

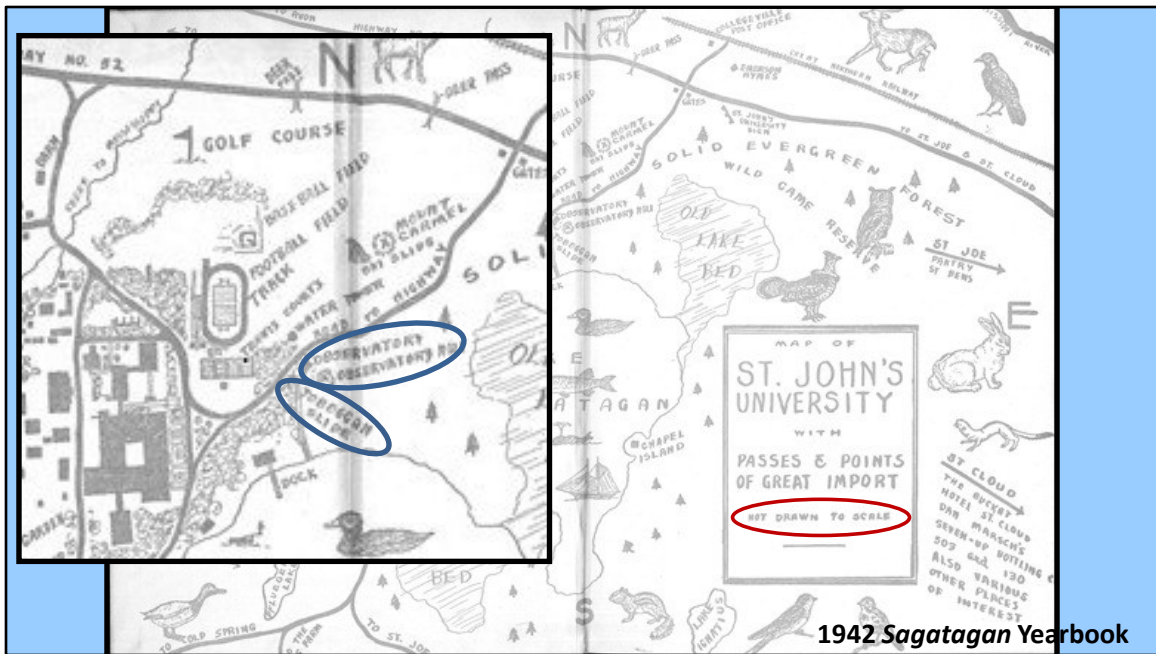
**Downhill Skiing at Saint John's:
The Story of
"Mount Carmel"**



Left image undated. O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Athletics\Winter sports\Skiing\Other Sports 1890-1983 v1 p80.jpg

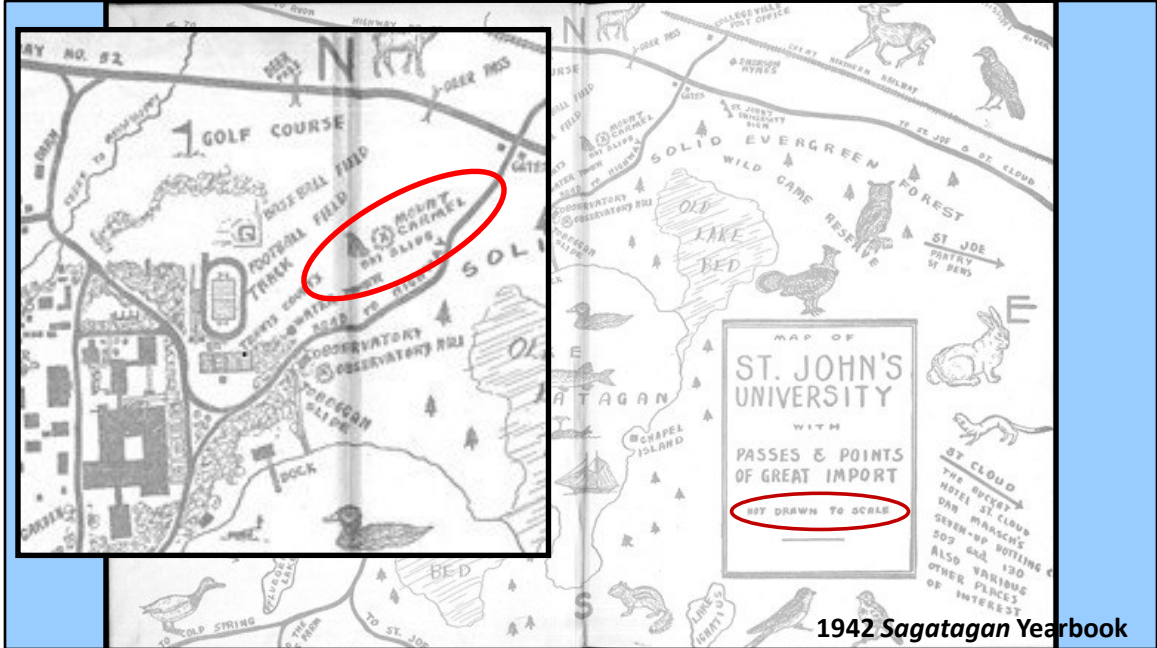
Right image: 1940 Sagatagan p.84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28484/rec/3>



I'll start with this old not-to-scale map from the inside covers of the 1942 Sagatagan yearbook showing the Saint John's campus and its environs. In previous history lessons I've talked about [Observatory Hill](#), where the Prep School is now, and the toboggan slide that was built there. [See [Skiing at Saint John's: The Early Years](#), 2020.]

Campus map from inside the covers of the 1942 *Sagatagan* yearbook



Also identified on this map is the “Mount Carmel ski slide.” Many people have no idea that Saint John’s once had its very own ski hill.

Campus map from inside the covers of the 1942 *Sagatagan* yearbook

The earliest mention of Mount Carmel: in the *Sagatagan*

SKI TOURNAMENT

The Ski Club, which was organized by Fr. Hilary several years ago, and recently reanimated by Fr. Denis, has worked its way right into the fore of winter-sport events at St. John's. This year under the able direction of Fr. Pirmin, the club members took frequent advantage of the deep snow to hike to the neighboring hills "via the Norway way."

Late in February the big Ski Meet took place. Without doubt the event was the greatest of its kind ever held in this part of the state. King Boreas was quite considerate in dealing out the weather the day of the meet. The sun was shining brightly and as far as the topographical conditions are concerned, there were seven inches of snow on the level and seven times seven in the drifts. Mount Carmel and Observatory Hill furnished the jump-offs for the participants.

