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## Ski Lifts, Inc. Bring Tows to the Northwest

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8 - 3 - 20

## SKI LIFTS, INC. BRINGS ROPE TOWS TO THE NORTHWEST



Old Betsy, first rope tow at Snoqualmie Summit, installed fall 1937. Courtesy of the Moffett family.

*By John W. Lundin*

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John W. Lundin is a lawyer, historian and author with homes in Seattle and Sun Valley, and is a founding member of the Washington State Ski and Snowboard Museum. He has written extensively about Washington and Idaho history and is a frequent lecturer on history topics. His essays have appeared in *Skiing History*, *Nordic Kultur*, and [Historylink.org](http://Historylink.org), the on-line encyclopedia of Washington history (19, 14 about ski history). He is the author of *Early Skiing on Snoqualmie Pass*, named outstanding regional ski history book of 2018 by the International Ski History Association; *Sun Valley, Ketchum and the Wood River Valley*, published in June 2020; *Skiing Sun Valley, a History from Union Pacific to the Holdings*, to be published on November 9, 2020; and *Ski Jumping in Washington - A Nordic Tradition*, to be published in January 2021. He learned to ski on Snoqualmie Pass in the 1950s, using wooden skis, leather boots, cable bindings, and riding rope tows, and was a member of Sahalie Ski Club that opened on Snoqualmie Pass in 1932.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the fall of 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc., owned by James Parker, Chauncey Griggs and others, built rope tows at Snoqualmie Summit, Mount Rainier and Mount Baker, bringing the latest in ski technology to the northwest. Those lifts transformed local skiing, as skiers no longer had to hike up hills with skins on their skis for a short run down, but could ride to the top and take what seemed like unlimited runs throughout the day.

Webb Moffett was the first employee of Ski Lifts, Inc., who ran the rope tow and concessions at Snoqualmie Summit beginning January 1938. In 1942, he and Rance Morris obtained control of the company, and they greatly expanded the ski area at Snoqualmie Summit after W.W. II. Moffett became the sole owner of Ski Lifts, Inc. in 1947, and later used the company to eventually acquire all four ski areas on Snoqualmie Pass.

Materials in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file provided by Webb's son, David Moffett, covering the period of July 14, 1937 to May 26, 1942, provide an insight into the company's operations of rope tows at various ski areas, its attempt to become Washington agent for patented J-bar lifts, and internal disagreements over the value, management and control of the company. These materials supplement the information about Ski Lifts, Inc. available from other sources.

## **II. 1934 - SEATTLE OPENS MUNICIPAL SKI PARK AT SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT**

The 1930s saw a tremendous growing of skiing in the northwest, including on and around Snoqualmie Pass, which was generally centered around private ski clubs that built lodges and offered skiing opportunities to their members. However, there were few areas open to the general public.

To make skiing more available to the public, in January 1934, Seattle's Park Board opened the Municipal Ski Park 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. The opening of the Municipal Ski Park was a significant leap of faith taken in the middle of the Great Depression when the economy was in free fall, money was scarce, budgets were being cut, and employees were being laid off. In spite of these problems, 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 use Forest Service land for free, and to access 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 a warming hut, and got the area ready for public use in January 1934. Ben Evans, Director of Playgrounds for the Park Board, was instrumental to the project from its beginning. 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." Seattle's Ski Park attracted myriads of skiers to the area, with the city reporting in 1936, that "since the ski park opened, 500 to 1,000 persons visited every weekend." The Ski Park initially had no lifts - skiers climbed or "herringboned" up the hill for a short run down.

In January 1936, the Seattle Times described the impact of 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.” The increased popularity of skiing over the prior two years was such that skiing was actually dangerous. Ben Evans, manager of the Ski Park, appointed Tom Sedgwick as its director or “traffic cop,” 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.

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. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Park Area is Patrolled*, Seattle Times, January 21, 1936 (page 16); *Strolling Around the Town*, Seattle Times, January 23, 1936 (page 17).



Seattle Municipal Park, 1937, before the rope tow was installed. Courtesy of the Moffett family.

### III. SUN VALLEY'S OPENING STIMULATES LOCAL INTEREST IN SKI LIFTS

The 1936 Olympics held in Garmisch-Parkenkirchen, Germany helped stimulate interest in obtaining ski lifts in the United States, as the U.S. skiers saw the benefits of lifts in training. Arnold Lunn, a British authority on skiing, described the disappointing results of the American skiers at the 1936 Olympics, blaming their performance on the lack of ski lifts that would enable them to train more effectively.

In the United States you are handicapped by a lack of mountain railways and funiculars. To achieve the standard of a FIS or Alrberg-Kandahar winner, a skier needs weeks of practice during which he can have his 10-15,000 feet of downhill skiing in the day. A skier who has to climb every foot is lucky if he can average 4-5,000 feet a day. Indeed, with your variable weather I doubt if your American racers can average 3,000 feet a day throughout the season.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1936, the Union Pacific Railroad opened its Sun Valley Resort near Ketchum Idaho, which cost of \$1,250,000, transforming skiing in this country. 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 in this country 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

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<sup>2</sup> *American Skiers at the Olympics, American Ski Annual, 1936, pages 22, 23.* Lunn was a British international authority on ski racing who helped to popularize the sport of slalom racing, was a member of the FIS executive committee for 50 years, and wrote a number of books about skiing and mountaineering.

were used to load bananas onto boats.<sup>3</sup>

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. Randall Zimmer of Seattle, who skied at Sun Valley, said “I have put in more downhill running in two days than I’ve had in four years of skiing ‘round and about the local terrain. Let’s have some ultra-modern ski lifts at home. At Sun Valley, buses take you out to the ski lift you name; you ride upwards comfortably, covered by a blanket, and then you ski down tow and three-mile slopes. With me, it was up-down, ditto, ditto and ditto all day long.”<sup>4</sup>

Rope tows that had been installed at Woodstock, Vermont and Williamstown, Massachusetts, also received publicity. Skiers in the Seattle area took notice and discussions began about installing tows locally, and Seattle’s newspapers began lobbying for the installation of ski lifts.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Union Pacific 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. *Sun Valley Ski Lifts*, Idaho State Historical Society Reference Series 974. 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, and granted 3/28/1939. Galvin, *Early Ski Tows*, Sahalie Historical Note #6.

<sup>4</sup> “Up-Down Verve Bubbles from Seattleites,” *The Valley Sun*, March 8, 1938.

<sup>5</sup> “‘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 29<sup>th</sup>, 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

At the 1937 Spring Carnival at Paradise on Mount Rainier, the host Junior Chamber of Commerce had more important motives than just operating the carnival, according to the Seattle Times. "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." These 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 ski lifts at Rainier, Baker and Snoqualmie Pass would 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 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 Service officials, and by next year, they want their plan to be in full swing.<sup>6</sup>

Skiing continued to increase in popularity in the winter of 1937. The number of cars at Mt. Rainier increased from 12,513 in 1936 to 17,228 in 1937, and the number of people increased from 4,673 to 6,936, showing "the tremendous strides the winter sport" had taken. Although there was

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

<sup>6</sup> *Chair-Lifts Will be Carnival Goal*, Seattle Times, March 28, 1937 (page 17).

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.<sup>7</sup>

Skiing had become so popular in the Northwest, that in 1937, the Pacific Northwest Ski Association made a bid to hold the tryouts for the 1940 Olympics in the Northwest, not just for downhill and slalom as had been done in 1935, but also for cross-country and jumping. The Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Visitors Show Huge Increase at Mt. Rainier*, Seattle Times, June 6, 1937 (page 16).

<sup>8</sup> *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, July 21, 1937 (page 17).



#### IV. FORMATION OF SKI LIFTS, INC.

In August of 1937, two entrepreneurs and skiers, James Parker and Chauncey Griggs, formed Ski Lifts, Inc., as a vehicle to built and operate ski lifts in the Northwest.

APP

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION  
OF  
SKI LIFTS, INC.

APPROVED  
AUG 4 1937  
JAMES N. NOTCHESON  
CLERK OF STATE

The undersigned, V. Grant, I. M. Annesley and John Ambler, of full age and citizens of the United States and of the State of Washington, desiring to form a corporation under the statutes of the State of Washington and each having subscribed for at least one share of the capital stock of the said corporation, do hereby make and subscribe to the following articles of incorporation, to-wit:

ARTICLE I.

The name of this corporation shall be SKI LIFTS, INC.

ARTICLE II.

The purposes and objects for which this corporation is formed are:

1. To design, build, construct, erect, purchase, acquire, buy, own, use, repair, remodel, manage, operate, conduct, lease, mortgage, encumber, sell or otherwise dispose of ski tows, ski lifts and ski hoists of any kind, nature or description and in whatsoever manner operated or propelled.
2. To design, build, construct, erect, purchase, acquire, buy, own, use, repair, remodel, manage, operate, conduct, lease, mortgage, encumber, sell or otherwise dispose of hotels, cabins, pleasure resorts, railroads, electric steam or otherwise, bus lines, truck lines, freight stations, passenger stations, including any other facilities similar or dissimilar to the foregoing which may be necessary, useful, and convenient for the loading, handling, discharging and accommodating of guests, passengers, freight, express matter or mail.

1.

Although Parker and Griggs were the best known owners of Ski Lifts, Inc., others were involved, including David Hellyer. The corporate records provided by Dave Moffett show that the initial shareholders included Parker (150 shares), Griggs (100 shares), and John Ambler (50 shares).

On November 22, 1937, each of the three shareholders were issued additional shares (Parker 75, Griggs 150 and Ambler 75), and David Hellyer got 75 shares from Parker. On December 29, 1937, H. R. Kilworth purchased 50 shares of stock. In May of 1938, O. A. Erdeving received 10 shares of stock for services rendered, and W. C. Collins received 25 shares for work for the corporation and part for an accident to his hand.

David Hellyer later described how the idea of installing rope tows in the Northwest originated, and issues with which they had to deal, in his book, *At the Forest Edge, Memoir of a Physician-Naturalist*, published by Sasquatch Books in 2006.

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 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 Lifts, Incorporated.<sup>9</sup>

Griggs came from a wealthy family whose fortune was made in real estate and timber.<sup>10</sup>

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 anticipated 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

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<sup>9</sup> Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, page 183.

<sup>10</sup> Griggs' grandfather made a fortune in real estate in St. Paul, Minnesota, and became president of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, which owned 80,000 acres and two large mills in Washington. 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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/Artifact/Pages/PhRtS290.htm](http://www.steinrag.com/Artifact/Pages/PhRtS290.htm); [alpengl.orgski-history/notes/misc/ancient-skiers-1984.html](http://alpengl.orgski-history/notes/misc/ancient-skiers-1984.html).

solve these problems.<sup>11</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1937, Parker and Griggs, through their company Ski Lifts, Inc., sought permission from the Seattle Park Board and U.S. Forest Service to install and operate rope tows at the Snoqualmie Municipal Ski Park, Mount Baker, and Mount Rainier, and acquired property at Blewett Pass to install a rope tow there.

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<sup>11</sup> Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, page 185.

## V. SKI LIFTS, INC. INSTALLS ROPE TOWS IN FALL OF 1937

### A. SNOQUALMIE SUMMIT

The Seattle Municipal Archives contain materials concerning Ski Lift, Inc's construction and operation of a rope tow at the Seattle's Municipal Ski Park at Snoqualmie Summit, which opened in January 1934.<sup>12</sup>

On June 5, 1937, James Parker wrote the Seattle Park Board proposing to construct and operate a ski tow at the Park Board's Municipal Ski Park, which would be the means of "developing this area to its greatest possibilities as a popular ski center." Parker described his background since some question had been raised about his qualifications and experience to build such a tow.

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.

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.

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<sup>12</sup> Lundin, *Seattle's Municipal Ski Park at Snoqualmie Summit (1934-1940)*, Essay 10362, historylink.org. 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.

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.

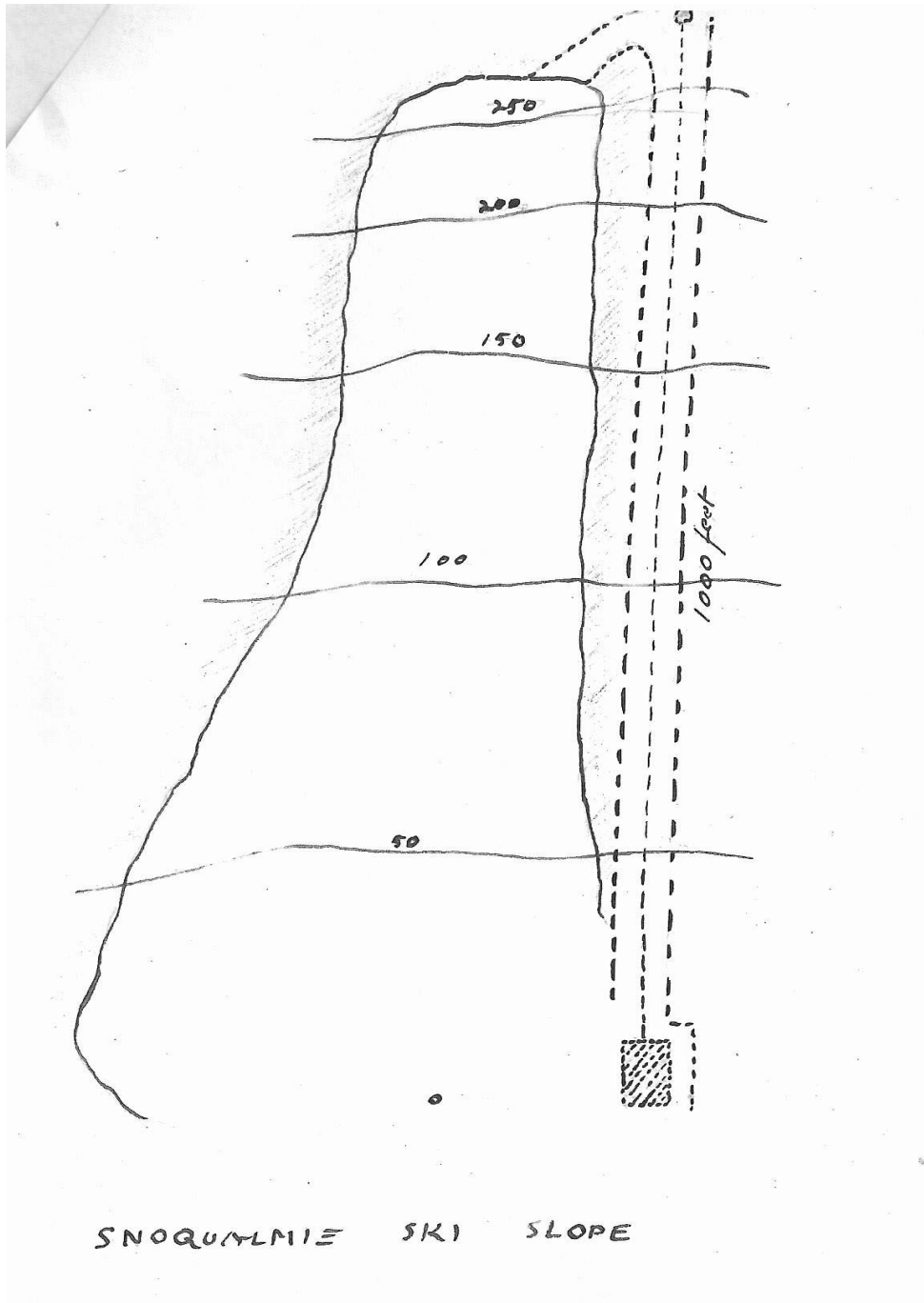
The novice: It is necessary to develop suitable trails for the novice.

