



Snow Ridge: Through the Years

A NYS Tug Hill Commission Presentation

Speakers



Nancy Grisham

Daughter of
Lawton and
Emily Williams



Bronny Davis & Jerry Britton

Authors of *White Magic: The Story
or Snow Ridge Ski Area*
Longtime Snow Ridge skiers



Tom Smith

Former Snow
Ridge racer and
coach



Nick Mir

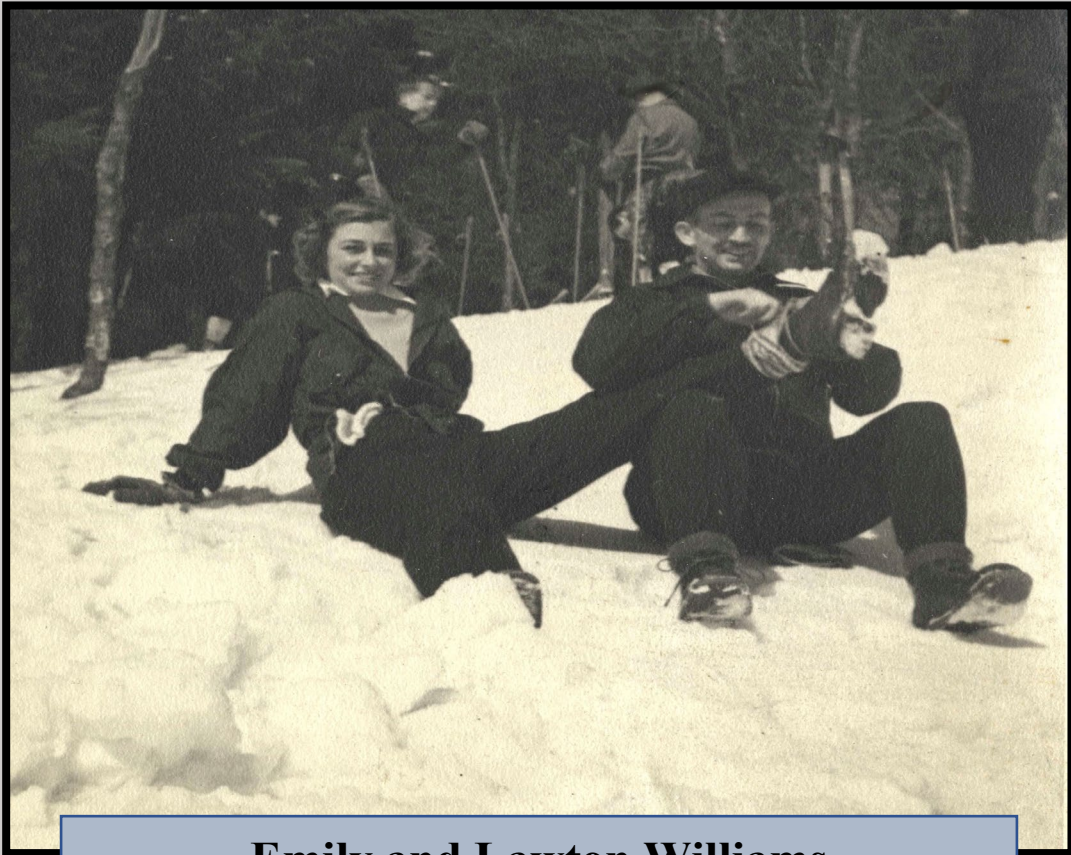
Owner and
General
Manager,
8 years



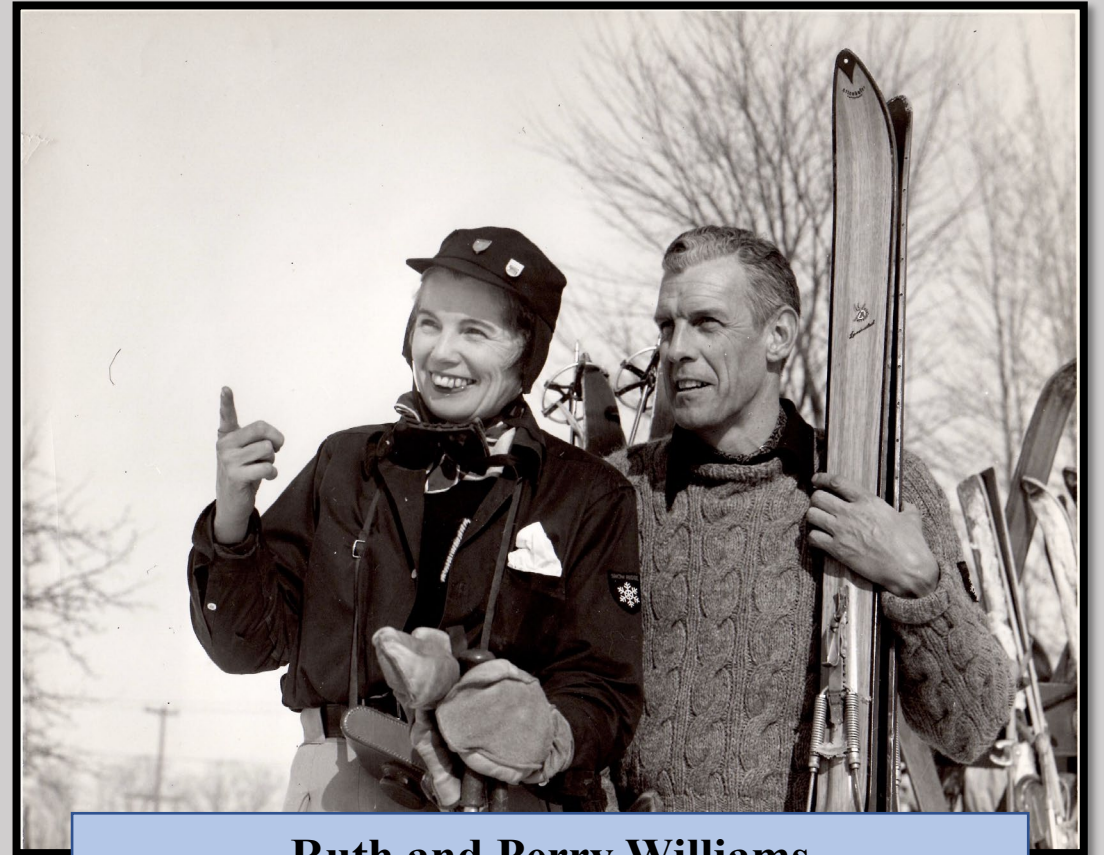
40s and 50s

The “skiing craze” takes hold of two couples from Lewis County.

The Williams Families



Emily and Lawton Williams



Ruth and Perry Williams



Lawt & Perry

The Beginning

- Shared love of skiing
- Climbed everywhere in Lewis and Oneida Counties
- No rope tows, herringbone up the hills
- Wanted a local place to ski, for themselves and friends



Early view of the slopes, 1940s

**The current location was comprised of four
different plots of land from four farmers
(and one farmhouse):**

Platt, Lee, Cruikshank, and Snyder

Equaling over 1,000 acres in the end.