The winners are: Class A: Carroll 48, Kreitinger, C., 40, Busch 36, Diekmann 20, and Houck 16. Class B: Schmid 38, Tekippe 20, Koehnlein 19, Ryan, W. 17, McNanamy 15, and Griffin 14. We are looking for more Ski Meets in coming years!

1922

The

twenty years before that map. It's in reference to a big ski meet in February 1922, when Mount Carmel and Observatory Hill furnished jump-offs for the skiers.

1922 *Sagatagan* p.122 (p.63 of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/17171/rec/1>

1936 *Sagatagan* p. 46

of the campus, another crowd of snow-seasoners was gathered to watch the first skier swish down Mount Carmel's 400-foot scaffolding. John Kiewel, northern Norwegian star, soared off the jump for 112½ feet and made a beautiful landing—on his nose. In his wake came twenty-three other champions out to get a coveted Carnival Cup.

1936 *Sagatagan* p.48

JOHN J. LARSON, Glenwood, is the "Little Swede" who has been seriously threatening to sue the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Co. for stunting his growth. Although undeniably small of stature, his ability to bring back excellent marks plus his grand personality are altogether admirable. For recreation he visits Teachers College, dares to jump Mount Carmel or to solve the ponderous problems of Hoel and Cram.

1936

The 1936 *Sagatagan* makes a couple other references to it, noting that Mount Carmel was the location of a ski jump with a "400-foot scaffolding" and that students "dare to jump Mount Carmel."

Left text: 1936 *Sagatagan* p. 46 (of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41634/rec/2>

Right text: 1936 *Sagatagan* p.48 (p.25 of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41613/rec/2>

The earliest mention in *The Record*

With the plentiful supply of snow on Mt. Carmel and the Observatory slide, skiing has become a big fall among students. In the case of McKenna and Miner, we could call it a big flop.

January 14, 1932, p. 8

1932

Thursday, December 10, 1936

ST. JOHN'S RECORD

CAMPUS SHOTS *by Len Heitzmann Ach O'Toole*

The campus is all agog over the super sub-zero weather, but contrary to the wishes of all lovers of solemn silence (Prefects), no one has frozen his vocal cords as yet. The frigidarian weather has pepped some of the boys up a bit—especially up on fourth floor. Father Hubert, guest Prefect of the above mentioned region, had quite a riot to quell—fire crackers, burned fuses, and no lights. The high spot of

dark maroon field with a shovel rampant.

Daffy Definitions:

Racketeer: A fellow who'll gladly sell you cheap what another fellow would give you for nothing.

Mount Carmel: What goes up must come down—hard.

Chuck Hinz, connoisseur of all that is beautiful, has at last (yes, we're not talking about

1936

Ten years later, Mount Carmel gets its first mention in *The Record*: “With the plentiful supply of snow on Mt. Carmel and the Observatory slide, skiing has become a big fall among students...” ...or a “big flop.” <ENTER> And, in 1936, there’s a passing reference, noting that “what goes up must come down—hard.”

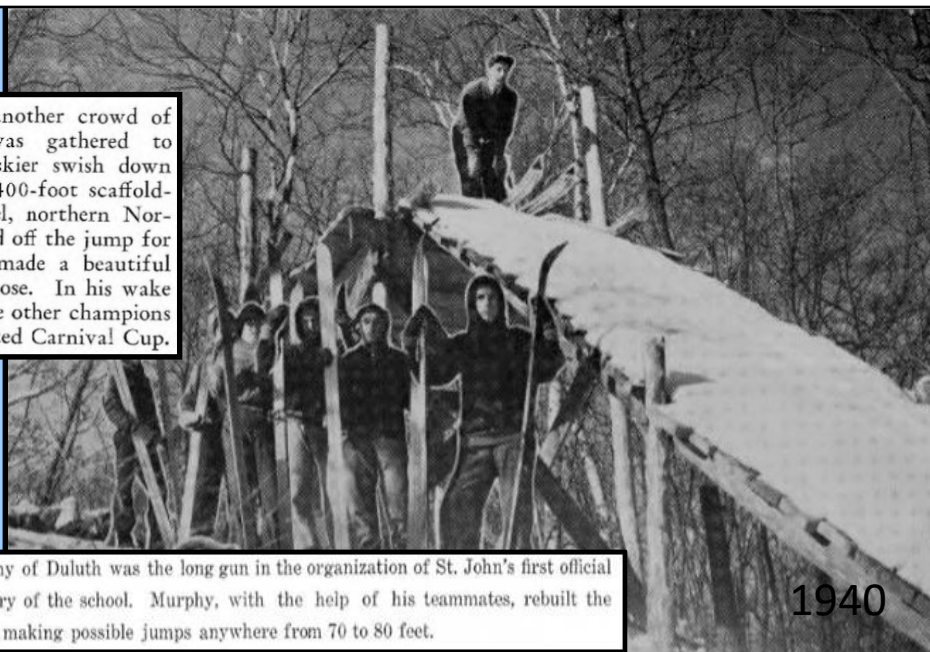
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/27231/rec/21>

December 10, 1936, p. 3

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/28335/rec/1>

1936 *Sagatagan*

of the campus, another crowd of snow-seasoners was gathered to watch the first skier swish down Mount Carmel's 400-foot scaffolding. John Kiewel, northern Norwegian star, soared off the jump for 112½ feet and made a beautiful landing—on his nose. In his wake came twenty-three other champions out to get a coveted Carnival Cup.



1940
Sagatagan

Randall Murphy of Duluth was the long gun in the organization of St. John's first official ski team in the history of the school. Murphy, with the help of his teammates, rebuilt the Mount Carmel Slide, making possible jumps anywhere from 70 to 80 feet.

The 1936 *Sagatagan* makes a couple other references to it, noting that Mount Carmel was the location of a ski jump with a “400-foot scaffolding.” And the 1940 yearbook gives us some pictures.

1936 *Sagatagan* p. 46 (of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41634/rec/2>

Text inset: 1940 *Sagatagan* p.83 (p. 42 of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28483/rec/3>

Right image: 1940 *Sagatagan* p.84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28484/rec/3>



High-flying Murphy

1941
Sagatagan



1940
Sagatagan

Randall Murphy of Duluth was the long gun in the organization of St. John's first official ski team in the history of the school. Murphy, with the help of his teammates, rebuilt the Mount Carmel Slide, making possible jumps anywhere from 70 to 80 feet.

