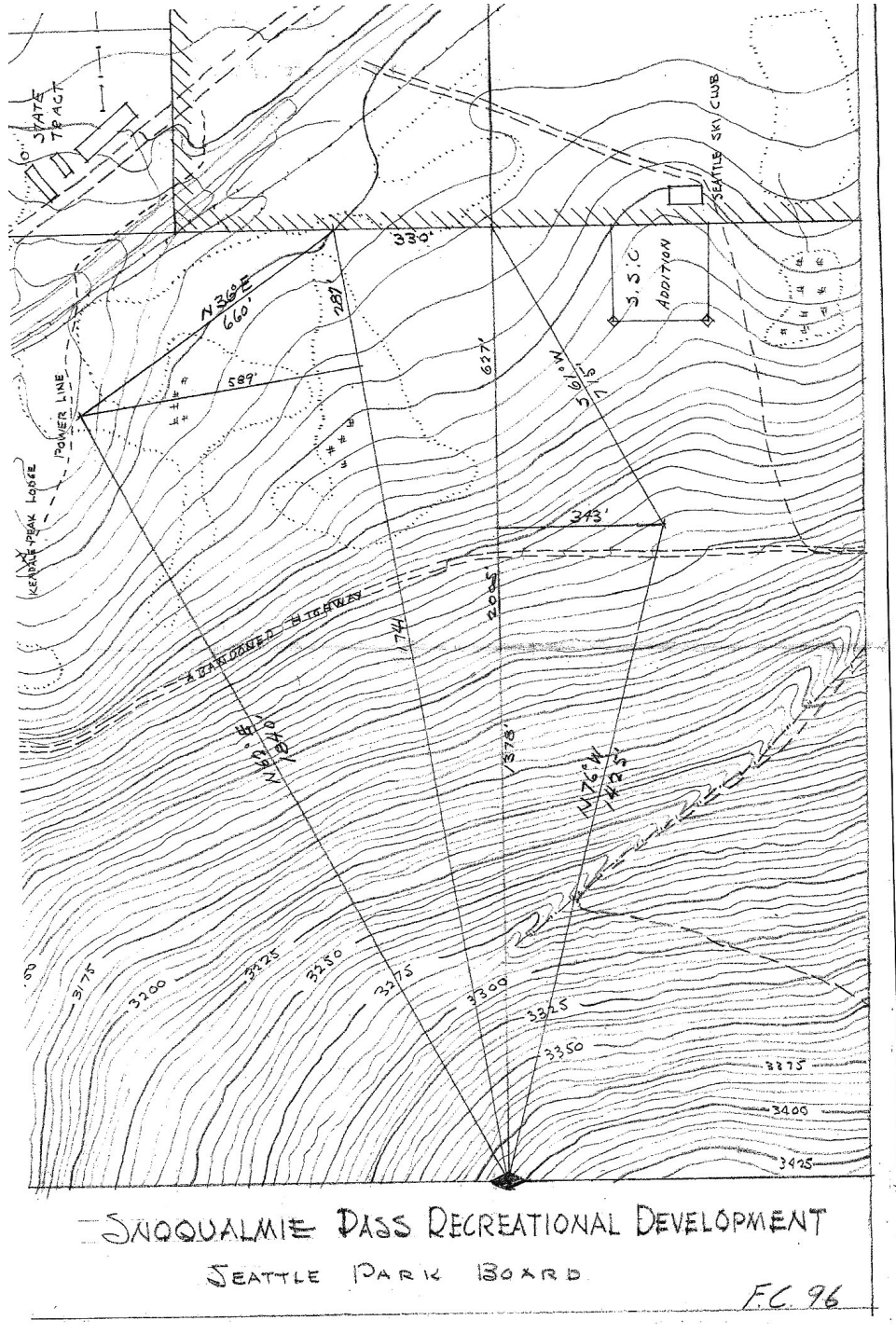
its budget by 1/3, and a number of employees were laid off. On August 2, 1933, Pursuant to the National Recovery Act, Mayor Dore directed the Park Board to limit the hours of mechanics and laborers to working for the Park Board to 35 hours a week, for which they would receive at least \$14 per week. Yet, Seattle was considering opening a new recreation area 60 miles from its city limits, accessible in the winter over a two lane icy, snow covered road. One assumes that planning for the ski park took place by the Park Board and Mayor Dore, that is not reflected in the public record.

Ski clubs supported the idea of creating a new ski area available to the public, and at least one began working to get such a facility started in the spring of 1933. The Mountaineers Bulletin of May 1933, says W. J. Maxwell suggested the club favor the establishment of ski grounds between Camp Mason and Snoqualmie Pass that would be available to the public, the “project to be developed by forest labor under government supervision.” A committee was appointed to confer on the matter.²¹ This implies that a new ski area accessible to the public was discussed at this time.

The Seattle Municipal Archives has several maps of the Snoqualmie Summit area where the Ski Park would be developed. One map is dated July 1, 1931, and shows a diagram of Maintenance Site, S.R. No. 2 on Snoqualmie Summit, the State Highway Department’s maintenance facility. A topo map entitled “Snoqualmie Pass Recreational Development, Seattle Park Board,” shows the area where the Ski Park was developed. The map is oriented so the top of the hill is at the bottom of the map, and the state highway is shown at the top of the map along the State Tract, which has outlines of the Summit Inn and two other buildings. The map shows the Seattle Ski Club & Addition in the upper right corner, which is not far from the state highway, the Kendall Peak Lodge on the upper left,

²¹ Alpenglow Ski History - Mountaineer Bulletin 1930 - 39, *Notes of Trustee’s Meeting*, May 1933 (page 5).

and an “abandoned highway” running through the middle, showing the route of the Snoqualmie Pass highway before it was relocated in the 1920s.



Courtesy of Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 4.

Seattle's Ski Park was made possible by a combination getting the use of free land on Snoqualmie Pass from the U.S. Forest Service, and federal funds from the Civil Works Administration (C.W. A.) to pay for preparation of the hill for skiing and to build a warming hut, taking advantage of one of the programs begun by the Roosevelt Administration to put people to work to mitigate the effects of the Great Depression.²²

Washington State had its own program to fund projects during the Depression, run by the State Emergency Relief Administration. The C.W. A. was formed on November 8, 1933, and projects begun or planned by the state agency were turned over the federal agency. By November 19, 1933, 34 projects designed to employ 2,588 men were turned over to the C.W.A. in King County.

The men will be employed at clearing and improving parks, making roads, trails and highways, flood control and various other projects that can be started immediately, with a minimum expenditure for materials. Employment will be opened as rapidly as the prospects can be found and the employable persons registered.

King County was expected to get funding for 12,740 jobs by December 15, which would make a "sizeable dent in the total number of unemployed." There were 9,300 employable heads of families on relief, and an equal number of "marginal" unemployed in the county. Only men or women registered with the U.S. Reemployment Service would be eligible for the C.W.A. jobs. Work on a number of Seattle Park projects would start immediately, but the Ski Park at Snoqualmie was not listed as one of them. Nationally, 10,865 men were employed at national parks and monuments, including 400 at Mt. Rainier where \$35,225 in funding had been received for various projects. By

²² The C.W. A. was formed on November 8, 1933, under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Harry L. Hopkins was in charge of the short-term agency, with a mission to use federal funds to put people to work doing construction. Roosevelt believed that jobs were better than cash handouts. It ended on March 31, 1934, after spending \$200 million and giving jobs to four million people. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Work Administration.

mid-December 1933, there were 15,000 men in King County at work on C.W.A. projects, and a total of nearly \$171,600 in federal funds had been spent in the county since November 15, 1933.²³

According to reports prepared in the spring of 1934, the Park Department and volunteers began to prepare the site on Snoqualmie Summit for the Ski Park in November 1933, even before it received formal approval to use the land for the project from the Forest Service, and before the formal work was done on the site in December by C.W.A. workers. "Park Department employees with the assistance of other interested citizens of Seattle donated spare time in clearing the ground for use, preparatory to the work which was done by the C.W.A workers." Another report said work started in November, 1933.

Work started in laying out the course and park in November. Civil Works Administration employees were used to clear a part of the grounds of trees, stumps and underbrush, transforming the area into a beautiful snow covered playground in a natural evergreen setting and ready for use at the peak of the winter sports season.²⁴

It is not clear when the Seattle Park Board formally sought permission from the U.S. Forest Service to use its land for a ski area, but it was clear who was behind the project.

The land on which the park now stands was United States forest property. It was obtained by the Seattle Park Board through the efforts of Mayor John F. Dore; Samuel Martin, president of the Park Board, and Ben Davis, supervisor of city parks.²⁵

A letter dated December 11, 1933, from John C. Kuhns, U.S. Forest Service Supervisor to

²³ *2,588 Needy in County Start Work at Once*, Seattle Times, November 19, 1933 (pages 1, 5). Work would begin at Fort Lawton, Sand Point, Washington Park, Seward Park, Lincoln Park, Woodland Park, Maple Leaf, Laurelhurst Playfield, Highland Park, Jefferson Park, and locations. *Jobs for 10,865*, Seattle Times, November 22, 1933 (page 5). *20,000 Dropped from County's Relief Roles*, Seattle Times, December 22, 1933 (page 13).

²⁴ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23.

²⁵ *Summit Course Ready; Spokane Tournament On*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1934 (page 21).

the City of Seattle Park Department, authorized work to start on the “ski slides at once” on National Forest Service land near Snoqualmie Pass, in “an area designated on the ground by Dr. Bordsen and representatives of the Forest Service, southwest of the highway.” A detailed description of the tract would be determined by a later survey. A special use permit would be issued in a few days.²⁶

On December 13, 1933, the Park Department sought permission from Seattle’s Purchasing Agent to authorize its employees to purchase gasoline from a Standard Oil Service Station in North Bend, “while on special duty pertaining to the establishment of a mountain camp in Snoqualmie Pass.” On December 15, 1933, the President of the Board of Park Commissioners wrote Mayor John F. Dore informing him that “the Snoqualmie National Forest Service has turned over for free lease a tract of land in the Snoqualmie National Forest, as a public skiing ground. The Civil Works Administration service has provided a crew of men to temporarily develop this area.”²⁷ Clearing land for a ski area in mid-December is an ambitious undertaking given the amount of snow that is typically on the ground on Snoqualmie Pass at that time of year.

The first mention of the ski park in the Seattle Times appeared on December 14, 1933, when it announced that Seattle Park Board officials were recruiting 40 workmen at North Bend to start clearing a mile-long, half-mile wide tract between the Seattle Ski Club and Commonwealth Ski Club grounds on Snoqualmie Pass, for use by Seattle’s skiing public. “Trees to be felled, ski run ready by January 1.” The Seattle Park Board Minutes of December 20, 1933, contains the first mention of the

²⁶ Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

²⁷ Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

ski park, when the Forest Service letter authorizing work to start immediately was presented.²⁸

On December 20, 1933, the U.S. Forest Service issued a Special Use Permit to the City of Seattle Park Department, signed by John C. Kuhns, Forest Supervisor. The permit covered “28.4 acres more or less of land” near the Snoqualmie Pass Highway for a “Public Playground,” which became its ski hill at Snoqualmie Pass.²⁹ “The permittee shall pay NO CHARGE under Reg L-2 B.” The Special Use Permit was valid for five years (until December 1939), although its terms anticipated that it could or would be extended beyond that five year period. “Construction work (or occupancy and use) shall begin within - 1- month, be completed within - 5 - years from the date of the permit, and this use shall be actually exercised at least - 90 - days each year, unless the time is extended or shortened.” Charges for the use of the land could be readjusted when necessary to place them on a consistent basis with charges to other permittees for like privileges, and a general readjustment would be made after five years, and at the end of each five year period thereafter.

The permit was subject to a number of conditions. No timber could be cut without a permit from the Forest Service. All clearing had to be done under the supervision of the District Ranger, and the strip of land between the highway and the tract “shall not be cleared.” Seattle had to provide, upon request, a way across the land for use by Forest officers and users of the National Forest land. The permit could be transferred with the approval of the Forest Service. Seattle could engage in

²⁸ *Skiers to Meet Tonight, Rialto Businesses Booms*, Seattle Times, December 14, 1933 (page 21). Seattle Park Board Minutes, Vol. XI, in the city’s Municipal Archives, which covers the time frame from August 16, 1933 to October 26, 1939.

²⁹ The special use permit made it clear that the size of the tract was 28.4 acres “more or less.” However, public descriptions of the ski hill said it was anywhere from 10 acres, to 20 acres, to 35 acres, to 45 acres. Since publications from 1934 mentioned a 10 acre ski park, that could have been the size of the cleared area, with the rest of the acreage remaining covered by trees. Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

business if it complied with the laws of the State of Washington.

The Permit described the kinds of structures that could be built on the land, both temporary and permanent.

All permanent buildings shall be constructed according to building and site plans furnished by the permittee and approved by the Forest Service. Flues must be constructed of brick, masonry or poured concrete by a reliable mason. All temporary buildings constructed by authority of the Forest Service will be removed or replaced in conformity with the approved plan within one year of their construction unless otherwise approved in writing by the Forest Supervisor.

Upon abandonment or termination of the permit, the permittee could remove structures it placed on the premises unless the materials were furnished by the Forest Service. Failure to remove structures meant they became the property of the Forest Service. Later, the temporary buildings that the Park Board built on the site became a bone of contention with the Forest Service.

In late December 1933, 100 men were building a ski run at Snoqualmie on land donated to the Park Department. By that time, 16,728 men and women were working on 284 C.W.A. projects in King County, and new projects were still being developed. Weekly payrolls were \$306,000.³⁰

The Mountaineers Bulletin of January 1936, described the history of the Municipal Ski Park. In December 1933, Ben Evans and a few others obtained money from the Civil Works Administration (C.W.A.) to clear the land. Land plotted for private homesites was withdrawn from private use to be used to meet the needs of the public. After December 11, 1933, a crew of 40 to 50 Civilian

³⁰ The projects included transforming Fort Lawton from a wild reservation into a park; flood work at Green River and Mill Creek; renovations at Seattle schools and grounds; work on the city's street railway; drainage, flood and sanitation projects throughout the county; street rebuilding and surveys in Seattle; street paving, grading and repairs; 19 highway projects; a study of fish resources; and many others. "Accountants, chemists, draftsmen, engineers, carpenters, painters, musicians, play leaders, and a wide variety of other trade, craft and professional workers have found employment in the program." *16,728 in King County Now at Work on C.W.A. Projects*, Seattle Times, December 31, 1933 (pages 21, 30).

Conservation Corps workers (loggers and a few carpenters) from North Bend spent five weeks clearing a 10 acre tract of land “donated by the Forest Supervisor to the Seattle Park Board as a recreation area for skiing.” They cut trees above a meadow for skiing, and erected a warming hut the size of a double garage for a shelter. Ernest Harris and Wm. J. Maxwell were in charge of the work, under the direction Ben Evans of the Park Board. T. J. Bordsen was appointed chairman of the committee representing the Mountaineers.³¹

Materials in the Seattle Municipal Archives show the layout of the ski park and alternate plans for a permanent grand lodge. Pictures in Seattle’s Municipal Photo Archives show the opening ceremony in 1934, and skiers on the hill in 1935. Seattle’s plans for a grand lodge at the Ski Park were never realized, and only a small warming hut was built, the size of a double garage with temporary sanitary facilities. These temporary structures led the Forest Service to criticize the city in 1937, in a letter found in Seattle’s Municipal archives.

[T]he warming house and the latrines are makeshift structures which were approved by the Forest Service representatives only until such time as it was demonstrated that the public use of the area required permanent structures. Our experience over a period of three years has indicated that the buildings and the existing ski runs are inadequate and that the increasing public use will make it imperative that additional and better facilities be installed not only for skiing but also for the comfort of the skiers. Sanitary facilities always have been inadequate.³²

Work on the Municipal Ski Park by the C.W.A. workers did not begun until after December 20, 1933, when winter had set in and snow was on the ground. Pictures from Seattle’s Municipal Photo Archives show how difficult the work was. Since this was the middle of the Depression, the men were likely happy to have work to do, although they must have suffered from cold and snow.

³¹ Mountaineers Bulletin, January 1936, Notes (page 4), Alpenglow Ski Mountaineering History Project, Mountaineer Bulletin, 1930 - 39.

³² Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.



Workmen at Ski Park. Seattle Photo archives, # 30374.



Work on Seattle Ski Park, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 31172.



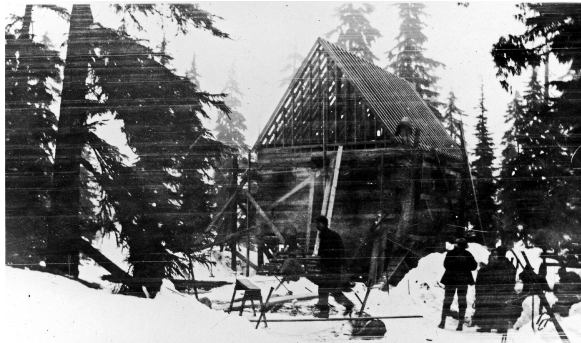
Building the warming hut, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 30374.



Building the warming hut, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 31173.



Building the warming hut, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 31191.



Building the warming hut, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 31190.



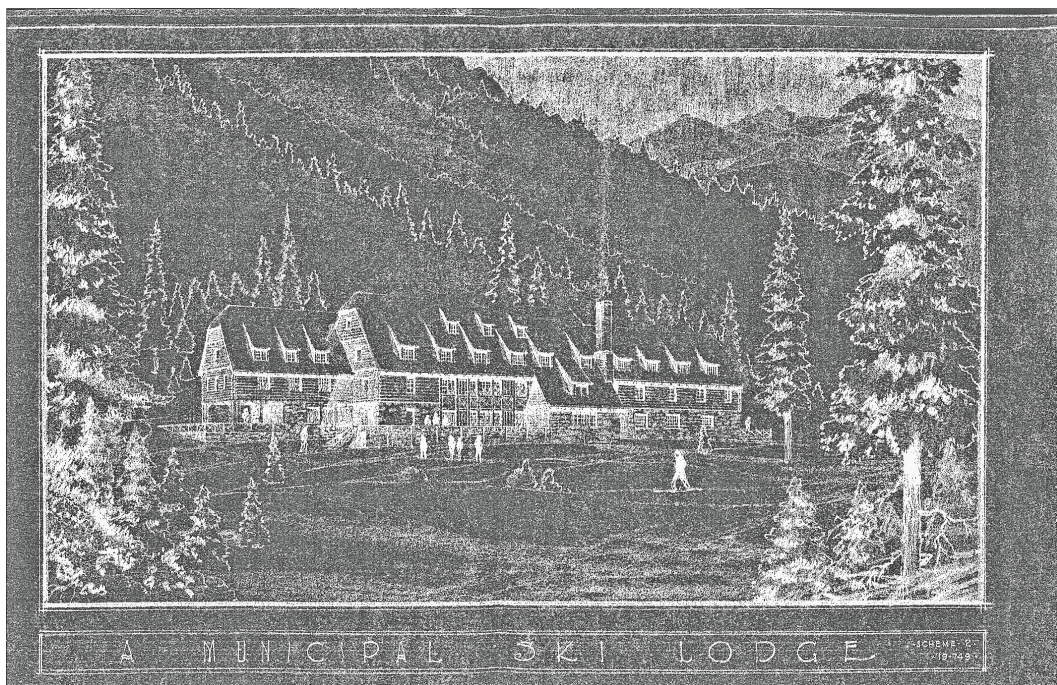
Building the warming hut, December 1933, Seattle Photo archives, # 31174

Seattle's Municipal Archives contains two plans for the permanent ski lodge at the Ski Park. The drawings for the grand lodge were prepared by the C.W.A..³³ The drawing shown above was a four story lodge and is labeled "scheme 2." The first floor had an entry porch leading into a 27 x 28 foot Ski Room. Next came a 46 x 42 foot lounge, a 27 x 18 foot dining room, and a 21 x 20 foot kitchen. The second floor had two sleeping wings and a second floor lounge. The first dorm room

³³ Seattle Municipal archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3, 4.

could hold 22 double bunk beds. On the other side of the lounge were hotel rooms. The third floor had three dormitory rooms. The first was 18 x 25 feet for 15 double bunks, with an adjoining bathroom and dressing room. A second 30 x 41 foot dorm room held 18 double bunk beds, with an adjoining toilet and dressing room. A third 19 x 64 foot dorm room held 20 double bunk beds. On the fourth floor, there were “servant’s rooms.”

Scheme 3 is a smaller two story version of the lodge. On the first floor, there was a ski room as an entry, leading to an office, concessionaire, kitchen, and a lunch room, all facing the ski hill. Facing the highway, there was a lobby, a room marked “lodge,” and a dining room. On the second floor, there were two wings, each with dormitory rooms. One plan for the second floor showed a dorm room for 48 double bunk beds, and another dorm room for 64 double bunk beds. An alternate plan for the second floor showed a men’s dorm room for 82 beds, a lounge, a woman’s dorm room for 82 double bunk beds, and a smaller dorm room holding 12 double bunks.



Plans for large lodge at Seattle’s Municipal Ski Park. Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 4.

There is no discussion in the Park Board minutes about the lodge or the warming shed that was built instead. The lodge would have been a magnificent addition to the Municipal Ski Park. The pictures below show the small temporary warming hut that was constructed which was never replaced by a permanent structure.



Warming Hut at Municipal Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, # 30371.



Warming Hut at Municipal Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, # 30383



Warming hut at Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, # 31164



Warming Hut at Municipal Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, # 31165



Warming Hut at Municipal Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, # 30368.

B. EXCITEMENT GROWS FOR THE 1934 SKI SEASON - TIMES PUBLISHED HOW TO SKI ARTICLES

In early December 1933, the Paradise Ski Club was formed under the leadership of John Condon of the University of Washington and Ken Syverson of Tacoma; the University Book store sponsored the first slalom race of the year at Paradise Valley; and the Rainier National Park Company was considering sponsoring a downhill race “which would have no rival in America,” which would become the Silver Skis race. The race would start at Camp Muir at 10,200 feet to Paradise Lodge at 5,557 feet, a drop of 5,000 feet, a route that had been run from between 12 to 15 minutes. The race would be spectacular but dangerous to inexperienced skiers, so it would have to be confined to the very best skiers. Three-fourths of the route could be viewed from Paradise Lodge, as Muir was perched on the side of Cowlitz Glacier. There was hope that the highway would be kept open to Paradise that winter. Darroch Crookes was in charge of ski instruction at Paradise.³⁴

In anticipation of the opening of the Seattle Municipal Ski Park, the Seattle Times ran a series of seven “how to ski” articles that ran each Sunday from December 15, 1933 to January 28, 1934. The articles were written by Ben Thompson, “Northwest Ski Expert,” designed to cover essential skiing techniques to coincide with the opening of the Ski Park. Thompson was the former winter sports director and chief guide on Mount Rainier, “one of the Northwest’s best students of skiing,” who helped coach the U.W. Ski Team in 1934. The series was designed to show novices “how to learn, how to develop, how to master the fundamental turns on which all skiing success is built.” Students were supposed to read each weekly installment, practice for a week, read another installment, and on and on. No need to take actual lessons. Thompson also ran the ski department

³⁴ *Snow Arrives in Paradise; Plans Laid for Races*, Seattle Times, December 6, 1933 (page 17).

at the Windy Langlie store in downtown Seattle, which said “Ben knows skiing - where to go - what to wear and the equipment necessary for best results. Come in anytime for information”.³⁵

The first Ski Lesson, published on December 15, 1933, had a picture of Thompson doing a snowplow, “first, balance, then try stemming.” The article contained sage advice.

[The skier] is not to hurl himself forward impetuously down a steep snow slope. That would be silly. He would fall. Learning to ski is to a great degree like learning to skate. Balance comes first, sense of power. Then speed can be acquired later. But not until every turn in the book is mastered. The turns are fundamental. Without a fundamental - no skiing. How, for instance, would you stop if you saw a tree looming right ahead, while you were doing forty miles an hour? Throw yourself down? You might be hurt.

Thompson then went on to describe how to do a stem turn (“the suavety of motion is impeded, without too quick a check”); the double stem; the kick turn; and the parallel kick turn (a “Charlie Chaplinesque procedure”). Thompson considered that to be enough for the first lesson.³⁶

Lesson No. 2 was published the following Sunday, and covered uphill climbing, downhill running, and level riding. Since there were no ski lifts in 1933, Thompson spent a lot of time on climbing techniques. He also covered level skiing, or cross-country skiing, the step turn, and went over the fundamentals of the stem and double stem turn again. He ended the article by saying to bring chains along on all ski trips.³⁷

The third ski lesson appeared on December 31, 1933, and covered how to crouch, “an aid to balance in downhill running,” and the telemark. There were three positions for downhill running,

³⁵ Windy Langlie ad, Seattle Times, December 15, 1933 (page 14).

³⁶ *Skiing Made Easy - Article No. 1, Ben Thomson Shows You How to Ski*, Seattle Times December 17, 1933 (pages 25, 27).