Early Stamp of European Approval

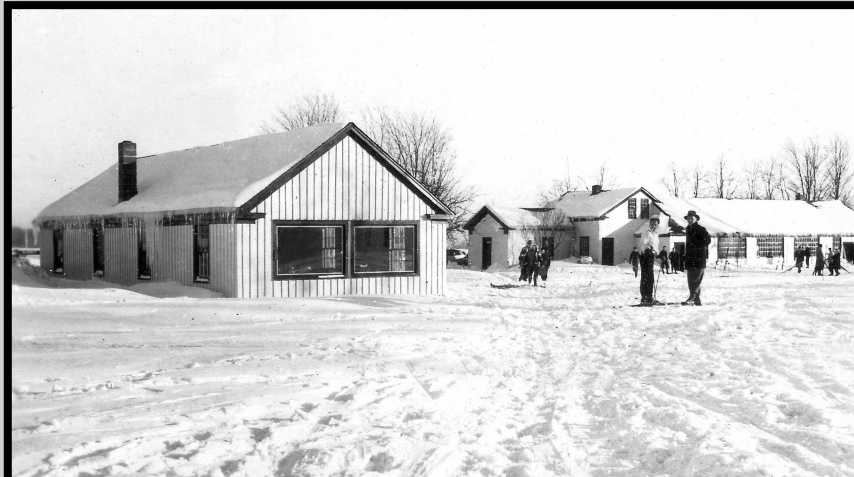
- Herman “Jackrabbit” Johannsen
- Norwegian-Canadian skier
- Was well-known for his trail work in the larger Canadian ski resorts
- Was a guest in Perry and Ruth’s home for a week while scoping the terrain
- Hired by Lawt and Perry to lay the early trail work and suggest positioning of rope tows

The “Jackrabbit” at Snow Ridge



Amenities

- “One-stop shopping”
- Farmhouse transformed into a chalet
- Cafeteria, ski and rental shop, restrooms, and a first aid room