(...which were included in my previous history lesson on the ski club.)

Text inset: 1940 Sagatagan p.83 (p. 42 of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28483/rec/3>

Right image: 1940 Sagatagan p.84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/28484/rec/3>

Left image: 1941 Sagatagan p.39

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/18404/rec/4>

*A Visitor's Paradise***Museum Has Many Antique Curios**

By Jim Doerner.

Popular with visitors—but comparatively unknown among freshmen and some older students—is the museum, occupying the top floor of the library building. It has everything from a stuffed bison right down to candles from St. Paul's recent Eucharistic Congress.

Many objects, Indian and pioneer relics and articles of handicraft from China and the Bahamas, have come in through the Benedictine missions. Arrowheads, tomahawks, feathers, pipes, pottery, and all the rest of the Indian's belongings are there. Indian relics take up several rooms—and incidentally, small objects in all departments are arranged for easy view.

The general pioneer room is outfitted with the best of the pioneer items, one gun, a spinning wheel, knitting machine, an old

Phonograph owners might be interested in the old Edison model that plays cylindrical records. Early typewriters are obviously the most impractical machines ever built. Spun glass is no novelty; the museum has a blue spun-glass fabric dating from 1893.

Then there's a picture frame much too big to hang on your wall; it's a section of a tree trunk. Imbedded in it is a picture of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It is from this picture that Mount Carmel, on the Johnny campus, was named, for there it was located until lightning struck the tree.

The sponge collection, while not very spectacular, is a very interesting one. Some specimens have been unobtainable for many years.

One room holds historical items of the abbey. There are pictures of the twin towers before there were clocks in them—pictures be-

The Namesake for the Ski Hill

Mount Carmel is a coastal mountain range in northern Israel. Haifa, Israel's third largest city, is located on the northern slope.

The Carmelite order was founded there in the 12th century.

1942

As for the name, it isn't until a 1942 *Record* issue that we get some historical context for the name "Mount Carmel," in an article which, with contemporary sensibilities, is of interest for reasons having to do with indigenous artifacts once displayed in the Wimmer Hall 3rd floor museum. Apparently, a picture of Our Lady of Mount Carmel graced the ski hill for some years. But which came first? – the photo or the name? – is not clear.

1942 April 23 *Record* p. 2

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/29448/rec/1>

Mount Carmel, Saskatchewan:

The shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a well-known place of pilgrimage. On the Sunday following the feast, July 16, thousands of pilgrims flock to this shrine, which is situated on a high hill two miles north of the village of Carmel. A tall marble statue of Our Lady rises above the summit of the mount. There is a beautiful stone chapel on the slope, and stone stations of the Cross encircle the base of the mount. At this pilgrimage Father Abbot pontificates at the High Mass in the morning and leads the procession of the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon.

1946

Besides Mount Carmel in Israel, there is an Abbey-affiliated Mount Carmel. The first issue of *Scriptorium* in 1946 documents that there was a shrine to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Carmel, Saskatchewan, Canada, near Saint Peter's Abbey, which was founded by monks originally from Saint John's in 1903.

1946-03 Scriptorium Volume 06 Number 01 Spring p.81

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/25257/rec/8>



“Mt. Carmel soon dispelled this casual confidence of Hunstiger, Juan, and Landwehr.”

1945

I was surprised to find this 1945 reference to Mount Carmel – and to my uncle, Roy Landwehr!

1945 Sagatagan p.65

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/18528/rec/7>

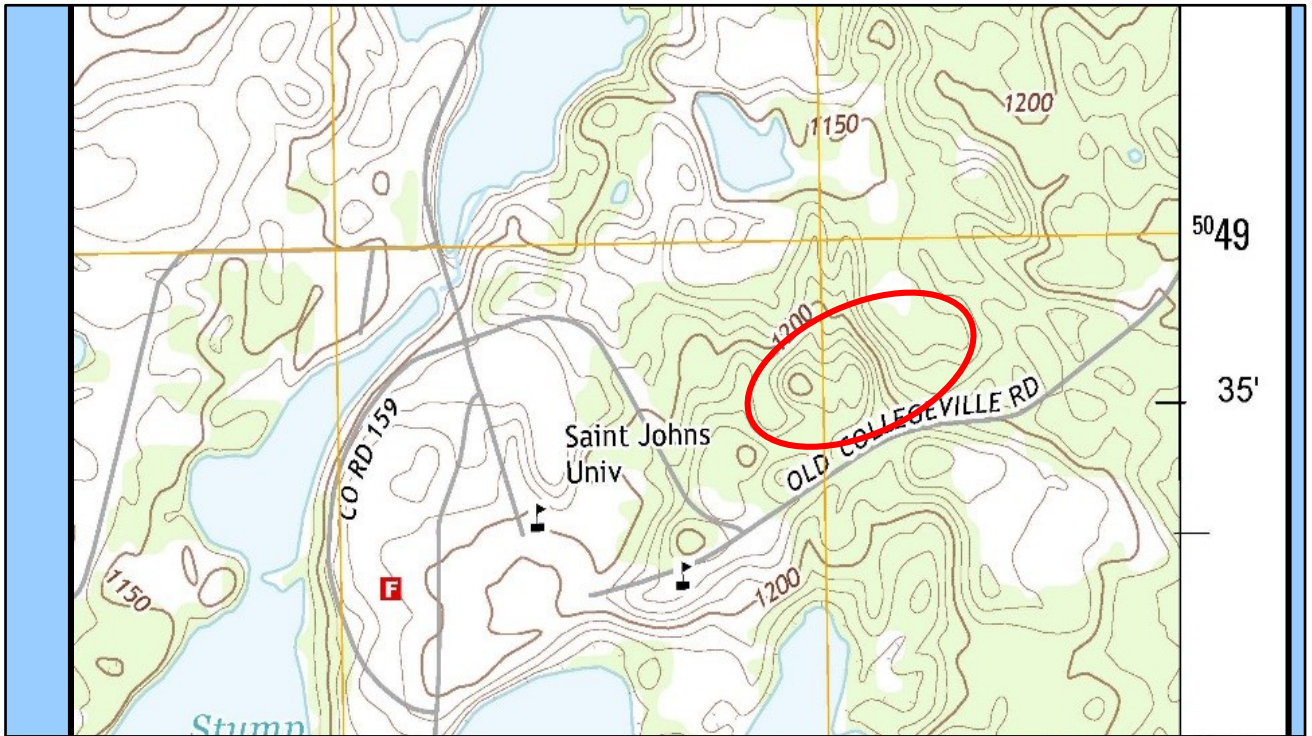
“6. Mt. Carmel soon dispelled this casual confidence of Hunstiger, Juan, and Landwehr.”



