

The History of the Manchester Ski Club

INTRODUCTION

MSC Charter members, present members and former members should be proud of the achievements of the club and individual members during the past quarter century. Many members were introduced to skiing by the club, others improved their techniques and some were motivated to promote skiing by individual effort in allied organizations and programs. The following information is presented to club members to acquaint them with the club's past and to stimulate memories that may help to complete, as exact as possible, a list of dates, names, officers and events that will be updated periodically.

DEVELOPMENT OF MT. NEBO

From the original start of the Manchester Ski Club, its purpose has been to promote and develop recreational skiing in Manchester. Consequently, the first and succeeding officers met frequently with Manchester Park and Recreation Department heads and town managers to establish a ski area on town property. The town first cleared an area behind the town hall in Center Springs that proved to be unsatisfactory and unpopular for beginners. The next area cleared by the town was adjacent to Center Springs Pond and proved so successful, that the sledders soon outnumbered the skiers. The ski club proceeded to lease a piece of property at Bolton Notch, cut two trails and installed lights (our first lighted slopes).

After three or four years, this had to be abandoned due to highway US Rte. 6 cutting across the bottom of the slope. The next slope location was the result of the members checking all the town owned property and suggesting an unused section of Mt. Nebo. Robert Samuelson, Ralph Oscar, Edward and Frederick Kurtz, along with others, met with town officials and agreed on a mutual effort to clear and light a slope on Mt. Nebo. This was the club's second effort at night skiing with "pick them and lay them down" lifts to the top. Each year the club members modified the slope for maximum utility and safety. After several years, the club received permission to do a major contouring at the bottom of the slope. The club provided a gasoline engine driven large rope tow and a gasoline engine driven small rope tow for beginners. During the years of the gasoline engine driven tows, the club provided fuel, oil and maintenance with an occasional donation from non-member skiers. A few years later and with increasing numbers of skiers, the club again met with the town authorities and agreed to cooperate on replacing the gasoline engines with electric motors and the town to supply tow operators. For approximately the last six years of operation at Mt. Nebo, it was always a good question as to when another highway would not only cross Mt. Nebo, but practically remove it. Fortunately, this time interval and the growth of skiing as a recreational activity gave the town and the club an opportunity to plan the North View area which was dedicated in 1968 and is a municipal ski area that has elicited many complimentary comments and some inquiries on how to plan and organize such an operation.

THE BEGINNING

The Manchester Ski Club was formed by local skiers in 1941 and incorporated in 1942. It has remained constantly active (except for late 1955 to early 1958) to foster interest in recreational skiing, competitive skiing, promote the development and improvement of skiing technique and safety among its members. The club was a major factor in the promotion and development of the Town of Manchester ski area, North View and supplies the majority of personnel for the Ski Patrol. The club has owned, operated and maintained its own ski lodge in Ludlow, Vermont since 1968. There are more than 20 ski areas within a 50 miles radius (approximately 10 areas within 25 miles) of the club ski lodge.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT OF INFORMATION FURNISHED BY OSCAR & FRED KURTZ BROTHERS

History of the Club by Ernie Tureck

Written JANUARY 24, 1969, by Ernie Tureck

1941

A notice was put in the Manchester Herald – Anyone interested in forming ski club by Edgar Clarke and Jim Blair.

Enough interest was shown to initiate a ski club – Oscar Kurtz – 1st President. The club was incorporated as Manchester Ski Club, Inc.

Permission was obtained from the Cheney's to brush out a ski run on Hackmatack Street just east of Prospect Street on South Side. The ski club referred to this as Sunset Hill Slope.

1944 – 1946

The club rented land at Bolton Notch and created a ski run. This area was lost when the Route 6 widened at the Notch (in 1949-1950).

1950 – 1951 Season

During this season, permission was received from the town to use Mt. Nebo. The ski club cleared out a slope at Mt. Nebo at this time.

1960 Season

The first rope tow was installed at Mt. Nebo by the ski club; it was 50 feet long and operated by a 2.5 horse power motor. This tow is still in operation* on the lawn of Ralph Kurtz at 347 Keeney Street, Manchester. (*At the time of the writing of this article.)

1960 - 1961 Season

The tow was increased to two, one 600' long powered by a "Model A Chassis"; the other a 400' long powered by a 9 H.P. gasoline motor. The ski club paid for all this plus clearing and grubbing of the slope.

1964 – 1965 Season

Both tows were converted to electricity by donations from various local businesses, industries and ski club members. When the Rec Department was taken over by the Park Department, the ski slope was shut down completely due to insurance difficulties. The ski club immediately negotiated with Town Directors. The slope soon resumed operations under the Park Department. The ski club turned all the equipment over to the Town at no cost to the town. Ski Patrol supervision would be furnished by the ski club at no cost to the town.

1968 – 1969 Season

The relocation of Route 6 passing through existing Mt. Nebo slope made it necessary to find a new location. An area off Hercules Drive was selected and developed by the town, with assistance from ski club members, town residents, businesses and industries – making this truly a community effort.

Respectfully submitted by Ernie Tureck