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 Parker's letter.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, Box 23, folder 14.



Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, 5810-01, Box 44, folder 4.

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 Special Use Permit issued to Seattle in December 1933, 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 in two ways. The Park Department could reimburse 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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 23.

<sup>15</sup> *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, August 3, 1937 (page 15).



On August 6, 1937, John Ambler, secretary of Ski Lifts, Inc., formally presented the company's proposal for the 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, giving the company 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 the 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. A Forest Service representative 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.<sup>16</sup>

On the same day, the Seattle Times reported *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

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<sup>16</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 23.

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 Forest Service.<sup>17</sup>

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.<sup>18</sup>

## **B. BLEWETT PASS**

In 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc. was also planning to install a rope tow at Blewett Pass summit, serving the Top-of-the-Hill Lodge, a resort owned by the R. B. Simons family. This was on the old Blewett Pass, which is located five miles west of the present Blewett Pass summit. The Blewett Pass highway was relocated in the 1950s to follow a different route.

In August 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc. bought 85 acres of land on Blewitt Pass for \$170 from the Northern Pacific Railway Company, “for ski runways,” paying \$42.50 down for the land. Most of the land had been burned over “and can be cleared without much expense.” In August 1937, a contract was signed between the Simons and Ski Lifts, Inc, in which 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.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Snoqualmie Pass to Get Ski Lift*, Seattle Times, August 27, 1937 (page 26).

<sup>18</sup> *The Timer Has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, August 28, 1937 (page 8).

<sup>19</sup> Documents in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file provided by David Moffett.

In October 1937, John Ambler, secretary of Ski Lifts, Inc., said the company was planning a rope tow for Blewett Pass where it had bought property for the structure, “which will afford fine skiing.”<sup>20</sup>

The company’s Balance Sheet dated June 30, 1939, shows dollar values for operations of the Baker Lift, Paradise Lift, and Snoqualmie Lift, as well as its portable lift, and shows Blewett property worth \$170, but shows no operations there. Ski Lifts, Inc. waited to install the rope tow at Blewett Pass until fall of 1947, when Webb Moffett installed two rope tows at Blewett Pass summit where the Top of the Hill Lodge was located.<sup>21</sup> The website, Lost Ski Areas of Washington for Blewett Pass indicates the area, located 34 miles north of Ellensburg and 27 miles from Cle Elum, had a rope tow and warming hut, but gives no date for the services.<sup>22</sup>

### **C. ROPE TOWS ARE INSTALLED IN THREE AREAS**

By October of 1937, the U.S. Forest Service had authorized installation of rope tows on its property 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 hills 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.” The tows were “endless ropes” powered by gasoline motors which skiers will catch hold of and be pulled along. The tow at Snoqualmie Summit would be 1,000 feet long and lift skiers up 450 feet, which should be the

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<sup>20</sup> *Ski Tows Being Installed: Work Opens on New Equipment at Two Sites*, Seattle Times, October 7, 1937 (page 27).

<sup>21</sup> Documents in Ski Lifts, Inc. provided by Moffett family; *Snowflyers to Find Many New Runs at Blewett Pass*, Seattle Times, November 9, 1947 (page 40).

<sup>22</sup> *Lost Ski Areas of Washington*, Hyak.net/lost/lostski.html.

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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

The 1,000 foot rope tow at Seattle Park Board's Ski Park at the Summit served the pie shaped wedge of clearing just west of the Seattle Ski Club. The Ski Park was small and jammed too many beginners into a small area, a situation that was somewhat relieved by the extension of its trails back into the timber on the top side,

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.

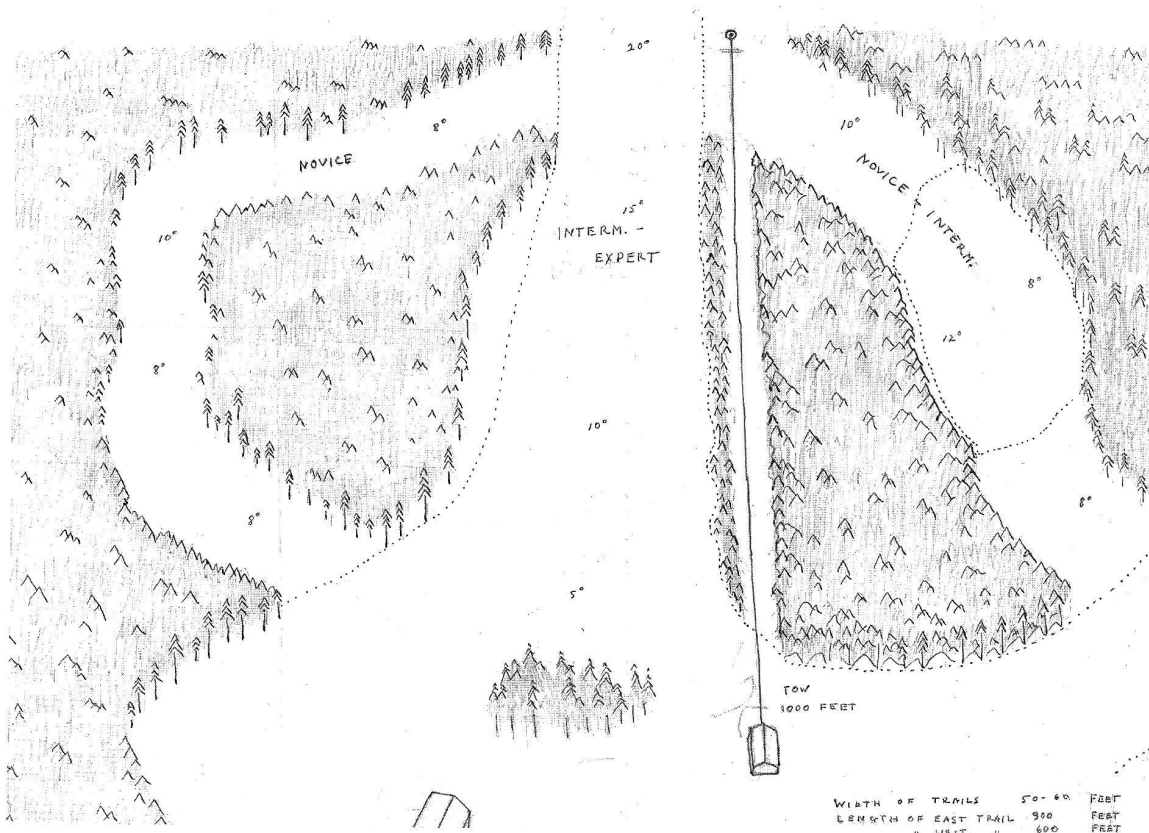
The Parker-Griggs ski tow fortunately will do much to clear the area, since it parallels the trees on the right-hand side of the course. Skiers using it will be well away from the downhill-bound novitiates; and the added opportunity of getting downhill training without the long uphill climbs and sudden, weary-legged returns will work wonders in developing turning technique.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ski Tows Being Installed: Work Opens on New Equipment at Two Sites*, Seattle Times, October 7, 1937 (page 27).

<sup>24</sup> *Ski Season's Here, Snoqualmie to Have Tow*, Seattle Times, October 31, 1937 (page 20).

<sup>25</sup> *Snoqualmie Gets Lift - With Lifts*, Seattle Times, November 11, 1937 (page 34).



Plan for rope tow at Seattle Municipal Park. Two acres of land would be cleared for the tow. Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 4.

The rope tow at Mt. Baker was expected to make the ski year of 1937 - 1938 an outstanding one for the area. Nearly 40,000 people visited Mount Baker in 1936 - 1937, after the area had undergone three years of ski development. The "magnificent lodge" at Mount Baker burned down in 1931, leaving only the lodge annex which was repeatedly crammed to capacity, as were the 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 Mount Baker 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 would hold its annual tournament on April 10, 1938, and countless tour parties were expected to take advantage of the “tremendous jaunts which make Baker what it is.”<sup>26</sup>

David Hellyer described the rope tow built at Snoqualmie Summit, and the difficulty of building the tow 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.<sup>27</sup>

The rope tow at Paradise Valley on Mount Rainier was the third lift installed in the fall of 1937, by Ski Lifts, Inc. The Seattle Times of October 25, 1937, said Jim Parker, who already installed tows at Mount Baker and Summit, Snoqualmie Pass, made a surprise announcement that “Paradise Valley gets a ski lift this winter.” The lift would pull skiers 1,000 horizontal feet and 300 vertical feet from Guide House to the saddle on Alta Vista, and would be installed that week. Parker was at Mount Rainier marking spots for poles that would haul the endless rope and making plans for the winter. Rates had not been set but they would likely be similar to the rates at Baker and the Summit - “\$1 per day per person, for as many rides as he wishes.” Jim Parker, who had been an Otto

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<sup>26</sup> *Mt. Baker Looks Ahead to Possible New Lodge, 40,000 Guests Visit Area for '37 Ski Season, & Snoqualmie Gets Lift - With Lifts*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937 (page 34).

<sup>27</sup> Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, pages 189, 190.

Lang Ski School assistant the prior year, said “you can really get a lot of downhill skiing on a tow...At Sugar Hill, Vermont, two years ago, one chap I knew got in sixty rides on a tow with 500 feet vertical lift. That’s 30,000 downhill feet of skiing.”<sup>28</sup>

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

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 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.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Paradise Valley to Install Ski Lift this Winter, Rope Tow Going on Alta Vista; Work to Start*, Seattle Times, October 25, 1937 (page 13).

<sup>29</sup> *Ski Eyes Turning to Snoqualmie Pass: Two Lifts & Railroad Work Give Area Aid*, Seattle Times, November 17, 1937 (page 37).

David Hellyer described the rope tow that Ski Lifts, Inc. installed at Mt. Rainier. Since it was located on National Park land, the tow had to be removed after ski season was over and all evidence of its operations eliminated..

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.<sup>30</sup>

The rope tow at Paradise was powered by a Ford V-8 engine and had a capacity of 250 skiers an hour. In 1939, a ride on the tow cost 10 cents, although by making use of a shuttle offered, a skier could have a two mile run for \$. 35. Rooms at the lodge could be rented by the day or for the season. The area around Paradise Inn and Paradise Lodge were lighted for night skiing, and Otto Lange operated the area's ski school.<sup>31</sup>

The lift at Mount Rainier was described in the Society Pages of the Seattle Times published in the winter of 1941.

Long uphill climbs in Paradise Valley are eliminated by a mechanically operated ski tow, on which passengers are taken 1,300 feet above the starting terminal at Alta Vista, where the trails radiate in every direction. The tow gives the skier many more times the down hill running than would be enjoyed ordinarily. The shuttle-bus service from Narada Falls to Paradise, together with the ski tow, allows the skier a continuous run from the top of Alta Vista to Narada Falls, a distance of approximately two miles. This area is illuminated with

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<sup>30</sup> Hellyer, *At the Forest Edge*, pages 189, 190.

<sup>31</sup> Alpenglow Ski History - Linda Helleson, *The History of Skiing in Mt. Rainier National Park*, 1937 - 38.



floodlights providing excellent skiing until late evening.<sup>32</sup>



Chauncey Griggs riding the rope tow at Mt. Rainier. Photo from Tacoma Library, courtesy of Tacoma Public Library.

#### **D. WEBB MOFFETT JOINS SKI LIFTS, INC.**

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.

Moffett told the story of how he became involved with Ski Lifts, Inc. and skiing at

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<sup>32</sup> *Seattleites Let Their Cares Slip Away on Skis, Throngs Fly to Mountains for Exciting Snow Sport*, by Virginia Boren, Seattle Times, February 2, 1941 (pages 9, 17)

Snoqualmie 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...

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...<sup>33</sup>

Another publication told Moffett's story.

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

Business was so bad in the beginning that Moffett 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.<sup>34</sup>

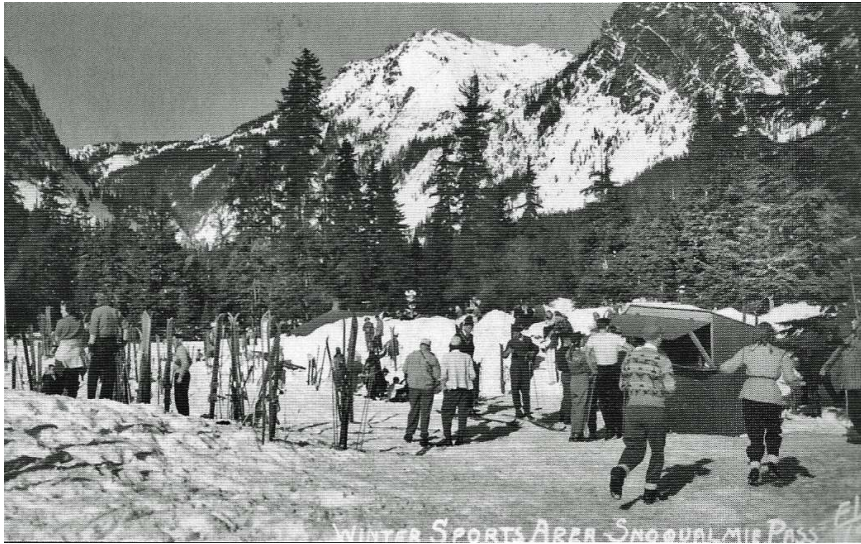
Moffett was hired to operate the rope tow at Snoqualmie Summit for Ski Lifts, Inc. when it opened on January 1, 1938. Moffett earned \$74.75 for his first month of work. A copy of his first

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<sup>33</sup> Moffett, Webb, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine 1978.

<sup>34</sup> Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, undated article in Seattle Municipal Archives.

check can be found on page 75 of Kinnick, *Images of Snoqualmie Pass*. The Snoqualmie Summit rope tow, known as “old Betsy,” was designed and built by Ski Lifts, Inc., which began operating at the area in January 1938. Its initial rates were 10 cents per ride or \$1.00 for a full day. The rope tow attracted numerous skiers to the Ski Park. Virginia Moffett ran a hot dog stand on the weekends as a food concessions, selling coffee, goggles, bootlaces and ski wax.



Virginia Moffett’s concession stand at Snoqualmie Summit.  
Courtesy of Moffett family.



Webb Moffett in front of rope tow shack at Snoqualmie Summit.  
Courtesy of the Moffett family.



Webb Moffett. Courtesy of the Moffett family.