Campus map inside the covers of the 1942 *Sagatagan*

So where, more precisely, was Mount Carmel?

Campus map from inside the covers of the 1942 *Sagatagan* yearbook



Most – though not all – evidence of its existence has vanished, but of course the hill itself is still there. The high point and the descending slopes are evident on topographical maps.

USGS map: MN_Avon_20130816_TM_geo (zoomed), 2013

Front: Google Maps view ca. 2020(?)

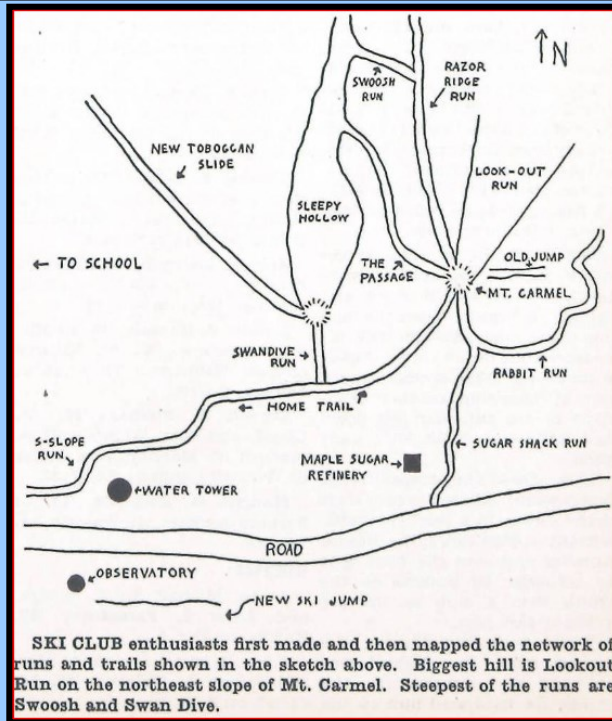


...and **<ENTER>** this overly shows where it was – and is – in Google’s aerial view.
USGS map: MN_Avon_20130816_TM_geo (zoomed), 2013
Front: Google Maps view ca. 2020(?)



And while the slopes themselves are being reclaimed by the forest, their previous existence is still evident in aerial photos.

The Record Dec. 15, 1949



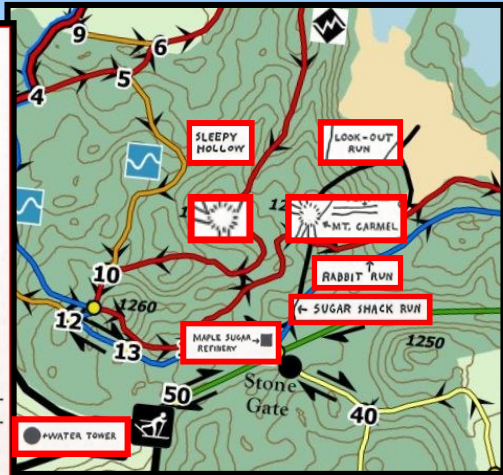
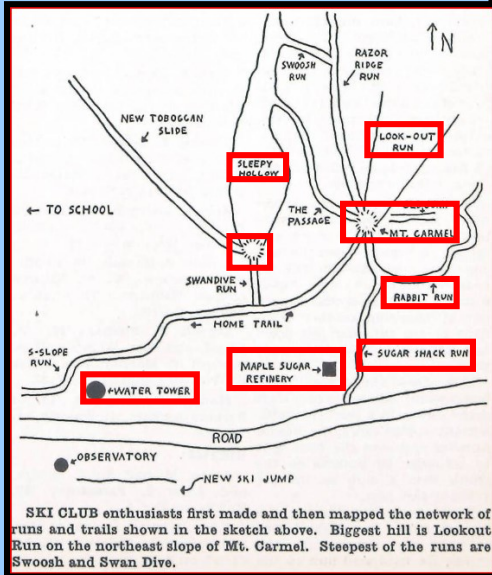
1949

From the 1949 Record: "Ski club enthusiasts first made and then mapped the network of trails." Many of these points of reference can still be found today.

Ski trails map from *The Record* Dec. 15, 1949, p. 7

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30221/rec/149>

The Record
Dec. 15,
1949



And one can juxtapose the 1949 trails with a more recent Arboretum map to find the old features, like **<ENTER>** the old water tower, **<ENTER>** the maple sugar shack's original location, **<ENTER>** Mount Carmel, **<ENTER>** "Look Out Run," the top of the old toboggan slide, **<ENTER>** and others.

Ski trails map from *The Record* Dec. 15, 1949, p. 7

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30221/rec/149>

...and the new ski trails map from SJ's Outdoor University (2013-14)

“Plans for next year include further development on Mt. Carmel, construction of a new ski jump on the same hill, and expansion of the existing trails.”

Ski Club

Using the materials nature has fortunately placed on the S. J. U. campus, the Ski Club experienced a renewed and lively interest in the sport of skiing. The aim of the club is to further this interest in skiing and provide improved facilities for the sport.

The development of an advanced downhill run on Mt. Carmel and the installation of a ski tow were projects completed by the club this year. Several other runs were also opened, along with improvements on the beginners slope. The Ski Club also sponsored the appearance here of the noted Austrian professional skier, Mr. Otto Hollaus, who lectured on skiing and showed several exceptional ski movies.

Plans for next year include further development on Mt. Carmel, construction of a new ski jump on the same hill,

and expansion of the existing trails. With these improved facilities for skiing, it is hoped that next year competition with other schools in this area will be possible. Several members of the club participated in meets during the season, and placed in several events.

Students have the opportunity to rent skis from the school and limited instruction from members of the club is available.

A new constitution was ratified by the club at the beginning of the year and the following officers were elected: John Kight, president; John Gable, vice-president and student cabinet representative; Lawrence Wolking, secretary; and Jerry Michaletz, treasurer. Rev. Conrad Diekmann, O.S.B., is the faculty advisor.

1950

The *Sagatagan* documents that a ski tow and an advanced downhill run on Mount Carmel were completed in 1950, and notes the ski club's plans for further development. <ENTER> It also identifies Fr. Conrad Diekmann (brother to Fr. Godfrey) as the club's faculty advisor.