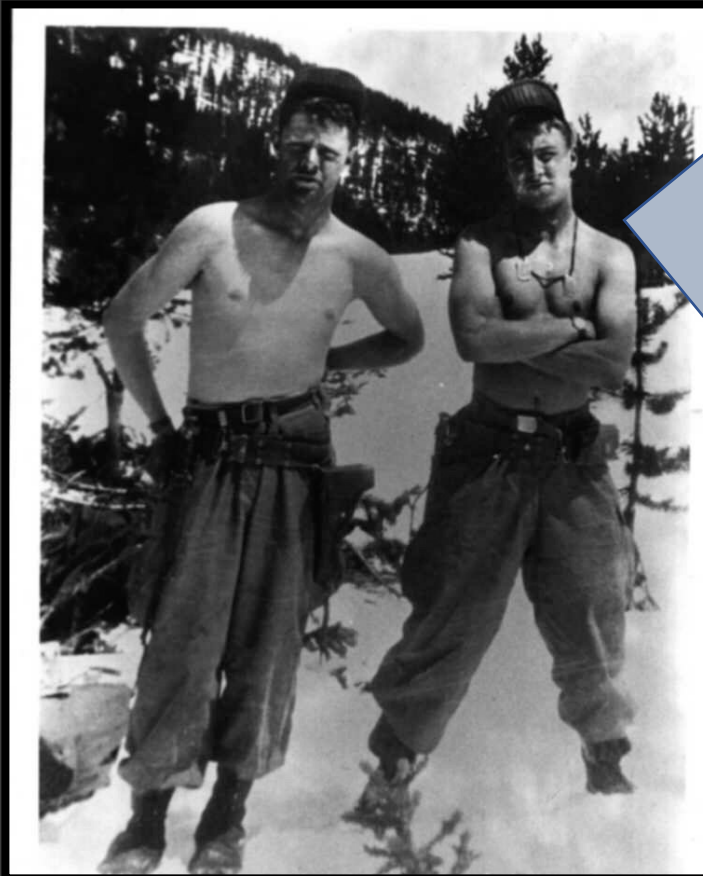




516 - OPEN SLOPE SNOW RIDGE

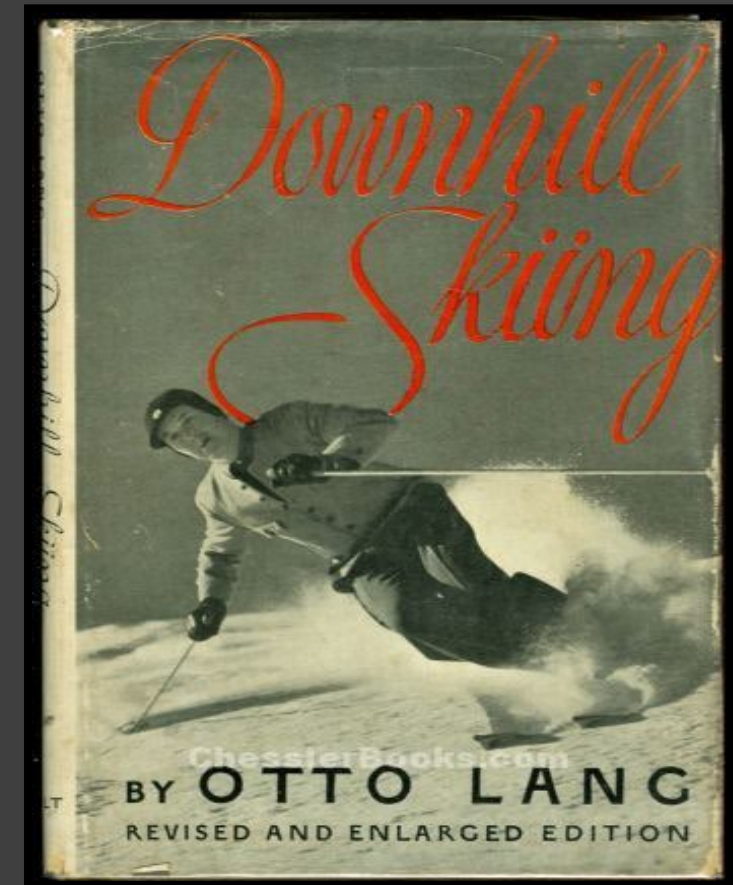
Bill Miller

- 10th Mountain Division
- A friend of Lawt and Perry, taught them to ski down the hills they were climbing



Otto Lang

- Written in 1936
- One of the texts Lawt and Perry used





Wax House

- Big picture windows to see the slopes – a big deal at the time!
- Wood stove to melt wax for skis



10th Mountain Division



Peter Gabriel

- First Ski School Director (1945-1947)
- Alberg versus step turn/stem Christie



Pushes Ski Center For Lewis County

A new winter sports center is to be opened in Lewis County this winter. Lawton Williams of Lyons Falls and Lyman P. Williams of Boonville have organized the Snow Ridge Ski Corp. and are developing an extensive area one-half mile north of Turin on the main state highway. The open slopes will be among the finest in the East and are being advertised as the finest in New York State. There will be, about five miles of trails, restaurant and ski

Newspaper article on Snow Ridge, Nov 1945

Opening Day

- Snow Ridge opened during the Christmas holidays of 1945
- They had two rope tows, powered by tinkered vehicle engines
- Lift ticket prices:
 - \$2 per day, OR
 - \$0.25 per ride