### **E. SKI LIFT AT SNOQUALMIE IS A SUCCESS**

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. The letter is in Seattle's Municipal Archives.

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 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 1<sup>st</sup> and continued each Saturday and Sunday until the closing date April 17<sup>th</sup>. 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.<sup>35</sup>

The Seattle Park Department Annual Report for 1938, found in Seattle Municipal Archives, said “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.”



Seattle Municipal Ski Park. Seattle Municipal Photo Archives, # 31171.

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<sup>35</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 3.

By 1938, 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.<sup>36</sup>

The Seattle Times published its annual Ski Issue on November 16, 1938, in which the paper discussed 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 by Ski Lifts, Inc., 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. Ski Lifts, Inc. was planning a meeting with the Superintendent of the Rainier National Park to discuss the use of portable rope tows. 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

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<sup>36</sup> *Skiing Leads as Seattle's Favorite Winter-Time Sport*, Seattle Times, July 24, 1938 (page 24).



widened the lane at the Meany Ski Hut at Martin near Stampede Pass, and installed a rope tow with 900 feet of pull and 330 feet of lift.<sup>37</sup>

Ski Lifts, Inc. records show that the last day of operation for 1939, was April 14. W. W. Moffett was the operator at Snoqualmie Summit.

The Seattle Park Board's Ski Area Report 1936 - 1939, found in the city's Municipal Archives, gave 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 showed 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. It also showed injuries sustained at the ski park.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Ski Section*, Seattle Times, November 16, 1938 (page 17).

<sup>38</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-02, Box 23, folder 14.

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



## **VI. CONFLICT & STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL AT SKI LIFTS INC.**

The materials in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file provided by David Moffett provide an insight into the operations of ski tows at various ski areas, and the internal disagreements over the value, management and control of the company. The file contains a variety of correspondence discussing the timing and price of the possible stock acquisitions and management changes, as well as descriptions of activities at local ski areas.

### **A. STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL**

Ski Lifts, Inc.'s balance sheet dated June 30, 1939, shows the company had total assets of \$7,443.68, including its Baker Lift, Paradise Lift, Snoqualmie Lift, portable lift, Blewett property, and a truck. David Hellyer was paid a salary of \$350. No salary was shown for Webb Moffett, even though he operated the tow at Snoqualmie Summit for Ski Lifts, Inc. At Snoqualmie, the company received total revenue of \$1,507, showed an operating profit of \$371.31, and a net profit for the season of \$136.21. At Mount Baker, total revenue was \$1,753, operating profit \$169, but the company incurred a net loss for the season of \$95.16. At Paradise on Mount Rainier, total revenue was \$6,265.57, operating profit was \$2,086.34, and net profit was \$1,116.52. The company's total net profit for the season was \$1,509.07.<sup>39</sup>

The success of the company's operations formed the basis for an internal struggle over control and ownership at Ski Lifts, Inc. between different factions that lasted several years, which is documented in the Moffett family Ski Lifts, Inc. file.

In the fall of 1937, James Parker began experiencing serious heart problems. The first indication is found in a letter dated November 29, 1937, from John Ambler, Secretary of Ski Lifts,

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<sup>39</sup> Ski Lifts, Inc. from the Moffett family.

Inc. to the Board of Park Commissioners, which mentions “the very serious illness of Mr. Jim Parker.”<sup>40</sup> Parker moved back to the east coast in 1939, and did not participate in the management of Ski Lifts, Inc. Griggs was president of Ski Lifts, Inc.

On October 9, 1939, Chauncey Griggs wrote James Parker at Swiss Meadows, Williamstown, Massachusetts, discussing a plan they discussed before Parker moved, that Parker buy the stock in Ski Lifts, Inc. owned by Griggs, Hellyer and Jack (whose last name was not given). Griggs said the prior year’s operations made a profit of \$1,500, which with the depreciation charge of \$1,500, gave a total return on the stock of \$3,000. Although Major Downing thought the shares were worth \$30 a share, they would accept \$21. Griggs proposed that payments be spread over several years, beginning with \$6 per share by November 1, 1939, totaling \$4,725, and \$6 per share to be paid during the season of 1940 - 1941. The balance would be paid from operations of the ski tows: sums due the company from the operation of the Paradise tow would be paid to Hellyer, Trustee, with half to be paid to Ski Lifts, Inc., and the other half retained by him as payments on the stock. Grigg’s final statement indicates there were internal conflicts in the company about its operations. “I am sure, Jim, that it going to be entirely possible for you to work this out in this manner and be entirely free from us in two years. You will then own the company and be able to run it just as you choose.” Parker had Carl Heussy, a Seattle lawyer, represent his interests with the company.

James Parker wrote Carl Heussy on October 12, 1941, about the offer from Griggs, saying the price was too high and listing the assets of the company. At Mount Baker, the company had a Special Use Permit from the Forest Service for an indefinite period, and they had verbal assurances

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<sup>40</sup> Seattle Municipal Archives, 5801-01, Box 44, folder 3.

that no other competing lifts would be permitted in the area. At Snoqualmie Pass, the company had a contract with the Seattle Municipal park Board approved by the Forest Service for a period of five years dating 1937 - 38, with a renewal option "which is fairly assured." There had been considerable improvement of the terrain by the Forest Service (clearing of trees & stumps). At Paradise Valley, the company had a contract with the Rainier National Park Company for a period of five years dating from 1937 - 38, but the attitude of the government representatives were not as certain as at the other locations. "Operating on government land is fairly hazardous. However, our relations with the Park Co. and the gov't have been at all times extremely good." Parker asked Heussy to be his advisor and take a look at the company's books, etc. He would have to borrow money to buy the company so he could not afford to make a mistake. He was inclined wait until the spring to let Griggs, Major and Heyller run the company and realize they could not make six dollars a share. "When I own the Co., I will get a new contract with the Park Co. by guaranteeing a new lift to Panorama - pretty smart, or is it?"

On October 16, 1939, Heussy wrote Parker at Williamstown, Mass., responding to his letter. He relayed information he received from Chauncey Griggs about plans for the upcoming season. Paradise Valley would be open on weekends only until March, after which it would be open all week, although there was a question whether this would be acceptable to the government. The Washington Ski Club planned to take over the Mount Baker lodge for the season, would remodel it and add a small coffee shop and beer parlor, rest rooms and a small lounge, although they needed \$10,000 to make the improvements. A new company, Trans Inc., was formed by Bruce Kehr, to put in a lift at Stevens Pass. "Mount Hood, with its new chair lift bids fair to become the real ski mecca this winter." Otto Lang was teaching in Sun Valley for the season. Regarding the sale of stock in

the company, Heussy wanted to hire an accountant to evaluate the books. The other stockholders were extremely pleased about last year's operations, which led to the high value placed on the stock.

On October 16, 1939, Griggs wrote Heussy about the offer made to Parker. Griggs described the ownership of Ski Lifts, Inc: Griggs 250 shares, Parker 200 shares, George Downing 162.5, Hellyer 112.5 shares, W. C. Collins 25 shares, and O.A. Erdevig 10 shares. Collins and Erdevig received their shares as gifts. Griggs said there were two reasons why he wished to conclude the sale speedily. It would be in the best interest of the company for Parker to take charge immediately if the sale is to be done. Second, he and Hellyer had opportunities for other investments when their shares were sold which would yield more than their present investment. Major Downing, who had an excess of capital, was loath to sell at less than \$30 per share, but would do so if the sale goes through to protect himself.

Parker wrote Heussy on October 18, 1939, saying he wanted to buy the company by beating the \$21 offer down to the lowest possible price by offering to pay cash for the full amount. He said that Griggs originally thought that Ski Lifts, Inc. was the "most marvelous investment of the age." He did not believe that the season of 1939 - 1940 would be as profitable and the prior year, since minor breakdowns could easily change the situation. Later in October, Parker told Heussy to offer \$15 a share when he met with Griggs, who was pressing to close the sale quickly. After having a CPA look at Ski Lift, Inc.'s books, Heussy agreed that an offer from Parker of \$15 a share was fair.

On November 29, 1939, Heussy wrote Parker outlining how his purchase of the company should work, using three separate agreements. The first would hire Parker as operator of the ski lifts for the season. The second would be a conditional sales contract for the 550 shares involved in the sale, containing the sale price and purchase terms. The third would be an escrow into which the

stock would be placed, pending payment of the sales price.

The sale did not go through, and there are no further documents in the file until October of 1940. Disagreements between the owners of Ski Lifts, Inc. continued in the fall of 1940, with offers and counter-offers being made to purchase each others stock.

On October 3, 1940, Heussy sent a telegram to Parker who was in Doctor's Hospital in New York. Downing was interested in buying Parker's stock in Ski Lifts, Inc., but Griggs and Hillyer wanted to sell their shares to Parker. Heussy said that he did not think Parker's employment by Ski Lifts, Inc. would be considered a vital industry to exempt him from the draft, but a job with Boeing or Todds would be. Parker told Heussy in a telegram dated October 8, 1940, that "it looks as if fight is on with Griggs, Hellyer in one corner, Downing in other," and told Heussy to see what price Downing would offer him for his stock.

In an October 9, 1940 letter, Griggs told Heussy "there surely is something screwy about the details I try and cook up with Jim Parker. Somewhere along the line the thing seems to get balled up terrible." Griggs said he would sell his controlling interest in the company to any one who offered him a satisfactory price. On October 30, 1940, Griggs wrote Heussy saying that since Parker was expecting to be drafted and was not particularly interested in buying his controlling interest, he would let the matter drop, as his plans had been established for the coming year. Heussy wrote Parker on November 18, 1940, telling him that it appeared that there would be extensive training of ski troops at Mt. Rainier, the Army was looking for competent instructors, and Parker could likely obtain that duty with a commission. Heussy was going to met with Griggs and wanted to take an accountant with him to look at the books. The ski season had started early that year, with the tow at Mt. Baker running for three Sundays. The New York Times was planning to have a full

page section the coming Sunday on Mt. Baker, and several news reels had been made there. Sun Valley appeared to be in for a tremendous year, as did Timberline.

#### **B. 1941- SKI LIFTS, INC. SEEKS TO INSTALL A CONSTAM LIFT AT RAINIER**

Negotiations over the sale of company stock continued through 1941, with various offers being presented, and further disagreement appeared between the owners. Griggs was still president of Ski Lifts, Inc. Parker remained in the east, and continued to be represented in his dealings by attorney Carl Heussy. New disagreements appeared between Downing on one side, and Griggs and Hillyer on the other. The company made a major push to install a T-bar at Mount Rainier.

Officials at Rainier National Park had long debated whether skiing was an appropriate activity in a national park. “The skier’s growing emphasis on speed, technique, athletic competition, and urban amenities led some park officials to view them as an unwelcome user group.” The Park’s landscape architect argued that the “growing popularity of the park as a downhill ski area was insidious, because skiers, as a group, were pushing for developments that would be injurious to the national park’s broader purpose of providing for the public’s enjoyment of nature.”<sup>41</sup>

In early 1940s, officials at Rainier National Park started to adopt a more favorable attitude to commercial development and winter sports activities at the Park. In 1940, private vehicles were allowed to travel to Paradise throughout the winter. In December 1940, the Director of the National Park Service authorized the installation of a demountable T-bar lift at Paradise, and in December 1941, a large dormitory known as the Ski Lodge was completed at Paradise.<sup>42</sup> Ski Lifts, Inc. saw this

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<sup>41</sup> Alpenglw Ski History - Theodore Catton, *Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park* (page 306).

<sup>42</sup> Alpenglw Ski History - Linda Helleson, *The History of Skiing in Mt. Rainier National Park, 1940*; Alpenglw Ski History - Theodore Catton, *Wonderland: an Administrative History*

as a major business opportunity.

Ski Lifts, Inc. had its annual meeting on March 8, 1941. Griggs, Hellyer and P. H. Sceva (the Chairman of the Rainier National Park Company), were nominated to serve on the Board. Heussy attended representing Parker, and summarized the business in a March 11, 1941 letter to Parker.

Heussy told Parker the company's net profit for the prior year was \$266.77, a low number since there was an effort to make as little profit as was possible, and salaries were up. The company was operating small portable tows at Baker, Paradise and Naches, in addition to its regular lifts. The 1940-1941 operation was expected to be better than the prior year, but there would be little profit due to the salaries and since heavy depreciation being taken on all equipment. Ski Lifts, Inc. might enter into a contract with the Rainier National Park Company for the operation of a Constam lift at Paradise, which would cost \$30,000, with the net profits from the lift shared equally by the two companies. Paul Sceva had replaced Downing on the Board because of this proposal. Regarding salaries, Griggs would be paid \$115 per month, and Hellyer \$35 a month. Heussy told Parker this was not a good time to sell his shares given the possibility that the Constam lift would be installed. There would be no dividends for several years, but thereafter, the dividends would be substantial.

Constam lifts were patented J-bar tows designed by Ernest Constam, a Swiss engineer, "where the skiers are towed by means of a J stick connected to an overhead cable." Ski Lifts, Inc. proposed to install a Constam lift at Paradise on Mount Rainier in 1941, and negotiated to become the agent for Constam lifts for the west coast.

Parker responded to Heussy, saying he had received a check for a salary for 1939 - 1940, for \$272.25, but had not cashed it since he had not worked for Ski Lifts, Inc., and was concerned about

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*of Mt. Rainier National Park* (page 311).

the legality of the practice. In a later letter, he said the salary check must be tax evasion since he never earned it. Parker had taken a physical for the Army, but they had discovered a slight heart strain and he received a deferment. He also announced that he had married a woman to whom he had been engaged for a year, and that he owned 50 shares of stock Ski Lifts, Inc. he obtained from the Kilworth.

On April 17, 1941, Heussy wrote Parker discussing an offer from Griggs and Hellyer to buy his stock for \$2,000 cash, but recommended against a sale. Major Downing was anxious to sell his stock to Parker and not to the others. Heussy said "the company is having and will have considerable difficulty installing [the] constand lift, particularly in regard to the financing end."

On May 5, 1941, an individual named Paul Dwyer wrote Paul Sceva, Manager of the Rainier National Park Company, lobbying for the installation of a lift to the top of Panorama, where the snow was often splendid and the lift would spread people over the vast snow fields there to relieve congestion on Alta Vista. He complimented the tow service that ski year, which

has been superior to anything we have ever enjoyed. It was conducted on a more businesslike basis, and we are provided with better tow facilities. Those little Swedish tow motors were a help on the practice hill...The tow out at Edith Creek Basis was a joy. The fact that the tow a week ago Sunday was switched to the practice hill onto a very pleasant route instead of shutting it down on account of the bare spot underneath the big rock was gratifying to all of us.

On May 15, 1941, Heussy wrote Parker enclosing the company's operating statement, which showed a very satisfactory operation. A serious rift had erupted between Major Downing and Griggs and Hellyer, and he advised Parker to buy Downing's 162 shares of stock at \$10 to \$12 a share. Griggs said there was a reasonable chance the Constam issue would be worked out with the Rainier National Park Company, and the financing could be arranged. On May 16, 1941, Griggs wrote



Heussy suggesting that an agreement be reached between Parker, Hellyer and himself, that their stock would be offered to each participant on an equal basis. Such an agreement was necessary to avoiding building up the price to unnecessary levels. Heussy could be the sole negotiator.