1950 *Sagatagan* p. 44

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/18822/rec/10>



THE NEW SKI TOW on Mount Carmel is now in operation. The tow, installed by the Ski Club and athletic department, highlights a program designed to improve skiing facilities here. Shown making the long trip up are Leo Wolf, Bob Zdechlik and Father Conrad Diekmann.

The Record January 1951

“Soon St. John’s had to add a rope tow for our short ski hill. Having no electricity in the area, an old service truck was parked on the top of the hill [on a concrete slab], a wheel was removed and a smooth rim was installed. ..

The rope merely ran on the snow down the hill and went around a pulley at the bottom of the hill to keep in line.”

- Fr. Walter Kieffer

1951

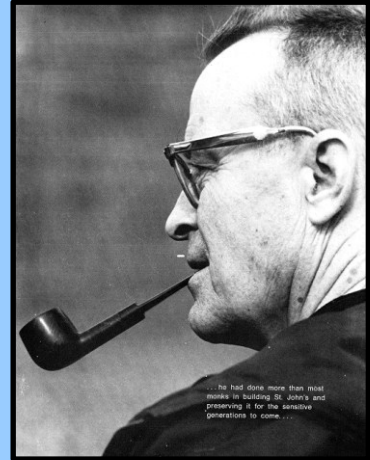
A 1951 *Record* provides a photo of Fr. Conrad and a couple of others using the rope tow on Mount Carmel. The skiers were dragged up the slope thanks to an old truck on a concrete slab, a thick rope, and a pulley.

The Record 1951 Jan. 18 p.2 Diekmann, Conrad

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30493/rec/2>

Conrad Diekmann, OSB was instrumental in promoting skiing in the 1950s-1970s

When winter threatened to come, he spent many afternoons with his grub-axe, cutting down brush on Mt. Carmel. He changed the art of skiing from what St. John's had known. Mt. Carmel had allowed for only two types of skiing: the down hill rush and the jump. During the period when Conrad was faculty representative for the Minnesota Conference of Intercollegiate Athletics, he used his influence on campus to bulldoze out much of the foliage on Mt. Carmel, added another run, and opened a bit of the woods for tobaggan sliders (to keep them off the ski runs). The slalom then became the manner of skiing and the jump disappeared. With some more expenditure of energy he found some army surplus rope, an abandoned Model-T engine, and had a ski tow erected at the hill. Before all this is forgotten, the hill should rightly be renamed Mt. Conrad.



Spring SJU Alumni Magazine
1974

A later tribute to Fr. Conrad noted the role he played in maintaining the hill and providing a rope tow. It said that <ENTER> “the hill should rightly be renamed Mount Conrad.”

Deutsch, Alfred, OSB. “Fr. Conrad Diekmann, OSB, 1904-1974.” 1974 Spring SJU Alumni Mag v.13 n.4 p. 1-5

Text from 1974 Spring SJU Alumni Magazine v. 13 n.4, p.5

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/5491/rec/39>

Ski Club Acquires Dry Run Machines

●The Ski Club had its first workouts last week as a result of the first heavy snow of the season.

Even before snow had fallen, the fifty members had ardently been practicing on the new parallel skis. This is a "dry-run" device on which a novice can practice the body movements essential to good skiing. It is especially useful in practicing turns. The beginner simply straps his skis on the machine and rotates the mechanism by twisting his body.

This campus organization is planning on attending and holding ski meets with the University of Minnesota, U M D, and St. Olaf.

Father Conrad, advisor of the Ski Club has been praying for snow and has been getting the clerics to do likewise.

Word has reached here that last year's president, Bob Zdechlich, '52, who is teaching math, science and skiing at Climax, Colorado, broke his leg while instructing one of his classes!

Ski meets are planned

The Record
December 1952

Skiers to Build New Jump

By Pat Roche

●In anticipation of an early and heavy snowfall, the 30 members of the St. John's Ski Club have been spending the last few weeks cutting down weeds, uprooting trees, and making various other improvements on the slopes of their winter haven, Mount Carmel.

In addition to improving their present ski slope, the club has also formed tentative plans for building a ski jump on the Observatory Hill. When completed, this ski slide, the first one of its kind on the Johnny campus, will be capable of jumps of up to 100 feet.

During the Ski Club's organizational meeting—at which Jim Schneider was elected club president, John Galm, secretary, and Dave Sinner, treasurer—the officers set up the requirements for membership. Three hours' work on the ski slope and a fee of one dollar, which gives the donor a season's use of the hill and the ski tow, are the two requirements for admission into the club.

Again this year, the more experienced members of the Ski Club will form a ski team which will compete with other colleges.

Building a jump on Observatory Hill

The Record
November 1954

More activities by the ski club...

The Record Dec. 5, 1952, p. 4

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/30608/show/30607>

The Record Nov. 12, 1954 p. 4

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/31405/show/31404>

Ski Club Ups Membership

●“This should be one of our biggest years,” predicted Ski Club President Tom Butler as he noted the record club turnout of almost forty members. “but,” he added, “we’d like to start a movement to encourage new skiers to bring outsiders to the hill this year.”

At a recent meeting Butler was elected president of the club, with Jim Welle as vice-president, Bill Falvey, secretary, and Paul Gavin, treasurer. Main activities of the club have been confined to improving the hill so far as they have installed a new tow and enlarged the hill almost one-third. Butler also announced that the club is planning a trip to Mount Telemark, Wis., in February.



Skiers Topple Macs To Finish Fine Season

By Al Eisele

●The St. John's ski team finished a successful season on Mar. 9 with a lop-sided victory over the Macalester skiers in the St. John's Annual Invitational Ski Meet on Mt. Carmel. Led by student coach Jerry Schlep, who took first place in both the slalom and downhill events, the Jays pilled up 271.0 points to Macalester's 162.3.

The Invitational victory was one of a series of highlights of the season for the ski team, which experienced one of the best seasons of recent years. Balanced team scoring was the key this year as the team consistently scored well.

The brightest point of the season was the first place which the Jays copped in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Ski Conference Meet at Duluth. The skiers finished ahead of UMD, and it was the first loss by UMD to another Minnesota college in ten years.

1957

By 1957, the Ski Club was doing such things as enlarging the ski hill, taking a trip to ski on Mount Telemark in Wisconsin, hosting another Annual Invitational Ski Meet on Mount Carmel, and besting even UMD at Minnesota's intercollegiate ski meet in Duluth.