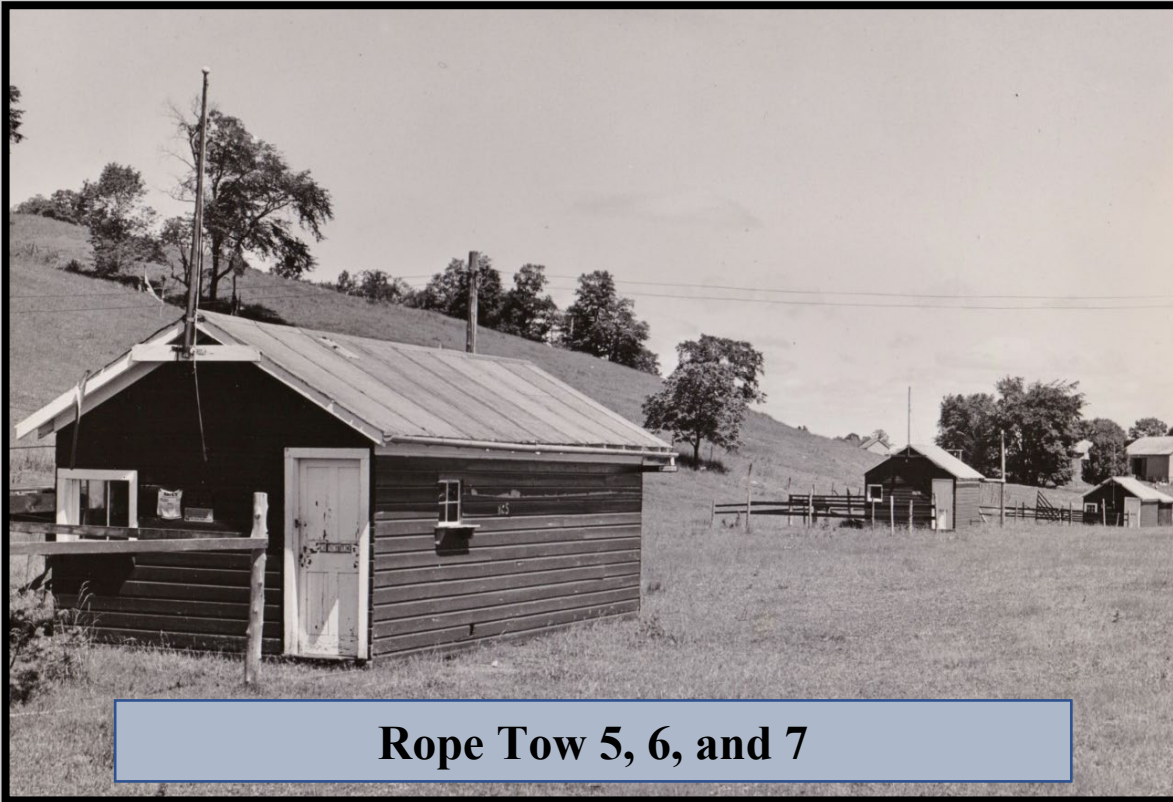


Aerial view of Rope Tows

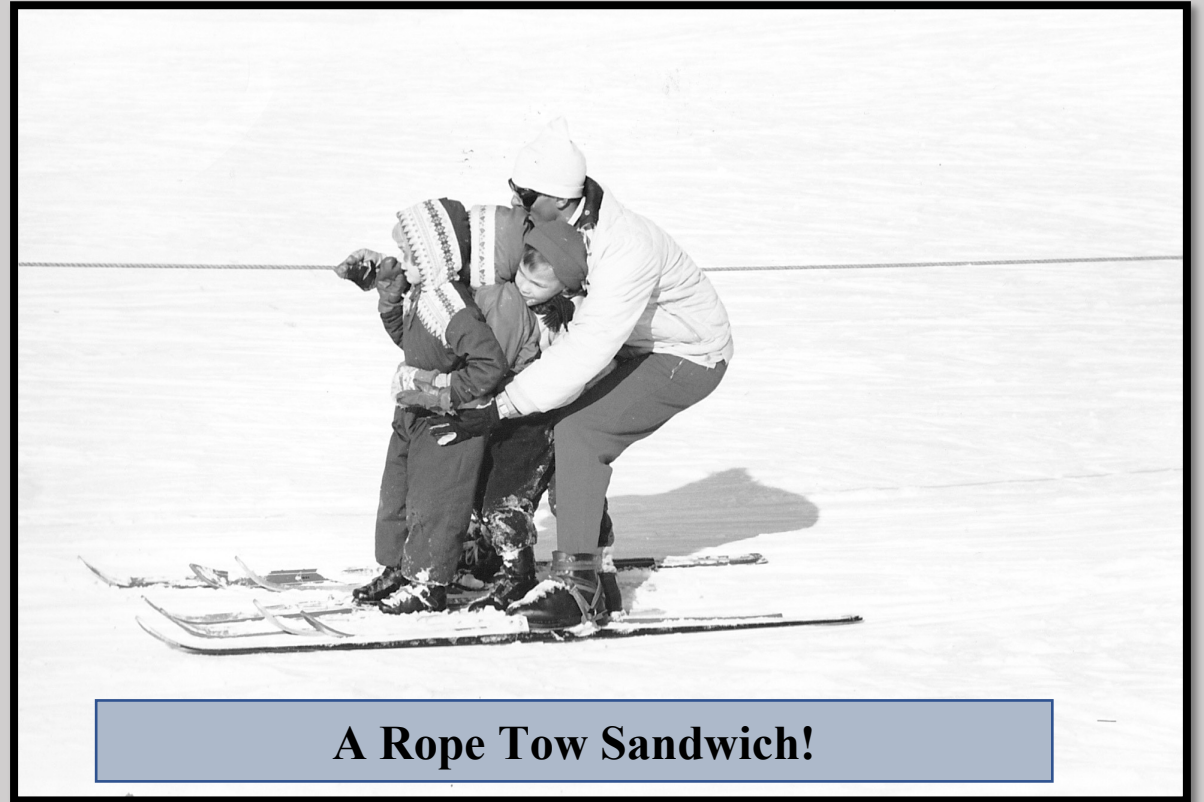


Dogleg facilities

Dogleg (left-handed) Rope Tow, added 1946



Rope Tow 5, 6, and 7



A Rope Tow Sandwich!

Rope Tow Capacity

- By 1953, there were seven rope tows up the slopes at Snow Ridge
- Largest lift capacity in the Eastern United States
- ~8,000 skiers/hour

Initial Poma Construction/Installation

- 1954: first Pomalift sold in the U.S. was installed at Snow Pocket
- Jean Pomagalski – French inventor