On June 20, 1941, Griggs wrote Heussy complaining that Major Downing spoke with Paul Sceva about the Constam lift at Rainier. This had caused confusion, and he asked Heussy to verify what happened with Downing. Heussy responded on June 23, suggesting the two of them meet with Downing to iron out the differences that existed between the stockholders, and get the management on a basis where everyone was pulling together. Given the inevitable increase of taxes, the company's books should be brought up to date to give a clear picture of the operation.

In the summer of 1941, Ski Lifts, Inc., through its President Chauncy Griggs, dealt with The Mine and Smelter Supply company of Denver Colorado concerning the purchase of a Constam Ski Lift, for which the Denver company was the exclusive licensee west of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian. In a June 30, 1941 letter, The Mine and Smelter Supply Company said Ernest Constam, the Swiss engineer who designed the Constam lift, was "a graduate engineer who is not only an experienced skier, but who also who had a record of 34 successful installations in Europe which have been accepted as the standard on the Continent." Three Constam lifts had been recently erected in the Eastern Snow Belt, to meet various snow depths, length of travel, incline, and transportation capacity: Pico Peak; Mount Tremblant Lodge in Canada, where high winds made it difficult to transport skiers by aerial chairs; and Cannon Mountain near Franconia, New Hampshire. All three lifts "worked perfectly and many glowing reports came from skiers using them." Mr. Constam was in Denver adapting various parts to comply with American manufacturing conditions and construction available under the Government Defense Program.

On July 2, 1941, Ski Lifts, Inc. had a special meeting of directors, to discuss notice from Paul Sceva, Chairman of the Rainier National Park Company, that he did not intend to extend the company's contract to run ski lifts in the Park when it expired in July 1942, and he did not want to enter into a contract for the company to construct a Constam lift there. Sceva also resigned as a Director of Ski Lifts, Inc. Carl Heussy, who represented Parker's interest with the company, replaced Sceva on the Board and became vice-president.

Heussy sent Parker a letter dated July 3, 1941, saying that Griggs and Sceva had a falling out over the Constam proposal, and Ski Lifts, Inc. won't operate at Rainier after 1942. "Also Griggs and Downing are very hostile toward each other, all of which creates a very unfortunate situation." Parker replied on July 14, saying he was concerned the company may not have a future since it was no longer operating at Mt. Rainier. He asked if there was a chance of a contract renewal if the company constructed additional rope tows at Rainier, or was Sceva bent on securing all lift rights for himself or his company? He also asked about acquiring the stock owned by Griggs and Downing cheaply.

Ski Lifts, Inc. held a Director's Meeting on July 29, 1941, and declared a dividend of \$3.50 a share. A letter was sent to Parker advising him of the dividend, and asking him to return the 50 shares of stock he bought from Kilworth so it could be reissued in his name. Griggs wrote Heussy on July 31, 1941, describing a major conflict with Downing. Griggs said Major Downing's stock had been originally purchased by John Ambler, who had done legal work for the company its first year. Griggs would only reluctantly include Downing in meetings, "if he doesn't change his mind and attitude....You will also recognize that there will be a limit to our appealing a person who can accuse of forgery so lightly." Griggs said the company's situation with Rainier National Park "is

partially, if not largely, due to [Dowing]'s activities,"and if they continue, will produce "disastrous results."

The Seattle Times reported on the conflict between Ski Lifts, Inc. and the Park Company on August 24, 1941. The article indicates that the Park Service in Washington D.C. had previously approved the installation of a Constam lift at Mount Rainier, but the Times placed much of the blame on the Rainier National Park Company for the failure to get the project implemented.

"Aw nuts!" may be the skier's appraisal of ski-lift developments at Paradise Valley, Mount Rainier, when the snow starts flying come November. Paul H. Sceva, Rainier National Park Company manager, hasn't admitted it, but there are rumors the "plan of the moment" is for installation of two "nutcracker" ski tows from Alta Vista to the base of Panorama. The term "nutcracker" as applies to this form of tow - a grand letdown after the build-up last winter when Washington approved installation of a mile-long, Constam lift at Paradise - is derived from a nutcracker device which clamps onto the tow line and (with a belt gadget attached) relieves the skier of holding on.

A nutcracker tow has operated at Boyd French's Mount Hood Ski Bowl and two such tows are being installed at Stevens Pass by Don Adams and Bruce Kehr. But at best they are a poor second-fiddle to the true Constam-type lift.

Northwest skiers might have had such a lift, despite the defense program's demand for construction materials, if Sceva and the Park Company had fallen in with the idea immediately and not dilly-dallied around scouting for more of a financial sure thing. It's now too late, most parties agree. Just the same, it's interesting to read a note from C. L. Griggs of Ski Lifts, Inc., Tacoma, which leaves some question even on the "too late" score:

"Mr. Constam, who is now at the Mine & Smelter Supply Company, Denver, has just written me that the City of Ogden has contracted for one of his lifts, which they will install on Mount Ogden this fall. This will be the first Consam lift build in the western part of the United States. There are three in operation in the East, one at Cannon Mountain, N. H, which runs alongside the aerial tramway; one at Pico Peak, Vt., and one at Mount Tremblant, in Quebec. These are the only three Constam lifts in operation in North America at the present time, irrespective of what other claims of other substitute operations may be."

If they can do it, why can't we?<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *The Timer has the Last Word*, Seattle Times, August 24, 1941 (page 7).

In August 1941, Ski Lifts, Inc. discussed becoming the exclusive agent for The Mine and Smelter Supply Company for patented Constam Ski Lifts to be installed in Washington State. The Mine and Smelter Supply Company had sold a chair lift to the Mt. Ogden Ski Lift in Snow Basin. The lift consisted of 120 chairs that would be 80 feet apart, supported by 15 wooden towers, would travel 400 feet per minute, and carry 600 skiers per hour. Ski Lifts, Inc. was sent this information for advertising so the company could “get before the public the name of Constam for good, reliable, well-engineered Ski Lifts and Aerial Chair Lifts.” Ski Lifts, Inc. had contacted Mount Spokane about selling a Ski Lift to them. The file has an Agreement between the two companies, signed by Griggs on August 22, 1941, which changed certain provisions in the contract he had received from the Denver company. There is no signature for The Mine and Smelter Supply Company.

### **C. GRIGGS & HELLYER RESIGN, HEUSSY TAKES OVER AS PRESIDENT**

Heussy wrote Parker on August 22, 1941, about Ski Lifts, Inc.’s affairs, where “things were happening very fast.” Griggs agreed to resign as president, Hellyer agreed to resign as secretary-treasurer of the company, and Heussy would become the new president. His activities would be limited to “the Rainier contract situation,” but the company needed a paid manager to handle detailed management issues. They were looking for someone interested in skiing who was not dependant on the salary for his entire livelihood. Heussy resigned as Parker’s representative, since as president, he would have an obligation to all the stockholders. David Hellyer resigned as an officer and from the board of Ski Lifts, Inc. on August 29, 1941, as he was about to begin medical school in Chicago, saying “[m]y association with Ski Lifts, Inc. has been a pleasant one and my interest as a shareholder will endure my continued desire to serve the company in any capacity commensurate with my other obligations.” In his book, *At the Forest Edge*, Hellyer made no mention of the internal disputes at

Ski Lifts, Inc.

On September 2, 1941, Heussy wrote Paul Sceva, Manager of the Rainier National Park Company, informing him that Ski Lifts, Inc. had undergone a complete reorganization, and he was the new president. He asked for a meeting to discuss the company's contract with the Park.

On September 3, 1941, The Mine and Smelter Supply Company wrote Griggs raising issues about the changes to the contract between them proposed by Ski Lifts, Inc. It appeared to him that Ski Lifts, Inc. wanted "the experience of Mr. Costam, not only in the design and engineering of his Ski Lifts, where the skiers re towed by means of a J stick connected to an overhead cable, as well as aerial chair lifts, where the skier is transported by a chair suspended above the snow and connected to an overhead cable." However, Ski Lifts, Inc. wanted to be able to compete with them by providing Chair Lifts, which were not protected by patents and could be built by most any manufacturer. That would not be acceptable. Heussy replied on September 17, 1941, accepting the Denver company's changes to the proposed contract.

On September 7, 1941, the Superintendent of Mount Rainier National Park wrote Ski Lifts, Inc. asking for information about the rope tows installed at Mount Baker and Snoqualmie Pass, but the issue of Constam lifts was not discussed. Heussy replied on September 16, saying the Snoqualmie Pass rope tow was 900 feet, with 125 feet of vertical lift, and charged \$.10 per ride, and \$1.00 for an all day rate. At Mount Baker, the tow was 600 feet, with a vertical lift of 275 feet, and charged \$.10 per ride and \$1.50 for an all day rate.

On September 16, 1941, Heussy wrote to Paul Sceva, Manager of Rainier National Park Company, discussing ski lift rates. The prior year, Ski Lifts Inc. had six different rates which was unwieldy, and he was going to eliminate all but two types of tickets. They would charge \$.05 per

ride at Paradise the coming year, except for the Alta Vista lift which would require two \$.05 tickets. A daily rate of \$1.50 would be charged and the student rate would be eliminated. Heussy said that Don Adams would likely be hired as the company's manager. Sceva replied on September 18, 1941, saying the new rates would likely produce more revenue than the prior year, and that he was applying to the Park Service for permission for Ski Lifts, Inc. to operate two lines from the power house to the shoulder of Alta Vista. Sceva wrote to the Park Service, informing them that to relieve congestion on peak days, two parallel rope tows going to the shoulder of Alta Vista would be operated. Two lines of posts would have to be installed, which needed Park Service approval.

On October 18, 1941, Heussy wrote The Mine and Smelter Supply Company. While it was too late to install new lifts for the coming season, it was not too soon to negotiate an agreement regarding installation of Constam lifts in the future. Only one page of his letter is in the file, so the details of his proposal are not available.

On September 16, 1941, Heussy wrote the Manager of the Mount Baker Development Company, informing him that he was president of Ski Lifts, Inc., and that Chauncey Griggs was "no longer actively engaged in any of the company's activities."

On September 19, 1941, Heussy wrote Donald Adams offering him the position of manager of Ski Lifts, Inc. for the 1941 - 1942 season. He had the option of having a salary of \$2,200, or a salary of \$1,200 plus a bonus at the close of the company's books for the season. Adams' duties would include "active management of the company in all matters with the exception of policy and keeping the company's records and account." He would be responsible for operation of the physical properties of the company, together with the installation of the equipment and dismantling of the equipment at the end of the season.

On September 25, 1941, Heussy wrote Parker informing him that he recently learned Ski Lifts, Inc. was as much in dispute at Mount Baker as it was at Mount Rainier. The head of the development company had been scheduling a meeting with the Mount Baker Forest Service to recommend cancelling their use permit, saying "both he and the Forest Service were completely disgusted with the operation at Baker in the past." Heussy met with the head of the Mount Baker Development Company, and they were back in his good graces, and if they could improve their operations this year, they will be able to continue in the future indefinitely. Heussy planned on advertising in Seattle newspapers to let skiers know what the company was doing, to build public good will.

On the same day, Heussy wrote to Wetherill Collins, a stockholder in the company, informing him of the problems at Mount Baker and the resolution he obtained, and warning him of personnel issues.

I can foresee...a certain amount of friction between Chauncey and Don [Adams] that is bound to arise, and while I am extremely fond of Chauncey, I am firmly convinced that this company can no longer be operated on a part-time basis by anyone and that Chauncey is absolutely persona non grata at Baker as well as Rainier. It therefore will be highly important for the success of this company that you back me up after a full knowledge of the facts in matters which may arise where there is a difference of opinion between Chauncey and Don. In other words, Don must be the General Manager of this company this year in fact as well as in name and Chauncey must stay in the background.

On October 11, 1941, Heussy wrote Parker, then living in New Jersey, updating him on the company's affairs. Don Adams, the general manager, "knows the ski tow business thoroughly," and is on friendly terms with Paul Sceva at Rainier where the company was installing two large tows in addition to the former tows they operated. The company will operate two parallel tows up Alta Vista, and one substantial tow down the other side of Alta Vista into Edith Creek basin. At Mount

Baker, the company will operate the Bagley tow and a new large tow on Seven Hills, a portable tow on Dustin Pass, and probably a beginner's tow on the foot of the ridge in back of Seven Hills. The company will operate a large and small tow at Snoqualmie and probably two tows at Naches. "This should give us a splendid operation this winter."

On October 13, 1941, Carl Heussy, president of Ski Lifts, Inc. ran the company's first ad in the Seattle Times informing the public of its plans for the year. Ski Lifts, Inc. operated 11 rope tows in 1941, at Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, Snoqualmie Summit, Naches a Edith Creek Basin.

**GOOD NEWS FOR  
SKIERS...**

*THERE'S new snow on the hills . . .  
eleven ski tows to ride . . . a great  
ski season is almost here! You'll ride  
NEW lifts on the practice hill at Para-  
dise, up Alta Vista and on the Seven  
Hills at Mount Baker . . . improved ski  
tows at Naches, at Snoqualmie and  
Edith Creek Basin.*

*MEET genial Don Adams, our new gen-  
eral manager, and his staff of assistants.  
And there's a new low all-day rate on  
all eleven tows! So wax up your skis  
. . . you'll soon be riding the ski-ways!*

**SKI LIFTS, INC.**

**CARL R. HEUSSY, President**

**1158 Stuart Building** **Seattle**

Seattle Times, October 13, 1941 (page 15).



On October 30, 1941, Heussy wrote to Robert Vossbeck, hiring him to be the Mount Baker lift operator. He was told to rent a cabin at the ski area in the name of Ski Lifts, Inc.

On November 8, 1941, Ski Lifts, Inc. entered into an Agreement with Trams, Inc., the operator of the Stevens Pass Ski Area, leasing a Ford V 8 1937 motor owned by Trams Inc. for \$500, to be installed at Alta Vista at Rainier National Park. Ski Lifts, Inc. had an option to purchase the unit for \$1,200.

Carl Huessy released the ski tow rates to be charged by Ski Lifts, Inc. in November of 1941, for the skier “who frowns upon the uphill traverse, loathes the side-step climb and gnashes his teeth at the thought of a herringbone pull.” Don Adams, general manager, and Bruce Kehr, were installing two parallel tope tows up to the Saddle of Alta Vista at Paradise. A ride on “this big tow” will cost 10 cents, or one could ride all four tows in the valley for \$1.50. Five cent rides would be offered on the new Edith Creek tow, 700 feet long and extending down the back side of Alta Vista to Edith Creek basin, and the two beginners tows on the practice hill. At Mount Baker, there would be an all-day charge of \$1.50, the Bagley tow would cost ten cents per ride, and the new Seven Hills tow would cost five cents a ride. The charges for riding tows at Snoqualmie Pass, where Webb Moffett was in charge, had not been set, but would be in the neighborhood of \$1 for all day and five cents a ride.<sup>44</sup>

On November 19, 1941, Huessy wrote to the Superintendent of Rainier National Park, saying that the main lift at Alta Vista was ready to begin operations the following Sunday. Heussy said their operation at Naches Pass was always in the red, based on its location, and he sought permission to

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<sup>44</sup> *10 Cents Please. Ski Lifts, Inc., Lists Rates*, Seattle Times, November 12, 1941 (page 24).

change the location and operate one or two portable lifts in the Lake Tipsoo area.