³⁷ *No. 2 in Skiing Technique, Uphill Climbing, Downhill Running, Level Riding Told in Article*, December 24, 1933 (page 21).

upright, crouch, and the telemark. The crouch lends safety and control as it lowers the center of balance and steadies control. There is both a medium crouch and a low crouch. He ended this lesson with his same warning. “Don’t go too fast. Proper skiing is not learned by going fast at first. That brings only spills and uncertainty. Go slow. Learn to be instinctive in movement.”³⁸

Lesson No. 4, appearing on January 7, 1934, was a practical one - *Get Up, One Always Falls; But Do it the Easy Way*. The article had a picture of Darroch Crookes, ski instructor at Paradise Valley, demonstrating the correct method of getting up after a fall. “One is not to scramble out of the self-dug hole into which he has plunged, off balance, skis askew and perhaps badly twisted. He must use judgment.” Thompson emphasized the importance of learning a variety of turning techniques to deal with changing snow and hill conditions, and he went through the mechanics of the single stem turn.³⁹

Lesson No. 5, published on January 14, 1934, covered the Lifted Stem, a simple turn but very sudden, to encourage skiers who “massaged away all the bruises incurred on last weekend’s crusted snowfields.” The lifted stem was one of the quickest and simplest turns for use in heavy snow. Thompson gave advice on how to recognize different snow conditions and to vary one’s techniques accordingly. He ended with more advice. “Don’t, in your new-found confidence once you get the hang of it, go rambling over glaciers or into strange country.”⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ski Lesson No. 3: How to Crouch, add Running Balance, Notes Thompson, Comes With its Use*, Seattle Times, December 31, 1933 (page 25).

³⁹ *Ski Lesson No. 4: Get Up, One Always Falls; But Do it the Easy Way*, Seattle Times, January 7, 1933 (page 25).

⁴⁰ *Ski Lesson No. 5: The Lifted Stem: Simple Turn, Thompson Points out, But Very Sudden*, Seattle Times, January 14, 1934 (page 25).

Lesson No. 6, published on January 21, 1934, covered Christies, including the stem Christiania, the stick Christiania, the pure Christiania and the open Christiania. These were high speed turns which could be used on steep slopes and in more different kinds of snow than any other turn. There was a picture of Dr. Otto Strizek, “well known slalom skier,” executing a pure Christiania turn “done almost entirely with body swing and with practically no muscular effort.”⁴¹

The last lesson published on January 28, 1934, covered the telemark turn and skate skiing. Thompson said the telemark was one of the easiest turns to learn but it was “one of the least useful of them all.” The turn was useful in heavy deep snow, but on hard snow it was not as safe or sure as other turns. Ski skating was done in the same manner as ice skating, and was best done on gentle downhill slopes. “Skating is difficult and somewhat treacherous in heavy, deep snow and should only be used when going directly downhill and not on a traverse.”⁴²

Presumably, if a skier had carefully read all the articles, and practiced the turns in their living rooms during the week and on the weekends in the snow, he or she was capable of handling the conditions at Seattle’s new Ski Park.

C. SKI PARK OPENS JANUARY 21, 1934 WITH A FLOURISH

Gala opening ceremonies were set for January 21, 1934, for the Snoqualmie Ski Park “developed by C.W.A. funds,” to accommodate the growing number of Seattle skiers, with the Seattle Times saying that 10 acre Ski Park at the Summit, near Snoqualmie Pass, became a unit in Seattle’s rapidly expanding ski plan. “This opening represents another step forward in the development of

⁴¹ *Ski Lesson No. 6: Christies, Stem, Stick, Pure Open Turns Explained*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1934 (page 22).

⁴² *Ski Lesson No. 7: Telemark, and, to be Different, Some Ski-Skating*, Seattle Times, January 28, 1934 (page 24).

Seattle as the focal point for winter sports activity of the West.”

Snoqualmie Ski Park captures Seattle’s interest, for its very uniqueness if nothing else. The land on which the park now stands was United States forest property. It was obtained by the Seattle Park Board through the efforts of Mayor John F. Dore; Samuel Martin, president of the Park Board; and Ben Evans, supervisor of city parks. Fifty men began clearing it five weeks ago. Today it is ready for public occupancy. Once the dedicatory ceremonies are ended, the public takes it, to have and to hold....This opening marks another step forward in the development of Seattle as the focal point for winter sports activities of the West.⁴³

The Seattle Park Department planned an impressive opening ceremony for their new Ski Park about which they were justly proud

Having ventured into an unprecedented enterprise - the acquisition of skiing property at Summit, Snoqualmie Pass - the Seattle Park Department today set out to make its dedication Sunday something grandfathers would tell their descendants far along in the twentieth century. Mayor John F. Dore will be there, to turn the big hillside tract, cleared and ready, to the skiing folk of the city. Other city and state officials, ski club leaders and winter sports enthusiasts will be on hand. So will the Seattle Ski Council, parent of all the organizations interested in winter sports.

Ben Evans, superintendent of playgrounds for the Park Department, said “[t]his opening marks another step forward in the development of Seattle as the focal point for winter sports activity of the West.”⁴⁴

“Seven girl skiers, all accomplished, will compete for the honor of being crowned queen of the dedicatory ceremonies.” “Vividly costumed, the queen candidates will make their appearance on the long Park Department slope, zoom to the bottom down a designated trail which will call for all their skiing skill.” Then will come an obstacle event; a flag race; formation skiing; a ski jump on a

⁴³ *Park Department to Dedicate Ski Property*, Seattle Times, January 16, 1934 (page 12); *Ski Park Dedication On Tomorrow, New Tract Near Summit Ready for Occupancy*, Seattle Times, January 20, 1934 (page 7); *Summit Course Ready; Spokane Tournament On*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1934 (page 21).

⁴⁴ *Park Department to Dedicate Ski Property*, Seattle Times, January 16, 1934 (page 17).

modified hill by junior members of the Seattle Ski Club; and the opening of the ski hill. The 35 piece North Bend Community Band would be on hand.

Junior members of the Seattle Ski Club will make the jumps to provide new thrills for the thousands who are expected to gather at the summit for the ceremony Sunday. A special jump and snow take-off will be erected on the ski track, recently completed at the playground...Entrants in the "Northwest Ski Queen" competition which will climax with the selection of the best woman skier to rule over the dedication of the winter sports playground...The girls will go through a regular competitive series of skiing maneuvers with twists and runs aplenty before the judges choose the "queen."⁴⁵

The number of other ski events the weekend of the opening of the Ski Park shows how popular the sport had become in the Northwest.

If the first Norwegian skier to ever bend the end up on the limb of a tree and lace it to his feet with walrus hide could stage a renaissance, he would immediately be projected into a fit of what in them days was lightly termed the humours. Ski times have changed. The old boy would grow dizzy. For look at Sunday's skiing bill.

Washington's recreational skiing had grown amazingly in three years. "If you can see a snow-clad hillside not marked by a passing ski, you're far into the hills."

Recreational skiing the length and breath of the state, wherever there's enough snow to be had - and there is enough to be had at any altitude above 4,000 feet... And ski instructors dotting the glittering landscape wherever there are two or more skiers gathered...

Tacoma Day would be held at Paradise Valley on Mount Rainier, "with slalom and downhill races, snow-shoe races, and no end to other matters." The event included night skiing by use of flood lights. Access to the event was by car, which "should be equipped with chains" to reach Narada Falls. "A walk remains, a mile and a half hike to Paradise Lodge. The walk is not difficult. Fifty minutes of ordinary walking does it." "Parking is the most serious problem," and a good early start was

⁴⁵ *Ski Program For Week is Filed*, Seattle Times, January 17 (page 14); *Ski Park Dedication ON; New Tract Near Summit Ready for Occupancy*, Seattle Times, January 20, 1934 (page 7); *Ski Jumping on Park Bill*, Seattle Times, January 18, 1934 (page 14).

recommended. A Northwest Ski Association recognized jumping event was held at Mount Spokane “despite adverse conditions,” which was attended by 2,000 the prior year. The National Ski Championships were to be held at Fox River, Grove, Ill, and a crowd of 30,000 was expected to attend. Every member of the American Olympic team was entered, along with “all the sectional championships from Coast to Coast.”⁴⁶

On January 21, 1934, “despite the weather,” Seattle held the opening ceremonies for its Ski Park, “the first municipal ski course” in the country, witnessed by 1,000 spectators, “most of them on skis.” The Seattle P.I. of January 22, 1934, reported that “a steady rain fell during the ceremonies.” Mayor John F. Dore dedicated the new ski area in a day full of ceremonies.

“This park is yours,” said Mayor Dore, addressing part of the crowd of 1,000 which witnessed the program. The rest were skiing, they liked the hill as well. “We hope to expand it, to take in more territory, make more of a clearing. We want to give you a ski instructor so that your children may learn to ski. There are other plans which need developing, and which we shall lend our assistance to.”

“It was turned over to the skiing multitude...in a picturesque ceremony by Mayor John F. Dore and the Seattle Park Board, and the skiers wasted no time; they took it by the hundreds.”

The Times carried a picture of Mayor Dore crowning Marguerite Strizek of the Seattle Ski Club holding a bouquet of roses, who was chosen Ski Queen after a skiing competition was held between girl skiers from the seven Snoqualmie Pass clubs: Bush School, Commonwealth Ski Club, Kendall Peak Lodge, Mountaineers, Seattle Ski Club, Washington Alpine Club, and University Ski Club. “It was decided by the judges Miss Strizek had chosen a more difficult course to run.” The Times had another picture of Mayor Dore on skis after he fell saying, “whew! Hizzoner again,

⁴⁶ *Ski Activities Spot State for Coming Sunday*, Seattle Times, January 19, 1934 (page 20); *Summit Course Ready: Spokane Tournament On, & 30,000 Expected at National Tourney*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1934 (page 21).

spilled,” and “the ski park is open for the public, which has a perfect right to fall down as much as it pleases.” Junior jumpers gave an exhibition on a miniature hill, and 20 skiers raced down a “quickly devised slalom course, and the dedication broke up in a general rush of skiers to the hill.”⁴⁷

A copy of the Dedication Program can be found in the City of Seattle’s Municipal archives. Formal acknowledgments were given to public officials who assisted with the venture, including the Supervisor and District Ranger of the Snoqualmie National Forest; Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest; Chief Engineer, King County Civil Works Administration; State Superintendent of Parks; State Highway Engineer, District Highway Engineer and the Snoqualmie Area Highway Engineer; Chief, State Highway Patrol; and Snoqualmie National Forest Service. Others directly involved in the ski area were acknowledged, including Dr. T.L. Bordsen, Location of site; E.R. Harris, Construction of buildings; and M. J. Maxwell, Construction of ski area.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Summit Course Given Skiers by City Park Body, & When Skiing is Believing*, Seattle Times, January 22, 1934 (page 12).

⁴⁸ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

DEDICATION PROGRAM

Snoqualmie Ski Park



JANUARY 21, 1934
1:00 P. M.

SNOQUALMIE PASS SUMMIT AREA

folder 5510 drawer 4 title 3
date acc.# 00007
subject ~~Project Development~~
~~Project Management~~
Seattle parks, Sherwood file.

SEATTLE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS:

SAMUEL MARTIN, President
PETER ROSAIA
DR. OEOIL L. TENNY
LAWRENCE ARNOLD
MRS. JAMES O. GALLAGHER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

Mr. John G. Kuhns, Supervisor, Snoqualmie National Forest
Mr. B. G. Saterbo, District Ranger, Snoqualmie National Forest
Mr. Gilbert D. Brown, Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest
Mr. A. M. Young, Chief Engineer, King County Civil Works Administration
Mr. W. G. Weigle, State Superintendent of Parks
Mr. L. V. Murrow, State Highway Engineer
Mr. George H. Shearer, District Highway Engineer
Mr. P. J. McKay, Highway Engineer, Snoqualmie Area
Mr. William Cole, Chief, State Highway Patrol
Mr. Loren Ray, District Highway Patrol
Dr. T. L. Bordsen, Location of site
Mr. E. R. Harris, Construction of buildings
Mr. W. J. Maxwell, Construction of ski area
Mr. H. V. Best, Snoqualmie National Forest Seavice

MEMBER CLUBS OF SEATTLE SKI COUNCIL COOPERATING WITH PROGRAM COMMITTEE:

REPRESENTATIVE	CLUB
Mr. H. Otto Giese	Seattle Ski Club
Mr. Paul Shorrock	Mountaineers
Mr. Carl Mahnken	Commonwealth Ski Club
Mr. Ed. Loners	Washington Alpine Club
Mr. Frank Bush	Y. M. C. A.
Mr. Ted Lewis	Boy Scouts
Mr. Wendell Trospen	Paradise Ski Club
Mr. Jack Hillyer	University Ski Club
Mr. Don Thomas	Kendall Peak Lodge
Mrs. Helen Bush	Bush School
Mr. Fred Thiem	Torvig Ski Club
Mr. Lowell Micklewait	Junior Chamber of Commerce

SKI EDITORS	PRESS
Mr. Ken Binns	Seattle Times
Mr. Chick Garrett	Seattle Star
Mr. Mike Donohoe	Seattle P. I.

PROGRAM

- I. Assembly Signal
- II. Musical Selection - - - - - North End Community Band
J. L. G. Meyers, Leader
- III. Flag Ceremony - - - - - Seattle Boy Scouts
- IV. Introductions - - - - - Samuel Martin, President, Seattle Park Board
- V. Musical Selections by band
- VI. Dedication Address - - - - - Mayor John F. Dore
- VII. Ski Events - - - - - Members of Organized Ski Clubs
 - (a) Selection of Honorary Queen
Judges: Seattle Press representatives, assisted by ski club members

CONTESTANTS:

NO.	NAME	CLUB
1.	Phyllis Ross	Bush School
2.	Ruth Brines	Commonwealth Ski Club
3.	Elizabeth Thomas	Kendall Peak Lodge
4.	Helen Spellar	Mountaineers
5.	Marguerite Strizek	Seattle Ski Club
6.	Gertrude Camp	Washington Alpine Club
7.	Rena Cox	University Ski Club

- (b) Obstacle Event
- (c) Flag Race
- (d) Formation Skiing
- (e) Ski Jump, Seattle Ski Club junior members
- (f) Opening of ski hill to public, by Queen

(Ski events subject to weather conditions)

Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 4.



THE CITY OF SEATTLE OPENS A MOUNTAIN PLAYGROUND: AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES

Mayor Dorn, who with Samuel Martin, Park Board president, last Sunday dedicated Snoqualmie Ski Park at Summit, is seen with "Queen Margarita," Miss Margarita Strizek of the Seattle Ski Club, who won the queenly honor in a competition with girls from six other Snoqualmie Pass clubs, three of whom are shown at the extreme right; From left, Jessie Duncan, Washington Alpine Club; Rena Cox, U. of W. Ski Club; Helen Spellar, Mountaineers.



THE FIRST U. S. MUNICIPAL SKI COURSE: SNOQUALMIE SKI PARK

A general view of the winter sports area that has been established at Summit, on the Snoqualmie Pass Highway, by the Seattle Park Board. The picture was made as skiers took possession of the



Mayor Dore at opening ceremony. Seattle photo archives, # 31880.



Mayor & admirers. Seattle Photo archives, # 31182.



Mayor Dore, Seattle photo archives, # 31187.



Mayor Dore, Seattle Photo archives, #31181.



Queen Strizek. Seattle photo archives, #31184.



Opening ceremonies of Ski Park, Seattle photo archives, # 31182.



Cutting the ribbon at opening ceremonies. Seattle Photo archives, #31183.



North Bend Band at opening of Seattle Municipal Park, January 21, 1934.
Seattle Photo archives, # 31183.

On January 24, 1934, Seattle's Park Board authorized the Director of Playfields to employ W. J. Maxwell for 60 days as a special caretaker at the Municipal Ski Hill. It also took other steps to get more Seattle residents interested in skiing, a sport that few had ever tried. The Board approved the employment of a ski instructor for 20 days at the same salary paid to a Play Leader in the Park system, and authorized arrangements to secure a suitable location in a downtown Seattle building to provide indoor ski lessons to Seattle residents. On February 14, 1934, the Commission for Civil Service presented a classification for the Caretaker and Play Leader for the Ski Park.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

The same month the Municipal Ski Park opened, the Seattle P .I carried an article announcing that the country's first rope tow had opened, giving local skiers a look at the future. "Ahoy skiers! Read this!" The first motorized ski-tow in the country opened on January 29th, 1934, at Woodstock, Vermont. "The device consisted of an endless rope which runs over a pulley at the top of the hill over a motor at the foot of the incline. It takes skiers up 900 feet in one minute."⁵⁰

D. SEATTLE OPENS AN INDOOR SKI ARENA THAT IS WIDELY PUBLICIZED

In February 1934, as part of Seattle's efforts to promote skiing, the Seattle Park Board opened an indoor school for skiers offering free courses in the old Westlake Skating Rink at 2229 Ninth Ave. Six ski classes were offered each day, with courses lasting a week. Final instructions were offered the following Sunday on the "snowy slopes of the municipal park." The school included lectures on equipment, the use of it, and first aid, along with practice and training on ski walking, sliding, and various turns. Harry Detjen was the instructor.⁵¹

Seattle's unusual indoor ski arena attracted attention throughout the country. The Sarasota [Florida] Herald-Tribune of March 2, 1934, published an article, *Seattle Skiers Learn to Ski on a Soapy Skidway*. Ski enthusiasts were "learning the art of the telemark, christiana, gelandesprung, double stem and such ski turns on a soap-covered floor far from the icy slopes and chilling snow of the mountains". Seattle had begun the first "indoor ski school" in the country, run by the Park Board, offering free ski lessons. "The soap-polished floor makes it possible for the people to manipulate their skis."

⁵⁰ Galvin *Early Ski Tows*, Sahalie Historical Note #6.

⁵¹ *Park Ski School Opening, Playground Course Starts on Indoor Rink*, Seattle Times, February 2, 1934 (page 22).

The Christian Science Monitor's article was headlined, *Seattle Ski School Trains for Events on Municipal Field*. Seattle's Park Board had opened a school for skiers in downtown as a sequel to a municipal ski field of 30 acres opened in the Cascades with the help of CWA workers.

Skiing is easily accessible to the residents of the city, as it is only a two-hour ride over splendid highway "up to the big hill" as the ski grounds in Snoqualmie Pass are referred to. To a people who have little in the way of coasting or ice-skating, this access to the mountains for skiing has opened up a new world of winter sport which had taken the community by storm. Ski "queens," ski tournaments and ski carnivals are the rule all through the Northwest.

The indoor ski arena was just of several efforts to make skiing available to all young people, and get them "into the hills for this clean sport."

The school is held in a former ice rink where the floor is made slick by soap chips. Skilled instructors teach pupils how to balance, how to climb, how to turn and how to slide. Six classes day are held, each accommodating 50. Some classes are open to women, some for young children, some for high school age, and evening classes are held for both men and women.



Seattle's indoor ski arena. Seattle Photo archives, # 31175.



Seattle's indoor ski arena. Seattle photo archives, # 31176.

Seattle's Municipal Archives contains a five page *Plan for Course of Instruction for Ground School for Skiers*, prepared for the indoor classes. The comprehensive course was designed to cover all aspects of skiing. It included lectures on Equipment; Inspection of Equipment; Non Use of Poles;

Posture; Walking - level or downhill; Daisy Turn; Walking - uphill, Kick Turn on level; Side Step Climb; Standing Jump Turn; Sliding; Traverse Sliding; Herring Bone Climb; Snow Plow; Double Stem Turn; Single Stem Brake; Single Stem Turn; Lifted Stem Turn; Pure Christiania Turn; Jerked Christiania Turn; Open Christiania Turn; Telemark Turn; and First Aid.⁵²

Lectures on equipment were designed to acquaint students with the traditional knowledge of ski equipment, to obtain the basic knowledge which natives of Scandinavia and Switzerland receive. Exercises were given to familiarize students with skis, balance, and the basic maneuvers and movements used in skiing. Exercises were explained and demonstrated, then practiced two or three times before students do the exercises with their eyes closed. The lecture on first aid would enable the skier to give emergency treatment in case of accident, not to make a doctor of him. "The general procedure of this course is progressive and cumulative. It begins with the very simplest and fundamental of the movements required in skiing, and gradually works up to those maneuvers that require fitness."

One hour classes were given Mondays through Fridays, so as not to be exhausting. The sixth class, held on Sundays, took place on the snow at the Ski Park. "In summary, it may be said that this course will do a very practical work in preparing the student to learn how to ski."

E. WINTER SPORTS WEEK HELD TO PROMOTE SKIING IN FEBRUARY 1934

The first week in February of 1934, was Winter Sports Week in Seattle, designed to promote the sport that was growing so quickly in popularity, which ended with the Seattle Ski Club's tournament at the Summit which featured ski-jumping and slalom competitions. The whole city was asked to get better acquainted with "the perfect opportunities for skiing abundant in this region." The

⁵² Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 44.

Washington Athletic Club and the Seattle Sports Council joined the Winter Sports Week Committee which was “thumping home the message that Seattle has the best skiing in the United States.” The Seattle committee would meet with the visiting Portland Winter Sports Carnival officials, and a ski parade would be held up Second Avenue winding up at the Washington Athletic Club for a luncheon.⁵³

A luncheon was held by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce honoring Portland ski officials, attended by the mayors of Portland and Seattle and three ski queens, one from the Portland Winter Sports Carnival, one from Tacoma day at Paradise Valley, and Queen Marguerite Strizek who reigned at the opening of Seattle’s Ski Park. This was Seattle’s first Winter Sports week but Portland had hosted three successful ones, and the Seattle Chamber wanted to learn from Portland’s experience. “We’re juniors in this business,...Portland has been at it for three years. They realized the power of skiing before we did. That’s why we’re having this luncheon.” In Oregon, the Cascade Ski Club started holding tournaments but they grew so fast and so many people attended that the Club appealed to the Chamber of Commerce for help. The Junior Chamber of Commerce came up with the idea of a ski carnival, and the Winter Sports Carnival Association was formed. Since there were over 50,000 skiers in the Northwest, many civic organizations got behind the idea of a Carnival. Luncheon speakers emphasized how popular skiing had become world-wide.

Munich has 100,000 outbound skiers each weekend; Boston ran one extra railroad car to the White Mountains five years ago for skiers, now sends from five to ten 15-car special trains; Montreal runs fifteen to eighteen special trains on week-ends to the ski courses; Paradise Valley saw 100 cabins rented during last winter, 400 cabins this year.

Mayor Dore said he wanted to see Seattle’s “children catch the spirit of this ski sport....I want to see

⁵³ *Winter Sports Week Near*, Seattle Times, January 23, 1934 (page 10); *Luncheon for Ski Party to Get Much Help*, Seattle Times, February 1, 1934 (page 16).

[Seattle's new indoor ski arena] patronized by everyone - men and women and children - just to make life more enjoyable for the people who live here."⁵⁴

The Seattle Times published a picture of Ski Queen Marguerite Strizek and Alfred H. Lundin, the authors' great-uncle and president of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, promoting the luncheon.



Seattle Times, February 2, 1934.

⁵⁴ *Cross-Country Race will Open Annual Tournament; Slalom, Jumps Sunday to Top Huge Program*, Seattle Times, February 2, 1934 (page 22); *Portland civic Leaders Lunch, Talk of Skiing*, Seattle Times, February 4, 1934 (page 21).

Seattle's first Winter Sports Week culminated with the Seattle Ski Club's tournament at Snoqualmie Summit the following weekend, where a cross-country race would open the race, followed by slalom and jumping competitions.

Only jumpers of admitted quality will be permitted to enter. The Seattle Ski Club hill is of such tremendous capacity only the best can make the jump in safety - and inclusion of inexperienced jumpers would stretch the program out too long. The slalom race, under supervision of Ben Thompson, starts at 12 noon, on the steepest, most difficult slalom course in the Northwest.

10,000 spectators were expected to attend the event, and transportation and parking were a concern. A shuttle system of busses that would charge 25 cents would operate up and down the highway from the parked cars to the Ski Club trail to help deal with the expected traffic jam.⁵⁵

The Seattle Ski Club's Fourth Annual Jumping Championship was held at Snoqualmie Summit the first weekend of February 1934. The jumping competition was held at the big jump near Beaver Lake, a mile up the hill from the Summit of Snoqualmie Pass, and was watched by 2,500 spectators including Mayor John Dore, Queen Robertson of Portland, and Queen Strizek of Seattle. The tournament also included cross-country races and the first slalom race sanctioned by the Pacific Northwest Ski Association. There were over 100 entrants in the jumping contest despite efforts to limit the field. "We do not need inexperienced jumpers," declared the head of the tournament. Motorists stopped by traffic in the pass were instructed to "park their machines, purchase tickets from the ticket sellers who follow traffic down the highway, and get free transportation to the Summit in the buses the ski club has retained for the tournament." Special buses left Seattle, charging \$2.50 for a round trip. Admission to the tournament was free.

The Seattle Times had a picture of Tom Mobraaten of Vancouver, B.C., described as the

⁵⁵ *Ski Committee Worried Group*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1934 (page 10).