The Record Jan. 18, 1957, p. 3

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/31159/show/31149>

The Record March 22, 1957, p. 3

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/31327/show/31325>

Images from Skier 1956-57 PC06 SJP Athletics p31a & 31b jpgs

Snow Welcomed

Jay Skiers Enthusiastic

Skis, ski boots and ski poles made the scene on campus in a big way recently as 30 members of the St. John's ski club returned from Christmas vacation loaded down with equipment. The reasons for their joy and equipment were the 20 inches of snow and the new ski-tow that awaited them.

The snow was heaven-sent after the "drought" of recent years. The ski-tow was the product of the work done during vacation by Father Richard Eckroth, OSB, and Brother Stephen Thell, OSB. It stands atop the 900 foot slope the club is now using and is powered by a new Jeep engine. The slope is located about halfway between St. John's and Highway 52.

The club, largest in years, is concluding plans for a trip to Michigan during the semester break. About 12 skiers will make the four day journey.

Bill Wagner, captain of last year's ski team, is looking forward to a more active season than the team has had in the past. There are at least two

meets he is sure the team will enter. On Jan. 27 the ski men will travel to Houghton, Mich., where they will meet Michigan Tech, Wisconsin State, Northern Michigan, and Notre Dame. Johnny skiers will also compete in Duluth on Feb. 24-25 in qualifying competition for the NCAA national championships. There they will meet such teams as the University of Minnesota and Duluth.

Although this year's team has not been formed, 11 members of the club have already signed up for tryouts. There are four skiers on a team. Top prospects include Dave Jenkins and Bill and Tom Wagner.

A meeting of the club was held Monday, Jan. 8, at which officers were elected and plans for the upcoming trip were discussed. Work crews for the ski slope were also formed.

Newly elected officers are Tom Withrow, president; Tom Wagner, vice-president; and Dave White, secretary-treasurer.

HOCKEY SCHEDULE



L. to R.: Tom Wagner, Bill Wagner and Dave Jenkins.

The new ski tow "stands atop the 900 foot slope ... and is powered by a new Jeep engine."

1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

The Record
January 1962

The 1960 winter Olympics took place in the United States, near Lake Tahoe; Johnnie interest in downhill skiing was high in 1962. A new rope tow powered by a Jeep engine was installed on the cement pad at the top of the hill.

The Record Jan. 12, 1962, p.3

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33353/show/33351>

Photo: 1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/36356/rec/25>

"...The season ended with a meet on Mount Carmel, the campus ski hill. All three members entered downhill and slalom competition while Jenkins alone participated in the jumping events....Captain Bill Wagner is looking forward to a successful season next year since only one member of the team will be lost through graduation. The ski team is chosen from among members of the St. John's Ski Club. The ski club consists of about thirty enthusiastic skiers, many of whom are new to the sport. Tom Withrow, president of the club, arranged several outings for the group, highlighted by a trip to Michigan during the semester break. The club is moderated by Fr. David McDarby, O.S.B."

With Fathers Gerard and Jerome gone for the weekend, the Dec. 29 duties of magister chori descended upon Fr. Austin--but not for long. After Saturday morning's practice, the foot of snow and the new ski tow proved too tempting. His second trip down Mt. Carmel ended in an abrupt cadence at the bottom of the hill, and transposition had to be provided to the infirmary. Seems a ligament had been torn, and so Fr. Geoffrey assumed the duties of magister chori, while Fr. Godwin directed the schola.



Fr. Austin Naughton Later (and better) known as Fr. Michael Naughton



Tom Wagner air-borne

1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

1962

Antics on the ski hill were not without their consequences!

Text box: 1962 Scriptorium Volume 21 Number 01 p. 125 (p. 132 of the pdf)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/27267/rec/26>

Right image: 1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/36356/rec/25>

Naughton image: 1963 *Sagatagan* p.81

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/36519/rec/72>

When power was installed to the Saint John's radio tower, built in 1966, it was also run to the ski hill to replace the jeep motor – no more need for fuel, oil and a battery.

A second slab was poured for a transformer.

A warming house was added at the top... heated with a wood stove.

- Fr. Walter Kieffer



L. to R.: Tom Wagner, Bill Wagner and Dave Jenkins.

1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

The Record Jan. 12, 1962, p.3

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33353/show/33351>

Photo: 1962 *Sagatagan* p.111

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/36356/rec/25>

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Ski House Burns

That wasn't a friendly bonfire on the ski hill last Sunday. It was a full-fledged blaze that reduced one of the cabins on the snowy slope to a heap of ashes, and although Brother John and crew put out maximum effort to stop the fire, it was levelled.

What was it that burned? Why, the warming house, naturally.

The Record Jan. 17, 1964, p. 1

* * *
The Ski Club has recently purchased lighting equipment for the Mount Carmel skiing area, thus enabling all winter sportsmen to take advantage of the extra "light" hours for skiing. The equipment is being produced by frosh Tom Marincel.
* * *

The Record Nov. 18, 1966, p. 3

Alas, a 1964 fire on the ski hill burned the warming house atop Mount Carmel. "What was it that burned? Why, the warming house, naturally." ...<ENTER> but by 1966 the club was installing lights on the hill.

That reference to "Brother John" is to Bro. John Anderl, abbey tailor and fire chief in the 1960s.

The Record Jan. 17, 1964, p. 1

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33383/show/33379>

The Record Nov. 18, 1966, p. 3

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33602/show/33598>



A rare treat: ski hill video footage, circa the 1950s or '60s.

Skiers Seek Experience

Snow, the lowest word in the Collegeville vocabulary this winter, is to a small group of Johnnies the best thing to hit campus since the five o'clock Mass. The 16-member SJU ski team has taken every advantage of the prevailing arctic conditions of the past two months to turn once peaceful Mt. Carmel into a center of attraction on campus.

The team, reorganized this year after a four-year layoff, skied in its first meet Feb. 4-5 at Welsh Village, Welsh, Minn., and capped a laudable performance by coming home with a first place trophy to its credit. Senior Phil Tintes sped home with first place honors in the Class C downhill event and also finished fourth in the overall downhill. Doug Wilhelmi, Mike Meyer, Jim Youngman and Lee Dols composed the balance of the team that raced in the meet. The meet was sponsored by the U.S. Ski Association and was open to all racers registered with it.

This quintet forms the base of the team which is dominated by underclassmen. Thus, the biggest hurdle to be overcome this year is that of com-

petitive inexperience, and with at least three more meets on schedule acting captain Doug Wilhelmi hopes to give his team needed experience.