In May 1942, Ski Lifts, Inc. ads were run saying “Spring Skiing is Swell! Plan now for weekend fun in the snow...in the sun...at Mount Rainier! Ski Lifts will be operating at Paradise every Sunday during May.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Seattle Times, May 1, 1942 (page 32).

## **VII. MOFFETT & MORRIS ACQUIRE CONTROL OF SKI LIFTS, INC.**

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the entry of the United States into World War II, changed Ski Lifts, Inc.'s business operations. There are no materials in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file beyond November 26, 1941, except for a May 26, 1942 letter from Webb Moffett to Chauncey Griggs responding to a telephone call from Griggs. Moffett had been hired by Ski Lifts, Inc. to operate the rope tow at the Snoqualmie Summit, which began operating January 1, 1938.

Chauncey Griggs called Moffett about Webb's interest in the purchase of his shares in Ski Lifts, Inc., and Griggs had asked Moffett to make him an offer. Moffett responded by letter dated May 26, 1942, which is the last document in the Ski Lifts, Inc. file. Moffett "always wanted to have a financial interest in the venture because I feel that I have been a part of it from the start." He 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.

In May 1942, Moffett and J. Ranch Morris purchased Grigg's 250 shares of stock for \$3,500, and they took control of the company. Moffett eventually acquired the entire company. The story

of the purchase of Ski Lifts, Inc. by Webb Moffett has been told in several places.

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.<sup>46</sup>

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.<sup>47</sup>

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, Moffett and Morris were elected to the Board of Directors of the company. Moffett became president of the company, and Morris became Secretary-Treasurer, and on November 18, 1942, both signed a notice of change of registered office filed with the Washington Secretary of State's Office. On August 20, 1945, Moffett and Morris purchased

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<sup>46</sup> Huston Horn, *There are no Wet Blankets at Snoqualmie*, undated article in Seattle Municipal Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Moffett, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine, 1978.

shares of Ski Lifts, Inc. from G. L. Downing, and James Parker. On September 11, 1947, Webb Moffett purchased all other outstanding shares of Ski Lifts for \$15,000, and became sole owner of the company.

## VIII. SKIING DURING AND AFTER WW II

### A. SKIING IS LIMITED DURING W. W. II

The winter of 1941 was the last peace-time ski season before World War started. Skiing enthusiasm continued to grow, but hints of the conflict to come were seen by the fact that Army ski troops were training at Mount Rainier.

Showing how popular skiing was in the winter of 1941, the Society Pages of the Seattle Times published a section on February 2, 1941, called *Seattleites Let Their Cares Slip Away on Skis, Throngs Hie to Mountains for Exciting Snow Sport*.

You can see the caravan of automobiles rolling mountain-ward each week-end. Strapped on top of the cars are skis. Inside the cars are skiers, Seattleites seeking escape from a work-a-day world; socialites shrugging their shoulders at their calendars; business and professional people finding temporary release from their worries; and students trying to forget the Greek "lit" tests! Ah, yes, each week-end at Mount Rainier, at Mount Baker, at Snoqualmie Pass, Seattleites eagerly exchange yawns for yodels, ice cubes in the glass for icicles, and glamorous evening gowns for cozy, snug ski outfits. Middle-aged men haven't forgotten how to play...and they're delighted. Mothers and even grandmothers feel the years slipping away as they skim over the snow. Debs and college men lose some of their cynicism and start acting as natural as children. The section carried pictures of Seattle skiers at Mount Baker and elsewhere enjoying their weekends on the snow.

The article gave a list of the Seattle skiers who regularly spend their weekends at the three ski areas. "And the, when Seattle skiers have tired of their own fields, Mount Baker, Mount Rainier, Snoqualmie Pass, they take jaunts over to Oregon, where they have a stimulating weekend at Timberland Lodge, or go over to the swanky Sun Valley, which is fast becoming the winter playground of the entire effete United States. Well, anyway, the effete population devoted to skiing."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Seattleites Let Their Cares Slip Away on Skis, Throngs Hie to Mountains for Exciting Snow Sport*, by Virginia Boren, .Seattle Times, February 2, 1941 (pages 9, 17)

World War II interrupted normal activities in Seattle, along with the rest of the country. Skiing virtually stopped 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. During the war years, gas rationing made trips to the mountains difficult. Access to the Meany Ski Hut at Martin by Northern Pacific train made trips the salvation for skiers, until the trains were rescheduled because of the war effort, making travel inconvenient. In December 1942, the Milwaukee Railroad shut down its Ski Bowl at Hyak and committed its resources to the war effort. Skiing at Mount Rainier and Mount Baker also stopped for the duration of the war.

In 1942, Chauncey Griggs sold his stock in Ski Lifts, Inc. to Rance Morris and Webb Moffett for \$3,500, and Moffett and Morris took over control of the company and continued operations at the ski area at Snoqualmie Summit. 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.

Yvonne Prater, who interviewed Webb Moffett, said that in 194s, Ski Lifts, Inc. grossed \$28,000 at Mount Rainier and Snoqualmie only grossed \$1,500. She said that during World War II, the company gross income was \$800, \$1,600, and \$3,200, as it was the only ski area operating in the

area.<sup>49</sup>

In the winter of 1941 - 42, Army ski troops trained at Mount Rainier taking advantage of the conditions that had attracted local skiers there for years, claiming the use of the rope tows at Paradise during the week, but members of the public were able to use them on the weekends. The road to Paradise was not kept open between the winter of 1942 - 43 and the end of the war. The U.S. Army's ski troops became the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and was transferred to Fort Hale, Colorado in 1943.<sup>50</sup>

Sahalie Ski Club was a leader in developing the "service skiing program," bringing service men to its lodge to get away from the war for a few days. "Sahalie Ski Club, which quietly has been playing an important role in making skiing possible for service men in the Seattle area, will be host to another Uncle Sam contingent today...." "[Pacific Northwest Ski Association] officials will meet... to discuss furthering the service skiing program in which Sahalie has taken the lead. 'It's Sahalie's policy to house as many service skiers as can come to the Summit,' .... Most of the service men who are guests have never had skis on before, and many have never seen snow."<sup>51</sup>

Two ski lodges on Snoqualmie Pass burned down during the war. On April 16, 1943, the four story Sahalie Ski Club lodge at Snoqualmie Pass burned to the ground, the result of defective wiring on the fourth floor - the club had its own electrical system. The lodge had sleeping accommodations for 85, had been used for many ski parties for service men that year, and it would

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<sup>49</sup> Moffett, *A Brief History of Skiing in the Northwest*, Puget Soundings Magazine, 1978; Prater, *Snoqualmie Pass, From Indian Trail to Interstate*, page 137.

<sup>50</sup> *Happiness is Skiing at Meany - Or Where Else Can you Find a 2 1/2 Mile Long Rope Tow?*, Mountaineer Bulletin, 1968, page 84, [Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/](http://Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/); Galvin, *The Ski Troops of WW II*, Sahalie Historical Note #15..

<sup>51</sup> "Ski Stars Jump Today," *Seattle Times*, February 14, 1943, pp. 5, 8.  
21 "Preps to Ski Today; Hostmark in Army," *Seattle Times*, February 28, 1943, p. 7.



have been used as a service men's recreation camp in the summer. Sahalie Ski Club was recognized by the military as having done more than any other organization to give soldiers a taste of skiing in the Northwest. Sahalie's president said he did not know whether the lodge would be rebuilt at the present time. The loss was estimated at \$20,000, and the club had \$5,000 of insurance.<sup>52</sup>

In autumn 1943, the Mountaineers extended its rope tow at Meany Ski Hut at Martin to the top of the lane, and a safety gate was added for safety. In autumn 1944, the basement at Meany was extended by digging under the original portion of the building, and a drying room was built. The Mountaineers Lodge at Snoqualmie Summit did not fare so well. On October 2, 1944, the Mountaineers lodge on west side of Snoqualmie Pass burned to the ground. The fire began from a spark from the fireplace falling on the roof. C. L. Anderson, who helped build the lodge 30 years previously, "fought a lone and unsuccessful battle to save it from fire," but was injured when he fell off the roof in his attempt. Only the natural rock fireplace remained. The caretaker's cabin was also destroyed. The lodge was about a mile off the highway, two miles south of the summit. It would cost \$10,000 to rebuild the lodge, but reconstruction would not be attempted until after the war.<sup>53</sup>

The road to Paradise was not kept open between the winter of 1942 - 43 and the end of the war. In the March 1946, the road above Longmire was opened and the 600-foot rope tow was put back into operation for spring skiing. It is not clear whether Ski Lifts, Inc. operated the rope tow there in 1946 a revised policy adopted in March 1946, eliminated a provision that allowed ski clubs

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<sup>52</sup> *Fire Destroys Pass Ski Lodge*, Seattle Times, April 17, 1943 (page 5); *Weide Elected Sahalie Prexy*, Seattle Times April 10, 1943 (page 8).

<sup>53</sup> Kellog, *Meany Ski Hut Celebrated Fifty Years*, 1979, pages 85 - 88, [Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/](http://Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/); *Mountaineers' Lodge Burns at Snoqualmie*, Seattle Times, October 3, 1944 (page 8).

to operate their own ski tows under special permit at Rainier, reserving that right for the park concession .<sup>54</sup>

Some of the only positive skiing news during the war came in the fall of 1943, when the Army announced it was building an “Alaskan GI Sun Valley” near Anchorage, five miles east of Fort Richardson. It would have a five mile run, a warm up cabin, and two Quonset-type huts for the accommodation of the soldiers. *Seattle Times*, October 16, 1943.

Skiing picked up somewhat in the winter of 1943 - 1944. In February 1944, there was a meet between the University of Washington and Washington State College on Mount Spokane, the first recognized race since skiing shut down for the war. Individual places were divided evenly between the two schools, with Washington’s Art Strom and Bob Smith winning the jumping and cross country events, and WSU’s Gordon and Norman LaVigne winning the downhill and slalom races. Also in February 1944, the Camp Little Norway Benefit jumping event was held at Leavenworth, a benefit where skiers, officials and spectators paid their own expenses, and the entire gate went to the Camp Little Norway fund. Olaf Ulland won the Class A event, and one of his jumps was just 10 feet short of Torger Torkle’s hill record (and one time national mark). He actually landed further down the hill than did Torkle, but heavy snow shortened the incline so a new record was not set. Ray Hendrickson of Leavenworth won the Class B event. The last event of the year was a combination affair for the benefit for the U.S. Army Recreational Camp at Jefferson Park in Seattle hosted by the Seattle and Sahalie Ski Clubs, with all proceeds going to the Athletic Fund of the Camp. Olav Ulland of Seattle won the jumping event at Beaver Lake at the Summit, setting a new

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<sup>54</sup> Alpenglow Ski History - Theodore Catton, *Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park* (pages 408, 415).

mark for the hill of 213 feet. The big thrill of the event was the “sensational” 217 foot jump made by Ray Hendrickson, a youth from Leavenworth, who fell on the landing so it did not count as a new record. Recreational skiing was confined to Stevens Pass, Snoqualmie Pass and Mt. Spokane. Mt. Baker and Paradise were closed for the war. The Sahalie Ski Club Lodge on Snoqualmie Pass burned down during the war, and the roof of the Cascade Ski Club Lodge at Mt. Hood collapsed under heavy snow. Much valuable equipment was lost in both locations, but no one was hurt. Many servicemen were able to ski as the military took over several hills on the weekends. The U.S.O. took skiers from Tacoma to Mt. Rainier and the U.S. Army Recreational Camp ran regular trips to Snoqualmie. The Penguin Ski Club of Seattle and the Tacoma Ski Club collected old ski equipment for the use of the servicemen.<sup>55</sup>

In 1945, North American champion jumper, the “human airplane,” Torger Tokle, was killed in Italy fighting with the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.<sup>56</sup> In 1941, Tokle had a jump of 288 feet at the Milwaukee Ski Bowl, setting a North American record.

## **B. SKIING RESUMES AND EXPANDS AFTER W.W.II**

Skiing resumed and expanded after World War II, as men returned from the war and the country tried to get back to normal. There was a pent up demand to resume activities that the Northwest enjoyed before the war. Interest in skiing was stronger than ever, resulting in an expansion and upgrading of local ski areas.

For the winter of 1945, lights for night skiing were installed at the Snoqualmie Summit ski

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<sup>55</sup> *Skiing in Western Washington - 1944*, American Ski Annual, [http://hyak.net/lost/skiing\\_1944.html](http://hyak.net/lost/skiing_1944.html).

<sup>56</sup> *Husky Winter Sports Club Booms Skiing for Campus Athletes*, Seattle Times, September 16, 1945.

area, after the Forest Service had enlarged the skiable area during the summer of 1944. Webb Moffett said the lights were put in so his employees would have a chance to ski after the area closed, but “it caught on with the customers, they began to enjoy it too.” Moffett strung surplus degaussing tape, heavy wire that was put around ships during the war to counteract minefields, around the ski area and put up service station lights to become one of the first ski areas in the country to put in night lighting.<sup>57</sup>

In January 1945, the Associated Students of the University of Washington bought the Martin Ski Lodge from Northern Pacific Railroad, and the Stampede Pass area became the center for student skiing activities. 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 new runs lined up.” The club also secured limited housing facilities at Mount Baker.<sup>58</sup>

In the fall of 1945, plans were made to greatly expand facilities at Mount Baker, ensuring that “skiing would return to even greater heights than it had reached before the war.” A Seattle businessman, Arch Talbot, had taken over the Mount Baker Development Company, and planned to construct two chair lifts to Shuksan Arm and Panorama Dome, four rope tows, and a 100-room mountain inn to be called Shuksan Inn. Work on the hotel would begin in the summer of 1946, and would be built at a slightly higher elevation than the old lodge. The Inn and the two chair lifts would be ready for the ski season of 1946 - 1947. For the season of 1945 - 1946, temporary

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<sup>57</sup> Prater, *Snoqualmie Pass, From Indian Trail to Interstate*, page 137.