“sandy-haired needle of jumping poise,” making a 130 foot jump toward a sea of spectators that helped make him win the combined winner of the tournament, “despite icy hill conditions which made competition dangerous.” Henry Sotvedt of Vancouver, B.C. won the jumping event with jumps of 163 and 157 feet. Mobraaten, described as “the chunky Canadian,” won the ten-mile cross-country race in a time of 49:09, and won the combined racing and jumping championship. The first sanctioned slalom race in the Northwest was “a test of racing skill which proved unexpectedly strenuous and spectacular.” Ben Thompson set the 14 flag slalom course down the slope from Beaver Lake, “which called for every whit of skiing skill and nerve” as the course was “a broken, icy mass.” Forty three racers entered but only nine men completed both runs. Hamish Davidson of Vancouver B.C. won the slalom race using advanced, state of the art steel-edged skis that he made. “The steel edge held them. Those without the steel edges were helpless. They slipped and fell.” The crowd chuckled as Davidson, the ski manufacturer, won a pair of laminated skis manufactured in Seattle as his prize, likely without steel edges. The crowd at the Summit was huge. There were 5,000 cars parked on the highway, although only 2,500 watched the tournament as the others were skiing. The president of the PNSA said “we have made skiing, perhaps, too successful...They don’t come to our tournaments to watch the skiers. They come to ski.” The same weekend, John Evrum, a “slim Norwegian from Portland,” set a new amateur ski-jumping record of 240 feet at the annual winter sports carnival at Big Pines California. This beat the existing Olympic record by eight feet, and the American record by 16 feet.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *Cross-Country Race will Open Annual Tournament; Slalom, Jumps Sunday to Top Huge Program*, Seattle Times, February 2, 1934 (page 22); *Portland civic Leaders Lunch, Talk of Skiing, & Mobraaten Wins First Ski Event*, Seattle Times, February 4, 1934 (page 21); *Mobraaten Skiing Champion, Sotvedt Takes Jumping Crown at Club Meet*, Seattle Times, February 5, 1934 (page 12).



Cars parked on Snoqualmie Pass for tournament. Photo from *Images of America: Snoqualmie Pass*, John & Chery Kinnick.

F. SKI PARK IS A SUCCESS BUT WORK CONTINUES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE IT

Seattle's Ski Park turned out to be such a success, that on March 19, 1934, Paul Brown, Superintendent of Parks for Seattle, wrote the Director of the National Park Service in Washington D.C. seeking permission to expand ski facilities on Mount Rainier.

The interest and participation in skiing in the Seattle Area has progressed to the point that the now established ski runs are overcrowded and facilities inadequate. The need and demand for better opportunities for skiing are really terrific. I have conferred with Superintendent Macy on this subject, and found him alert to the possibilities of expanding the ski run facilities at Mt. Rainier. I have suggested to my Board of Park Commissioners that they authorize me to arrange for an exploratory conference between the Mt. Rainier and this department's staffs, with possibly the State Highway and State Parks and local interests participating, to determine the feasibility of inaugurating a joint Seattle Park Department, Mt. Rainier program of ski instruction and ski school. The prime purpose of this communication, therefore, is to ask you to authorize and encourage Preston Macy to attend such a conference with his planners. We would hope, of course, that we might have a statement from you, indicating ambitions to secure appropriations adequate to finance suitable ski tows, warming

shelters, etc., that would ensure the success of the project.

Brown was planning to contact Washington's governor as well to get the state involved.

From the Governor we would hope to obtain an indication of his interest in assisting in keeping the highways open to the Mt. Rainier ski runs; and from the local committees we would hope to obtain assurances that they are ready and happy to forgive the National Park Service for their past ultra-conservative conservation policies and niggardly developments, recognizing in this new gesture of yours that your "welcome mat" is awaiting them at the ranger station.

No response to the letter can be found in Seattle's archives.⁵⁷

A report from the Park Board prepared in the spring of 1934, called Seattle's 30 acre ski course only two hours distant from Seattle, the first public park in the Northwest and one of the few in the nation.

Work started in laying out the course and park in November. Civil Works Administration employees were used to clear a part of the grounds of trees, stumps and underbrush, transforming the area into a beautiful snow covered playground in a natural evergreen setting and ready for use at the peak of the winter sports season.

The only other winter playground near Seattle was Mount Rainier, nearly twice as far from the city as Snoqualmie Pass, making it impractical for the majority of Seattle residents to visit regularly. Snoqualmie Pass was 69 miles from Seattle and Paradise at Mount Rainier was 103 highway miles, after which a person had to hike one and one-half miles to reach the Valley.

The need for such a winter resort in or near Seattle has always been apparent, as it is in any similar city where normally there is no snow during the winter, or not enough snow to make possible winter sports for any length of time. This year, for example, Seattle had no snow at all. In the past, therefore, both children and adults have had no opportunity for winter sports at home, or no place close to the city where they might go for a day's outing and be assured ample facilities and protection. The winter recreational program in Seattle, until the establishment of the Ski Park this year, has been largely an indoor, one, centering in the city's seven field houses, with some playground programs when weather permitted.

⁵⁷ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

“Before the development of the municipal ski course, various clubs and outdoor groups maintained camps and cabins there but there were no facilities for the general public, and only a small number of persons could be accommodated.” Since the ski park opened, 500 to 1,000 persons visited every weekend. “A warming shed, 20 by 30 feet, with two big fire boxes giving our heat, providing them with all the shelter needed.”

The Report said that interest in winter sports was stimulated by the indoor “Ground School” for beginners, “where ski experts were employed to instruct beginners in the elements of skiing.” Seattle needed such a winter resort since it rarely got any snow to make winter sports possible.

Both the Park Department and the Playground Division consider the development of the Ski Park one of the greatest steps forward in the development of a winter sports program. We look for a steadily increasing public interest in this form of healthful outdoor recreation and the opening of a new field in public recreation work, extending beyond the city limits.⁵⁸

In April of 1934, the Department of Parks applied to the State of Washington Emergency Relief Administration, King County Division, for assistance to work at the Snoqualmie Ski Park. The Administration replied that its work program was still uncertain, and work at the Ski Park was contingent on its relief load in the district, so no commitment could be made.

The same month, the Park Board received a letter from a citizen dated April 17, 1934, informing it that most of the privately owned property in the neighborhood of Snoqualmie Pass had been recently sold by the Northern Pacific RR Co. to private owners, but one tract of 40 acres immediately north of the Seattle Ski Club jump remained unsold and could be purchased for \$435. Another adjoining 40 acre tract could be purchased for \$435. The upper point of the Ski Park touched the corner separating the two tracts. Most of the land is “highly desirable for park and ski purposes.” He suggested that the Park

⁵⁸ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23.

Department make a study of the area. No response appears in the archives, and the property was not purchased by the Park Board.⁵⁹

In May of 1934, the Park Department enlisted the help of local skiers to improve the Ski Park. *Skiers Wanted at Park Today*, said Ben Evans, inviting all willing to lend a hand to help clear fallen timber on the “ten acre tract hastily cleared at the Summit to permit skiing” last winter. Attendees were to bring their own ax and lunch. Evans hoped to get more land cleared and more trails cut in for the next season. Several ski clubs planned to participate, including Commonwealth, Seattle, Washington Alpine, and the Mountaineers. Forty skiers showed up to clear underbrush, inspiring hopes for further improvement the following weekend. supervisor of playgrounds for the Seattle Park Department, in charge of the ski ground. “A very good turnout yesterday,” said Evans. “Now if we can get eighty skiers out next Sunday we can eliminate the fire hazard those tree branches cause, set ourselves right with the forestry service, and hope for aid in clearing ski trails next winter.”⁶⁰

On May 31, 1934, the Park Board approved a “Transient Boys Work Camp” at the Snoqualmie Ski Park to make improvements for recreational purposes, supervised by the Director of Playgrounds, with the cooperation of the Forest Supervisor. Labor would be furnished at no cost to the Park Board, which would provide for the transportation of men and supplies to the site.⁶¹

A Park Department report prepared at the end of 1934, described the Municipal Ski Park, and appears in the City of Seattle Municipal archives.

Snoqualmie Ski Park: Each winter skiing becomes more popular, and people of all ages seem to

⁵⁹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

⁶⁰ *Skiers Wanted at Park Today*, Seattle Times, May 20 (page 22); *40 Sloers Tirm Pit. Get Third of Work Done*, Seattle Times, May 21, 1934 (page 14).

⁶¹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

derive extreme pleasure from this unusual and health-giving pastime. We feel that the operation of the ski site at Snoqualmie Pass was a very timely thought, and the people of Seattle and the territory from which this ski site may be reached owe a vote of thanks to the government for the permission granted to the Park Department to use the ground for this purpose, as well as to the Board of Park Commissioners for their interest in the matter. The site consists of a 45 acre tract [thirty acre is crossed out] turned over to the City of Seattle by the U.S. Forestry Service on a five-year lease grant for recreational purposes. C.W.A. labor constructed a building for the use of the people who frequent the ski course, and Park Department employees with the assistance of other interested citizens of Seattle donated spare time in clearing the ground for use, preparatory to the work which was done by the C.W.A workers.⁶²



Seattle Municipal Ski Park. The man on the log is identified as Mr. Vance, owner of the Vance Hotel and the first concessionaire at the Park. Seattle Photo archives, # 30377.

⁶² Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

III. 1935 SKI SEASON

A. IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SKI PARK

In the fall of 1934, the Seattle Park Department began planning for the 1935 ski season, as shown by materials in the Seattle Municipal archives.

On October 30, 1934, W.H. Musser of North Bend wrote the Park Board offering to run a lunch room at the Snoqualmie Ski Park if one was to be established. He would pay a reasonable charge for the concession to operate on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, or he would be the caretaker for the privilege of operating the lunch room. The Board of Park Commissioners replied that they had not yet given the matter any serious consideration.⁶³

On November 15, 1934, the Park Department Park Engineer wrote the head of the federal department providing federal funding for local projects. The prior year, the Park Department felled timber for several runways at the Snoqualmie Ski Track, but much of the material was still lying on the ground. The Park Department lacked funds to clean up the debris and was seeking federal funds to complete the work. The Park Board was able to obtain funds from the King County Welfare Board and CWA to accomplish work at the Ski Park: \$572.65 was expended on the Snoqualmie Ski Tract by the King County Board since the ski area fit into the Seattle Park Recreational Facilities, and the site is “close to the Snoqualmie Pass Highway above Rockdale and is accessible for winter sports, thereby furnishing a recreational service sufficiently well used by Seattle ski enthusiasts to justify the Park participation. CWA labor and Park Staff direction accomplished the work.” King County and CWA funds were considered necessary to the program “because qualified and experienced workmen

⁶³ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

are required for gardener work and preparation for seeding and planting.”⁶⁴

On December 6, 1934, the Park Board approved improvements in cooperation with the Washington Emergency Relief Administration at the Snoqualmie Ski Park, to consist of drainage and clearing.⁶⁵ Seattle’s Photo archives have a series of pictures taken at the Ski Park in 1935.



Crowds & spectators at Ski Park. Seattle Photo archives, 31169.

⁶⁴ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

⁶⁵ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.



A. Erickson (city clerk) & Ben Evans, 1935. Seattle Photo archives, 31387.



Ben Evans at Ski Park, 1935. Seattle Photo archives, 31194.



Skiers at Ski Park, 1935. Seattle Photo archives, 31166.



Ski Park, 1935. Seattle Photo archives, 31163.



Warming Hut at Municipal Ski Park. Seattle photo archives, 30371

B. SKIING CONTINUES TO GROW IN POPULARITY IN THE NORTHWEST

On April 13 & 14, 1935, the U.S. National Championships and Olympic tryouts in downhill and slalom racing were held at Paradise on Mt. Rainier, hosted by the Washington Ski Club, a major event in northwest skiing history. Roscoe (Torchy) Torrence was the Executive Chairman of the event with a \$10,000 budget contributed by local sponsors. There were 59 entrants, eight from the East; one from the Middle West; 13 from the Rocky Mountains; 12 from California; 14 from the Pacific Northwest; 10 from Canada; and one from Austria.. PNSA sponsored racers from the Northwest included Hjalmar Hvam of the Cascade Ski Club of Portland; Washington Ski Club members Don Fraser, Carleton Wiegel, Ken Syverson, Hans Grage, and Darroch Crookes; John Woodward of the U.W. Ski Team; and Emil Cahen of the Seattle Ski Club. Since the event was in a National Park, admission could not be charged but a \$.50 donation from spectators was requested, and 7,000 spectators attended the event.

The three best U.S. skiers, who were “almost certain to be selected to the Olympic squad” to compete in Garmisch, Germany, included Dick Durrance of Dartmouth College, who was first of all U.S. competitors; E.D. (Ed) Hunter Jr. of Dartmouth College, third in the combined competition; and Robert Livermore, Jr. of the Ski Club of Hochgebirge, Boston, who placed second in the combined competition. Hannes Schroll, an Austrian teaching at Yosemite, won the event’s slalom, downhill and combined championships, using the European skiing technique that “beats American methods all to pieces.” Schroll used longer poles and skis, with bindings set in the middle, compared to short poles and skis with bindings set back of the center of the skis used Durrance. Where Durrance “clipped close to flags in the slalom race with only a hip wiggle or a tempo turn to miss them, Scholl swung wide,” and skied in a “vorlage”(forward leaning) position, with legs fairly straight, arms flung back and up, and ski poles held high. He constantly shifted weight, “pumping rapidly - getting air under his skis, eliminating friction, picking up speed.” The Washington Olympic Committee was complimented on the tournament, which was a financial success.⁶⁶

In the summer of 1935, several new facilities were constructed showing how interesting in skiing was growing in the Pacific Northwest. The Seattle Ski Club built a new lodge close the highway near the Snoqualmie Summit, with \$25,000 of contributed labor. The Forest Service built a “warming hut” close to Leavenworth’s big jump, with comfort facilities, shower baths, a lunch stand, a large lounge with a nine-foot fireplace, caretaker’s facilities, and conveniences. At Mount Baker, the Forest Service built a \$35,000 large stone shelter on the shelter course, where competitors

⁶⁶ *Tacoma Excited - Ski Event Sunday Draws*, Seattle Times, January 23, 1935 (page 15); January 24 (page 18), *Ski Army Pours into Paradise, & Fraser Defeats Hvam on Baker*, Seattle Times, April 1 (page 18); *These Three Almost Certain Olympic Games Men*, Seattle Times, April 16, 1935 (page 14).

could warm up and eat. Another shelter was built at McClure's Rock in Paradise Valley on Mount Rainier to provide protection for high altitude skiers.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Huts Going Up at Mt. Baker, Leavenworth*, Seattle Times, September 8, 1935 (page 22).

IV. 1936 SKI SEASON: IMPORTANT CHANGES IN SKIING AND AT THE SKI PARK

A. 1936 OLYMPICS ARE HELD IN GERMANY

The 1936 Winter Olympics, held at Garmisch, Germany, featured Alpine skiing for the first time with a combined event (downhill and slalom), along with Nordic events (cross-country, Nordic combined, and jumping). Men and women competed in the Alpine events, although only men were allowed in the Nordic events. Northwest skiers Don Fraser and Darroch Crookes of the Washington Ski Club were on the U.S. team. Dick Durrance, who learned to ski in Garmisch in the early 1930s, was the highest placing U.S. skier, coming in tenth. There were 14 women on the U.S. team. Germans took gold in the men's and women's event. The U.S. team placed eight overall, winning four medals.⁶⁸

B. PLANS FOR A NEW SKI JUMP AND LODGE AT THE SKI PARK

In December 1935, the Seattle Times announced that \$50,000 in W.P.A. projects had been approved for the Municipal Ski Park: a new jumping hill that would be the most modern one this side of the huge Olympic take-off at Lake Placid, New York; and "a comfortable cabin for skiers who frequent the Seattle Park Department's big ski sector." Both projects have been approved, only the proximity of heavy snowfall prevented immediate starts on both, but they would be a reality next ski season. Snoqualmie Summit

probably has more skiers to the square inch during the winter season than any area, due to its easy availability and also due to the fact that it was at Snoqualmie Pass that modern skiing was really born and raised. It is the home of Seattle Ski Club, the Mountaineers, Washington Alpine Club, and now one of the leased Washington Ski Club Lodges. It is the hub of more ski tours than can even be imagined; it is the home of the annual Seattle Ski Club tournaments,, and next February is the host to the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association jumping and cross-country championships and to the Pacific Northwestern Junior

⁶⁸ 1936 Winter Olympics, <http://www.skimuseum.net/pdf/1936-52.pdf>.

championships in jumping, cross-country, downhill and slalom racing. It's high altitude length is dotted with private cabins of winter sports enthusiasts.

The paper also said the National Ski Year Book "gave the conclusive indication that the national recognition accorded Washington skiing has been a real and hearty one, based on the National Downhill and Slalom Championships that had been held the prior April on Mt. Rainier."⁶⁹

In January 1936, the Times described changes that had been made at the Municipal Ski Park, which was "unique in American skiing, since it is owned and operated by a city and is undergoing somewhat of a spiritual transformation." Popularity of skiing the past two years had grown so much that skiing was actually dangerous. Ben Evans appointed Tom Sedgwick as the ski director of the Ski Park, and skiing was becoming "more or less controlled." Sedgwick said there would be

no more of this stuff of skiers climbing up in the middle and getting knocked down by someone who hasn't learned to make a turn. We're trying to educate them to go up the sides and then ski down the middle. The upper half of the slope is for the better skiers, who perhaps are learning to turn to a stop. My megaphone helps. I stand in the middle and direct traffic.

Evans hoped to persuade the Forest Service to widen the ski area by cleaning out trees. Floodlight skiing would begin that weekend - three huge searchlights had been erected at the bottom of the hill.⁷⁰

Ben Evans was recognized as the heart and soul of the Municipal Ski Park who continued to play an active role in its management after the area opened, although others from Seattle's Park Board contributed as well. Tom Sedgwick played an important role as the area's traffic cop

The Park Board ski hill at Snoqualmie Pass has few more enthusiastic patrons than Ben Evans, who, as supervisor of Seattle playfields, has charge of the ski hill. He took up the sport several years ago, when he most of the current skiers were content to read about the sport.

⁶⁹ *Snoqualmie Pass Projects Total \$50,000 & Year Book Gives Northwest Huge Boost in Skiing*, Seattle Times, December 8, 1935, (page 33).

⁷⁰ *Park Area is Patrolled.*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1936 (page 16).

Now he goes to the ski hill nearly every Sunday. Ben's lieutenant-in-charge there is Tom Sedgwick, who teaches swimming at Seattle beaches during the summer. Tom is "traffic cop" at the ski course. He patrols the hill and megaphones warnings when thoughtless or slow-footed skiers "park" in prohibited areas, such as in the middle of a ski track. The "ski cop" makes no arrests for speeding, however. A skier can go as fast as his skill permits.⁷¹



Seattle's Municipal Ski Park at Snoqualmie Summit, 1937, before the rope tow was installed in 1938. The signs direct traffic and say "Please Stand on Side Lines," and "Keep to Right of Flags." Photo courtesy of the Moffett family.

Additional plans for the W.P.A. project to build a new ski hill and lodge were made public in February 1936. The W.P.A. grant was not \$50,000 as previously announced, but \$18,520, which would be spent to create a "new skiing paradise." The project will include a 200 foot jumping hill, patterned after the one at Lake Placid, new trails cut in the forest, and a large park warming shed.

⁷¹ *Strolling Around the Town*, Seattle Times, January 23, 1936 (page 17).

Land would be cleared for a new 10 acre park, and improvements would be made on the existing five acre park, which had been partially developed under the Civil Works Administration. The 20 x 20 foot warming hut will be supplemented by a 60 x 30 foot similar structure, made of lodge poles cut locally, which will have a large rock fire place. It was noted that there were 100,000 skiers in the United States, of which 25 - 30,000 were in the Northwest.⁷²

In July 1936, the Times announced *W.P.A. Will Build Jump Project*. The ski jump will take form soon. A 225 foot capacity jump designed by Peter Hostmark of the Pacific Northwest Ski Association, will give the west a hill comparable to the magnificent ones in Norway. The runout will be lined with a grandstand, and the hill will be a model of engineering perfection, built on wooden trestles of cedar taken from the Snoqualmie National Forest. The paper also published several pictures of skiers enjoying themselves at local ski areas. A picture of skiers at the Municipal Ski Park was called *City Playfield and Mountain Snows*. “Skiers on a picturesque ski grounds at Snoqualmie Pass established by the Seattle Park Board in recognition of the ever growing popularity of the sport.”⁷³

In October 1936, the Seattle Times announced that work was to begin on the Huge Ski Jump hill, the W.P.A. project for a 200 foot capacity modern ski hill, grandstand and shelter just 400 yards off the highway just west of the Summit. The purpose of the project was to put men to work.⁷⁴

⁷² *WPA Will Construct Ski Jumping Hill at Snoqualmie: \$18,570 Grant to Provide New Snow Paradise*, Seattle Times, February 23, 1936 (page 13).

⁷³ *W.P.A Will Build Jump Project*, Seattle Times, July 12, 1936 (page 13).

⁷⁴ *Work to Start Soon on Huge Ski Jump Hill*, Seattle Times, October 1, 1936 (page 15).

C. SKI MAGAZINE PROMOTES NORTHWEST SKIING

The premier issue of Ski magazine of January 1936, unabashedly promoted Northwest skiing, including Seattle's Municipal Ski Park.

One article said the Northwest was “the Switzerland of America” with perfect conditions for the advancement of skiing. “With a mild climate and close proximity to population centers, golf may be played in the lowlands while skiing takes place among the mountain tops.” Snoqualmie Pass was Seattle's closest skiing area, “a mecca for thousands who have but a day to spend.” At Leavenworth, a government grant paid for the clearing of trees and stumps from a 40 acre skiing area by the Forest Service and Civilian Conservation Corps. The club had several jumping hills and a variety of slopes and trails. Stevens Pass was said to be comparable to the best ski terrain to be found in the Northwest, and a clearing and building project was being considered by the Forest Service for 1936, similar to the work done at Leavenworth, which will make it a “mecca for skiers.” Mount Baker offered a “Ski-Escalator now in operation” to move skiers up the hill.⁷⁵ While railroads had not undertaken a comprehensive plan to develop skiing, the Magazine was confident that with the

⁷⁵ The Mount Baker Development Co. began operating s ski escalator at Mount Baker in December 1935, which carried skiers from Terminal Lake to Panorama Dome. This was the first ski lift in the Northwest, a sled type of lift that only operated for a month after its designer died in an avalanche. Lucas, Joy, *The Ancient Skiers of the Northwest*, page 24. Kirby Gilbert, a local ski historian, says the Mount Baker lift was a “boat tow” or “sled tow,” powered at top of mountain by a turning drum, reversible motor. It was patterned after logging equipment of the time, and the lift at Yosemite that started in 1934-35 at Badger Pass. Badger named their lift the “Up-ski,” and each sled had names like the “Queen Mary”, etc., and lasted much longer than the Baker tow. They had these types of tows in Idaho (Bear Gulch had one you could stand on), and several other places around the country, including one at Aspen on the lower slopes to serve Roch Run (Aspen's first “lift”), named after Andre Roch The owner and installer of the Baker Ski Escalator was killed in January 1936 (first season of operation) at age 41, in an avalanche as he had to climb the slope in the morning to get to the top to start the tow. The following website that shows a picture of the ski escalator. http://www.turns-all-year.com/skiing_snowboarding/trip_reports/index.php?topic=25719.msg108980#msg108980

tremendous growth of local skiing interest,” snow trains will soon be a reality.” The Mountaineers, Washington Alpine Club, Washington Ski Club and Seattle Ski Club were mentioned as organizations that “blazed the trail” in local skiing. The University Book Store offered a bus service from Seattle to Snoqualmie Pass on Sundays, leaving at 7:15 a.m., arriving two hours later, fare \$1.50. The Book Store also rented ski equipment. The Northwest offered “one of the longest ski season in the world. Spring and mid-summer skiing starts around March and continues as late as June or July. At these dates, we turn to the vast sun-lit expanses of ski ground that lie between glaciers.”

One article discussed a plan to improve the Municipal Ski Park by cutting more trees and smoothing out terrain so several thousand skiers could enjoy themselves. The time had come that people must choose “whether a huge ski development shall take place and Seattle and neighboring communities reap the fullest reward both commercially and recreationally.”

We have to choose: does conservation mean to keep our ski hills in comparative idleness - unused through the ages - or to yield to the demand of your America that they be given an adequate winter playground. The high school boys and girls are the skiers of today and tomorrow. They cannot afford trips to distant places and to expensive hotels, but they must have physical activity to develop fully and to satisfy their love of adventure.

The exhilaration of swift running skis, the purity of mountain air, the achievement of skill and the approbation of their companions, the feats of daring on skis...all these give to young America an outlet of exuberant spirits. It is a youth movement worth while. It teaches them teamwork, self control, good sportsmanship, ability to overcome obstacles, to endure and enjoy a mountain storm and to really know the outdoors in all its varying beauties and vicissitudes. Let us then work ceaselessly for the further development of skiing in Snoqualmie Pass.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Alpenglow Ski Mountaineering History Project, alpenglow.org.