"The team is very young, but with a lot of good freshman talent," said Wilhelmi. "I only hope that they take advantage of their own potential and continue on from here next year." Among the meets to come are: this weekend at Biwabik, Minn., Feb. 25-26 at the Carleton Invitational and the Divisional Championships for the U.S.A. at Boyne Mountain, Mich., on March 12.

Over the semester break the majority of the racing team traveled into Canada to the Lochlond Ski Resort at Fort William. Here the team put in a half-week of practice in preparation for these upcoming meets.

The ski team is run in connection with the SJU Ski Club, which has also made much progress from previous years under the guidance of president Ken Nuzzo. Its membership has increased to nearly 250, including members from St. Ben's and the Nursing School.

"...reorganized after a four-year layoff..."

Membership
"increased to nearly 250, including members from St. Ben's and the Nursing School."

1967

1967 saw even more interest, with a re-organized intercollegiate ski team and a ski club – including Bennies.

The Record Feb. 17, 1967, p. 5

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/33707/show/33705>



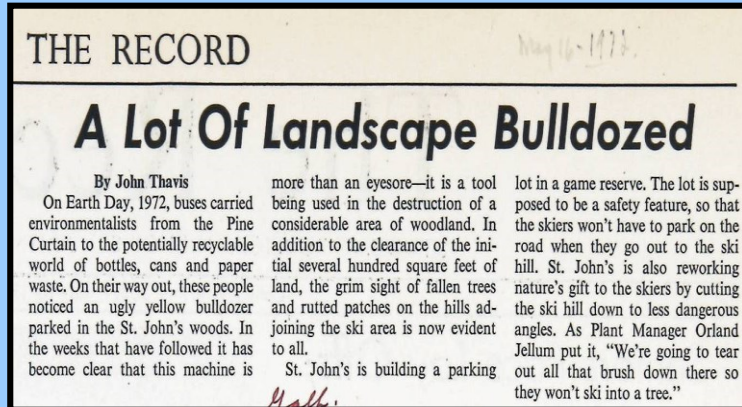
...although no Bennies made it into this photo, taken west of Pat Hall on the bank near Stumpf Lake.

Ski Club 1967-68

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Athletics\Winter sports\Skiing\Other Sports 1890-1983 v1 p78.jpg

“Improvements” are made to the ski hill site, mostly to make the hill safer and to establish a better parking area, using a bulldozer.

Seeing this “development” in the woods – shortly after Earth Day – draws the criticism of campus journalist John Thavis in May 1972.



One wonders if the directors of this little landscaping job consulted any one of the many people who enjoy a simple walk in an untouched woods. One wonders whether the hypothetical right of animals to live protected in a game reserve was discussed. One wonders whether these renovators have ever seen a deer.

The real danger lies in the foot-in-the-door technique of these “development salesmen.” We will be told that, “After all, there are still a lot of places to walk, and a lot of trees left.” Right now there are. But now might not be a bad time to start keeping count.

“Improvements” are made to the ski hill site, mostly to make the hill safer and to establish a better parking area, using a bulldozer. Seeing this “development” in the woods – shortly after Earth Day – draws the criticism of campus (and future Vatican) journalist John Thavis in May 1972.

The Record May 16, 1972, p. 2

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchNews/id/34699/show/34698>

An athletic club is the Ski Club, run by Mr. Hannes Blauensteiner. The club has use of the Mt. Carmel Ski Hill right on campus. One problem last year, tho, was that the tow rope occasionally broke. This year members must pick rocks off the hill, pull out weeds, and smooth down the hill.

1974-75 *Prep World*

Next came the skiing competition on Mt. Carmel, which was in bad shape due to the warm weather. Commented junior Mike Cheeny: "It was like skiing on mashed potatoes." Senior Rob Sherman captured the slalom event with an average time of 11.1 sec. thru two runs. Ken Dirkes flew to the distance jumping crown with a flight of 51 ft. 4 in..

1975-76 *Prep World*



JEFF SECK ON MOUNT CARMEL
"Show off!"

1975

But by the mid-1970s, interest in the ski hill by the college students was waning. According to Fr. Walter, "Students were starting to go to Kimball to ski at Powder Ridge where a new modern ski hill was developed with snow making [and chair] lifts." In their place, Prep students were struggling to keep the ski hill viable – with their ski club members picking rocks, weeding, and fixing the rope tow.

1974-75 *Prep World* p. 32 [not online]

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/40857/rec/40>

1975-76 *Prep World* p.96 [not online]

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41111/rec/49>

Quote from Fr. Walter Kieffer, in an email to the archivist, December 2022.

Carmel bombers

Whoosh, glide, fly, crash, ouch, broken leg! What are all these associated with? Yep, the exciting but sometimes dangerous sport of skiing.

It may be dangerous but many Preps enjoy this popular winter pastime. Some of the prominent skiers this year are seniors Mike Cheeney (Ski Club president), Tim Ott, Paul Henley, and junior Joe Herzog (vice-president).

This group, along with many others compose the Ski Club. Herr Gottfried Zmeck, a teacher and prefect from Austria, is the advisor.

The Prep School is proud to say that it's the only high school in Minnesota that has its own ski hill, Mt. Carmel.

The students have put in long hard hours of labor on the hill in preparation for the first snowfall. They have cut down the grass and cleared away the big rocks. The last big project left is splicing the tow rope. Those working on the hill for 10 hours will get to ski free. Those who don't will be required to pay a set fee.

The ski room in the dorm will be open for the skiers this winter on a trial basis.



JEFF SECK ON MOUNT CARMEL
"Shove off!"

1976-77 *Prep World*, p.62

"The Prep School is proud to say that it's the only high school in Minnesota that has its own ski hill, Mt. Carmel."

Text: 1976-77 *Prep World*, p.62 [not online]

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41245/rec/52>

Image: 1974-75 *Prep World* p. 32 [not online]



King of the hill

The ski season was a distant but exciting thought as Prep ski club members prepared Mt. Carmel last fall. The club encountered the same problem this year as last, no ski rope. Last year the club purchased a cheap, well-worn rope from Powder Ridge, but it lasted only till the end of the season.

This year the Preps were faced with a hunk of shredded rope which could never be fixed, so the problem of *NO* ski rope arose. Where could the club get enough money to buy a ski rope? It looked like a sad situation, but hopes were set. After a few phone calls to the college, the club got the hint that the college had nothing to do with the hill. Last year and this year none of the college Joes helped, so it looked like the club was on its own.

After putting in his 10 hours of preparing the hill, Paul Henley (vice-president of the club) said: "You know it's funny; the college owns the hill and uses it at will, yet the Preps do all the work on it."