<sup>58</sup> *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/](http://Alpenglow.org/ski-history/notes/period/mtneer-b/).

dormitories capable of housing 800 to 1,000 skiers would be built around Heather Inn, and four tows would be in operation. The State Highway Department was constructing permanent stone and concrete bridges to the ski area for deal with the rush of travel that was anticipated that winter, and buses would transport skiers from Bellingham. One ski lift would give skiers a long run from Shuksan Arm to the highway, where buses would pick up skiers and take them back to the lift. The development was the result of the demand of organized ski groups for improved accommodations at Mount Baker, which had been a center for thousands of skiers from Seattle for years. The rope tows and chair lifts would be a “big improvement over the herring bone for hill-climbing skiers.”<sup>59</sup>

Mount Baker’s place in the skiing world was further enhanced as the Talbot Trophy Race, sponsored by the Shuksan Ski Club of Bellingham, to be held at Mount Baker in April of 1946, was expected to rival “the famed Harriman Cup races as Sun Valley and the Snow Cup competition at Alta, Utah. The two day tournament was scheduled two days after the annual Snow Cup races, and sponsors were hoping that “crack national skiers from the Rocky Mountains, Middle West and East, would make the journey west to Baker.” It was an “open affair,” planned to be the biggest two-day tournament of the Pacific Northwest, and sponsors promised a huge trophy for the combined winner.<sup>60</sup>

Local skiers were upset when in October 1945, the Department of the Interior announced that neither Paradise on Mount Rainier nor any other national park could be used for PNSA meets, the Silver Skis race, or any other sanctioned ski competition. “Paradise Valley is finished as a

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<sup>59</sup> *New Facilities in Store for Schuss Artists*, Seattle Times, September 16, 1945 (page 23).

<sup>60</sup> *Talbot Trophy Race May Draw Nation’s Best*, Seattle Times (page 23).

competitive ski area unless the Department of Interior revises its winter-sports plan for all national parks.” No overnight accommodations would be allowed, so skiers at Paradise would have no place to stay. No regular tows could be erected, but portable tows could operate so long as they were removed in the spring. No winter ski carnivals or any other events that would attract large crowds of people would be allowed. The Park Service hoped to obtain funds to open the road to Paradise for recreational but not competitive skiing for the 1946 - 1947 season. The Rainier National Park Company (with 200 stockholders) would keep Paradise closed during future winters. It had operated at a loss for the previous 15 years. Ski organizations joined together to protest the policy to officials of the federal government. “We feel the government is depriving 100,000 Western Washington skiers of the finest ski terrain in the world for no apparent reason...We’ll fight to the last ditch to get Paradise open.”<sup>61</sup>

In November 1945, the 25 members of the Pacific Northwest Ski Association, that had been inactive during the war, met to set the upcoming ski season’s schedule of competitions, discuss the difficulties of resuming skiing after the war, and to take a stand on the ban of competitive skiing at all national parks.

One of the problems sure to get plenty of attention is that of accommodations at the ski areas. Judging from the increase in ski interest this fall, more skiers than ever before will flock to Mount Baker, Stevens and Snoqualmie Passes, and Paradise. But housing, other than at Baker, will be woefully short. Stevens and Snoqualmie haven’t much in the way of cabins, and the Rainier National Park Committee won’t open Paradise Inn, even if the Park Service lifts its ban on over-night accommodations in national parks.

Baker, which is being built up into a first-class ski center, will be able to handle from 800 to 1,000 skiers a night, but indications are that won’t be enough. The problem of equipment probably will be brought up tonight. Skis, ski clothing and boots are short this winter, and

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<sup>61</sup> *Competitive Skiing Banned at Paradise Valley, Interior Department Order Prevents Snow Contests*, Seattle Times, October 21, 1945 (page 38).

chances are the items will be missing from store shelves until late winter or spring.

The delegates adopted a resolution calling on the Department of the Interior to reopen the parks to competitive skiing, and agreed to “carry the fight on the reopening of National Park areas to competitive skiing to the national meet.” Canadian delegates announced the intended development of the Garibaldi ski area one hour’s boat ride north of Vancouver, and their plans to boost skiing throughout British Columbia and to develop ski terrain and young skiers. An ambitious series of ski tournaments were scheduled from January 6 to March 24, 1946.<sup>62</sup>

The Seattle Times of February 3, 1946, published an article about the boom in skiing after the war ended.

Skiing! When Paul Bunyan’s blue ox “Babe” carelessly kicked up the Pacific Northwest into mountains, he made world-renowned playgrounds for skiers. With mountains virtually in our back yards, Seattleites can’t help but be ski-minded. There are thousands of devotees to the sport which gives wings to the feet and to the spirit. Ski clubs are many in numbers and in 1946, with wartime restrictions gone, promises to see an unprecedented number of skiers going to the snow-covered slopes of the Cascades and Olympics.<sup>63</sup>

For the ski season of 1946 - 1947, the Milwaukee Road Railroad resumed operations of the Ski Bowl, changing the 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, named the Talley-Ho SkiBoggan, was installed at the Ski Bowl in 1946. It was a surface lift that could carry 1,440 skiers per hour, designed by Keith Talley of Seattle.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ski Delegates Set for Long Meeting Tonight*, Seattle Times, November 3, 1945 (page 8); *Nov. 3 Set for Ski Conference*, Seattle Times, September 26, 1945 (page 20); *Granstrom to Serve 4<sup>th</sup> Term as P.N.S.A. Head*, Seattle Times, November 5, 1945 (page 19).

<sup>63</sup> *Club Booms Skiing for Campus Athletes*, Seattle Times, February 3, 1946 (page 41).

<sup>64</sup> Lundin, *Milwaukee Ski Bowl, 1938-1950: Revolution in Local Skiing*, Essay 100601, historylink.org.

Also for the ski season of 1946 - 1947, Ski Lifts, Inc, headed by Webb Moffett, invested \$18,000 to make significant improvements to the Snoqualmie Summit Ski area, which the Seattle Times called “Seattle’s famed near-home ski area.” The Summit’s ski area had been tripled, and three lifts were added, for a total of eight rope tows that could carry 6,500 skiers an hour. “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.” A 120 foot building had been moved adjacent to the Forest Service warming hut, which had cafeteria service, a ski-rental shop and a warming room. The Times said there would be two top-flight ski centers on Snoqualmie next winter, the Summit, and the Milwaukee Ski Bowl which was being enlarged and improved after a four-year, war enforced closure. “Judging from the advance interest inskiing this year, the 2,500 skiers a week average set last winter will be boosted to 3,000 or more.”<sup>65</sup>

In the fall of 1947, Ski Lifts, Inc., the operator of the Summit ski area, installed two rope tows at the Blewett Pass summit, near the Top of the Hill Lodge. New ski area was 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 looking for more areas to accommodate the thousands of runners.<sup>66</sup>

### **C. BEN EVANS SUGGESTS CHANGES AT SUMMIT**

On March 13, 1946, Ben Evans, who was in charge of Seattle’s Municipal Ski Park from its

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<sup>65</sup> *Eight Rope Tows at Snoqualmie to Haul 6,500 Riders an Hour*, Seattle Times, October 23, 1946 (page 24).

<sup>66</sup> *Snowflyers to Find Many New Runs at Blewett Pass*, Seattle Times, November 9, 1947 (page 40).



inception in 1934, wrote a letter to the Supervisor of the Snoqualmie National Forest, expressing his opinion about management of the Snoqualmie Ski Hill. Evans criticized the way the Forest Service had been managing Snoqualmie Summit since Seattle had gotten out of the ski business, and 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 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 tow operation concession for competitive bids, with a flat guarantee or 6% gross sales. Regulations should be adopted regarding 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." Evans said that before the ski season closed, the Forest Service planning engineer should visit major ski areas located below the tree line which serve large numbers of people, particularly in New England, which have similar issues as found on Snoqualmie Summit..

Evans expressed some dissatisfaction with Ski Lifts, Inc. His "personal experience with the Ski Tow, Inc. [sic] 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.”

#### **D. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ARE MADE AT THE SUMMIT FOR 1947**

The suggestions made by Evans worked. In the summer of 1946, Ski Lifts, Inc. made significant improvements costing \$18,000 to the Snoqualmie Summit Ski area ( “Seattle’s famed near-home ski area.”), for the 1946 - 1947 ski season. 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 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. had 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.” An aerial photo of the Summit ski area showed the new skiing area and tows.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *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*.





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.” 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.”<sup>68</sup>

Other events announced in the fall of 1947, show how important the 1947 - 48 ski season was for the Northwest. In October 1947, the Pacific Northwestern Ski Association established a record 32 tournaments for the six month long ski season, at a meeting of 49 delegates from Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The big news at the meeting was that “Washington Ski Club speedster Don Amick” had been selected to the U.S. Olympic team for the winter games at St. Moritz, Switzerland in February of 1948, to compete in the downhill and slalom events. Amick would join the rest of the team in December at its training facility in Davos, Switzerland. His selection was announced by Darroch Crookes of Portland, Oregon, a member of the Winter Games Selection Committee and a member of the U.S. Olympic team at the 1936 Olympics.<sup>69</sup>

The Seattle Times published several articles in the fall of 1947, discussing how several local ski areas had been improved for the upcoming ski season. The Stevens Pass Company, “headed by

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<sup>68</sup> Seattle Times, January 28, 1947 (page 16) & May 19, 1947 (page 33).

<sup>69</sup> *Northwestern Ski Body Sets 32 Tournaments*, Seattle Times, October 13, 1947 (page 22).

hard-working Don Adams, installed a new \$90,000 Constam T-bar lift “to haul skiers” from the 4,100 foot mark to the 5,200-foot elevation, over 4,700 feet of track, tripling the available skiing area. Workmen cleared much of the small timber around the lower half of the hill and new lanes were cut through for expert and intermediate skiers. A new parking area had been cleared. At Snoqualmie Summit, the main hill nearly doubled in length after an extensive land-clearing program opened up a vast new area. A new tow high on Government Hill would haul skiers to the sweeping Beaver Lake runs, and seven tows would operate. “The slopes used by thousands of Pacific Northwest skiers in previous years have been bulldozed to a new smoothness so a light snowfall will enable winter-sports enthusiasts to ski earlier in the season than ever before.” A sledding area had been opened for children, and a “revolutionary one-man bobsled...will be available for Snoqualmie Pass visitors, with two steep runs on hills away from the ski area.”<sup>70</sup>

Ski Lifts, Inc. took advantage of the record snowfall in December 1948 to run advertisements of the skiing at Snoqualmie Pass, “skiing has never been better.”

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<sup>70</sup> *Skiers Cheered by Many Improvements*, Seattle Times, October 26, 1947 (page 40); *Longer Snoqualmie Hill Awaits Skiers*, Seattle Times, November 20, 1947 (page 47).





Seattle Times, December 20, 1948  
(page 18)

**E. OTHER OPERATIONS OF SKI LIFTS, INC. - EXPANSION TO BLEWETT PASS & CAYUSE PASS**

In 1941, Webb Moffett and Ranch Morris paid \$3,500 to acquire controlling interest in Ski Lifts, Inc., the price Moffett told Chaucey Griggs was the value of the company's operations at Snoqualmie Summit, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier. Ski Lifts, Inc. only operated the ski area at Snoqualmie Summit during WW II as skiing was shut down at Baker and Rainier. After WW II ended, Ski Lifts, Inc. focused on the operations at Snoqualmie Summit, although it opened subsidiary operations at Blewett and Cayuse Passes that operated for short periods of time..

The book, *Mount Baker Ski Area: A Pictorial History*, says that in January 1946, Don Adams purchased Ski Lifts, Inc., which included "the Forest Service use permit and facilities [at Mount Baker]." This is not correct, since Webb Moffett and Ranch Morris purchased the company's

stock in 1942, which included its operations at Snoqualmie Summit, Mount Baker and Mount Rainier. Although Adams did not purchase the company, it is possible he may have purchased the company's rights to operate at Mount Baker. Webb's son Dave says he does not believe Ski Lifts, Inc ever operated at Mount Baker or Mount Rainier after WW II. Moffett may have sold the company's rights at Mount Baker to Don Adams, who continued rope tow operations there. Sigmund J. McGuire ran the place for Don Adams and eventually owned the company that operated Baker in the late forties according to Dave Moffett.<sup>71</sup>

A 600 foot rope tow was operated at Mount Rainier in the winter of 1946. It is possible that Ski Lifts, Inc. may have operated that tow, although there is no information readily available to determine whose operation that was. Ski Lifts, Inc. and Moffett expanded its operations to the old Blewett Pass and Cayuse Pass between 1946 - 1948.

### **Skiing at Mount Rainier after WW II**

Local skiers were upset when in October 1945, the Department of the Interior announced that neither Paradise nor any other national park could be used for PNSA meets, the Silver Skis race, or any other sanctioned ski competition. "Paradise Valley is finished as a competitive ski area unless the Department of Interior revises its winter-sports plan for all national parks." No overnight accommodations would be allowed, so skiers at Paradise would have no place to stay. No regular tows could be erected, but portable tows could operate so long as they were removed in the spring. No winter ski carnivals or any other events that would attract large crowds of people would be allowed. The Park Service hoped to obtain funds to open the road to Paradise for recreational but not competitive skiing for the 1946 - 1947 season. The Rainier National Park Company (with 200

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<sup>71</sup> *Mount Baker, A Pictorial History*, page 47.

stockholders) would keep Paradise closed during future winters. It had operated at a loss for the previous 15 years. Ski organizations joined together to protest the policy to officials of the federal government. “We feel the government is depriving 100,000 Western Washington skiers of the finest ski terrain in the world for no apparent reason...We’ll fight to the last ditch to get Paradise open.”<sup>72</sup>

There was some good news for skiers. Governor Wallgren announced the road to Paradise would remain open during the winter of 1946, as the State Highway Department would cooperate with the National Park Service. “Skiing...is one of our established winter sport attractions, and we want to see it continued at Paradise.”<sup>73</sup>

In November 1945, 25 members of the Pacific Northwest Ski Association, which was inactive during the war, met to set the upcoming ski season’s schedule of competitions, to discuss the difficulties of resuming skiing after the war, and to take a stand on the ban of competitive skiing at all national parks.

One of the problems sure to get plenty of attention is that of accommodations at the ski areas. Judging from the increase in ski interest this fall, more skiers than ever before will flock to Mount Baker, Stevens and Snoqualmie Passes, and Paradise. But housing, other than at Baker, will be woefully short. Stevens and Snoqualmie haven’t much in the way of cabins, and the Rainier National Park Committee won’t open Paradise Inn, even if the Park Service lifts its ban on over-night accommodations in national parks.

Baker, which is being built up into a first-class ski center, will be able to handle from 800 to 1,000 skiers a night, but indications are that won’t be enough. The problem of equipment probably will be brought up tonight. Skis, ski clothing and boots are short this winter, and chances are the items will be missing from store shelves until late winter or spring.

The delegates adopted a resolution calling on the Department of the Interior to reopen National Parks

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<sup>72</sup> *Competitive Skiing Banned at Paradise Valley, Interior Department Order Prevents Snow Contests*, Seattle Times, October 21, 1945 (page 38).