Cars on Snoqualmie Pass, 1930s. Photo from *Images of America: Snoqualmie Pass*, John & Chery Kinnick.



Cars at Snoqualmie Summit, 1930s. Photo from Prager, *Snoqualmie Pass*.

In the spring of 1936, skiing conditions were very good at Snoqualmie Pass - good snow and cold temperatures.

At Snoqualmie Pass on a perfect day for skiing....Girls, faces made rosy by biting cold wind...a skier hobbling down the trail like a lame duck, making what progress he could with one ski broken. Municipal Hill, hundreds of persons swarming over it, jumping to get out of each other's way; like so many ants on an ant hill...motorists nursing frozen automobiles...veteran skiers declaring the snow "the best it's ever been," while the temperature crept barely near zero.⁷⁷

While the rest of the country was "linseeding their skis and turning to the lowland sports," in Washington "where the snow rides deep and high, the period of pre-determined skiing's merely starting," the period of spring snow was just about at hand. March offered an impressive array of skiing competitions in the Northwest. On March 8, 1936, ten Seattle high school teams would compete at the Summit's Municipal Hill in jumping, slalom and cross-country, and men's and women's downhill races would be held at Paradise Valley. On March 15, the Mountaineers were hosting its open patrol race from Snoqualmie Lodge to Martin, "twenty miles of amazing terrain," with three-man teams competing. On March 22, the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association junior and senior jumping championships would take place on Snoqualmie Pass. On March 29, the Vancouver B.C. jumping and cross-country championships would occur. On April 4 and 5, the Seattle Junior Chamber of Commerce Spring Ski Carnival would be held at Paradise Valley, and downhill and slalom tournament would be held at the Washington Ski Club. Ski competitions were expected to last until May.⁷⁸

D. SKI PARK REPORT FOR 1936

The Park Board prepared a Ski Hill Report for the 1936 ski season, which is available in Seattle's Municipal Archives. The Ski Park operated from January 27 to April 20, 1936, opening

⁷⁷ *Strolling Around the Town*, Seattle Times, February 17, 1936 (page 13).

⁷⁸ *Spring Skiing's Period Arrives*, Seattle Times, March 3, 1936 (page 17).

from Friday to Sunday. The total attendance was 16,480 skiers and spectators, with 400 - 500 people on the hill on several Sundays. The hill was divided by ropes to allow more people to use the hill at once with less danger. There was a regular uphill route separated from the area on the left for those coming down. Lights at night when weather permitted, permitted skiers to enjoy night skiing. Ski races were not encouraged due to the lack of space. However, the Annual High School Meet was held at the Ski Park, and on Easter, a small impromptu meet was held. Numerous special buses brought kids to the Ski Park, including the U.W. Girls ski class, Sails and Trails, and students from Garfield, West Seattle, North Bend, and Renton. Regular bus service was provided by the University Book Store. One serious accident occurred during the 1936 season: a 16 year old boy fell and dislocated his hip. There were also minor sprains and strains. The report concluded by saying:

With skiing's popularity growing every year, it seems advisable that the skiing area be enlarged for safety and really enjoyable skiing by the many who use the ski hill during the winter.⁷⁹

In October 1936, the Seattle Park Department wrote the Director of the P.W.A., seeking permission to open Snoqualmie Ski Park for two weeks to install a water system for drinking water and drainage, and to fall trees which are in the way on one of the ski courses and clean up the debris. The Park Department would supply the truck and it sought men to work eight or ten hours.⁸⁰

In October 1936, the Seattle Times announced that work was to begin on the "Huge Ski Jump hill", the W.P.A. project for a 200 foot capacity modern ski hill, grandstand and shelter just 400 yards off the highway just west of the Summit. The purpose of the project was to put men to work. The Seattle Times was even more certain in its Ski Edition printed on November 18, 1936, with two

⁷⁹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

⁸⁰ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

separate articles about the project, one saying *New Jump Seems Likely*. The Forest Service seemed “ready to assist in completion of a jumping hill” near the Summit. More than \$20,000 in W.P.A. funds had been allocated for the jumping hill, but delays had meant the work had not started. The president of the Seattle Ski Club announced the hill would be built next spring as soon as the snow melted, with the Forest Service taking the lead. The jump will be open to all Washington skiers, although the Seattle Ski Club will maintain it. “Included in the original plans, which still stand, are grandstands and, at the end of the run-out, a long warming shed for the comfort of guests.” The second article said that \$20,000 had been appropriated for the construction of the warming hut on the Seattle Park Board’s skiing area, and \$21,000 had been appropriated for the construction of a “magnificent jumping hill at the Summit.” Optimism was expressed that the projects would go through as they were “good for the welfare of skiers generally.”⁸¹

Unfortunately for the ski community, W.P.A. funds were “slashed after 1937, its work force in Washington was curtailed, and the Snoqualmie Pass projects were never built. In the fall of 1937, the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association considered transferring the Northwest Jumping Championships from the Seattle Ski Club to another club “since the Works Progress Administration failed to construct a promised new jumping hill at the summit of Snoqualmie Pass.”⁸²

⁸¹ *Work to Start Soon on Huge Ski Jump Hill*, Seattle Times, October 1, 1936 (page 15); *New Jump Seems Likely, & Two Projects Hang*, Seattle Times, November 18, 1936 (pages 42, 44); *W.P.A. in State Curtails Force*, Seattle Times, November 5, 1936 (page 24); *W.P.A. in State to Slash Jobs*, Seattle Times, June 24, 1937 (page 16); *Relief Spending Expected to be Trimmed in '38*, Seattle Times, September 22, 1937 (page 1).

⁸² *Ski Chiefs to Discuss Plans Here October 2*, Seattle Times, September 5, 1937 (page 14).

V. 1937 SKI SEASON

A. SUN VALLEY OPENS TRANSFORMING SKIING

In December 1936, the Union Pacific Railroad opened the Sun Valley Resort near Ketchum Idaho, at a cost of \$1,250,000, transforming skiing in this country.⁸³ The Seattle Times of November 18, 1936, described the exciting new resort.

Sun Valley was born – a fashionable ski resort costing Harriman and the Union Pacific something more than \$1,000,000; offering a luxurious, ultra-modern hotel with accommodations for some 200 guests; sun-bathing in roofless ice igloos; mid-winter swimming in outdoor swimming pools fed by natural hot springs; ski-tows to raise skiers 1,470 feet in elevation on a 6,500 foot-long hoist; the other which gives the skier 650 feet of elevation above the valley level.

Sun Valley was the country's first destination ski resort, where the chair lift was invented, changing the sport of skiing here forever. The area's publicist suggested that "mechanical devices" be installed to carry people to the top of the "slides." This issue was turned over to the Union Pacific's engineers who considered several ideas before adopting a chairlift based on mono cables that were used to load bananas onto boats.⁸⁴

⁸³ Sun Valley was the idea of W. A. Harriman, Chairman of the Board of the Union Pacific Railroad, who was looking for a way to attract more passengers to use his trains in the winter which went along the northern tier of the United States. He was a long time skier, and felt the slopes of the western United States could rival those of Europe in attracting an increasing number of American winter sports enthusiasts. The area around Ketchum was chosen for the site of the resort by Austrian Count Felix Schaffgotsch after he toured the entire West in the winter of 1935. Publicity man Steve Hannagan, known for his Miami Beach project, renamed the area Sun Valley. Idaho State Historical Society Reference Series 974, *Sun Valley Ski Lifts*.

⁸⁴ U.P engineers looked at the J-bar Fred Pabst installed at the Bromley ski area, an up-ski toboggan similar to that at Yosemite, and a cable car. Finally James Curran's chairlift idea was adopted, which initially was considered too hazardous. Prior to working for the Union Pacific, Curran worked for Paxton and Vierling Iron Works in Omaha, which designed a system for loading bananas onto fruit boats. Curran took the mono cable tram idea and replaced the banana hooks with chairs, and created a system with a greater capacity than the up-ski toboggan or cable car and more comfortable than the J-bar. His basic design is still used for chairlifts today. Idaho

Sun Valley attracted skiers from all over the world, including Hollywood movie stars, giving the resort a high profile. Seattle newspapers regularly reported on ski races in Sun Valley and local skiers traveling by train there to enjoy the attractions of this international resort, showing how extensively skiing was covered by local newspapers in the 1930s.

B. SKIING AT SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT IN 1937

The Seattle Ski Club's tournament held in March 1937, on its new jump at Snoqualmie Summit, promised to be the greatest ski jumping event it ever had, with Sigmund Ruud (who had jumped 334 feet), Alf Engen (who had jumped 287 feet), and Helge Sather of Leavenworth (who had jumped 255 feet) competing against each other and other great jumpers. Engen had the longest jumps, but Ruud won the competition, since Engen lost on form points. Ruud got hurt doing a spectacular double exhibition jump with Sverve Kulterud of Norway, when he ran into a woman spectator on the runoff. Xrays showed he did not break his ankle but had only torn ligaments. The tournament was watched by 3,000 spectators.⁸⁵

The Seattle Park Department's Ski Report - Winter 1937, prepared by Tom Sedgwick, described another successful year at the Summit. Seattle's Ski Hut was opened on Sunday December 20, 1936, and closed Sunday, May 2, 1937, operating from Friday to Sunday of each week. Snow conditions were good nearly every weekend, with 124 inches of snow being the largest snow pack.

State Historical Society Reference Series 974, *Sun Valley Ski Lifts*. The design for the "Aerial Ski Tramway" made for Sun Valley in 1936 was patented in 1937, U.S. Patent No. 1,252,235, filed 11/17/1937, granted 3/28/1939. Galvin, Sahalie Historical Note #6, *Early Ski Tows*.

⁸⁵ *Long Distances Jumped by Ski Aces, Due Here*, Seattle Times, March 25 (page 25); *Ski Greats Arrive, Four are Sons of Kongsberg*, Seattle Times, March 26, 1937 (page 12); *Smashup Marks Snoqualmie Ski Meet, Ruud Suffers Ankle Injury Defeats Engen*, Seattle Times, March 29, 1937 (page 14).

The average depth was 85 to 90 inches. Excellent spring skiing lasted right to the end of the season. Total attendance was 19,865, with 2,800 being the largest single day.⁸⁶

Many special bus loads of skiers came to the hill on Saturdays and Sundays, including those carrying high school students from Garfield, Roosevelt, West Seattle, Ballard, North Bend and Franklin. The Sails and Trails Club and West Seattle YMCA had special groups. Local sporting goods stores sent at least one special bus loads of skiers every Sunday in January and February. A 1,000 watt floodlight on the hill made night skiing very popular, and night skiing seemed more popular than daytime skiing. A Seattle High School ski meet was held at the ski park, which was won by Garfield. No serious injuries occurred, two broken ankles and minor twists and sprains were the most serious. "It must be said that from the crowded condition of the hill and the falls some of the skiers took it is really a miracle that there were no broken arms, legs or bodies."

Needed improvements included a larger cleared area to accommodate the hundreds of skiers who overcrowd the hill each week; making the hill "a little less bumpy; and running water so skiers could quench their thirst when they desired."

C. SEATTLE SEEKS FUNDS TO IMPROVE SKI PARK

Seattle's Park Department attempted to improve its Ski Park for several years, although it lacked sufficient funds to bring the facility up to the condition that the Forest Service and the public desired.

In April 1937, the Seattle Park Department wrote the National Park Service seeking assistance with clearing, drainage and road work at the Ski Park, suggesting the installation of a CCC camp to assist its efforts. The Park Service responded on April 27, 1937, by saying all the assignments of

⁸⁶ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

CCC programs for the summer had been made, and suggested contacting the Forest Service.⁸⁷

In a letter dated July 16, 1937, the Forest Service criticized the Seattle Park Board for the lack of development of the Ski Park since Seattle received its special use permit in December, 1933.

In this connection I might add that the Forest Service is being criticized because of the lack of development of the special use area and I would like to call to your attention the fact that the City of Seattle has done very little as yet toward carrying out the original plan for development which I understand was to be put into effect as rapidly as possible by the Park Department. For example, the warming house and the latrines are makeshift structures which were approved by the Forest Service representatives only until such time as it was demonstrated that the public use of the area required permanent structures.

Our experience over a period of three years has indicated that the buildings and the existing ski runs are inadequate and that the increasing public use will make it imperative that additional and better facilities be installed not only for skiing but also for the comfort of the skiers. Sanitary facilities always have been inadequate.

I realize that limitations of funds and the difficulty of using relief labor have made it difficult for the City to carry out all of the plans which were originally contemplated. On the other hand, the project has been started by the City, the public has made use of the area and undoubtedly will continue using it to such an extent that both the Park Department and the Forest Service will be subject to just criticism if no further action is taken to meet the public's needs.

The letter concluded by saying "I wish to assure you of my interest in your winter sports program and to express my desire to be of assistance to you in this worthwhile undertaking."⁸⁸

D. NORTHWEST SKI AREAS SEEK SKI LIFTS

The installation of the chair lift at Sun Valley for the winter season of 1936 - 1937, caused a sensation in the Northwest. Skiers no longer had to climb hills with skins on their skis, but could ride up to the top again and again, making more runs than they ever dreamed were possible. Rope tows had been installed in a few eastern ski resorts, Woodstock Vermont and Williamstown,

⁸⁷ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

⁸⁸ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

Massachusetts, also received publicity. Skiers in the Seattle area took notice and discussions began about installing tows in local areas.⁸⁹

The Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Seattle Times were lobbying for ski lifts to be installed at northwest areas at the Spring Carnival at Paradise in February 1937. The Seattle Times of February 28, 1937, announced *Chair-Lifts Will be Carnival Goal*. The Junior Chamber had more important motives than the carnival. “That motive is a modern ski plan for Washington ski areas that could give Rainier, Mt. Baker and Snoqualmie Pass and other centers the sort of skiing people want.”

Skiing needs more uphill lift than downhill drag. Ergo, build ski lifts. “A ski lift on ever mountain”, might well be the slogan. The Junior Chamber of Commerce is serious about this. It wants them at Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Chinook, Pass, Yakima, Mount Spokane...but why go on? The boys would gladly put one on the counterbalance, if they could.

Their plans will upset the apple cart of the National Park and Forest officials who want their lands kept clear of encumbrances such as overhead trams and chair lifts, to maintain pristine beauty untouched by the hand of man. Plans for lifts at Rainier, Baker and Snoqualmie Pass will likely be resisted right up to the President of the United States. The necessity of funiculars in the development of great ski areas brooks no argument. Skiers are not made by climbing hills. Skiers develop

⁸⁹ David Galvin described the history of ski tows in Sahalie Historical Note #6, *Early Ski Tows*. “‘Ahoy skiers! Read this!’ trumpeted an article in the January 30, 1934, Seattle Post-Intelligencer. It noted that the first motorized ski-tow in the country opened the day before, on January 29th, 1934, at Woodstock, Vermont. ‘The device consists of an endless rope which runs over a pulley at the top of the hill over a motor at the foot of the incline. It takes skiers up 900 feet in one minute.’ The future beckoned. Early skiers through the 1920s and well into the ‘30s were a hardy bunch who ‘earned their turns’ by skinning uphill using seal skins, fur, canvas, or rope stuck to the bottom of their skis; by herringboning or side-stepping; or by taking skis off and walking up the hill. The enticement to find a mechanized way to move uphill was great. According to ski historians, the Germans were the first to figure it out, with the first documented rope tow in the Black Forest around 1908. At the P.I. noted, the first ski tow in the States showed up at an inn in Vermont in early 1934. Bob and Betty Royce powered their simple rope loop using the rear wheel of their Model A Ford. Interest exploded. The skiing ‘industry’ was born. By the late 1930s, more than 100 tow ropes were operating in North America.”

proficiency by coming downhill. Skiers at Mount Rainier can get in around 4,000 feet of skiing a day. At Sun Valley, with its chairlifts, a skier can get in 37,000 feet a day. The Junior Chamber of Commerce planned meetings with National Park and Forest officials, and by next year, they want their plan to be in full swing.⁹⁰

Skiing continued to increase in popularity in the winter of 1937. That winter season, the number cars at Mt. Rainier increased from 12,513 in 1936 to 17,228, and the number of people increased from 4,673 in 1936 to 6,936, showing “the tremendous strides the winter sport” had taken. Although there was no complete information about the numbers going to Snoqualmie Pass, the Pass had been constantly lined with automobiles of skiers all winter, since it was only 65 miles from Seattle. Those who followed skiing had willingly conceded that Snoqualmie Pass had, during the winter, nearly double the number that went to Paradise.⁹¹ Skiing had become so popular in the Northwest, that the Pacific Northwest Ski Association was making a bid to hold the tryouts for the 1940 Olympics locally, not just for downhill and slalom as had been done in 1935, but also for cross-country and jumping. The WPA had promised to build a new jumping hill at Snoquamlie Summit, which could be the site of the jumping trials, and thousands of spectators from Seattle could attend.⁹²

In the summer of 1937, two entrepreneurs, Jim Parker and Chauncey Griggs, sought permission from the Seattle Park Board and Forest Service to install a rope tow at the Snoqualmie Ski

⁹⁰ *Chair-Lifts Will be Carnival Goal*, Seattle Times of February 28, 1937 (page 17); *Snow Carnival Program Ready; Flares to Fly*, Seattle Times, March 30, 1937 (page 14).

⁹¹ *Visitors Show Huge Increase at Mt. Rainier*, Seattle Times, June 6, 1937 (page 16).

⁹² *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, July 21, 1937 (page 17).

Park, using their company, Ski Lifts, Inc.⁹³ Although Parker and Griggs were the best known owners of Ski Lifts, Inc., others were involved as well, including David Hellyer, who described how Ski Lifts, Inc. was formed and the idea of installing rope tows in the Northwest originated.

During the winter of 1936, Chauncey Griggs had spent many weekends at Paradise, and there he met Jim Parker, who had just come to Tacoma from Williamstown, Massachusetts, and was enjoying the deep snow of the Pacific-Northwest for the first time. After repeated half-hour climbs to the top of Alta Vista above Paradise Valley, followed by minute-and-a-half downhill runs, Jim turned to Chauncey one day and said, "We ought to build a ski tow here. We'd make a fortune." Chauncey asked him if he knew how to make one and he said, sure, he had built one of the first on the East Coast at Williamstown the previous winter. And so, from that conversation, Ski Lifts, Incorporated, had its beginnings...After he and Chauncey arranged for some financial backing, Ski Lifts, Incorporated, was officially founded in the fall of 1937...

Griggs and Parker combined their financial resources and PR talents to form the company.

Chauncey had insufficient time to work on the physical planning and construction side of the operation but had contacts and the financial know-how required to keep the project afloat. Jimmy had a good deal of experience from having built one ski lift already, but was not particularly mechanical or fond of monotonous tasks, and avoided, when possible, hard physical labor. He was, however, to a superlative degree, a born PR man, both through his gift of gab and his skiing prowess. These were the days of long skis, telemarks, and christies, although stem turns and snowplows were coming in, and Jimmy was poetry on skis. When he came down a slope, dipping and turning, he was magic to behold, and every man, and certainly every woman stopped, leaned on their poles, and watched. In the evening at the inn or lodge, he was always the center of attraction. Without Jimmy there to pave the way, there could not have been Ski

⁹³ Griggs' grandfather made a fortune in real estate in St. Paul and became president of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, which owned 80,000 acres and two large mills. Chauncey's father graduated from Yale and opened a law firm that handled legal affairs for the lumber company. Griggs also attended Yale, and in 1936, at age 26, he and Parker founded Ski Lifts, Inc. They operated the company for six years, and in 1942, they sold out to their first employee, Webb Moffett. Griggs spent the bulk of his career as a lumber industry executive. Griggs served in the Artillery Section of the 10th Mountain Division at Camp Hale, Co. and ended the war in San Francisco as a transportation officer. In 1945, Griggs had Frank Lloyd Wright design his house in Lakewood, outside of Tacoma, which took seven years to complete. *Wright Studies, Chauncey L. and Johanna Griggs Residence, Tacoma (Lakewood) Washington*, www.steinrag.com/ArtifactPages/PhRtS290.htm; alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/misc/ancient-skiers-1984.html.

Lifts, Incorporated.⁹⁴

Hellyer described the difficulty of building, operating and maintaining rope tows, which required constant attention from the person in charge, jobs which brought him into Ski Lifts, Inc..

But who, I wondered audibly, was going to spend time at the two sites in the off-seasons, live in a tent or shack with a work crew while designing and constructing the buildings, setting poles, figuring out the tightening devices for the ropes, supervising the machining of the sheaves, devising safety gates, and making it all come together? And when this was done, who was to stand in the cold and collect the dimes? Or climb frozen poles with the weight of a wet rope on one shoulder replacing it in the pulleys when it jumped out in response to the bouncing and tugging of some high spirited customer? And worst of all, who was to weave a long splice in a broken towrope while the lift stood idle and the dimes remained in pockets? Of course, none of us anticipate all these routine operating problems, but the construction requirements did seem to call for an additional partner, and I offered myself for the job, and became the third member of the company.

The principles of a rope tow are fairly simple, but in practice, when one is dealing with snow depths that fluctuate from a few inches to twelve or more feet, not counting drifts of twenty feet or more, and when the length of the tow is so great that the stretch and contraction of the rope may be more than thirty feet, ingenuity is called for, and I spent much time trying to solve these problems.⁹⁵

On June 5, 1937, Parker wrote the Park Board proposing to construct and operate a ski tow on the area cleared by the Park Board at Snoqualmie Pass, which would be the means of “developing this area to its greatest possibilities as a popular ski center.” Parker said that since some question had been raised about his qualifications and experience to build such a tow, he described his background.

As ski coach at Williams College, ski school director in Woodstock, Vermont, and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, assistant to Otto Lang, ski trail technician, and ski tow builder, I have had the opportunity to study every phase of recreational skiing, both in this country and in Switzerland. I have constructed one tow at Woodstock, Vermont, which had been operating without fault or replacement of any part, for two winters, and one tow in Williamstown, Massachusetts, which has operated equally well.

⁹⁴ Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, page 183.

⁹⁵ Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, page 185.

Parker provided a number of arguments in support of installing such a ski tow based on the practical experience in eastern ski centers.

Safety: In a congested area a ski tow eliminated the most frequent of accidents: collision between person ascending and person descending, by concentrating uphill traffic along the tow line and leaving the slope free for downhill skiers. There is no record of injury sustained on any ski tow in the east.

Proficiency: The eastern skier has developed faster with the introduction of the ski tow. Such stars as Bob Livermore, Alec Bright, Ted Hunter, and Dick Durrance owe a great deal to the ski tow for developing their downhill technique. The western skier has no hope of competing with the eastern product unless he is given the opportunity of more downhill practice.

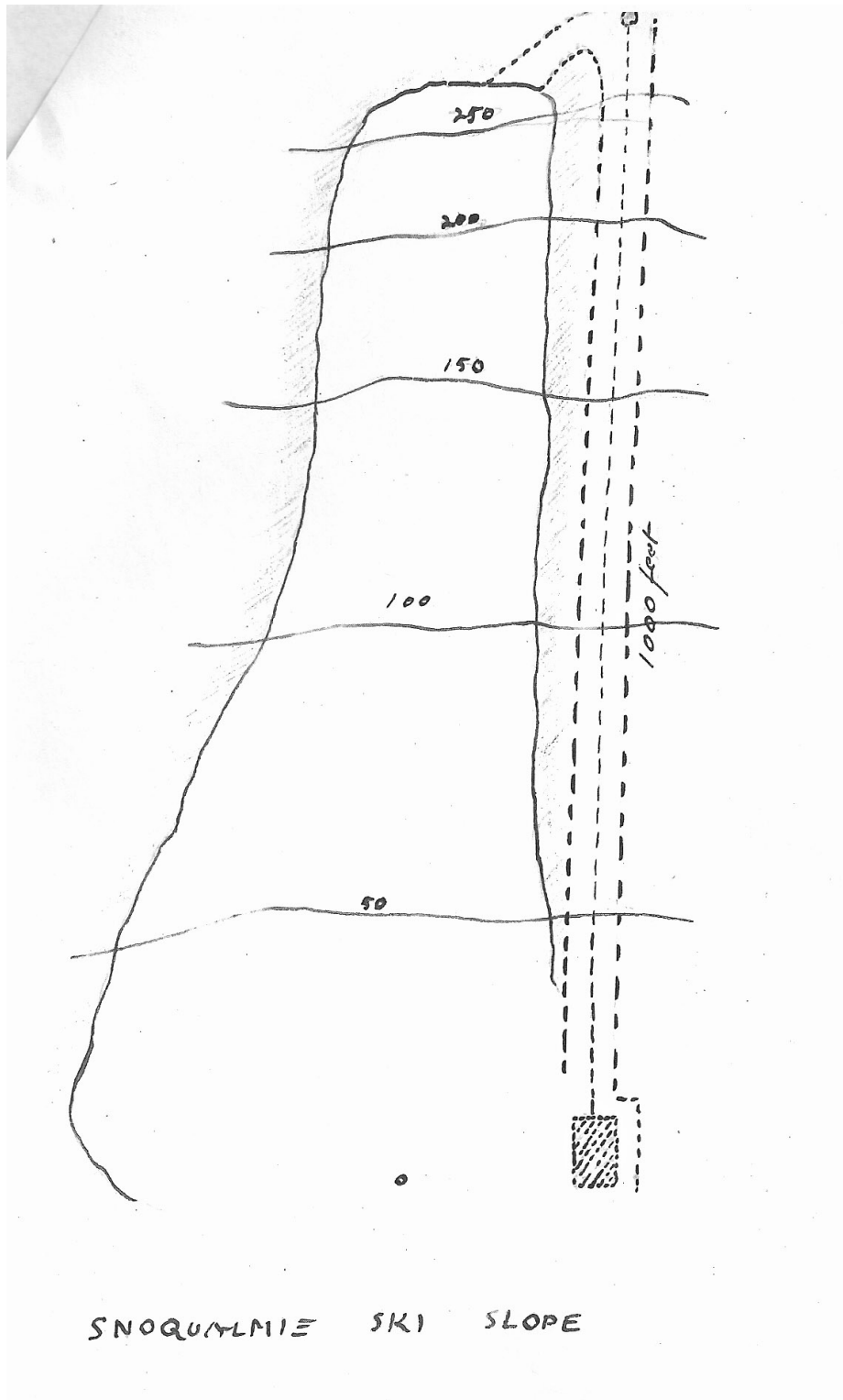
Enjoyment: Five times as much downhill skiing is possible with a ski tow. The skier arrives at the top fresh for the down run.