- Lift capacity: 825 skiers/hour



Cat. Diesels installing Poma at Snowpocket, 1954



Fully-installed Pomalift, 1954

T-bars & Hall Ski Lift Company



Hall Ski Lift Company Manufacturing Plate



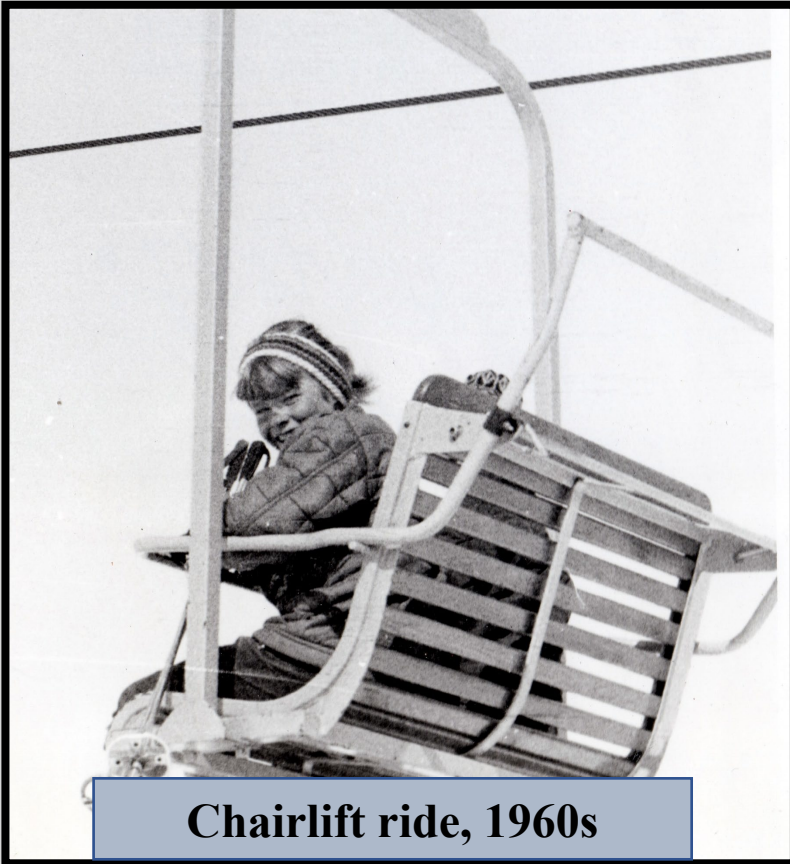
Hall Lift T-Bar Up South Slope, 1955

Poma Relocation

- 1958: Pomalift was relocated from Snow Pocket
 - A T-Bar took its place
- The Pomalift replaced an old rope tow at the beginner's area
- The Pomalift burned down the same year it was moved
- Tickets = \$4/day