<sup>73</sup> *Paradise Road to Stay Open*, Seattle Times, October 24, 1945 (page 18).

to competitive skiing, and agreed to “carry the fight on the reopening of National Park areas to competitive skiing to the national meet.” Canadian delegates announced the intended development of the Garibaldi ski area one hour’s boat ride north of Vancouver, and their plans to boost skiing throughout British Columbia and to develop ski terrain and young skiers. An ambitious series of ski tournaments were scheduled from January 6 to March 24, 1946.<sup>74</sup>

The Seattle Times of February 3, 1946, published an article about the boom in skiing after the war ended.

Skiing! When Paul Bunyan’s blue ox “Babe” carelessly kicked up the Pacific Northwest into mountains, he made world-renowned playgrounds for skiers. With mountains virtually in our back yards, Seattleites can’t help but be ski-minded. There are thousands of devotees to the sport which gives wings to the feet and to the spirit. Ski clubs are many in numbers and in 1946, with wartime restrictions gone, promises to see an unprecedented number of skiers going to the snow-covered slopes of the Cascades and Olympics.<sup>75</sup>

The road to Paradise was closed from the winter of 1942 - 43, until the end of the war. In the winter of 1946, the road above Longmire was opened, and the 600-foot rope tow was put back into operation for spring skiing. It is possible that Ski Lifts, Inc. operated the rope tow there in 1946, after a revised policy adopted in March 1946, eliminated a provision that allowed ski clubs to operate their own ski tows under special permit at Rainier. The right to operate tows was reserved to the park concession.<sup>76</sup>

### **Old Blewett Pass**

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<sup>74</sup> *Ski Delegates Set for Long Meeting Tonight*, Seattle Times, November 3, 1945 (page 8); *Nov. 3 Set for Ski Conference*, Seattle Times, September 26, 1945 (page 20); *Granstrom to Serve 4<sup>th</sup> Term as P.N.S.A. Head*, Seattle Times, November 5, 1945 (page 19).

<sup>75</sup> *Club Booms Skiing for Campus Athletes*, Seattle Times, February 3, 1946 (page 41).

<sup>76</sup> *Alpenglow Ski History - Theodore Catton, Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park* (pages 408, 415).

In November 1947, the Seattle Times announced that Ski Lifts, Inc. would put in two rope tows at the Blewett Pass summit, near the Top of the Hill Lodge. The tows would be in operation by December, and were expected to attract a large number of skiers from Eastern Washington.

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 looking for more areas to accommodate the thousands of runners.<sup>77</sup>

According to ski historian Kirby Gilbert, 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.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Snowflyers to Find Many New Runs at Blewett Pass*, Seattle Times, November 9, 1947 (page 40).

<sup>78</sup> 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.

This fulfilled the plan that Ski Lifts, Inc. made in 1937, to install a rope tow at Blewett Pass. The company bought property there and signed a contract with the Top-of-the-Hill Lodge to operate a lift through their property, although the lift was not put in.<sup>79</sup> According to Kirby Gilbert, the Ellensburg Ski Club put in a Swedish portable tow at the old Blewett Pass around late 1939, although it was never much of an operation. The Washington Trails Association website says the old Blewett Pass highway had a rope tow ski lift in the 1930s, and the website, Lost Ski Areas of Washington indicates the Blewett Pass ski area, located 34 miles north of Ellensburg and 27 miles from Cle Elum, had a rope tow and warming hut, but gives no date for the services.<sup>80</sup> There is virtually no information available about the ski area at the old Blewett Pass after the rope tows were installed in 1947. According to Gilbert, the ski area there was a limited operation and did not last beyond a few seasons.

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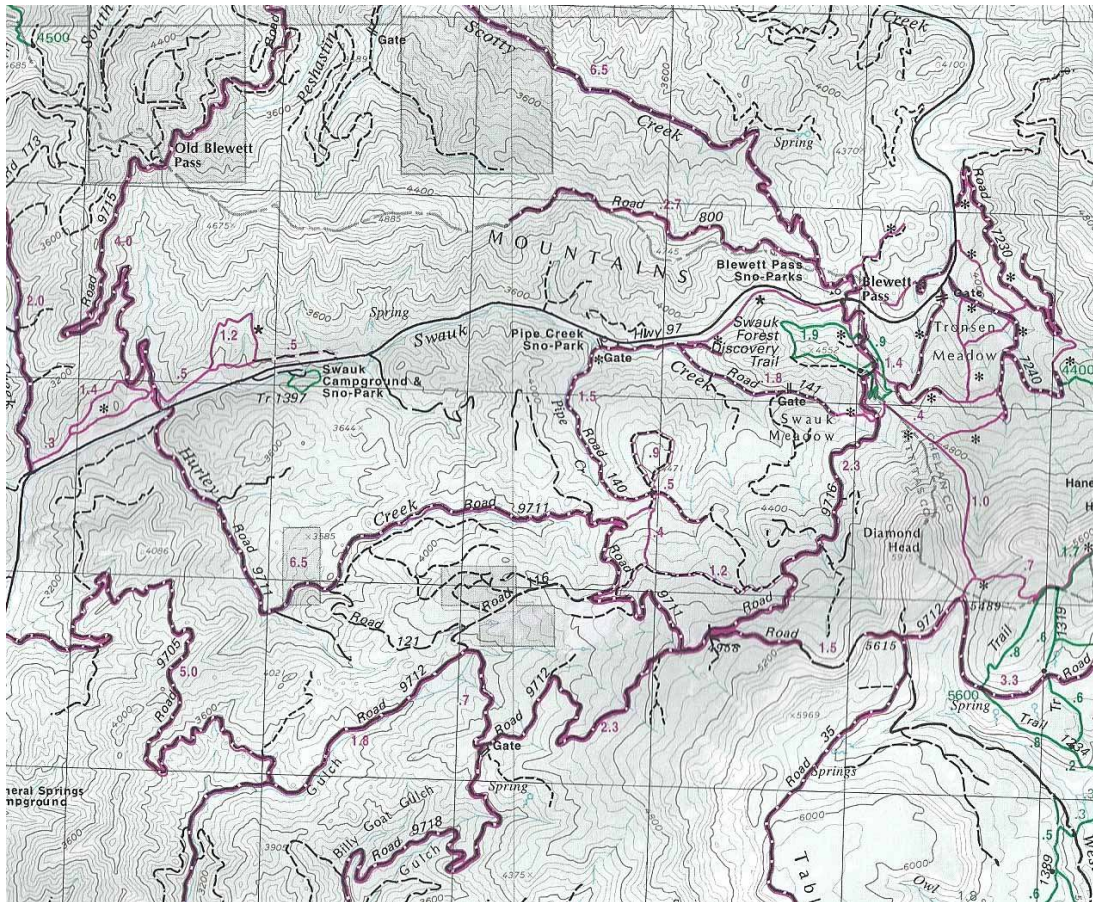
<sup>79</sup> In August 1937, Ski Lifts, Inc. bought 85 acres of land on the old Blewett Pass for \$170 from the Northern Pacific Railway Company, “for ski runways.” Most of the land had been burned over “and can be cleared without much expense.” In August 1937, a contract was signed between the Simons family (owners of Top-of-the-Hill lodge) and Ski Lifts, Inc, in which the company obtained the right to erect a ski tow across the Simon’s property and operate the lift for ten years. Moffett family Ski Lifts, Inc. file.

<sup>80</sup> *Old Blewett Pass Highway*, WTA.org; *Lost Ski Areas of Washington*, Hyak.net/lost/lostski.html.





Top-of-the-Hill Lodge, old Blewett Pass Summit. Courtesy of Kirby Gilbert.



The Old Blewett Pass is on the upper left and the new Blewett Pass is on the right.

Another small ski area, Swauk Ski Bowl, operated not far from the old Blewett Pass ski area, from the late 1930s or 1940s to the 1950s.<sup>81</sup>

### **Cayuse Pass - Tipsoo Lake Ski Area**

Cayuse Pass was treated as being a part of Mount Rainier National Park, being on its north side, and skiers began using the Cayuse Pass - Tipsoo Lake area in the mid- 1930s, when the Highway Department began maintaining the road to the Pass during the winter. In 1936, Seattle skiers would meet Yakima skiers there, since the American River Ski Area was just a few miles on the other side of Naches Pass. When the higher Naches Pass was closed, Cayuse Pass was the best place to ski since it was kept open by the highway department, and the area became popular as a winter sports area. Even though there were no shelter or sanitary facilities there, it was reported that 34,000 skiers used the area during the 1937 - 1938 season, although those numbers seem too large

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<sup>81</sup> Lowell Skoog's website, Alpenglow Ski History, has several references to the Swauk Ski Bowl. Ski Areas Lost, lists Swauk Ski Bowl (near Blewett Pass 1940s - 50s). *The Ski Guide for Washington*, published in 1950 by Shell Oil Co., says Swauk Ski Bowl was six miles west of Blewett Pass. *Skiing's Great in Washington State, 1950 -51*, published by the Washington State Advertising Commission, says Swauk Ski Area was 20 miles south of Peshastin. An Ellensburg Capital article from February 1, 1934, *Ski Tournament Handicapped by Poor Weather*, says because of three years of weather vagaries that handicapped the annual ski tournament held in Robinson canyon, plans were being formulated to build a course in the Swauk. An undated newspaper photo by Gene Prater, probably from the 1950s, of skiers and a rope tow has a caption reading, "Swauk Ski Bowl near Ellensburg offers protected areas plus three rope tows and warming hut to Kittitas Valley winter sports enthusiasts." Alpenglow Ski History, Ski Areas Lost, Tacoma Public Library - Clippings, Ellensburg Public Library - Clippings, Alpenglow.org.

An article in the Ellensburg Daily Record from October 8, 1953, *Relocation of Blewett Pass Road Pushed*, said the new road being built which would bypass the old Blewett Pass and go over Swauk Pass, would not interfere with the Swauk Ski Bowl, but would improve access to it. Thus, Swauk Ski Bowl was still operating in the early 1950s.

Kirby Gilbert has been to the site of Swauk Ski Bowl, between the old and new Blewett Passes. He found the old tow lines, some sheaves up high in trees, remnants of a hamburger hut, and a few other things from its days of operations. He said the Ski Bowl, which had one rope tow and was mostly volunteer run, had nice terrain.



to be accurate. Groups like the Seattle Jaycees promoted a permanent ski development at Sunrise, rather than a at Cayuse or Tipsoo Lake.<sup>82</sup>

As previously discussed, in 1939, Ski Lifts, Inc .operated a portable rope tow at Lake Tipsoo, Cayuse Pass for racers, and in 1941, the company sought permission from Rainier National Park to move its rope tow from Naches Pass to Tipsoo Lake.

After WW II, the National Park Service authorized the construction of a T-bar in Rainier National Park, from the base of Panorama Point to a ski dormitory that was opened in 1941. However, because of the competition from ski areas that had been developed elsewhere, the Park Company concessionaire was unwilling to make major improvements on Mount Rainier and risk a loss. The company manager said “the Company will not spend another dollar in winter operations.” Given this impasse, skiers used portable rope tows that had been installed at Cayuse Pass in the winter of 1945 - 1946, and at Tipsoo Lake the following winter.<sup>83</sup> It is not clear whether the Park Department installed the tows, or whether Ski Lifts, Inc. installed and operated them as it had before the war.

One article says in 1947, Webb Moffett, Don Adams and Bruce Kehr opened a small ski area at Cayuse Pass, although it is likely they used the Naches Company to run the ski area, not Ski Lifts, Inc. In November 1948, the Tacoma News Tribune reported there was one small tow in operation at Cayuse Pass. The USDA Forest Service Recreation Winter Sports Report for the 1947 - 1948

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<sup>82</sup> Alpenglow Ski History - Town Crier, Proctor, Gordon, *Northwest Ski Guide*, December 1936 (page 6); Alpenglow Ski History - Linda Helleeson, *The History of Skiing in Mt. Rainier National Park*, 1937 - 38.

<sup>83</sup> Alpenglow Ski History - Linda Helleeson, *The History of Skiing in Mt. Rainier National Park*, 1937 - 38, 1946; Alpenglow Ski History - Theodore Catton, *Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park* (page 421).

Season said that Chinook Pass had one rope tow operating,, public toilets and a parking area for 100 cars.<sup>84</sup> In the fall of 1938, Adams and Kehr had set up the rope tow at Stevens Pass, and in 1941, Adams was hired as the general manager of Ski Lifts, Inc.

A book about the history of Mt. Rainier said in the winter of 1946 - 47, the Rainier National Park Company, the private concessionaire for the Park, operated the Paradise ski lodge on weekends and holidays only, and lost \$19,000 for the season. In the winters of 1947 - 48 and 1948 - 49, the company did not offer overnight accommodations but only cafeteria service, and it still lost money. In the fall of 1949, the National Park Service made “hasty arrangements with the Naches Company to operate rope tows and provide limited food service at Tipsoo Lake.” At the end of 1949, the contract of the Rainier National Park Company was extended, with the stipulation that it did not have to provide winter services at Paradise or Longmire, and Paradise ceased to be a winter resort. Through 1952-53, the Park Service closed the road above Narada Falls, and the Paradise road was not reopened until the winter of 1954 - 55.<sup>85</sup>

In the fall of 1949, the Tacoma News Tribune reported that the Rainier National Park Service, the Forest Service and the Washington State Highway Department were cooperating to develop Cayuse Pass as a ski resort. Four rope tows and a ranger and first aid station were completed at Tipsoo Lake, a turnaround and parking area for 350 to 400 cars at Cayuse Pass was

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<sup>84</sup> *Cayuse Ski Area Northwest Champ For Snow Depth*, Northwest Skier, December 4, 1958 (p. 3), *Alpenglow Ski History - Northwest Skier 1958-59*; *Northwest Rated Greatest Ski Country in World*, Tacoma News Tribune, November 3, 1948 (page 42), *Alpenglow Ski History - Tacoma Public Library - Clippings, Washington, Sports, Skiing*; USDA Forest Service Recreation Winter Sports Report for the 1947 - 1948 Season, [http://hyak.net/lost/usda\\_1948.html](http://hyak.net/lost/usda_1948.html)

<sup>85</sup> *Alpenglow Ski History - Theodore Catton, Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park* (page 425); *Alpenglow Ski History - Linda Helleeson, The History of Skiing in Mt. Rainier National Park*, 1946, Late 1940s.

cleared, and work started on a lunch room and first aid station there. "The Cayuse - Tipsoo operation this winter will be on an experimental basis. Additional improvements will not be made unless the area proves itself." An accompanying photo showed Park Superintendent Preston and Don Adams of the Naches Company, which was presumably the operator at the time. Although the National Park Service developed limited facilities at Tipsoo Lake, including a temporary warming hut, first aid station, portable toilets and a ranger's office, "the Tipsoo Lake area did not prove popular with skiers."<sup>86</sup>

The American Ski Annual and Skiing Journal of January 1950, said with the closure of Paradise Valley as a resort, the Park Service had permitted development of the Cayuse Pass - Tipsoo Lake Area. The area had four rope tows "in series," 3,000 feet long which took skiers 1,000 vertical feet, which were installed by the Naches Company headed by Don Adams and Webb Moffett.<sup>87</sup>