Increased Capacity: In a limited area a tow makes it possible for many more skiers to use a hill satisfactorily.

The novice: It is necessary to develop suitable trails for the novice.

Advancement of skiing: The added enjoyment of skiing with a tow will bring more people from the cities into the out-of-doors during the winter months. A ski tow at Snoqualmie would make it the most popular ski center in this area.

A sketch of a proposed ski tow at the Ski Park was included with the letter.



Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, Box 23, folder 14.

The Forest Service responded to Parker's proposal by letter to the Seattle Park Board dated July 16, 1937. The Forest Service was interested in allowing the Park Board to "provide the maximum public service in winter sports activities." The permit issued to Seattle authorized occupancy of the land for "non-commercial use." If the Park Department wanted to pursue Parker's proposal to install a ski lift, it could do so under the existing permit by the Park Department reimbursing Parker for the use of the facilities provided for free use by the public, or the Park Department could secure a new special use permit under which the Park Department could authorize a concession to Parker to operate the ski lift of that particular portion of the area on a commercial basis. The easiest way to handle the issue would be for the Park Department to issue a concession to Mr. Parker.⁹⁶

On August 3, 1937, the Seattle Times discussed the hopes of Northwest skiers that ski lifts would be installed at local ski areas.

Mount Rainier needs a funicular - or overhead tram. It needs several, but one would do. ..The hitch with installing overhead trams at Rainier comes from the perhaps justified, but certainly difficult (to the ski public) feeling within the National Park Service that they would tend to destroy the natural beauty of the park. It is not an insurmountable obstacle, however; opinions have changed before. But at the moment it checks development.

Private individuals have been talking with Ben Evans, supervisor of Seattle parks and a staunch friend of the municipal ski area at Summit, Snoqualmie Pass, about installing and operating a tram on the order of the Sun Valley, Idaho, chair lifts; a business to be conducted commercially, and this winter. First thought would be that it would put too many skiers on an already congested ski hill; the municipal area has never been nearly large enough to handle the crowds. But it might be that the ski tow, if it were universally accepted, and used, would thin out the downhill running crowd and make skiing safer. It's still worth considering.⁹⁷

On August 6, 1937, John Ambler formally presented the proposal by Ski Lifts, Inc. for the

⁹⁶ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

⁹⁷ *The Times Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, August 3, 1937 (page 15).

erection of a ski lift at Snoqualmie to the Park Board.. John C. Kuhns of the Forest Service attended the meeting to hear the proposal. Ski Lifts, Inc. was granted a contract for five years, with an option to renew, the right to build and operate a ski lift at the Municipal Ski Park. If service was not satisfactory to the City, the contract could be cancelled given 90 days notice. Kuhns requested that gradual erection of permanent buildings be considered “in due course” to replace the temporary ones built at the Ski Park.

On August 27, 1937, the Board of Park Commissioners approved a tentative contract with Ski Lifts, Inc. for the installation and operation of a ski lift at the Snoqualmie Recreational Tract. A copy of Seattle’s Special Use Permit from the Forest Service was provided to the company. The Forest Service was present at the Board meeting, and verbally approved the contract. A concession contract between the Board of Park Commissioners and Ski-Lifts, Inc. was approved by Seattle’s Law Department, provided that Ski-Lifts, Inc.’s insurance covered the City of Seattle and the U.S. Forest Service, and the Seattle Park Board had a 90 day option to cancel the contract if Ski-Lifts, Inc. should fail to satisfactorily perform its obligations.⁹⁸

On the same day, the Seattle Times reported that *Snoqualmie Pass to Get Ski Lift*. The Board of Park Commissioners granted permission to Ski Lifts, Inc, to construct and operate a ski lift at the Seattle Park Department’s skiing area at the summit. Ski Lifts, Inc. was headed by Jim Parker, well-known skiing enthusiast. The ski lift will be 1,000 feet long with an elevation of 250 feet.

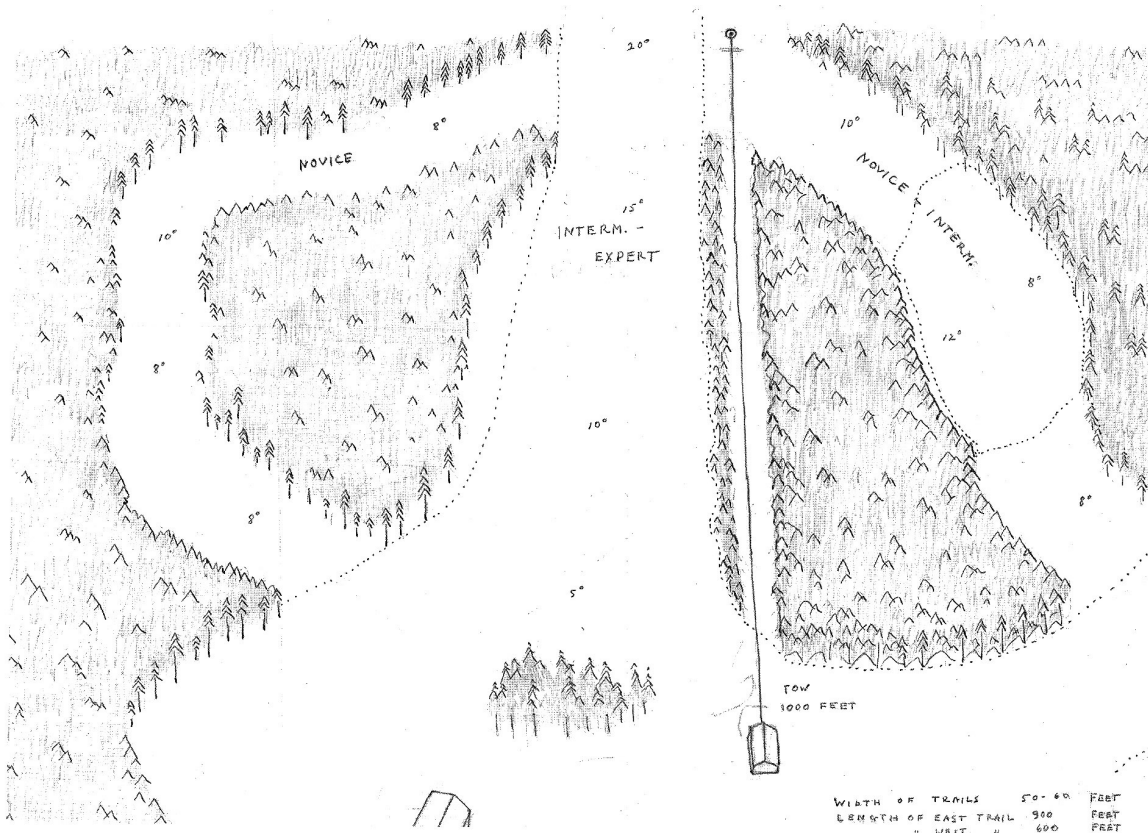
Designed to save skiers the long, weary uphill trek before the exhilarating downhill trip may be accomplished, the lift will go in operation on or about December 1....Seattle ski experts felt that with the added inducement of the lift at Snoqualmie, hundreds of additional lovers of the sport would flock to the area and that the Forest Service would be asked for further space to handle winter sports. Operation of the lift will at all times be subject to the approval of the

⁹⁸ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

Forest Service.⁹⁹

The Seattle Times lobbied for the proposal made by Ski Lifts, Inc. to be accepted by the Forest Service. Since Parker and Griggs had proposed to install the lift at the Ski Park,

interest in uphill lifts has quickened, despite the season. The skiers need lifts. And from the civic standpoint, lifts are essential if ski-tourists are to be attracted here. Throughout Europe, the ski lift is institutional: in fact, it is essential if a resort is to survive. And the lack of ski lifts is the only thing that is preventing Washington ski areas from dominating those in Europe.¹⁰⁰



Plan for rope tow at Municipal Ski Park. The map shows that two acres of land would be cleared for the ski tow. Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 4.

⁹⁹ *Snoqualmie Pass to Get Ski Lift*, Seattle Times, August 27, 1937, (page 26).

¹⁰⁰ *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, August 28, 1937, (page 8).

D. ROPE TOWS ARE INSTALLED IN FALL 1937

By October of 1937, the Forest Service had authorized installation of the ski tows at several areas, and installation had begun at Mt. Baker and Snoqualmie Summit where heavy poles the size of telephone poles had been erected in a straight line up the ski hill where the forest service authorized the removal of trees. This meant “the Northwest will have made the first step toward catching up with Europe in the matter of ski equipment.” Both tows were endless ropes powered by gasoline motors which skiers will catch hold of and be pulled along. The tow at the Summit would be 1,000 feet long and lift skiers up 450 feet, which should be the solution to the area’s “weekly traffic jam,” as it keeps up-hill skiers on the right side with the downhill-bound skiers on the other side. The tow at Mount Baker, located south of the slalom course, was longer.¹⁰¹ These new rope tows

will give Washington’s principal ski areas, Mount Rainier, Mount Baker and Snoqualmie Pass, four tows where none grew before... At the Seattle Park Board’s recreation area, a quarter of a mile this side of the summit, Jim Parker and Chauncey Griggs (Ski Tows Inc.) are completing one that reaches as far up the hill as the timber is cleared. They have already installed one from the dam in Heather Meadows, Mount Baker, 800 feet up the hill. They are also working on one at Paradise Valley, running from the Guide House, home during the winter of the Washington Ski Club, to the “saddle” on Alta Vista.¹⁰²

By November 1937, the 1,000 foot rope tow at Seattle Park Board’s ski area at the Summit had been installed to serve the pie shaped wedge of clearing just west of the Seattle Ski Club. The Ski Park area was small and jammed too many beginners into a small area, a situation somewhat relieved by extending its trails back into the timber on the top side,

¹⁰¹ *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, Seattle Times, October 13, 1937; *Ski Tows Being Installed: Work Opens on New Equipment at Two Sites*, Seattle Times, October 7, 1937, (page 27).

¹⁰² *Ski Season’s Here, Snqoualmie to Have Two*, Seattle Times, October 31,1937 (page 20).

but it is somewhat hazardous to come down any but in a generally straight line. Those who try to curb speed by traversing become the target for those, who, with more courage than ski-savvy, click skis together in the military manner and shaft straight down, completely out of control, they fall, bounce, start cart-wheeling, and wind up with the half-dozen unfortunates they have knocked down.

The Parker-Griggs ski tow fortunately will do much to clear the area, since it parallels the trees on the right-hand side of the course. Skiers using it will be well away from the downhill-bound novitiates; and the added opportunity of getting downhill training without the long uphill climbs and sudden, weary-legged returns will work wonders in developing turning technique.¹⁰³

Snoqualmie Pass was “coming into its own” for the ski season of 1937 - 1938, for two reasons. First, was The Milwaukee Railroad’s new Ski Bowl at Hyak, the east portal of its Snoqualmie Pass tunnel. The other was the new ski lift on the Seattle Park Board area just west of the summit.

Each area will have a ski lift; and the rapid improvement in ski technique they will bring will pay its dividends in increasingly long ski tours into the Summit hinterland...that vast Cascade region of wooded trails and burns, and nursery slopes and avalanche slides, which some day will sprout over-night huts and a greater army of skiers...the adventurous men and women who, seeking respite from packed practice hills and marked areas, will seek release on unexpected terrain.¹⁰⁴

The rope tow at Mr. Rainier was nearly ready for operation, setting the stage for a grand year of skiing.

This year is slated to be a banner one for the realm of skidom...So the greatest winter sports season in the Pacific Northwest is about to get under way. The Rainier National Park Company with the cooperation of the United States Department of the Interior is prepared for the throngs which will be Paradise Valley guests during the forthcoming season. New improvements and replacements, the innovation of a ski lift, and the introduction of fresh ski trails will be noted with interest by those who will be making their initial appearance on the mountain slopes. The new ski tow, 1,000 feet long, starting from the Guide House and

¹⁰³ *Snoqualmie Gets Lift - With Lifts*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937 (page 34).

¹⁰⁴ *Ski Eyes Returning to Snoqualmie, Two Lifts and Railroad Work Give Area Aid*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937 (page 33).

terminating on Alta Vista, is virtually completed and will be ready for usage when the ski season opens officially. The outstanding features of lifts elsewhere were incorporated into the construction of the Rainier funicular. The device is said to increase the amount of downhill skiing by at least six times.¹⁰⁵

David Hellyer described the rope tow that Ski Lifts, Inc. installed at Mt. Rainier. Being on National Park land, the tow had to be removed after ski season was over.

We built our first rope tow at Paradise Valley in Rainier National Park. The engine house was two stories high, to accommodate the tremendous snowpack, and was located just behind the inn, near a clump of trees, which afforded some shelter. The top pulley was placed on a pole at the summit of Alta Vista. Special conditions and restrictions were placed on our operation within the national park, since every evidence of human interference with the landscape had to be removed when the snow left the hillsides. Thus, each year we assembled the building in the late fall and disassembled it in the spring, masking the holes where the poles had been lifted from the ground with huckleberry bushes, and storing all the pre-fabricated panels and machinery out of sight.

Hellyer described the rope tow built by Ski Lifts, Inc., at Snoqualmie Summit and at Mt. Baker.

After completing the Paradise lift we obtained permits to expand our operations to Snoqualmie Summit and Mount Baker, and I also built two "portable tows," which we thought could be used for special events at more remote sites. The ski tow at Snoqualmie Summit was of a similar design to that at Paradise Valley, but the third tow at Mount Baker was a far more challenging project. The most popular slope accessible to the lodge to the lodge ran out onto a small lake making it necessary to place the engine house at the top instead of the bottom of the hill, while mounting the end pole on a raft in the middle of the lake and waiting for it to freeze solidly in place before installing pulleys and rope. Because this slope consisted of nearly solid columnar basalt, we had to dynamite the rock for the house foundations and the holes in which to set the poles.¹⁰⁶

The new rope tow at Mt. Baker was expected to make the ski year of 1938 an outstanding one for the area, according to the Seattle Times. Nearly 40,000 people visited Mount Baker in 1936-1937, after the area had undergone three years of ski development. The "magnificent lodge" there burned in 1931, leaving only the lodge annex which was repeatedly crammed to capacity, as were the

¹⁰⁵ *Lift Installed at Mr. Rainier to Aid Skiers, Winter Season at Hand; Inn is Opening Dec. 15.,* Seattle Times, November 17, 1937, (page 37).

¹⁰⁶ Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, page 189, 190.

cabins. If there were suitable overnight accommodations, Mount Baker “would be one of the world’s greatest ski areas.” Jim Parker and Chauncey Griggs built a dam to furnish power and water to the buildings, but the “real item of development” at Mount Baker was the ski tow built by Parker and Griggs, from the dam to Panorama. “It isn’t long, as ski tows go, but it will speed its users toward downhill knowledge, which is, after all, 75 per cent of skiing.” The ski school was directed by Otto Lang, and a ski tow would take “you to the top of the run without effort.” The Mount Baker Ski Club’s annual tournament was planned for April 10, 1938, and countless tour parties were expected to take advantage of the “tremendous jaunts which make Baker what it is.”¹⁰⁷

Just to remind Northwest skiers that eastern ski resorts were ahead of their western brethren in terms of ski lifts, the Seattle Times of November 17, 1937, announced that the country’s first overhead ski tram was about to open at Cannon Mountain, Franconia Notch, New Hampshire. The lift would whisk 27 skiers at once from the area’s base at elevation 1,975 feet to 4,000 feet in one mile, a vertical ascent of 2,025 feet. The new lift would make downhill runs of two to four miles possible.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Mt. Baker Looks Ahead to Possible New Lodge, 40,000 Guests Visit Area for ‘37 Season, & Bellingham Gateway to Mt. Baker*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937, (page 34).

¹⁰⁸ *One Mile Tram Almost Ready at Franconia*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937, (page 37). In 1933, Alexander Bright conceived the idea of building a tramway in NH during his trip to Europe as a member of the US Olympic Ski Team. He saw passenger carrying tramways and recognized that building one in NH could foster growth of skiing and summer tourism in the White Mountains. In November 1933, Bright and L.R. Batemen of the American Steel and Wire Company conducted a survey of Franconia Notch. In the spring of 1934, after estimating construction costs, completing research on operating costs and potential income, and examining seven promising sites for a tramway, a committee appointed by Governor John G. Winant recommended Cannon Mountain where a tramway could be built with only minor cutting of forests and without marring the scenic beauty of Franconia Notch. Legislation for the project was passed in 1935, but federal financing was unavailable. In June 1937, a \$250,000 bond issue was authorized to finance the tramway. In August 1937, American Steel Wire Company was awarded the construction contract. At the same time, a 200 man CCC Camp began work developing ski trails at Coppermine, Tucker Brook, Kinsman and

Webb Moffett became the first employee of Ski Lifts, Inc. According to his son Dave, Webb was a civil engineer from New York who moved to Seattle in 1931, where he worked as a station manager for Sacony Vacuum (which later became Texaco Oil), and by 1937-38, he was the assistant director of the Hiram Chittenden locks on the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Moffett read a newspaper article about the rope tow installed at the Woodstock, Vermont ski area. When he saw the Municipal Ski Park, he thought a rope tow would be perfect there, but when he learned that others had gotten there before him, he decided to join forces with Parker and Griggs. Webb Moffett told the story of how he became involved with Ski Lifts, Inc. and skiing at the Summit in articles that appeared in several places.

Although all were having fun in those days (because we didn't know any better), the world was awaiting an easier way to get more out of skiing. In 1932 a sophisticated young man by the name of Jim Parker came out from the east. His involvement there with the rope tow enabled him to enlist the support (and the finances) of Chauncey Griggs of Tacoma. They started a company known as Ski Lifts, Inc., for the purpose of installing rope tows in the Northwest. At the same time, I had my interest piqued by an article the Sunday supplement of the New York Times about the first mechanical device to haul skiers up a hill by an endless rope. This device, located at Woodstock, Vermont, intrigued me. I had been doing a little skiing myself - you did a little skiing in those days because you spent most of your time climbing the mountain - and suddenly I knew that a rope tow was the answer...¹⁰⁹

Moffett, accordingly, sat down before a sheet of drafting paper and in no time at all had engineered his own version of the Woodstock tow. He then got in touch with the men holding the forest permits, and they made a deal. Moffett would get 10% of all tow tickets sold at

Cannon. Old logging roads on Cannon mountain had been used for skiing since 1929. Construction of the tramway continued through the winter of 1938, with almost all the work done by hand, including pouring 32 carloads of cement, assembling 232 tons of steel and four miles of cable. On June 28, 1938, North America's first aerial tramway was dedicated. It quickly became a major tourist attraction, carrying 163,000 passengers in its first year. The tramway proved not only a sound financial investment for the state, but also confirmed the viability of skiing as an industry in New Hampshire. *Cannon Mountain, a Rich History*, <http://www.cannonmt.com/history>.

¹⁰⁹ Moffett, Webb, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine 1978.

Snoqualmie Summit in exchange for erecting tows there and at two other, more distant mountains...¹¹⁰

Those were the depression years and, since I was out of a job, I had the opportunity to secure a location. I found that the Tacoma people had preceded me. On the theory that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, I talked myself into a job with Ski Lifts, Inc., and Jim Parker and I set out to install rope tows at Rainier, Mt. Baker, and Snoqualmie. At the same time, Don Adams and Bruce Kehr were busy setting up a rope tow at Stevens Pass. Previously, the Milwaukee Railroad got into the act at the Milwaukee Bowl with ski trains running to the eastern terminal of the Snoqualmie tunnel. Skiing had arrived...¹¹¹

Business was so bad in the beginning that Moffett and his wife and his wife, a Seattle girl named Virginia Robinson, were lucky to gross \$10 a week at Snoqualmie for themselves. They spent their weekend nights sleeping in the equipment room.¹¹²

Moffett earned \$74.75 for his first month of work. A copy of his first check can be found on page 75 of Kinnick, *Images of Snoqualmie Pass*.

In 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc. was also planning on installing a rope tow at the old Blewett Pass, serving the Top-of-the-Hill Lodge there, a resort owned by R.B. Simons and Hagel M. Simons. In October 1937, John Ambler, secretary of the company, said they were planning a rope tow for Blewett Pass where they had bought property for the structure, "which will afford fine skiing."¹¹³ In August 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc. bought 85 acres of land on Blewett Pass for \$85 from the Northern Pacific Railway Company "for ski runways." Most of the land had been burned over "and can be cleared

¹¹⁰ Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, undated article in Seattle Municipal Archives.

¹¹¹ Moffett, Web, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine 1978.

¹¹² Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, undated article in Seattle Municipal Archives.

¹¹³ *Ski Tows Being Installed: Work Opens on New Equipment at Two Sites*, Seattle Times, October 7, 1937, (page 27).

without much expense.” Ski Lifts, Inc. paid \$42.50 down for the land. A contract was signed between the Simons and Ski Lifts, Inc, in which the Simons granted Ski Lifts, Inc. the right to erect a ski tow across their property and operate the lift for ten years. Ski Lifts, Inc. proposed to erect the tow for the season of 1937 - 1938, but if that proved not to be possible, it would be erected for the 1938 - 1939 season.¹¹⁴

Ski Lifts, Inc. did not build the rope tow at Blewett Pass in 1937. Its Balance Sheets dated June 30, 1939, shows operations of the Baker Lift, Paradise Lift, and Snoqualmie Lift, as well as the portable lift, but shows Blewett property worth \$170, but no operations there. However, in 1947, after Webb Moffett obtained sole ownership of Ski Lifts, Inc., the company build two ski lifts at Blewett Pass.¹¹⁵ This was the north face of the old Blewett Pass Summit, which is five miles west of the present Blewett Pass Summit. The Blewett Pass highway (highway 97), was relocated to the east in the 1950s, bypassing the old Blewett Pass Summit and going over Swauk Pass.¹¹⁶ The website, Lost Ski Areas of Washington, indicates for Blewett Pass shows the area, located 34 miles

¹¹⁴ Correspondence in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file provided by David Moffett.

¹¹⁵ *Snowflyers to Find Many New Runs at Blewett Pass*, Seattle Times, November 9, 1947 (page 40).

¹¹⁶ In the 1950s, the Blewett Pass highway was relocated to run over Swauk Pass, in order to eliminate the narrow, steep road with sharp switchbacks over the old Blewett Pass summit. The new road was five miles longer than the old route, and 400 feet higher at its summit, but maintained a 5% grade and followed a long sweeping curve to provide a high-speed two lane road that became four lanes at the summit. Even though the new road went over Swauk Pass, travelers continued to call it the Blewett Pass highway. In the late 1990s, the highway department gave into years of tradition and Swauk Pass was renamed Blewett Pass. *Relocation of Blewett Pass Road Pushed*, Ellensburg Daily Record, October 8, 1953; *Old Blewett Pass Highway*, WTA.org.

north of Ellensburg and 27 miles from Cle Elum, had a rope tow and warming hut.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ *Lost Ski Areas of Washington*, Hyak.net/lost/lostski.html.

VI. 1938 & 1939 - LIFTS AT NW SKI AREAS REVOLUTIONIZE SKIING

A. MILWAUKEE BOWL AND NEW SKI LIFTS CHANGE NW SKIING

The ski season of 1938 was a seminal one for the Northwest, based on work done in the last half of 1937. Snoqualmie Pass was coming into its own in 1938, for two reasons: the Milwaukee Railroad's new Ski Bowl at the east portal of Snoqualmie Pass tunnel, and the new ski lift on the Seattle Park Board area just west of the summit.