Perry riding the relocated Poma, 1958





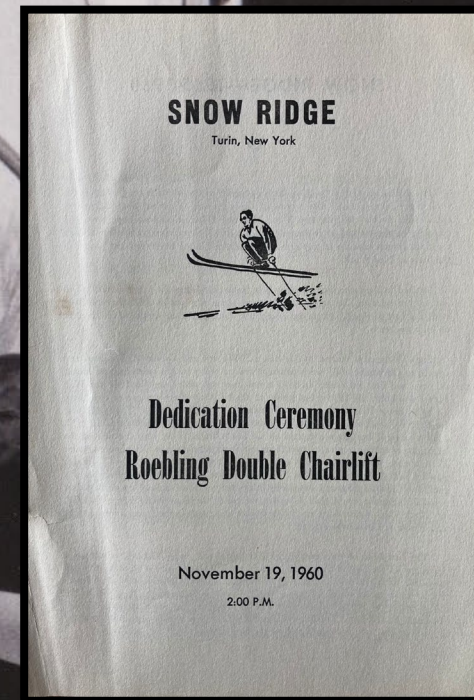
Chairlift ride, 1960s



Construction work on Roebling, 1960

Roebling Chairlift

- New Jersey company
- Double-Chairlift on South Slope
- Required extensive grading and excavation



Roebling ribbon-cutting

- Third largest lift capacity in the Eastern United States
- Fall 1960: Ribbon-cutting ceremony, fancy dress
- Guests invited to ride to the top of North Slope



Owner	Location	Tel.	Rates	Meals Available
Mrs. Phyllis Priest, Mgr.	Turin	2792	\$6.00 & up *	Breakf Din
Jack & Lorraine Lumford	Turin	3537	3.00 & up	Br. & *
Sherm & Arlene Marmon	Turin	3531	2.25 & up	Br. & *
Mrs. Herbert McGee	Turin	3100	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Mrs. Sarah Trube	Turin	2401	2.50 & up	Breakf
Virginia & Jim Burr	Turin	2791	2.00 & up	No Me
Mrs. Frank Higby	Turin	3536	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Mr. & Mrs. Leo Carl	Lyons Falls	3272	2.00 & up	Rest.
Doris & Bud Valasky	Turin	2717	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Wm. & Lawrence Howley	Glenfield	951F4	2.50 pvt.	Meals
			bath	
Mrs. S. S. Sweet	Turin	2475	1.50 Dorm.	No Me
Mr. & Mrs. Morris Burr	Turin	2711	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Mrs. Francis Sliter	Turin	2477	2.00 & up	Breakf
Mrs. Wm. Jackson	Turin	3105	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Brown	Turin	2479	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Mrs. Harjorie Crowley	Constableville	5583	2.00 & up	Breakf
Mrs. Albert Miller	Constableville	5255	2.00 & up	No Me
Mrs. H. J. Barnes	Turin	---	2.00 & up	No Me
Mrs. Godfrey Regetz	Constableville	5367	2.00 & up	Br. & *
Walter Hayes	Turin, Rte. 12-D	3142	2.00 & up	Br. & *



“If you build it, they will come”

Upon opening, Snow Ridge had the snow, the tows, all the amenities and a first-class ski director. All they needed now was people: and come they did.