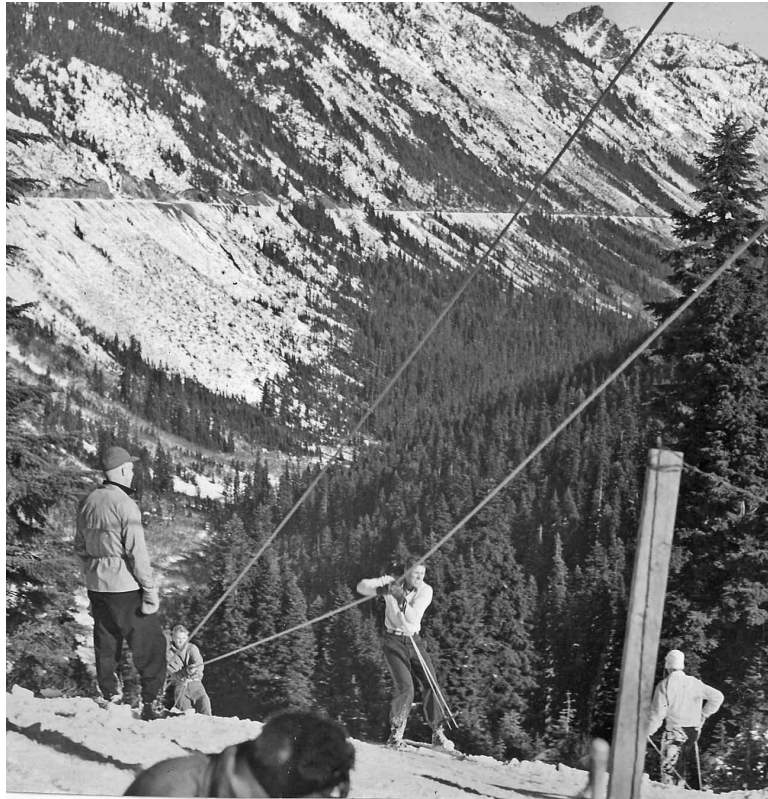
Tipsoo Lake (67 miles SE of Tacoma on U.S. 410) was listed in Shell Oil's 1950 Ski Guide for Washington, and Cayuse Pass was listed in the Washington State Advertising Commission's 1950 1951 *Skiing's Great in Washington State*. The Cayuse Pass ski area was operated as a family venture by Carl and "Mickey" Daniels from 1953 - 1958, providing three rope tows varying from 600 to 1,000 feet in length.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ski Area Previewed*, Tacoma News Tribune, September 29, 1949 (page 4), Alpenglow Ski History - Tacoma Public Library - Clippings, Washington, Sports, Skiing; Alpenglow Ski History - Theodore Catton, *Wonderland: an Administrative History of Mt. Rainier National Park*, (page 421).

<sup>87</sup> McNeil Fred H., *Skiing Activities in the Pacific Northwest*, American Ski Annual and Skiing Journal, January 1950 (page 26), Alpenglow Ski History - American Ski Annual and Skiing Journal January 1950.

<sup>88</sup> Alpenglow Ski History - Tacoma Public Library - Clippings, Washington; *Cayuse Ski Area Northwest Champ For Snow Depth*, Northwest Skier, December 4, 1958 (p. 3),



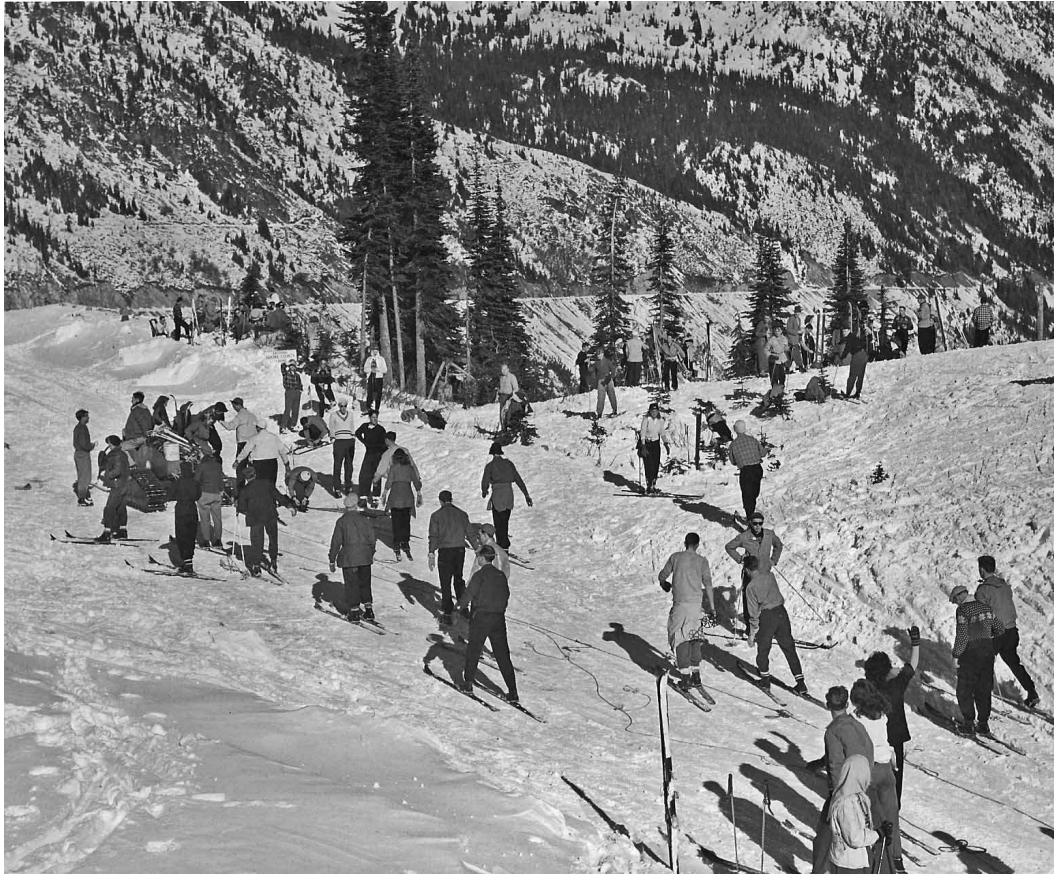
Cayuse Pass, late 1940s, courtesy of Moffett family.



Cayuse Pass, late 1940s, courtesy of the Moffett family.



Cayuse Pass, late 1940s, courtesy of Moffett family.



Cayuse Pass, late 1940s, courtesy of Moffett family.

#### **F. OTHER SNOQUALMIE PASS SKI AREAS OPEN & EXPAND**

For the winter of 1947, 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 Ski Bowl had been enlarged to include 360 acres, doubling or tripling the skiable area, 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. The Milwaukee Road planned to rope off a separate area each Saturday for use by the Times ski School. The need for the Times ski school to begin again to teach the fundamentals of controlled skiing was illustrated by the number of injured skiers cared for by the national Ski Patrol at every local ski area during the

winter of 1946.

The first high-capacity ski lift on Snoqualmie Pass was installed at the Ski Bowl, the Talley-Ho SkiBoggan, for the winter of 1947. 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 could take advantage of 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."<sup>89</sup>

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." Six jumpers were selected to the U.S. Olympic team.<sup>90</sup>

In 1948, Ski Acres opened, located one mile east of the Snoqualmie Summit with the first chair lift on the Pass, largely on private land purchased from the Northern Pacific Land Company. The same year, the Mountaineers built a lodge on land between the Ski Acres and Summit ski areas, to replace the one lost by fire during W. W. II, with volunteer labor from 160 members.

For the 1948 season, the Milwaukee Road improved the Ski Bowl with "an extensive summer

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<sup>89</sup> *Times Ski School to Be Resumed, Milwaukee Will Enlarge Bowl for Next winter*, Seattle Times, April 14, 1946 (page 23); *Ulland Faces Mobraaten on Baker's Slopes*, Seattle Times, April 28, 1946 (page 21); *From the Scorebook, Pass to be Busy Spot This Weekend: Ski Layout Great*, Seattle Times, October 10, 1946 (page 18).

<sup>90</sup> *,6,000 Expected to See Jumps*, Seattle Times, March 22, 1947 (page 6); *Joe Perrault First in Olympic Jump Tests, Committee Names Six Jumpers for 1948 Squad*, Seattle Times, 24, 1947 (page 16).

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 to the winner in honor of the past champion who was killed in the war.<sup>91</sup>

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." Temporary facilities and train cars were used to permit skiing during the winter of 1950, but the Milwaukee Road decided not to rebuild the Ski Bowl at the end of the season. The Milwaukee Road said it could not justify the high cost of rebuilding the lodge and train-shed, estimated to be \$125,000, in spite of an offer from the Seattle Times of financial assistance. The Times was forced to cancel its ski school, which had operated from 1938 - 1942, and from 1947 - 1949, reaching over 20,000 students the fundamentals of controlled skiing.<sup>92</sup>

The Ski Bowl ski area remained unused until 1959, when the Hyak Ski Area was opened.

### **G. SKI LIFTS, INC. ACQUIRES OTHER SKI AREAS**

In 1953, a Poma lift was installed at the Snoqualmie Summit ski area. In 1955, the Summit

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<sup>91</sup> *More Room at Ski Bowl, New Tows Will Reach Additional Area*, Seattle Times, August 16, 1947 (page 23); *Ski Jumpers Go After Torkle Trophy Tomorrow*, Seattle Times, March 6, 1948 (page 6); *Snowstorm Postpones National Ski Jumps*, Seattle Times, March 7, 1948 (page 29).

<sup>92</sup> *Skiing Will Start at Ski Bowl January 7 Despite Burned Lodge*, Seattle Times, December 2, 1949 (page 1); *Milwaukee Bowl Suspends Times Free Ski School Off, & Railroad Finds Reconstruction Not Justifiable*, Seattle Times, September 13, 1950 (page 37).

installed the first double chairlift at Snoqualmie Pass, the Thunderbird, and built a mountain top lodge known as the Thunderbird Lodge. Moffett purchased a 40 acre tract from the Northern Pacific Land Company for the Thunderbird expansion.<sup>93</sup>

In 1980, Ski Lifts, Inc. purchased the Ski Acres area from Ray 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. In 1983, Alpentel was sold to Ski Lifts, Inc.. In 1992, the Hyak ski area was sold out of bankruptcy 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 the ski areas were renamed "The Summit at Snoqualmie," with each area given a new name - Summit West, Summit Central, Summit East and Alpentel 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.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The Seattle Park Board received a letter 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." The writer of the letter suggested that the Park Department make a study of the area.

<sup>94</sup> *The Summit at Snoqualmie* - Wikipedia; *Snoqualmie Pass Ski Area*, [http://ski.loveknow.com/Snoqualmie\\_Pass\\_Ski\\_Area](http://ski.loveknow.com/Snoqualmie_Pass_Ski_Area); *Hyak*, [Hyak.net/history.htm](http://Hyak.net/history.htm).





Lodge at Snoqualmie Summit under construction. Courtesy of the Moffett family.



Webb Moffett. Courtesy of the Moffett family.

## **IX. GARFIELD PARTIES AT THE THUNDERBIRD LODGE AT THE SUMMIT**

The Thunderbird Lodge at the top of the highest peak at the Snoqualmie Summit Ski Area was the site of fabulous parties during the early 1960s for friends of the Moffett family. John Lundin attended parties at the Thunderbird 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.

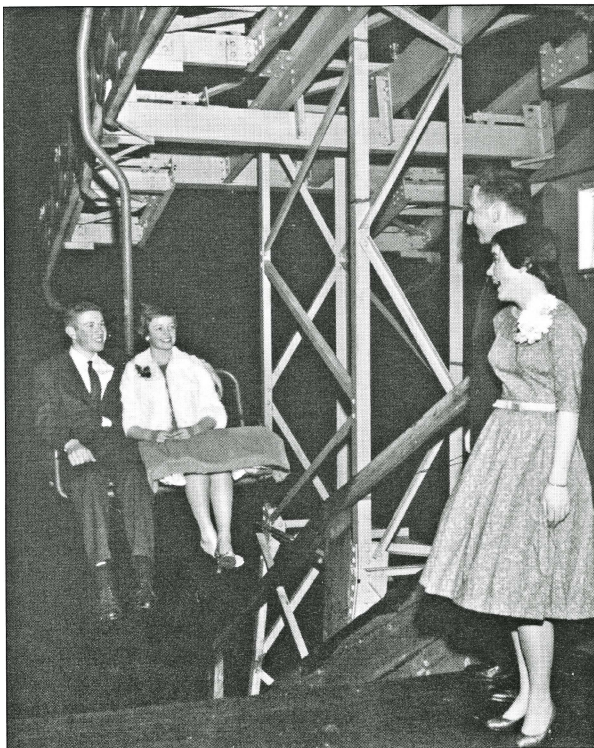
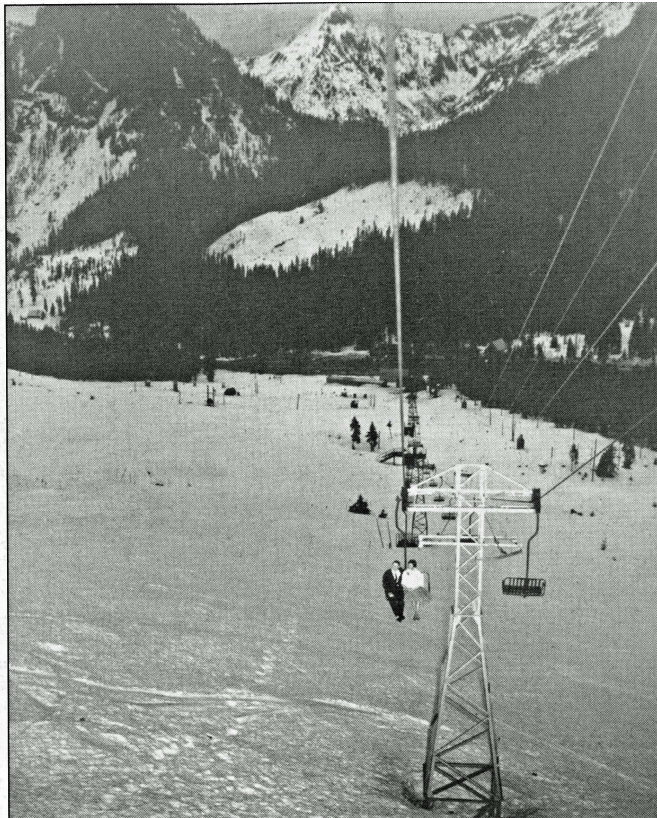
The- scene of this different sort of party was the Thunderbird, the restaurant perched atop the highest hill at the Snoqualmie Pass ski area. It was made possible because the parents of Dave Moffett. a Garfield Senior, are the restaurant's owners. Webb and Virginia Moffett catered the affair, as they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

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.

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.)



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.)





Garfield H.S. party at the Thunderbird, 1960. Photo from Lundin family.



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

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