Each area will have a ski lift; and the rapid improvement in ski technique they will bring will pay its dividends in increasingly long ski tours into the Summit hinterland...that vast Cascade region of wooded trails and burns, and nursery slopes and avalanche slides, which some day will sprout over-night huts and a greater army of skiers...The adventurous men and women who, seeking respite from packed practice hills and marked areas, will seek release on unexpected terrain.¹¹⁸

On January 8, 1938, the Milwaukee Railroad opened a ski area at its Hyak stop on the east end of its tunnel under Snoqualmie Pass. The ski area was initially called the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, although after World War II, its name was changed to Milwaukee Ski Bowl to differentiate it from the Snoqualmie Summit ski area. The new ski area, easily accessible by train from Seattle in two hours, and offering a J-bar ski lift (described a Sun Valley type lift without the chairs), lighted slopes for night skiing, along with free ski lessons for students sponsored by the Seattle Times, revolutionized skiing in the Northwest.

Rope tows installed at Snoqualmie Ski Park, Paradise on Mount Rainier, and Mount Baker for the 1938 ski season caused a sensation among local skiers. For the first time, local skiers had an alternative to hiking up the hills to be able to take just a few runs down the mountain per day. These new lifts changed the dynamics of local skiing forever and attracted legions of skiers.

¹¹⁸ *Ski Eyes Returning to Snoqualmie, Two Lifts and Railroad Work Give Area Aid*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937 (page 33).

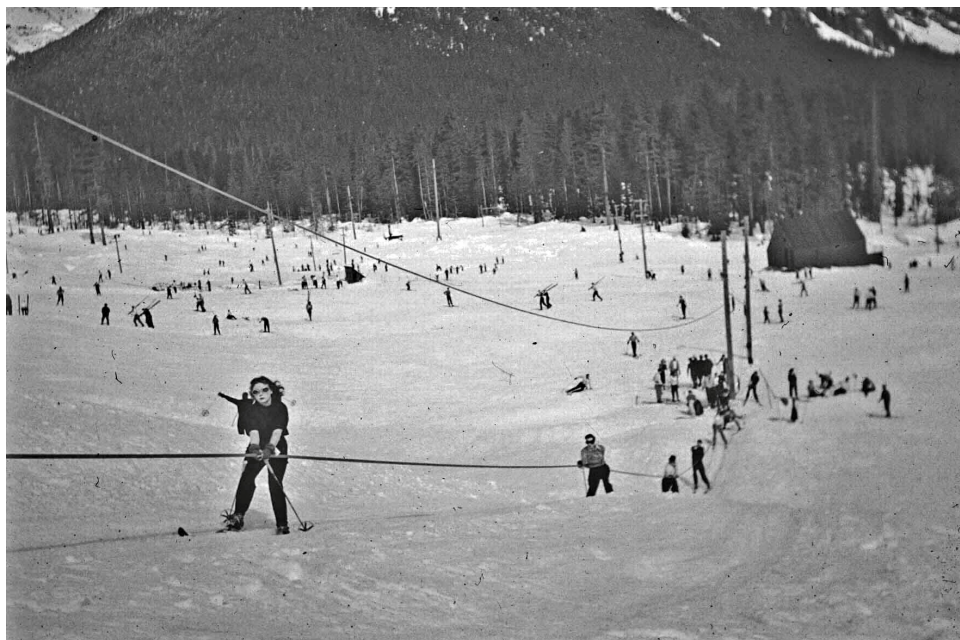
The Summit rope tow, known as “old Betsy,” was designed and built Ski Lifts, Inc., which began operating the concessions at the area in December 1937. Its initial rates were 10 cents per ride or \$1.00 for a full day. The rope tow brought numerous skiers to the Ski Park.



“Old Betsy,” Snoqualmie Summit’s first rope tow installed in fall 1937. Photo from Moffett family.



Skiers & rope tow. Courtesy of Milwaukee Road Historical Association.



Skiers & rope tow. Courtesy of Milwaukee Road Historical Association.



Cars at Ski Park and sign for ski lifts. Seattle Photo archives, 31171.

B. MILWAUKEE SKI BOWL OPENS AT HYAK STOP OF MILWAUKEE ROAD

Milwaukee Railroad's newly developed Snoqualmie Ski Bowl at Hyak had two hundred acres, comfortable access by train, and a state of art lodge, according to the Seattle Times of November 11, 1937. The Bowl had two hundred acres

mostly wooded but with cleared ski runs from the Old Milwaukee grade crossing down out of the "rim" section of the Bowl to the flat area in which the railroad company has erected a two story, 24x94 foot ski cabin. Gradient from zero to 40 degrees. Ski lift, Sun Valley type (minus chairs) being installed at present by Ben Paris Recreation, which also will maintain lunch counter in ski hut. The lift will be 1,800 feet long with a vertical lift of 300 feet. It will be powered with an electric motor; operate day and night, for flood light are being installed on all five of the runs cut through the trees.

Two special trains will leave Seattle each Sunday morning for the area; containing as well as "reserved" coaches in which every skier will have a seat, a baggage car equipped with ski checking racks and waxing tables (with hot irons), and a recreation car, sixty feet long and nine feet wide (interior measurements) with an orchestra. There'll be dancing, going and coming,

a two hour trip. One train will return late in the afternoon; the other later in the evening.

Arriving at Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, skiers will alight on a platform fully covered and go through a boarded tunnel into the ski hut proper. There will be little, if any, wading in the snow. The ski hut's first floor will have the catering bar, and checking divisions. The second floor will be given over to waxing, lavatories and chairs and lounges on which skiers may rest. The second floor, too, will open directly onto the snow; the start of the hill will be less than 100 yards away.¹¹⁹

The Milwaukee Bowl offered the region's first ski lift, described as "a Sun Valley type lift,"

(later known as a J-bar),

with two towers, one at the top of the Milwaukee grade crossing and one at the bottom. Horizontally placed on each tower is a 9 ½ foot cast iron wheel with a groove around it. On those two wheels revolves an endless 5/8 inch cable. Suspended from the cable are other cables, ending in a trapeze-like wooden handle to which the skier clings. He stays on his skis, keeps in a track, and is pulled up the course at about four miles an hour - a moderate pace, but it takes no time to get to the top. Then when he leaves the grade crossing, he has his choice of five downhill runs, each named after a crack Milwaukee train...Olympian, Hiawatha, Pioneer, Arrow and Chippewa. Between the Olympian and Hiawatha downhill trials is the Racine uphill trail.¹²⁰

The Ski Bowl sought to attract young skiers, "since rail transportation took a burden off parents' hearts - no skidding into ditches, and there will be a definite time for arrival home.

They take the skier to the mountains without the bother of driving; they give him a specially prepared baggage car in which to wax his skis or store, his skis. They give him recreation cars, devoid of chairs and equipped with mountain music so he may dance his way to the bowl and back. They give him the opportunity to relax on his tired way home.

The Ski Bowl overcame opposition to the sport from parents and school officials, who had been worried about lack of control over the youth on the way to skiing, and the dangers of making the trip to the Pass by car on snowy roads.

¹¹⁹ *Ski Eyes Returning to Snoqualmie, Two Lifts and Railroad Work Give Area Aid, & Snoqualmie Gets Lift - With Lifts*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937, (pages 33, 34).

¹²⁰ *Lift to be Ready Saturday*, Seattle Times, January 5, 1938 (page 24).

Today, however, with ski trains carrying these youthful ski aspirants, the opposition is melting to a great degree...It is expected that the Ski Bowl and ski trains will do much in the future to erase the official objection for high school students. The availability of supervised ski instruction will also do considerable for the youthful skiers. Under the capable guidance of Ken Styveson Ski School, the student may learn the rudiments of controlled skiing, thereby assuring himself of greater pleasure and safety.

High school ski clubs grew rapidly after the opening of the Ski Bowl. The Queen Anne Ski Club had a membership of 116, including “Margaret O. Dell,” the authors’ mother.¹²¹

Seats on the train were reserved so there was no danger of overcrowding. Checking service for ski equipment was available for a nominal fee - skis could be taken to the seats or checked. Milwaukee Railroad trains left downtown Seattle on the weekends for the ski area, at either 7:15 am or 9:30 am, for the two hour trip to the ski area, costing \$1.70.

Leave Seattle after breakfast, return in time for dinner. You’ll enjoy a carefree, exciting day in perfect surroundings...your choice of numerous courses ranging in length from 1,200 to 1,600 feet. Power Ski Lifts available at reasonable rates. The Special Ski Trains had “warm, comfortable coaches, a specially equipped baggage car for storing your skis, and a recreation car for dancing.”¹²²

The Milwaukee Ski Bowl became the destination of choice for young skiers who were attracted by free ski lessons given to students by the Seattle Times. The authors’ mother, Margaret Odell, worked at Queen Anne High School after graduating from the University of Washington in 1937. She was the advisor for the school’s ski club, and every weekend for three years, she took her students to the Seattle Times Ski School at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl on the ski train.

¹²¹ *Ski Bowl Bids for Junior Enthusiasts, Opposition to Week-End Trips Cut by Trains*, Seattle Times, January 5, 1938 (page 24).

¹²² Milwaukee Road ad, Seattle Times, January 5, 1938 (page 23).



Margaret Odell, the authors' mother and advisor to Queen Anne Ski Club, at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, 1938. She is wearing a UW crew letterman's sweater as part of her attire.

C. ACTIVITIES AT THE MUNICIPAL SKI PARK IN 1938

Although the new rope tow at the Municipal Ski Park at Snoqualmie Summit was very popular, the opening of the Ski Bowl at Hyak by the Milwaukee Road was the big news of the year, and it became the primary focus of Seattle's ski scene. The Ski Bowl got most of the publicity beginning in 1938, while the Ski Park was rarely mentioned.

On January 13, 1938, the Park Board gave Ben Evans the authority to inspect the new ski tow at the Ski Park to see the Park Board was fully protected, and signs placed on the property calling attention to the possibility that accidents to inexperienced skiers. Ski Lifts, Inc was asked to provide copies of its insurance policies to the city.¹²³

In January of 1938, Ben Evans sought permission from the Forest Service to utilize a professional ski instructor at the Snoqualmie Ski Park under Seattle's special use permit. On January 22, 1938, the Forest Supervisor for the Snoqualmie National Forest approved his request subject to certain conditions. The ski instructor would give instructions at specified rates, the proceeds would go directly to him, and the Park Board would receive no material financial benefit.¹²⁴

It appears that a ski school was established at the Snoqualmie Ski Park in 1938, by Hurley DeRoin, as shown by the Ellis postcard below. DeRoin had been a football player at the University of Washington (a "star lineman" according to the *Seattle Times*) and a member of the Washington Ski Club. In April 1935, he finished in second place in the first annual Washington Ski Club slalom championship at Alta Vista on Mount Rainier. DeRoin was later the football and basketball coach at Seattle Prep, and a part time P.E. instructor at the UW.

¹²³ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

¹²⁴ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.



Seattle Municipal Ski Park 1938 - sign advertising Harley DeRoin Ski School. Ellis postcard.



Mrs. Otto Strizek is trying on a ski jacket which will be given to some outstanding yodeler or schottischer at the dance tomorrow evening, which the Washington Ski Club will give at Spanish Castle. Mr. Stanley Borgerson, right, a member of the board, and Mr. Hurley DeRoin, left, who is this year's entertainment chairman, also are on the committee for the ski dance, which is an annual affair. On the table are other favors to be given away tomorrow evening for various contests.

Seattle Times, November 4, 1937 (page 22)

In 1938, a new ski jump was still being considered for Snoqualmie Summit in anticipation as part of local ski clubs' attempts to get the trials for the 1940 Olympics to be held here. On February 1, 1938, a committee organized by the Park Board visited the Municipal Ski Park to determine the best location for a new ski jump. This was a continuation of the process that started in 1936, when the W.P.A. approved \$18,500 to build a new ski jump at Snoqualmie Summit.¹²⁵ In 1937, the W.P.A. had promised to build a new jumping hill at Snoquamlie Summit when the Pacific Northwest Ski Association made a bid to hold the tryouts for the 1940 Olympics for all events, including downhill, slalom, cross-country and jumping.¹²⁶ The Park board committee consisted of Ben Evans, Park; C. Wende, W.P.A. Engineer; Pete Hostmark, Seattle Ski Club; R.W. Crawford, Forest Service; Bert Satterbo, Forest Ranger; ___ Van Orsdale, Forest Engineer; Archie Phelps, Sect. to Taylor; and Max Dressel, Forest Engineer. "Trip to Pass. Both sites looked over. All agreed area across from present area best for jump."¹²⁷

In July 1938, the Seattle Ski Club sent a formal bid to the Ski Committee of the United States Olympic body requesting that the 1939 trials for the 1940 Olympics be awarded to the Snoqualmie district. With the national acclaim for the winter sports opportunities in this district, there was much hope for favorable action on the part of the Olympic committee.¹²⁸ The new jump was built in late

¹²⁵ *Snoqualmie Pass Projects Total \$50,000*, Seattle Times, December 8, 1935, (page 33); *WPA Will Construct Ski Jumping Hill at Snoqualmie*, February 23, 1936 (page 13); *\$18,570 Grant to Provide New Snow Paradise; W.P.A Will Build Jump Project*, July 12, 1936 (page 13); *Work to Start Soon on Huge Ski Jump Hill*, October 1, 1936 (page 15).

¹²⁶ *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, July 21, 1937, (page 17).

¹²⁷ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

¹²⁸ *N. W. Wants Trials; Bid Sent to Ski Committee*, Seattle Times, July 22, 1937, (page 12).

1938, and subsequent articles talked about the “Big Hill” at the Summit. In December 1938, the Seattle Ski Club announced its tournament schedule for jumping on its “brand new hill” at Snoqualmie summit. “The hill is not the biggest in the world but its sporting, and they MAY jump as far as 100 feet.”¹²⁹

The fourth annual high school ski meet was held at the Municipal Ski Park in February 1938, with skiers competing in slalom, cross-country and jumping. Th meet was won by Garfield, although a West Seattle skier, Kjell Qvalie was the individual champion. Girls competed in slalom but their results did not count. “Parents lined the hill, and a thousand or skiers jammed the area, which is not very large, anyhow.”¹³⁰

The Seattle Times of March 7, 1938, reported on the Seattle Ski Club’s jumping tournament on Snoqualmie Summit. Birger Ruud (1937 world champion, and the Olympic title holder in 1932 and 1936) won the jumping championship at the Big Hill of the Seattle Ski Club at Snoqualmie Pass, beating fellow Norwegian Olav Ulland and his brother Sigmund. The paper carried a picture of Birger and Sigmund doing a double jump, flying through the air side by side. The skiers were leaving the next day for Sun Valley where they would compete in the F.I.S open.

On April 27, 1938, James Parker, President of Ski-Lifts, Inc., wrote the Seattle Park Board thanking it for its cooperation with the operation of the ski lift at Snoqualmie Pass, and giving a summary of the past year’s operations of the ski lift.

We are very pleased with the favorable reaction that had been evidenced by the skiers at this playground and are satisfied that the use of the ski tow has contributed greatly to the increased

¹²⁹ *Brand New Hill, Close to Highway, Scene of Two Class Tournament*, Seattle Times, December 11, 1938, (page 36).

¹³⁰ *Garfield is Again, Prep Victor*, Seattle Times, February 14, 1938, (page 14).

pleasure of skiing as well as to the further development of the sport. Although the ski lift was a new idea in this vicinity this year, it did not take skiers long to appreciate its benefits. When we first started operation in January the lift was patronized by only about 15% of the skiers on the hill. The acceptance of the lift increased throughout the season until at the close of the season approximately 75% of the skiers were accustomed to taking advantage of the lift.

We started operating the tow on January 1st and continued each Saturday and Sunday until the closing date April 17th. During this time almost 3000 people took rides. Some of these customers would average between 50 and 70 rides per day so that approximately 100,000 rides were given in all. Since the machinery and equipment in connection with the lift was expensive to install, we are satisfied in netting a sufficient profit during the season to pay for approximately one-third of the original investment.

We believe, because of location and accessibility, that the Snoqualmie area is an ideal district for Seattle skiers. Further development of this playground would prove an immeasurable benefit to Seattle. We hope that we may continue to have the opportunity to be of service to the Park Board and we would be very glad to cooperate in any future development of their winter playground.¹³¹

The Park Department Annual Report for 1938, said that “the Ski Course at Snoqualmie Pass, operated by the Park Department, gains in popularity, and thousands of spectators as well as skiers visit the course each winter.” The Sails and Trails Club, the Park Department’s young women’s organization, enjoyed many pleasant week-end activities, which included a ski trip.¹³²

The Seattle Times of July 24, 1938, said that over the last decade, skiing had become Seattle’s favorite winter-time sport, featuring areas on two mountain ranges, with the manufacture and selling of ski equipment becoming a \$3 million industry.

Within a comfortable four hours distance a half-dozen of the outstanding ski terrains in the entire nation, Seattle has become the hub of intense activity through the winter months. Every week-end finds 20,000 or more skiers turning to the glistening snowfields of the Cascades, Olympics, to Mountain Rainier and Mount Baker...In the Cascades east of Seattle, ski-fans find opportunity at Snoqualmie Pass, Naches Pass, and a half-dozen other points. Newest of the areas is the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, accessible by ski trains from Seattle and Tacoma.

¹³¹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

¹³² Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

The Seattle Times published its annual Ski Issue on November 16, 1938, in which the paper discussed the news and events for the upcoming 1939 ski season, including “The Ski Lift Plan.” Lifts were a problem when skiers had none but wanted them. They are now a problem for the Park Service because of the promised construction of portable lifts. The Park Service says it can’t allow an elegant landscape to be cluttered up with long stretches of vibrating rope, tugging skiers up to where they may ski down. A portable ski tow had been developed, with 1,200 of rope powered by a 12-horsepower engine, weighing 200 pounds, which when placed on skis or a toboggan, could be hauled anywhere. One had been installed at Tipsoo Lake for racers only who would not be charged for its use. Skiers can use up their book of tickets in about an hour at paying lifts, which is more than most skiers can afford. To develop skiers of international caliber, they need to get 25 - 40,000 feet of downhill skiing a day. The group that developed the portable tows were planning a meeting with the Superintendent of the Rainier National Park to discuss their use. The arrival of ski lift the previous season in several local ski areas created a demand for lifts everywhere. A new free rope tow had been installed by the Spokane Ski Club at Mount Spokane, and the Mountaineers widened the lane at the Meany Ski Hut at the Summit, and installed a rope tow with 900 feet of pull and 330 feet of lift.¹³³

D. APRIL 1938 - BEN EVANS ADDRESSES WINTER SPORTS SYMPOSIUM

Ben Evans gave a lecture on April 13, 1938, at a Winter Sports Symposium in Salt Lake City, on “The Responsibility of municipal, county, state and federal agencies incident to winter sports activities.” He described developments in Northwest skiing.¹³⁴

Seattle’s municipal winter playground at Snoqualmie Pass “is the center of this great country”

¹³³ Ski Section, Seattle Times, November 16, 1938, (page 17).

¹³⁴ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

where the Park Department opened to the public a hill that was “hand cleared” after a special use permit was obtained for the 30 acre site. A crew of civil works administration employees cleared part of the grounds of trees, stumps and underbrush, “transforming the area into a beautiful playground in a natural evergreen setting, ready for use at the height of the winter sports season.” Use of the area has grown by leaps and bounds and attendance rose steadily. In the 1936 - 37 season, one half or 20,000 of the 46,000 persons who visited the Snoqualmie National Forest went to the Seattle Ski Park. The attendance figures for 1938 were expected to exceed the prior years. Improvements to the area include underbrush being cleared away. A warming shed was built where skiers could rest, and a 1,000-watt flood light system made night skiing possible. Flags and rope control skiing in the congested area. Park guard control, equipped for first aid and trained in public service, lessened accidents “and aided required supervision and moral responsibility.” Maintenance had cost the Park Department \$1,000 a year. Prep school tournaments and dual competitions had become popular, and “the sport affords one of the best co-educational activities on the recreation calendar.” Additional funds were needed to extend the ski area, provide additional drainage, larger shelter quarters, and adequate toilet facilities.

Evans said the Park Department had plans to construct a permanent indoor training facility in Seattle, that would be

one of the best municipal sports playgrounds in the country. An in-town training camp has found its way into the plans. It is our contention that if the federal government, state, and county continue to spend such tremendous sums in making available the great forest and national park areas to the public, that it is the duty of Seattle to assist with the training, that the public may properly enjoy these facilities at their disposal, with the maximum amount of sport, and the minimum amount of danger.

What is the safest way to climb a mountain? How are rock slides avoided? What not to do when a slide occurs? How does one care for a person injured on a mountain? These, and dozens of other major and minor problems, are being considered in the training course. To provide the proper elements for a demonstration, a miniature concrete and rock mountain is being constructed at the training camp. On this structure the various climbing technics will be

demonstrated, and the necessary hazards pointed out...Skiers and winter sports enthusiasts have been remembered in the planning of this area, for on occasions when the snow fall is heavy enough there will be facilities and hills for ski practice.

It appears that Evans was describing the climbing facility built at Camp Long in West Seattle, which was really not skiing related.

Evans said Seattle, as the “youngest of the world’s great ski communities,” wants a lot of things: “winter ski resorts that are constructed for winter occupancy, overhead trams, skating rinks, garages alongside where we can park our cars, a new hotel at Snoqualmie Pass, and a wider road to Dear Park.” Some day these things will happen if the “sensational rise in skiing continues,” at not so distant a time in the future, as 186,000 persons enjoyed winter sports in the Northwest national park service areas. Winter sports had become a major faction in forest recreation the past few years, with 10% of national forest recreation seekers attracted by winter sports. Of 20 national forests in Washington and Oregon, Mt. Hood had the highest number of winter sports participants (58,883). The Seattle Chamber of Commerce reported that \$400,000 was spent in the Northwest the prior fall on ski equipment and apparel.

New improvements at Snoqualmie Pass included the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, ski lift and train. Rope tows were installed at the Municipal Ski Park, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier. Highway improvements for parking further improved skiing in the Northwest. Since the opening of the Milwaukee Ski Bowl and train, PTAs had chaperoned train loads of high school students to the Ski Bowl for outings, and interest was growing among high school students.

In the Northwest, over a million automobile miles were driven every weekend by skiers. At an average of five cents a mile for gas, oil, rubber and depreciation, this meant \$10,000 was spent weekly. “We feel this would be a justifiable source of securing financial assistance, to improve skiing

in our western area, and would enable the people to further utilize the magnificent mountains for which the region is famous.”

E. SKI SEASON OF 1939

The Seattle Times of January 23, 1939, said *Weekend Skiing Crowd Break All Time Record: 12,000 + Go to Snowfields; Pass is Packed*. 1,100 skiers’ cars were counted on Snoqualmie Pass, 905 at Cayuse Pass; 686 cars and 2,973 persons at Paradise; 483 cars at Mt. Baker; and 783 skiers at the Milwaukee Bowl. Assuming four skiers per car, 12,245 persons “were swinging it in the various ski areas.”¹³⁵

The first weekend of February 1939, the Municipal Ski Park hosted the Seattle High School Ski tournament, with the winner getting the Hans Otto Giese trophy. High school skiing caliber had improved amazingly since the tournament began in 1933. Where awkwardness prevailed then, speed and precision does not. Garfield had won the tournament every year since its origin.¹³⁶

On March 6, 1939, Ken Syverson, head of the ski school at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, wrote to Ben Evans of the Seattle Park Board offering to furnish the ski area with an instructor from his school to teach the fundamentals of skiing. He could not pay anything for the use of the hill, but he would give the caretaker of the hut five percent of all monies taken in for the handling of the sale of the Ski School tickets. He would operate the ski school only so long as it paid to hold classes. The fee would be \$1.25 for adults for a two-hour period, and \$.75 for students. Syverson sent a Waiver of Liability for Minor” form to Evans. The Park Board approved Syverson’s request on March 17,

¹³⁵ *Weekend Skiing Crowd Break All Time Record*, Seattle Times, January 23, 1939, (page 14).

¹³⁶ *Prep Skiers Compete Today*, Seattle Times, February 5, 1939, (page 35).

1939, for the remainder of the 1939 ski season. Syverson was required to handle his own reservations and issue his own tickets, which were to inform the public that Seattle was not liable for injuries.¹³⁷

In early March 1939, the Pacific Northwest Jumping Championships were held at the Big Hill at Snoqualmie Summit. Motorists were warned to carry chains and leave early to avoid the crowds that caused many spectators to miss the jumping events the prior year. The Big Hill at Beaver Lake was ½ mile from the highway, so “don’t try visiting it in high-heeled slippers or light oxfords. The trip calls for warm clothing and boots or overshoes.”¹³⁸

According to the Park Department Annual Report dated March 22, 1939, \$648.64 was spent on the Snoqualmie Ski Area. “The Ski Course at Snoqualmie Pass operated by the Park Department, gains in popularity, and thousands of spectators as well as skiers visit the course each winter.”¹³⁹

Showing the wide appeal of skiing in the winter of 1939, the Seattle Tennis Club hosted a dinner for its skiing members in January that was covered by Virginia Boren, a non-skiing writer for the Seattle Times Society Pages, who wrote an article that was typical of the woman’s news of the day. In addition to discussing the events of the evening, Boren listed all of the attendees, who sat together, and was careful to describe the clothing and jewelry that many of the women were wearing.

