

Spokane's History of Skiing: 1913 to 2018 Revisions and Additions

Page 11, revised text. That wagon road reverted to a trail after about two miles (approximately one mile into the park from the Day Road gate).

~~where today's Day-Mount Spokane Road continues into the park and Jackson and Bowman Roads split off.~~ Today, the Day Road gradually climbs into the park and junctions with the Kit Carson Loop Road. Cook built a total of ten miles of road, which would have included improving the wagon road and the trail that is now called the Day Road (S-R Sept. 19, 1916). He didn't complete the last three miles to Paradise Camp, on what is now known as the Kit Carson Loop Road, until September of 1916.

Page 12, revised text. ~~It is unknown exactly when Cook built the road from his cabin to the summit, but it must have been between 1912, when he finished his camp, and 1920, when he sold his 320-acre mountain top property to the county for \$32,000 and subsequently died the next month.~~ Cook died of cancer at the age of 69 in 1920 just after selling his 320-acre mountain top property and his road rights-of-way to the county for \$30,000 with funds from the county road and bridge account (S-R May 11, 1920). Using a crew of 13 men and a bulldozer, the county extended Cook's Auto Road the remaining two miles to the summit. Engineers H.S. Baker and W.L. Morgan reached the top by automobile on July 27, 1922. Two weeks later, after it was covered with a dirt surface, the summit road opened to the public (S-R July 28, 1922).

Page 19, new text. Silas Cook, Francis Cook's son, was the first person to record reaching the summit on snowshoes. He and Herbert Alexander left Spokane on Wednesday, January 25, 1911 on the Great Northern Railroad for Colbert Station to start their three-day expedition. Cook reached the summit the next day with his camera, but Alexander had to turn back a quarter mile from the goal due to frozen feet. The weather was perfect, and Cook claimed he could see the Cascade, Rocky, Blue, and Selkirk mountain ranges. (Spokesman-Review, January 28, 1911, page 5, and January 18, 1911, page 5).

Page 20 revision. So instead of Mt. Spokane, the competition and carnival were held at the Wandermere Golf Course in January of 1933. At that time, Wandermere was a year-round recreation resort, offering not only golf, but horseback riding, swimming, diving, boating, fishing, ice skating, dancing, dining, and music. The 700-foot long ski jump was designed by Peter H. Hostmark, a Seattle engineer and president of the Northwest Ski Association. Not being in the mountains, the site was an easy nine-mile drive from Spokane and had parking for over 1000 cars. Unfortunately, the elevation was low and snow had to be moved from the more shaded areas on the property and packed over piles of straw on the jump and the landing area.⁹ Nevertheless, with the economy still in deep depression, people were hungry for low-budget entertainment, and the event was a tremendous success, with about 22,000 spectators. Ineffective crowd management led to the largest traffic jam in Spokane history, and no money was made when thousands were able to enter the gates without paying. There were 38 entries from all around the northwest, but jumping distances were disappointing due to windy conditions. Nordal Kaldahl of Vancouver, British Columbia won on the basis of his excellent form and a jump of 145 feet.

The next club project was to attract the northwest championship jumping tournament for 1934 and bring the jumping hill to Olympic standards. While the lobbying effort was successful, the weather again did not cooperate, and five railroad cars of snow had to be hauled in from Berne, Washington in the Cascade Mountains and transferred to trucks for hauling to the Wandermere site. It was a distance of 223 miles and a cost of \$1,000. The previous year's traffic jam was prevented with the help of the State Highway Patrol making Division Street one-way out before the event and one-way in at the conclusion. The longest jumps were 124 feet, due again to windy conditions.

After two years of tournaments at Wandermere, the ski club decided they had to have a Class A jump at a higher yet accessible elevation. Si Cook, son of Francis Cook, and Spokane Ski Club president George Ingraham, Jr. announced on Feb 4, 1934 that they had found a suitable site for a new jump near the ski club's lodge. They had hoped that the Civilian Conservation Corps would help build it, but that was not to be, and it was another 15 years before that jump was actually built.

Meanwhile, the owners of Wandermere considered ski jumping so successful that they formed the Wandermere Ski Club in 1937, built a ski lodge near the base of the jump hill along with two smaller skiing hills, a 350-foot escalator, and a 400-foot two-track toboggan run. Both toboggans and ashcan lids were available for rent, and skijoring behind horses was also available through a 40 acre field. Giant floodlights made skiing, sledding, and skating all possible after dark, until the start of World War 2 when the ski club disbanded and the resort owners began to focus more on golf.¹⁰

¹⁰ For additional details about winter sports at Wandermere, see *Wandermere: Legacy on the Little Spokane River*, by Ty A. Brown, self-published and printed by Gray Dog Press, Spokane, Washington, 2019, pp. 227-275. Don't miss the old photo of golfers on cross-country skis!

Page 29, corrected text. The first rope tows in western Washington did not open until late 1937 at Mount Rainier and Mount Baker followed by Snoqualmie Pass on January 1, 1938.

Page 36, corrected text. The Selkirk Ski Club, formerly known as the Mount Kit Carson Snow Association, incorporated on June 6, 1936 and changed names on December 30, 1937. ~~The Club built a small lodge on 40 acres, just outside the western edge of the park.~~ The club finalized their purchase of 40 acres of land with a cabin just outside the western edge of the park on October 21, 1937, and as of 1938, there were 69 members.¹ However the Spokane Mountaineers were organizing ski trips to the property as early as January 1936, hosted by the previous owners Carl and Emma Ingram (Kinnikinnick Newsletter 1/19/36).

Page 40, new text. In this aerial photo, the "present" rope tow is within the current Run #3 alignment and the "proposed new lift" is approximately where Chair 6 is today.

Page 60, corrected caption. Loretta and John Simchuck riding the first chairlift.

Page 115, corrected caption. The old bottom terminal was demolished to make room for the new ski school building, not the guest services building.

Page 127, additional text. However, during the 1990-91 season a group of skiers started meeting at the initiation of Allison Cowles. Allison, who died in 2010, was a very independent woman who was driven to get things done. She was an avid skier who loved Mt. Spokane, and according to her daughter Betsy, “she took great joy in knowing that families of all backgrounds could enjoy recreation there.” Today there is a ski run named *Allison’s Way*, because according to her son Stacey, that is what she usually got (Spokesman-Review, April 25, 2010). One day when she encountered a poorly dressed lift operator using foul language, she scolded him and promised to make some changes at the ski area. While taking a ski lesson with Loulou Kneubuhler on his Magic Mountain, she voiced her concerns to him. Shortly thereafter, the two met with her husband (newspaper publisher William Cowles), Ted Stiles, Dave Clack, and Tammy Jensen, and the Mt. Spokane 2000 Study Group was formed.

Page 207, caption correction. 2003 Langlauf poster. Original art by Ric Gendron, used by permission. Correct spelling of artist’s name is Ric on page 206.

Page 246, new text. Add Charles Luttrell and Bob Zeller to acknowledgements.