The ski club didn't give up hope. A week later, Mike Cheeney called Fr. Otto Weber, OSB, and explained the situation. Fr. Otto said that "There will be funds for the rope and so we should go check out a rope at Powder Ridge." Well the rope is here and all set up for skiing.

The club thanks Fr. Otto and all who helped get the ski hill going this year. All the skiers will have another exciting ski season," according to president Cheeney.

The club has already hit the hills of two ski areas. This year, like others, the club had its annual trip to Wild Mountain. It also went twice to Afton Alps. Other possible trips are to Lutsen, Quadna, Sugar Hills, and Spirit Mountain.

Mike Cheeney

1976-77 *Prep World*, p.99

In the winter of 1976-77, another new rope was needed, so, with some help from Fr. Otto Weber, the Prep ski club replaced the "cheap, well-worn rope" from Powder Ridge with another one. This was with no support from the "college Joes."

1976-77 *Prep World* p.99 [not online]

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41282/rec/54>

Image undated. O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\Athletics\Winter sports\Skiing\Other Sports 1890-1983 v1 p80.jpg



2010

But without support from the University, the ski hill operation could no longer be sustained. “All the equipment was removed. At some point later, possibly with the start of Nordic Cross Country skiing, the slabs were pushed off the trails to allow for grooming equipment to pass through... and Mount Carmel was returned to nature once again.” – Fr. Walter Kieffer.

Photo Sept. 2010 by plr

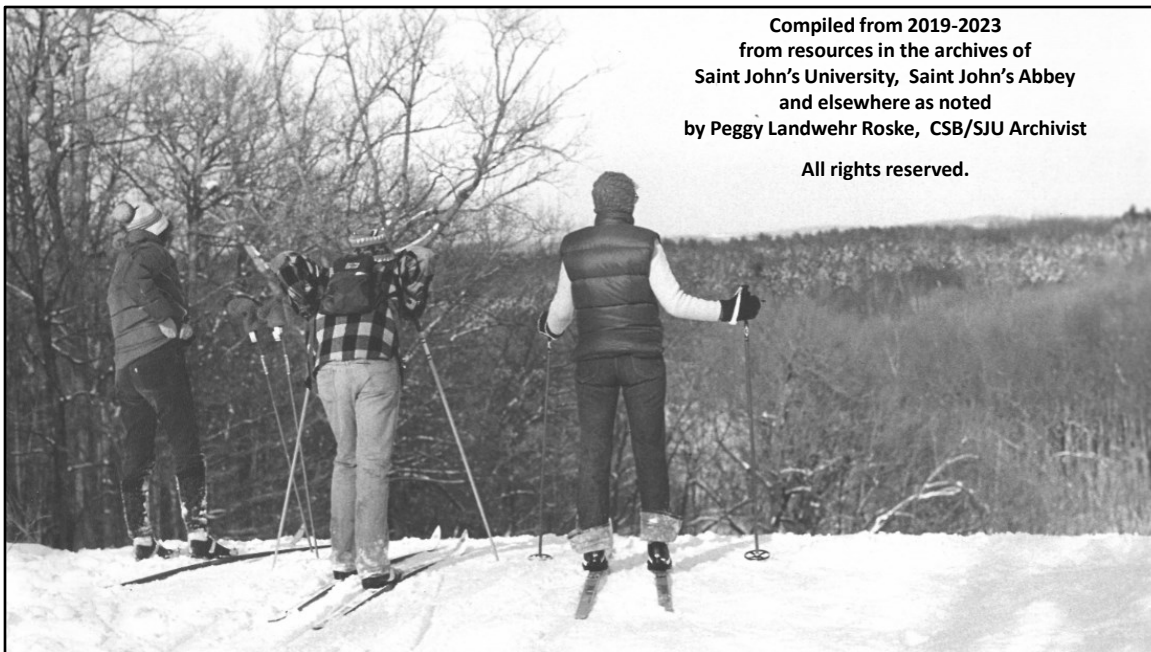


2010

Now, only the concrete slabs remain to give silent testimony to the many hours of enthusiastic winter activity once common on the slopes of Mount Carmel....And the forest is gradually reclaiming the slopes.

Sept. 2010 by plr

Compiled from 2019-2023
from resources in the archives of
Saint John's University, Saint John's Abbey
and elsewhere as noted
by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist
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"As time went by, after WWII, many jeeps, which were the workhorses of the troops, became available along with the spare parts. A motor was obtained, and a slab was poured at the top of the hill where the old truck was parked each year. The engine along with the attached transmission was mounted on some pedestal. A battery and fuel tank provided for it. To protect this new and permanent setup, a building was built over it with only a door to enter. This sat up there and ran year after year. It was coming to its end about the time KSJR radio tower was built. To supply electrical power to this new site, a buried high voltage line was installed to the site. Someone with foresight promoted that a line could be tapped off of this line and run to the ski hill to run an electric motor for the rope tow to replace the old jeep motor. This also would simplify the operation as only a switch was needed to turn it on and off, no more need for fuel, oil and battery. To bring the line up to the ski hill, a manhole was installed in the original path so that high voltage tap equipment could be installed for service. This is still in place south of the old stone gate by a few hundred feet. For the high voltage to be useable, a transformer had to be installed. A second slab was poured a little to the west where the supply line came up to feed the transformers. A secondary power line then came off the transformer with a 220-volt feed to the engine house. That winter was a bust for snow, but the new motor and tow worked wonderfully when skiing was permitted.

A few years later, lights were added to the hill and night skiing was begun when snow covered the hills. A warming house was added at the top of Rabbit run. This was heated with a wood stove. This partly burnt due to carelessness. It was requested that an electric heater be installed with light inside a rebuilt shed. Also, the rope wore out and needed to be replaced as the last person to splice the large haybarn type rope was gone now. I believe Fr. Roger Klassen was the last rope splicer on campus. About this time talk of grooming equipment was talked about to improve the usage of the hill. It was getting to be a major investment with little returns. Students were started to go to Kimball to ski at Powder Ridge where a new modern ski hill was developed with snow making, lifts and all. Our Mount Carmel was returned to nature once again. Over the next year or two, all the equipment and electrical power was removed. At some point later, possibly with the start of Nordic Cross Country skiing, the slabs were pushed off the path of their trails to allow for grooming equipment to pass through."

- from Fr. Walter Kieffer, December 2022

Addendum: Fr. Walter Kieffer's history of the ski hill, emailed to the archivist in December 2022.