All I lacked was a yodel and a Tyrolean hat! I fairly chinned myself on the Jungfrau. I found that slalom is a race and not a first cousin to salami, nor even a distant relative of Salome. Under my breath I hummed, “I Miss My Swiss,” and then caught the same breath with quick convulsive gulps when I saw those expert skiers dusting off the sides of Mount Rainier and Mount Baker, and fluffing up the snow at Sun Valley in a manner both careless and delightful. I learned ...there are more skiers than any other active sportsmen in the world, that you can learn to ski in 10 days, that skiing is good for the soul as well as the body, that skiing is “not

¹³⁷ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

¹³⁸ *Jumps Due Today*, Seattle Times, March 6, 1939, (page 30).

¹³⁹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

only a sport, but a way of life.”

Orville Borgerson, one of Seattle’s leading young merchants, showed films of spring and summer skiing in the Northwest at Sun Valley, Mount Hood, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier. One film, taken on the Fourth of July, showed sportsmen skiing in the morning and fishing in the afternoon. Darroch Crookes, a member of the 1936 Olympic ski team and a representative of Sun Valley, showed a film of ten “tenderfoots” who had never skied before, taking lessons at Sun Valley. The film showed them buying ski clothes, taking their first lesson, and followed them through the rest of their vacation until “they can really take the snow slopes standing up, minus that villainous sitzmark!” The film showed swimming in the resort’s warm pool, dog sledding, riding to the mountain peaks in trams, singing and dancing, and lunches on the mountain and dinners at various restaurants. Tennis Club members discussed forming a ski auxiliary which would have its own ski cabin. The authors’ mother, Margaret Odell, attended, sitting with her friends Dorothy Leede, Dr. William Leede and Dr. Rodney Hearne.¹⁴⁰

F. SKI PARK REPORT FOR 1936 - 1939

The Seattle Park Board’s Ski Area Report 1936 - 1939, gives week by week attendance figures at the Ski Park for the three years, together with the snow conditions and accidents at the area. The figures show a substantial jump in the number of skiers in 1938, after the rope tow was installed, but a drop in participants in 1939, perhaps reflecting the increased popularity of the Milwaukee Ski Bowl. In 1937, 19,865 people went to the park; 26,025 in 1938; and 22, 880 in 1939. The report also shows injuries sustained at the ski park. No report for 1940 can be found in the Seattle Municipal

¹⁴⁰ *Hearing All About Skiing*, with Virginia Boren, Seattle Times, January 25, 1939 (pages 12, 13).

**SKI HILL REPORT
1936 - 1939**

Snow and Attendance

Week end of month	Year 1936	Year 1937		Year 1938		Year 1939	
		Snow	Attend	Snow	Attend	Snow	Attend
Xmas Week		37"	2765	68"	845	38"	1040
Jan. 1		37	1900	65	1700	35	780
2		43	1160	60	1525	47	1485
3		68	2190	69	1200	44	1065
4		81	1825	81	1520	55	1040
5	Final report	76	1185	82	2025	82	1725
Feb. 1	only available	100	3175 #	98	2490	91	3495 #
2	for 1936	104	1580	96	3170 #	101	2000
3		124	1325 @	96	3505 @	111	3000 @
4		98	1130	86	1255	115	1450
Mar. 1		88	1025	80	2205 "	131	2590 "
2		81	635	70	590	138	1135
3		83	460	113	1175	129	940
4		87	1190 "	100	700	101	875
Apr. 1		90	380	90	595	80	690
2		83	320	75	430	75	260
3		76	425	61	45	67	110
4		80	240				
May 1		74	65				
Greatest snow depth for year		171"	124"	113"		138"	
Total Attendance		16,480	19,865	26,025		22,880	

#-- High School meet
 @-- Includes Washington's birthday
 "-- Ski Jump meet

Serious injuries	1936	1937	1938	1939
Dislocated hip	1		1	
Dislocated knee				1
Broken Ankles		2	2	
Broken Legs			4	2

Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, box 44, folder 3.

¹⁴¹ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

VII. 1940 - SEATTLE GETS OUT OF THE SKI BUSINESS BUT SKIING CONTINUES TO THRIVE ON SNOQUALMIE PASS

A. THE MUNICIPAL SKI PARK IS BARELY MENTIONED IN 1940

The Municipal Ski Park was barely mentioned in 1940, as other areas hosted major ski tournaments.

The Sixth Annual Seattle high school ski tournament was held in January 1940, at the “Seattle Park Board skiing area at Summit, Snoqualmie Pass.” Hans-Otto Giese, who started the tournament in 1935, said “take a look at the former high school skiers who have become champions already this year,” winning events at the intercollegiate championships held at Sun Valley, Idaho, in December 1939. Three skiers who attend Garfield won events: Joe Dunford, attending Dartmouth, won the intercollegiate cross-country championship;. Reidar Gjolme won the intercollegiate downhill; and Bobby Blatt won the combined championship. Carl Neu, from Queen Anne, won the slalom. Giese said “[t]his tournament is building champions, I tell you.” The 1940 tournament at the Ski Park included a boys’ cross-country race, a boys’ and girls’ slalom, and a jumping event.¹⁴²

In summer and fall of 1939, the Milwaukee Railroad improved its Ski Bowl for the third year in a row. Responding to complaints that the terrain was not open enough, workmen “removed most of the offending timber,” and cleared trees in the 40 acre area on the east side of Rocky Point and down into the Bowl. A giant ski-jumping hill at the Ski Bowl for jumping events of the National Four-Way Ski Championships in March 1940, which attract international competitors. The Road also built a lift to hoist skiers to the top of Rocky Point, the big hill back of the Bowl. The Class A hill was greater than 200-foot capacity, and Class B and C jumping hills were constructed as well. The Times said

¹⁴² *Prep Skiers Meet Sunday*, Seattle Times, January 24, 1940, (page 16).

that “*Snoqualmie Ski Jump to be Big.*” The hill was designed by one of the most accomplished jumping hill designers, Peter Hostmark. Ken Syverson was again in charge of the Times Ski Lessons. In October 1939, the Pacific Northwest Ski Association set the schedule for the upcoming winter’s events. The National Four-Way championships would be held in the Northwest on March 30 & 31, 1940, which was a major national event. Downhill and slalom racing would take place on Mount Baker the week before March 30, with cross-country skiing at Snoqualmie Summit on March 30, and jumping at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl on March 31.¹⁴³

The conflict between the Park Service and skiers continued into 1940. The National Ski Association, at its annual meeting, criticized plans by the National Park Service to obtain jurisdiction of further lands in the Pacific Northwest for recreational administration. The group urged that a code be adopted to “modernize’ federal control of winter sports. The Forest Service’s advanced cooperation regarding winter sports was applauded, in contrast to the “outmoded policies” of the Park Service. This controversy had been simmering for several years in ski circles. The National Ski Association awarded the National Jumping Championships to the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, Seattle for 1941; the National Downhill Championships to Aspen, Colorado; and the International Open Downhill, Slalom and Jumping Tournament to Berlin, N.H.¹⁴⁴

The National Four-Way Championship held in the Northwest was the big story of the year

¹⁴³ *Ski Jump Hill Going in Bowl*, Seattle Times, June 22, 1939 (page 20); *Snoqualmie Ski Jump to be Big*, Seattle Times, September 16, 1939 (page 9); *Ski Hail! Dates Set, National Meet is to be Split*, Seattle Times, October 9, 1939 (page 15). *Build Jump at Ski Bowl*, Tacoma News Tribune, November 27, 1939, Alpenglöw Ski Mountaineering Project, Tacoma Public Library Clippings.

¹⁴⁴ *Park Service Criticized for Sports Policies*, Seattle Times, December 4, 1939 (page 21).

which dominated skiing news. The tournament was held between March 13 - 17, 1940. Dick Durrance, one of the favorites to win the competition, withdrew just before the start, citing a conflict with his job at the Sun Valley Ski resort, disappointing the local crowds. The biggest event would be the jumping competition at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl. Alf Engen, a Norwegian ski instructor at Sun Valley, and Torger Torkle from Norway but living in New York, would face off on the big jump. Torkle was looking for revenge after Engen beat him in the National Jumping Championships at Berlin, N.H. Engen was also the favorite for the combined title after Durrance dropped out.

Sigurd Hall of the Seattle Ski Club won the first event, the downhill race at Mount Baker on March 13. Engen was third in the downhill, but won the slalom the next day, beating two dozen racers in the 2,000 vertical foot race. The skiers then left Mount Baker for Snoqualmie Pass where the cross-country and jumping events would be held on the weekend.

The jumping event at the Ski Bowl got most of publicity. The Seattle Times of March 17, 1940, said "*Engen, Torkle to Head Up Special Event, They'll shoot the works at the Ski Bowl Today, and girls and boys, we do mean shoot.*" Twenty special jumpers would compete on the Class A jump on the Bowl's Olympian Hill which had not been tested before in competition. Others would compete on the Class B jump. Sunday's jumping event overshadowed the cross-country competition on Saturday, a rough 11 mile course in which Engen finished fourth.

The Times published a picture of Torger Torkle flying high off the jump over the Ski Bowl, with a headline, "*Torger Torkle Rides out of the World.*" Torkle had longer combined jumps than did Alf Engen, but Engen was declared the winner as Torkle "failed to display the form" shown by Engen, on a day when the weather was perfect and the snow fast. "Form scored over distance" announced the Times. Torkle had jumps of 238 and 235 feet, while Engen had jumps of 224 and 235 feet. In ski

jumping, points are awarded for form as well as distance, so Engen won the event getting more form points than Torkle. Torkle later said he had practicing distance jumping and had not worked hard enough on his form. Engen, “the stocky skiman from Sun Valley went off with the works,” winning the overall title in the Four-Way Competition. Engen’s brother, Sverre was second, Sig Hall of the Seattle Ski Club (who won the downhill) placed third, and Hjalmar Hvan of the Cascade Ski Club was fourth. The newsreel boys expressed disappointment that they only had one spill to film in the jumping event, as only the first jumper fell, and the rest rode out their leaps.¹⁴⁵

The Pacific Coast Conference ski championship tournament was held at Snoqualmie Summit the weekend after the National Four Way Championships. The University of Washington had won two years before at Mt. Rainier, and the prior year at Yosemite, but the competition in 1940, made a repeat “tough sliding.” The first event was jumping at the Beaver Lake jump at the Summit, then the competitors would go to Paradise on Mt. Rainier for cross-country, downhill and slalom races. After losing the jumping competition, the Huskies roared back to win the cross-country, downhill and slalom races to win the event for the third time in a row.¹⁴⁶

The first annual State High School Ski Tournament was held at Snoqualmie Summit the following weekend, with 65 skiers from 21 high schools competing in downhill, slalom and

¹⁴⁵ *Competition Sponsored by Seattle Ski Club*, Seattle Times, February 21, 1940 (page 11); *National 4-Way Skiing Starts, Downhill Race Opens Tourney at Baker Today*, March 13, 1940 (page 23); *Slalom Race Due at Mt. Baker Today, Downhill Race Won by Hall in Four-Way Series*, March 14, 1940 (page 29); Seattle Times, March 15, 1940 (page 28); *Jumping Champ Heavy Favorite for Bowl Leaps, Cross-Country Today; Jumping Due Tomorrow*, March 16, 1940 (page 9); *Engen, Tokle to Hook Up in Special Event*, Seattle Times, March 17, 1940 (page 21); *Engen Beats Tokle on Form, 4-Way Champion Superb in Leaps of 224, 235 Feet*, March 18, 1940 (page 19); *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times March 20 1940 (page 21).

¹⁴⁶ *Huskies Ready to Defend Ski Crown*, Seattle Times, March 19, (page 21), *U. W. Wins Final Two Events of Tournaments*, March 24, 1940, (page 17).

jumping.¹⁴⁷

In June 1940, the Lake Washington floating bridge was completed, bringing “a vast area of snow clad peaks, mountain lakes - the Snoqualmie National Forest,” fourteen miles closer for Seattle’s sports enthusiasts.¹⁴⁸

B. SEATTLE DROPS ITS OPERATION OF THE SKI PARK

Public records are not clear when Seattle gave up its special use permit with the Forest Service, which gave the city the right to use the property for five years, subject to being extended. The initial five year period expired in December 1939. Park Department minutes contain no discussion of whether the city should give up or extend the special use permit and continue its ski park in all of 1939, or early 1940. Perhaps it was a forgone decision that did not need much discussion.

Likely the difficulty of getting funds and labor to improve the Municipal Ski Park, coupled with the criticism of the conditions of the facilities by the Forest Service in 1937, contributed to the decision to get out of the ski business. The Milwaukee Ski Bowl opened for the 1938 ski season, offering the region’s first J-Bar ski lift, easy access by train from downtown Seattle by train, a state of art lodge offering many amenities and hot food to skiers, and hills lighted for night skiing. This took away some of the appeal from the Municipal Ski Park, and the Ski Bowl became the new focus of Seattle area skiing.

Several published articles say that in 1940, the Seattle Park Department got out of the ski

¹⁴⁷ *65 Prep Skiers to Compete in State Tournament*, Seattle Times, March 26, 1940, (page 17).

¹⁴⁸ *Vast Recreation Area is Brought Closer to City*, Seattle Times, June 30, 1940, (page 19).

business after Seattle residents concluded that Snoqualmie Pass was too far away for a city park.¹⁴⁹ Those accounts do not cite a source for their information, and do not indicate whether the city got out of the ski business at the beginning or at the end of the 1940 ski season. The Seattle Times of January 29, 1940, mentioned the “municipal hill just turned back to the forest service,” indicating that the Seattle Park Board gave up its permit on the land at the end of the five-year period covered by the permit at the beginning of the 1940 ski season.

Ben Evans resolved the issue in a letter to the Supervisor of the Snoqualmie National Forest dated March 13, 1946, found in Seattle’s Municipal Archived. Evans expressed his opinion about the management and betterment of the Snoqualmie Ski Hill. Seattle operated its Ski Park until spring of 1940.

I worked on the design and construction of this hill, and **from its dedication in January 1934 to the spring of 1940, was responsible for its operations.** At that time we cancelled our Seattle Park Board permit with the U.S. Forest Service, who anticipated the expansion of program and development of the area under a newly created division of recreation. (Emphasis added).¹⁵⁰

This ended Seattle’s innovative role in ski operations at Snoqualmie Summit that it had run since 1934. The ski area continued to be referred to as “the municipal hill” at least through 1942.¹⁵¹

C. SKIING CONTINUES AT SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT

The ski area was taken over Ski Lifts, Inc., the company that built the rope tow in the fall of

¹⁴⁹ Prater, Yvonne, *Snoqualmie Pass, From Indian Trails to Interstate*, pages 133 - 137.

¹⁵⁰ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

¹⁵¹ “Other events in the high school meet include the men’s slalom (on the municipal hill) at noon, girls’ slalom at 1 o’clock, and jumping on Tverdal Hill at 3 o’clock.” The Sahalie Ski Club women were en route to Sun Valley, so feminine honors in the race may rest on new shoulders. *High School Ski Meet Set, Cross-Country Event to Start Annual Tourney*, by Rita Hume, Seattle Times, February 12, 1942 (page 19).

1937, and run the concessions since January of 1938. It is not clear what was done with the Forest Service permit. Ski Lifts, Inc. was operating its rope tow under Seattle's special use permit, not its own. Ski Lifts, Inc. undoubtedly obtained its own lease for the Summit land from the Forest Service, enabling it to continue the operations of the ski area. A letter from Webb Moffett to Chaucey Griggs in 1942, said they were operating their concession rights on a year to year basis. The area was later renamed Snoqualmie Summit Ski Area, which thrived under Webb Moffett's management. Skiing on Snoqualmie Pass continued to grow before and after World War II.

Ski jumping was still a very important part of the sport in the winter of 1941, including at Snoqualmie Pass. Jumping competitions continued hosted by the Seattle Ski Club, at its jump near Beaver Lake, which later became part of the Snoqualmie Summit ski area.

A world class ski jump was built at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl in fall of 1940, for use at the National Jumping Championships which were held at the Ski Bowl in March 1941.

The first jumping competition in 1941 was at Leavenworth in February, followed by the National Jumping Championship at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl at Hyak in early March. At Leavenworth, Torgle Torkle had a "mighty leap of 273 feet," setting a new North American record. At the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, Torkle, "the human sky rocket from New York," jumped 288 feet, setting another North American record, to the great pleasure of the excited crowd of 5,500 fans. Alf Engen was second, and Arthur Devlin of Lake Placid was third. Torkle said if the takeoff was moved back 30 feet, he could jump 325 feet. After the weekend, four Seattle skiers were headed to the National Downhill and Slalom Championships in Aspen, one UW racer, and three racers from the Washington Ski Club, including one woman. From Aspen, they would go to the Far West Kandahar event at

Yosemite, and then to the National Four-Way Championships at Sun Valley.¹⁵²

In the winter of 1941, nearly one half a million people went to Washington's mountain resorts, skiing was a \$1,000,000 industry, and there were 65,000 skiers in Western Washington alone. Mt. Rainier attracted the most skiing visitors, 125,000, followed by the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, Cayuse Pass, Mt. Baker, Stevens Pass, Stampede Pass, Martin, Deer Park, American River, Mt. Spokane, Leavenworth, and others.¹⁵³

World War II changed everything. Skiing slowed as men went off to war and women had to deal with war-time living conditions which included rationing of items such as gasoline and tires. The U.S. Army's Ski Troops trained at Snoqualmie Summit and Mount Rainier from 1940 to 1942, before moving to Camp Hale, Colorado in 1943. In December 1942, the Milwaukee Railroad shut down its Ski Bowl and committed its resources to the war effort. Two ski lodges burned down during the war, the Sahalie Lodge on April 16th, 1943, and the Mountaineers lodge in 1944. Both were rebuilt after the war. In 1945, Torger Torkle, who set the North American jumping record at the Ski Bowl in 1941, was killed in Italy fighting with the 10th Mountain Division.¹⁵⁴

Ski Lifts, Inc. continued operating the rope tow at Snoqualmie Summit after Seattle got out of

¹⁵² *Ski-Jump Star Says He's Out to Set Record*, Seattle Times, February 5, 1941 (page 24); *Tokle Leavenworth Head Man*, Seattle Times, February 7, 1941 (page 25); *Tokle Beats Jumping Mark in Practice*, Seattle Times, February 8, 1941 (page 9); *Leavenworth's Annual Classic Beckons Crowd*, February 9, 1941 (page 19); *Tokle Out-Jumps Engen, Soaring Ski Star Sets New U.S. Record, 273 Feet, at Leavenworth, & Alf Engen Has 267-Footer at Iron Michigan*, Seattle Times, February 10, 1941 (page 17).

¹⁵³ *Skiing is New \$1,000,000 Industry in Northwest*, Tacoma News Tribune, April 22, 1941; *Alpenglow Ski History - Tacoma Public Library - Clippings*.

¹⁵⁴ *Fire Destroys Pass Ski Lodge*, Seattle Times, April 17, 1943 (page 5); *Weide Elected Sahalie Prexy*, Seattle Times April 10, 1943 (page 8); *Mountaineers' Lodge Burns at Snoqualmie*, Seattle Times, October 3, 1944 (page 8).

the ski business in 1940. In 1941, David Hellyer decided to go to medical school in Chicago, and sold his interest in Ski Lifts, Inc. to the other partners to help pay his expenses, although he said he “did not realize much from this sale.”¹⁵⁵ Webb Moffett, the first employee of Ski Lifts, Inc. who was hired to operate the rope tow at the Ski Park in 1938, eventually acquired the company. The story of the purchase of Ski Lifts, Inc. by Webb Moffett has been told in several places, but the details differ from version to version.

With the outbreak of the war in 1941, the Tacoma-Seattle businessmen, toting up unimpressive receipts for the few years they had backed skiing, decided to bow out. They believed gasoline rationing, for instance, would doom out-of-town recreation. Moffett, not so easily dissuaded, offered to buy the group’s rights to Snoqualmie, and his offer of \$2,000 was accepted with alacrity....Curiously, it was gas rationing that saved Snoqualmie Summit. People did not have enough gas to drive the 90 odd miles to Rainier, a more popular area then, but they could, with car pools, get the 56 miles to the pass....Other breaks befell the Moffetts. Because of defense priorities, they were unable to buy lumber, so they bought and dismantled an abandoned CCC barracks and rebuilt it at the base of the rope tow as a hamburger hut.¹⁵⁶

Webb Moffett described how the Summit Ski area survived during WW II in spite of the rationing imposed by the federal government.

With the outbreak of war in 1941, the future appeared rather dismal. Rainier was set aside for the training of mountain troops, Mt. Baker was closed for the duration, and, the most critical problem for everyone was gas rationing. The Tacoma people decided to bow out and sold the operations at Rainier, Mt. Baker, and Snoqualmie for \$3,500. Even the Milwaukee Bowl, which had been very popular by virtue of the ski trains, had to close down for lack of rolling stock. Curiously, it was gas rationing that saved Snoqualmie. People still wanted to ski and they could pool their five gallons of gas a week, jam-pack their cars, and drive the shorter distance to Snoqualmie. Business quadrupled the first year, and Snoqualmie grew with more and more rope tows.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Hellyer, *At the Forest’s Edge*, page 199.

¹⁵⁶ Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, undated article in Seattle Municipal Archives.

¹⁵⁷ Moffett, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine, 1978.

The articles have different prices for Moffett's purchase of Ski Lifts, Inc.: \$2,000 and \$3,500. Materials in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file provided by Webb's son Dave provide the details. In May 1942, Webb Moffett was contacted by Chauncy Griggs who wanted sell his shares in Ski Lifts, Inc. and asked Moffett to make him an offer. Moffett responded by letter dated May 26, 1942, saying "I have always wanted to have a financial interest in the venture because I feel that I have been a part of it from the start." Moffett believed the operations at Snoqualmie Summit (the area of his principal interest) were worth \$2,000, and the company's total operations, including at Mount Baker, were worth \$3,500.

From any angle it certainly is so much of a gamble under present conditions that it is difficult to evaluate the prospects for the next several years, and therefore to set a fair price. Any price now would certainly have to be based on future anticipation, and I know that in the case of Snoqualmie, in which I am primarily interested, that because of the conditions, short season, etc., the location will never be a large money-maker. I would say that a fair value of the machinery and equipment at Snoqualmie in its present condition would be not over \$1,000. Therefore any amount over that would be for good will for the indefinite value of the concession rights which are on a year to- year basis. At any rate, I would be willing and able to make a firm offer of \$2,000 cash, payable immediately.

As far as Baker is concerned, I cannot make a definite offer at this time and inasmuch as I would have to raise the capital, I would have to have a few. weeks in which to negotiate. I am frankly not so much interested in any deal on Baker, but if you would only consider them both together, I believe something might be worked out. However, I think about \$3,500 would be a top fair figure.

The Ski Lifts, Inc. shareholder document provide by Dave Moffett shows that in May 1942, Webb Moffett and his partner J. Rance Morris purchased 250 shares of stock from Chauncy Griggs for \$3,500. On September 9, 1942, Webb Moffett and Rance Morris were elected to the Board of Directors of the company. On August 20, 1945, Webb Moffett and J.R. Morris purchased shares of Ski Lifts, Inc. from G. L. Downing, and James Parker. On September 11, 1947, Webb Moffett purchased all outstanding shares of Ski Lifts for \$15,000, and became sole owner.

D. SKIING RESUMES AFTER W. W. II

Skiing resumed after World War II, bringing expansions and upgrading of the ski areas on Snoqualmie Pass. Webb Moffett installed lights for night skiing at Snoqualmie Summit. Webb's son Dave said the lights were put in so his employees could ski after work, not for the general public.

As World War II was ending, the University of Washington made an effort to rejuvenate winter sports on campus for the ski season of 1944 - 1945. The Husky Winter Sports Club (HWSC) was re-instituted, and the Associates Students of the University of Washington (ASUW) bought the Martin Ski Hut on February 14, 1945 for \$1,250, and leased 137 acres of land from Northern Pacific Railroad, and the HWSC leased the Sahalie Ski Club hill and the Rustic Inn “several miles further on the Sunset Highway” for the use of its members. The Husky Winter Sports Club improved the Martin lodge, installed rope tows on the hill, and offered lessons to get students involved in skiing. From the ski season of 1944 - 1945 to 1948 - 1949, the Husky Winter Sports Club and the Washington ski team used Martin as their home base. The U.W. ski team trained and held intercollegiate competitions there, and HWSC members spent weekends and vacations at Martin.¹⁵⁸

In the fall of 1945, the Mountaineers installed a new high-powered ski lift at their Meany Ski Hut at Martin, which was ready for the first snow. The Fordson motor was discarded replaced by a Chevy truck engine and transmission. “Additional clearings have been made on the club property and

¹⁵⁸ Northern Pacific Archives, Minneapolis Minnesota, Box 134.K.4.10 (F), file #10159, Right of Way Change Memorandum, & note of December 8, 1944 to Mr. J. H. Poore. University of Washington Special Collections, *Report of the Advisory Council on the 1944 - 1945 Activities of the Husky Winter Sports Club*, accession Number 96-002, box number 8, Husky Winter Sports file.

new runs lined up.” The club also secured limited housing facilities at Mount Baker.¹⁵⁹

Ben Evans Criticizes Snoqualmie Summit Operations & Suggests Changes

ON March 13, 1946, Ben Evans wrote a letter to the Supervisor of the Snoqualmie National Forest dated March 13, 1946, expressing his opinion about the management of the Snoqualmie Ski Hill.¹⁶⁰

Evans had been the director of Seattle’s Ski Park from its inception in 1934, he criticized the way the Forest Service had been managing Snoqualmie Summit since Seattle had gotten out of the ski business, and Evans offered suggestions for changes. His letter points out problems arising from the fact that the land used for the ski area was owned by the Forest Service, but the operations were private.

Regular use and close inspection of the management, buildings, and area, convinces me that the Forest Service is not functioning in their usual efficient manner, and is deserving of much criticism for their negligence in operation and drift-along attitude in developing this most popular winter sports location. I feel qualified, after 30 years public recreation service, to say that at any time thousands of people gather in one of our forest areas for good, wholesome recreation, they are entitled to receive at least the minimum standard of public protection and safety that our government makes available.

Evans said assigning only one man two days a week for janitor services was difficult to understand. “The removal of the obsolete building that looks like John Brown’s barn, and its replacement with a modern sanitary building, is your responsibility.” The first aid room, staffed by a volunteer ski patrol who handle emergency services, is overcrowded and unsanitary, and needs communication services.

Evans gave a series of detailed suggestions for improvement of Snoqualmie Summit. ADEQUATE POLICING, with assignment of at least two Forest Service uniformed patrolmen on the

¹⁵⁹ *Mountaineers’ Lift Completed*, Seattle Times, November 8, 1945 (page 30); Kellog, *Meany Ski Hut Celebrated Fifty Years*, 1979, pages 85 - 88, Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/.

¹⁶⁰ Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, box 23, folder 14.

weekends, with the Sheriff's office to provide special help when necessary. ADEQUATE MEDICAL SERVICES, with a minimum of one doctor and two nurses on duty on the weekends, with one nurse coordinating the activities of the ski patrol. EMERGENCY FIRST AID SERVICES, with ambulance service and new first aid quarters. COMMUNICATIONS, with improved local phone service, radio communication service, and coordination with nearby towns regarding emergency services.

CONTROL OF SKI TOWS, with a policy regarding the number of tows permitted in certain areas, and putting out the concession of tow operations for competitive, bids with a flat guarantee or 6% gross sales. The adoption of regulations regarding the conditions of the tow lines and operations of the lifts. He suggested that the present lift rate be discontinued, and strip tickets be sold twelve for a dollar or ten cents per ride at centralized quarters separate from the loading zone. Tow operators should be of sufficient age to ensure good judgment. SKI HILL, with runs marked and gated, ribbons placed at control points to direct traffic, and flags to segregate slow lanes.

Evans said study should be given to further development of the hill, lift locations, buildings and drainage, especially sanitary conditions and drainage of the food concession. Improvements in existing lavatories. Organization of an education program in public schools with the Department of Education, with ski lessons given by volunteers on weekends. "Non-commercial instruction would be better for the public morale." Before the ski season closes, your planning engineer should visit major ski areas located below the tree line which serve large numbers of people, particularly in New England.

Evans expressed some dissatisfaction with Ski Lifts, Inc. His "personal experience with the Ski Tow, Inc. has been the most pleasant and I consider them efficient, but in need of direction and supervision as was the case during our first contract with this company." Its gift fund of \$1,000 to the Forest Service to improve the area was "not an adequate expression to the regional office of the service

load.” Evans ended by saying “Let’s give the kids, the beginner skier, picnic skier, and those who lust love the outdoors, the support, protection and services they have a right to expect from your grand office and the Federal Forest Service Department.”

Snoqualmie Summit Significantly Expanded for Winter of 1947

The suggestions made by Evans worked. In the summer of 1946, Ski Lifts, Inc., under the Moffett and Morris, made significant improvements costing \$18,000 to the Snoqualmie Summit Ski area by “Seattle’s famed near-home ski area.”). On October 23, 1946, the Seattle Times announced, *Skiing Area at Summit Tripled, There’ll be Fewer Stumps to Dodge, Litters to Carry*. The skiing area available at the Summit had been tripled by the summit ski-lift operators. “Logging teams have slashed trees, bulldozers have scraped and graded, and workers have completed a drainage system for there separate ski areas....there’ll be room to duck for the first time in Snoqualmie Pass history.” There will be two top-flight ski centers on Snoqualmie next winter, the Summit and the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, which was enlarged and improved after a four-year, war enforced closure.

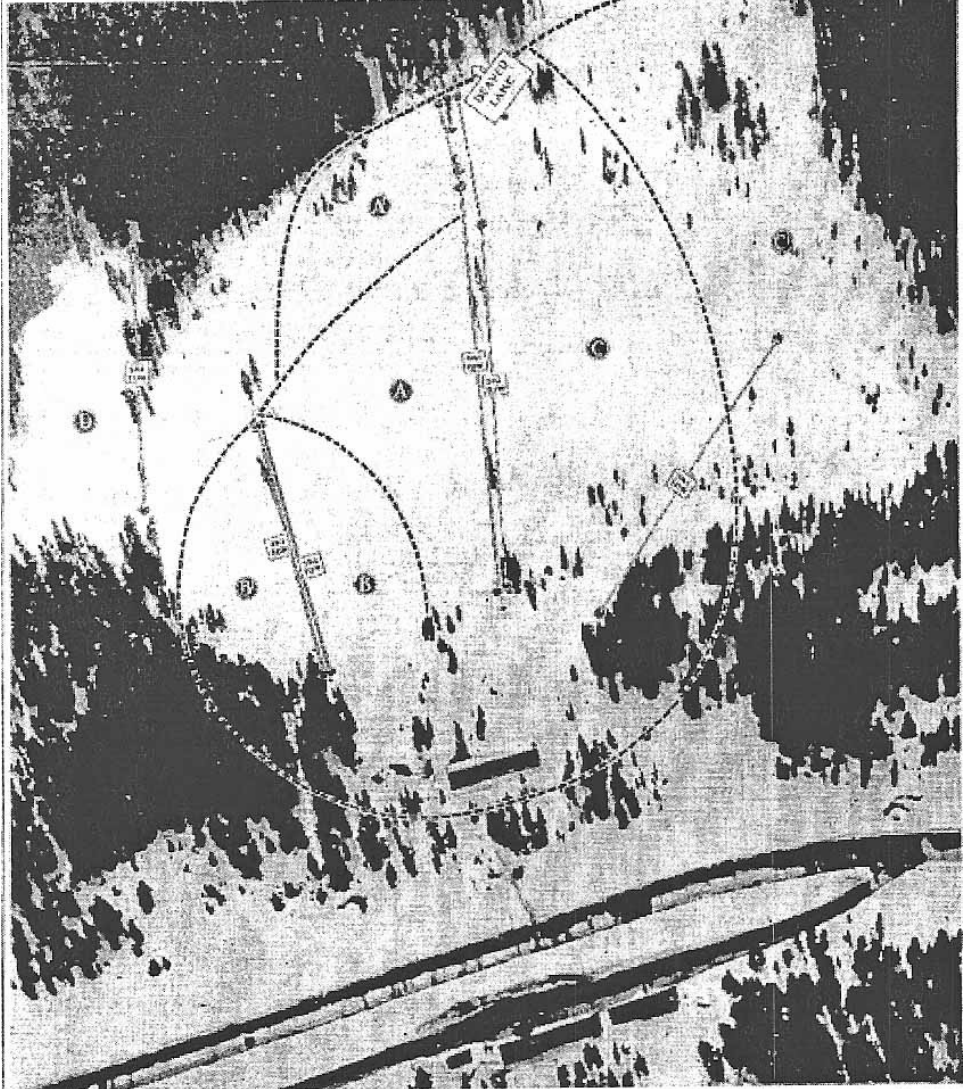
At the Summit, Ski Lifts, Inc. added three lifts, for a total of eight rope tows that can carry 6,500 skiers each hour. Two tows were constructed in the Beaver Lake area, “for the terrain there is steep enough to attract any experienced skiman.” The lifts on Government Hill had been lengthened and improved - “the long lines waiting for rides, so characteristic of the Snoqualmie Pass ski scene last winter, won’t be repeated.” A beginners’ tow, formerly operated by the Seattle Ski Club, will run on the small cleared area south of the Ski Club’s hut. A beginners’ tow will be operated on the left side of Government Hill, “the big hill.” An advanced tow, lengthened to 3,000 feet, will run from the base of Government Hill to the Beaver Lake trail. A beginner’s tow will be operated in a newly cleared area west of the advanced tow. An advanced tow will be operated alongside the Beaver Lake Class B jump

for veteran skiers. A 30-foot wide road was bulldozed from the top of Government Hill to Beaver Lake, and “Sno Cat” service will be provided to skiers who want to test the “more rugged Beaver Lake country.” Ski Lifts, Inc. moved a 120 foot building adjacent to the Forest Service warming hut, which will have cafeteria service, a ski-rental shop and a warming room. “Judging from the advance interest in skiing this year, the 2,500 skiers a week average set last winter will be boosted to 3,000 or more.”¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ *Eight Rope Tows at Snoqualmie to Haul 6,500 Riders an Hour*, Seattle Times, October 23, 1946 (page 24). The Moffetts were unable to buy lumber, so they bought and dismantled an abandoned CCC barracks and rebuilt it at the base of the rope tow as a hamburger hut. Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*.

SKIING AREA AT SUMMIT TRIPLED

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There'll Be Fewer Stumps to Dodge, Litters to Carry



Here's the way Government MEN, in the Snoqualmie Pass, looked last winter, with an artist's idea of the summer development. Areas A, B, C, D, E and F cleared last year and Areas A', B', W and C' have been cleared and graded for the 1947 season. Area C' will be cleared next year. All told, the development program has tripled the ski area available.

Seattle Times, October 23, 1946.



Old C.C.C. Quonset Hut that became the hamburger hut at Snoqualmie Summit. Courtesy of Kathy Cook Harless and the Moffett family.



Virginia Moffett, Hal Kihlman & Webb Moffett. Kihlman was an owner of Osborn & Ulland and a ski instructor. Courtesy of the Moffett family.

In the winter of 1947, Ski Lifts, Inc., under the supervision of Webb Moffett and Rance Morris, ran ads in the Seattle papers promoting skiing at the Summit. “Night Skiing, Tomorrow Night and every Wednesday and Saturday nights, 7:30 till 11 p.m. by floodlight. For a new thrill come to Snoqualmie Pass Winter Sports Area tomorrow night. Only 1-hour drive from Seattle. Also dinners and refreshments at the Warming Hut. Tows also operating every day except Monday and Tuesday.”¹⁶² Ads were also run in the spring. “Spring Skiing at its best at Snoqualmie Summit. Tows open every day of spring vacation (on other weeks every day except Monday and Tuesday). Take advantage of our private instruction.”¹⁶³

In the fall of 1947, Ski Lifts, Inc., headed by Webb Moffett, installed two rope tows at the old Blewett Pass Summit, finally implementing the company’s plans made in 1937, to operate rope tows there. The Blewett Pass highway was relocated in the 1950s, bypassing the area where the rope tows operated.

There’ll be a new ski area available this winter for Washington State skiers who like the sunshine and dry, powder snow on the eastern slopes of the mountains. For Ski Lifts, Inc. has installed two rope tows at the summit of Blewett Pass in the heart of the dry-snow belt in the Wenatchee Mountains, 120 miles east of Seattle via the Snoqualmie Pass Highway. The runs available range for beginners’ slopes to steep hillsides which will please experts who can speed downhill at 45, 50, or 55 miles per hour. Blewett Pass will be kept open throughout the winter, since the main trucking route from the surrounding country follows the Snoqualmie-Blewett highways.

There’s a small inn called Top of the Hill Lodge where skiers will find food and shelter. Overnight accommodations, however, are limited in the area. The ski area is at the 4,100 foot mark at the pass. Webb Moffett, who heads Ski Lifts, Inc., plans to start operating the tow December 15, possibly sooner if the weather man cooperates. Blewett is expected to attract scores of East Side skiers who ordinarily ski at Stevens Pass. For the Eastern Washington residents are just as enthusiastic about the snowflying sport as West Side skiers, and they’re

¹⁶² Seattle Times, January 28, 1947 (page 16).

¹⁶³ Seattle Times, May 19, 1947 (page 33).

looking for more areas to accommodate the thousands of runners.¹⁶⁴

Milwaukee Ski Bowl Opens for Winter of 1947

For the 1947 ski season, the Milwaukee Road resumed operations of its Ski Bowl, changing the area's name from "Snoqualmie Ski Bowl" to "Milwaukee Ski Bowl" to eliminate confusion with the Snoqualmie Summit ski area. The first high-capacity ski lift on Snoqualmie Pass was installed there, the Talley-Ho Ski Boggan. It was a surface lift described as a "massive sled that carries 32 snow riders a time up the steep slopes to Rocky Point," which could carry 1,440 skiers per hour. The Ski Bowl had been enlarged to include 360 acres, so advanced skiers would have areas suited to "expert performers."

The ski terrain west of Rocky Point in the Silver Peak Basin was opened for skiing. A separate area would be roped off each Saturday for the Times ski School. The need for the Times ski school to begin again to teach the fundamentals of controlled skiing was illustrated graphically by the number of injured skiers cared for by the national Ski Patrol at every local ski area. The first high-capacity ski lift on Snoqualmie Pass was installed at the Ski Bowl, the Talley-Ho Ski Boggan. It was a surface lift described as a "massive sled that carries 32 snow riders a time up the steep slopes to Rocky Point," which could carry 1,440 skiers per hour. The new lift, together with a rope tow, carried skiers to the top of Rocky Point, elevation 4,000 feet. Skiers had an eight mile run to Banderra, where returning trains would pick them up in the evening. The flood-lighted area was enlarged for night skiing. A new 60 foot Class C jumping hill was built for juniors to learn "basic training in snow flying."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ *Snowflyers to Find Many New Runs at Blewett Pass*, Seattle Times, November 9, 1947 (page 40).

¹⁶⁵ Seattle Times, *Times Ski School to Be Resumes, Milwaukee Will Enlarge Bowl for Next winter*; April 14, 1946 (page 23); April 28, 1946 (page 21); *From the Scorebook, Pass to be Busy Spot This Weekend: Ski Layout Great*, October 10, 1946 (page 18).

On March 22 and 23, 1947, at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, the Seattle Ski Club hosted the final tryouts for U.S. team for the jumping events of the 1948 Olympic Games at St. Moritz, Switzerland. "One of the best jumping fields ever assembled in the history of Northwest skiing" competed on the "giant Olympian hill." Jumpers from Norway and Sweden participated in exhibitions and the U.S. Olympic team was selected. Milwaukee Road snow trains carried 6,000 spectators to the event. Arnold Kongsgarrd, "the spring-legged Norwegian flyer who left a German concentration camp a short two winters ago, boomed 294 feet in an exhibition jump," exceeding the late Torger Torkle's American record by six feet with the longest jump ever made on the giant Olympian Hill, but it was not official since it was not made during competition. Six jumpers were selected to the U.S. Olympic team. The downhill, slalom, cross-country and classic-combined Olympic teams were selected the prior week at Sun Valley, and the jumpers were leaving for Sun Valley for two weeks of intensive training.¹⁶⁶

For the 1948 season, the Milwaukee Road improved the Ski Bowl with "an extensive summer clearing and grading program," where more than 50,000 skiers sped down the snow-covered slopes the prior winter. A new rope tow was installed to carry skiers 200 feet beyond the top of Rocky Point at the 4,000 foot level. In March 1948, the Ski Bowl was the site of the National Jumping Championships. Arne Ulland, "a visiting Norwegian flyer," topped one of the best fields of American skiing, to win the National Championship with a 280 foot jump. The Torger Torkle trophy was given

¹⁶⁶ *Ski Jumpers Due Here for Olympic Tryouts*, Seattle Times, March 16 (page 42); *6,000 Expected to See Jumps*, Seattle Times, March 22, 1947 (page 6); *Strolling Around Town*, March 23, 1947 (page 46); *Kongsgaard Leaps 290 Ft.*, Seattle Times, March 23, 1947 (page 21); *Joe Perrault First in Olympic Jump Test, Committee Names Six for 1948 Games Squad*, Seattle Times, March 24, 1947 (page 16).

to the winner in honor of the past champion who was killed in the war.¹⁶⁷



On December 2, 1949, tragedy struck as the Milwaukee Ski Bowl Lodge burned to the ground in a \$180,000 fire. The Railroad spent \$25 - 30,000 the prior summer to make the area the "best all around ski center in the state." The Milwaukee Road said it could not justify the high cost of rebuilding the lodge and trainshed, estimated to be \$125,000, in spite of an offer from the Seattle of

¹⁶⁷ *Ski Jumpers Go After Torgle Trophy Tomorrow*, Seattle Times, March 6 (page 6); *Weather Postpones National Ski Jump*, March 8 (page 20); *Ulland Tops Crack Field to Take Class A Ski Title*, Seattle Times, March 9, 1948 (page 18).

financial assistance. The Times was forced to cancel its ski school, which had operated from 1938 - 1942, and from 1947 - 1949, teaching over 20,000 students the fundamentals of controlled skiing.¹⁶⁸ The area remained unused until 1959, when the Hyak Ski Area was opened.

Improvements at Other Snoqualmie Pass Ski Areas

In 1948, Ski Acres opened, located one mile east of the Snoqualmie Summit with the first chair lift on the Pass, built largely on private land purchased from the Northern Pacific Land Company in 1942 “for so little money that he would rather not talk about it.” The Mountaineers built a lodge on land between Ski Acres and Summit ski areas, to replace the one lost by fire during W. W. II, with volunteer labor from 160 members.¹⁶⁹

In 1953, a Poma lift was installed at the Snoqualmie Summit ski area. In 1955, the Summit installed the first double chairlift at Snoqualmie Pass, the Thunderbird, and built a mountain top lodge known as the Thunderbird Lodge.

In 1959, the Hyak Ski Corporation purchased the land north of where the Milwaukee Ski Bowl had been located, and began operating a new ski area called Hyak. In 1967, a new ski resort named "Alpental" opened, the fourth ski area on Snoqualmie pass. Hyak Ski Corporation ran into financial trouble, and a lawsuit over a 1972 ski lift accident that left a 14 year old skier with permanent damage, sent the company into bankruptcy in 1977.

In 1980, Ski Lifts, Inc., owned by Webb Moffett, purchased the Ski Acres area from Ray

¹⁶⁸ *Fire Razes Ski Bowl Lodge; Loss \$180,000; Two Story Structure Burns Fast Fire Razes Ski Bowl Lodge; Loss \$180,000; Two Story Structure Burns Fast*, Seattle Times, December 2, 1949 (page 1); *New Ski Lodge Facilities Studied*, Seattle Times, December 3, 1949 (page 11).

¹⁶⁹ Horn, Huston, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, no source, found in the Seattle Municipal Archives, page 58.

Tanner, and operated it in conjunction with the Summit ski area. In 1980, Hyak was purchased by Pac West which operated it until they filed bankruptcy in 1988. Pac West was one of the few ski resorts to allow snowboarding, along with the Mt Baker ski area. In 1983, Alpental was sold to Ski Lifts, Inc., giving that company control of three of the four Snoqualmie Pass ski areas. In 1992, the Hyak ski area was sold out of bankruptcy court to Ski Lifts, Inc., which then owned all four Snoqualmie Pass ski areas. In 1997, Ski Lifts, Inc. was sold to Booth Creek Holdings, and all four ski areas were renamed "The Summit at Snoqualmie" with each area given a new name - Summit West, Summit Central, Summit East and Alpental at the Summit. In 1998, the Booth Creek Company purchased the ski areas from Ski Lifts, Inc., and in 2007, the company sold all four areas to CNL. Booth Creek signed a management agreement with CNL. On September 19, 2007, CNL announced the management of the Snoqualmie Pass ski areas was sold to Boyne USA.¹⁷⁰

E. GARFIELD H.S. PARTIES AT THE THUNDERBIRD LODGE AT THE SUMMIT

The Thunderbird Lodge at the top the Snoqualmie Summit Ski Area was the site of fabulous parties during the early 1960s for friends of the Moffett family. John Lundin attended the parties at the when he was in high school in the early 1960s, hosted by a class-mate Dave Moffett, whose parents owned the Snoqualmie Summit ski area. The Seattle Times of May 1, 1960, had a long article about the party with a number of pictures of the festivity, headlined "Teenager's Party on a Mountain Top."

By the time you're 16 or so these days, you've seen and done just about everything.. So a group of Garfield High School boys scored a social triumph In the teen-age set recently with a really unusual semiformal party. They held it. on a mountain top.

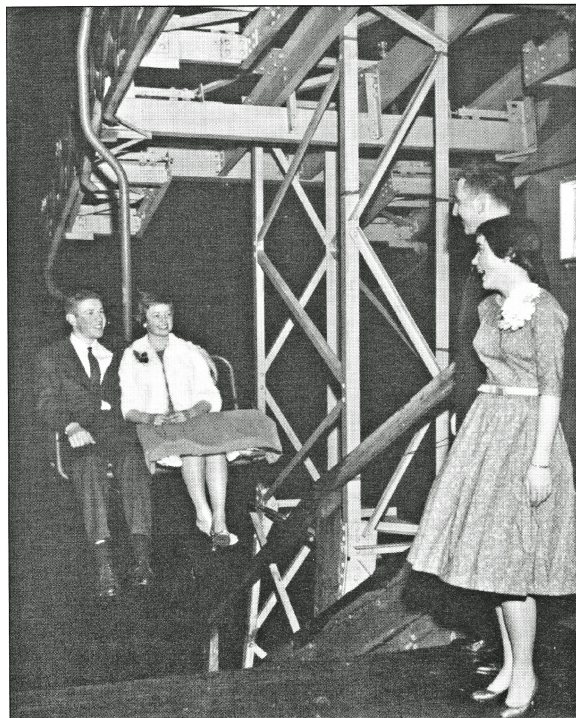
The- scene of this different sort of party was the Thunderbird, the restaurant perched atop the highest hill at the Snoqualmie Pass ski area. It was made possible because the parents of Dave Moffett. a Garfield Senior, are the restaurant's owners. Webb and Virginia Moffett catered the affair, as they had done last spring when their older son, Bill, was a senior at Garfield:

¹⁷⁰ *The Summit at Snoqualmie - Wikipedia; Snoqualmie Pass Ski Area, <http://ski.love>toknow.com/Snoqualmie_Pass_Ski_Area; Hyak, Hyak.net/history.htm.*

Dressed in party clothes, including lacy gowns and open-toed slippers, the boys' dates gayly trudged with them through six-foot deep snow and then took the 12-minute chairlift ride in the chill air to the top.

Many of the party-goers had been skiing at Snoqualmie that same day. Most had driven all the way back to Seattle to change their clothes - and their manner. There was no snowballing- nor juvenile horseplay. This was the most decorous of soirees. The evening had been planned for a long time, and a bid to it was coveted by high-school girls all over town. The hosts provided printed dance programs, and every girl got a corsage to wear on her "formal."

There were about 30 couples. They danced (one couple even waltzed out onto the porch in the chilly, starlit night), ate a dinner of boeuf fondue, the specialty of the restaurant, and spent a lot of time just sitting around the huge triangular fireplace. Midnight came too quickly, and it was all over, but the Garfield boys and their starry-eyed dates won't soon forget their dress-up-party on a mountaintop.



Garfield High School seniors Norman Winton and Susan Sprague (right) greet Frank Meyer and Barbara Campbell as they complete the 12-minute chair lift ride from the bottom of the ski hill. About 30 couples attended the party at the Thunderbird Lodge, and many of them had gone skiing earlier in the day. Dinner included boeuf fondue followed by dancing, but a number of couples spent a lot of time around the huge triangular fireplace, just enjoying the view and each other's company. David Moffett's date for the evening was Nancy Reynolds. (Courtesy Webb Moffett family.)

Photo from Kinnick, *Images of America Snoqualmie Pass*, page 89.

David Moffett's senior class at Garfield High School in Seattle enjoyed a real treat when a party was held at the Thunderbird Lodge atop Snoqualmie Summit. David's parents, Webb and Virginia Moffett, provided the facilities and also catered the affair. On Sunday, May 1, 1960, the *Seattle Times* reported on the "Teen-Agers' Party on a Mountaintop," calling it a "really unusual" semiformal event. (Courtesy Webb Moffett family.)



Photo from Kinnick, *Images of America Snoqualmie Pass*, page 89.



Garfield H.S. party Thunderbird Restaurant, 1960. Lundin family photo.



Judy Rohrer, John Collins, John Lundin and Carolyn Vogue getting off the chair lift. Lundin family photo.

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