“During the late 1940s and into the 50s, it is said that lines of cars, bumper to bumper, made their way from the New York State Thursday up the two-lane roads into Tug Hill Country on Friday nights, destination Snow Ridge! John Jay, the famous film maker called Snow Ridge ‘the Western outpost of Eastern Skiing’”

White Magic, p. 15

Cars from Kingston Ontario, Syracuse, Rochester, and even NYC! Hitchhiking, locally, was popular.





The Crossroads

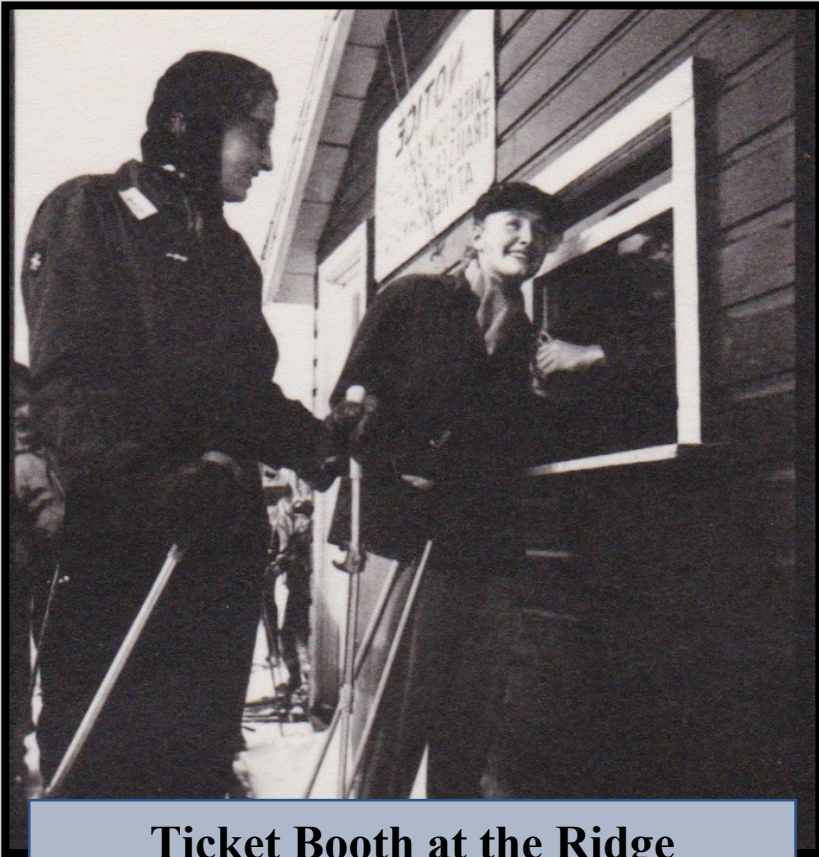
- Lodgings, sometimes in the form of rented-out farmhouse rooms and barns, cropped up
- So did early eateries and entertainment, like The Crossroads (currently the Steak N Brew)



Mary Ann Kelpy

Ambiance

“High on a Mountain Peak” by the Bavarian Yodeling Club



Ticket Booth at the Ridge





Young Skiers at Snow Ridge

- From the beginning, arrangements were made with local schools for a ski program
- Promote lifelong love of the sport

Some Early Standouts



Renie Cox
Port Leyden

NYS Woman's Downhill and Slalom
Champion at 16
U.S. Woman's Olympic Alpine Team



Ken Phelps Jr
Lyons Falls

U.S. Men's Alpine Olympic
Team



Henry Chrzanowski

Qualified for Junior Nationals at
Sugarloaf at 15
Won Oneida Silversmith's 3
years in a row

And more: Redmond "Red" Wilcox, Stanley Evans, and members of the Borden, Cox, Evans, Phelps, Palmer, Britton, Kelly, Harris, Cardamone, Welch, and Bobela families.



All denominations
welcome

- Chapel built by Rudi Kursteiner
- Mural by Burt Green
- Ski directly up to a twenty-minute service
- Organ playing included!



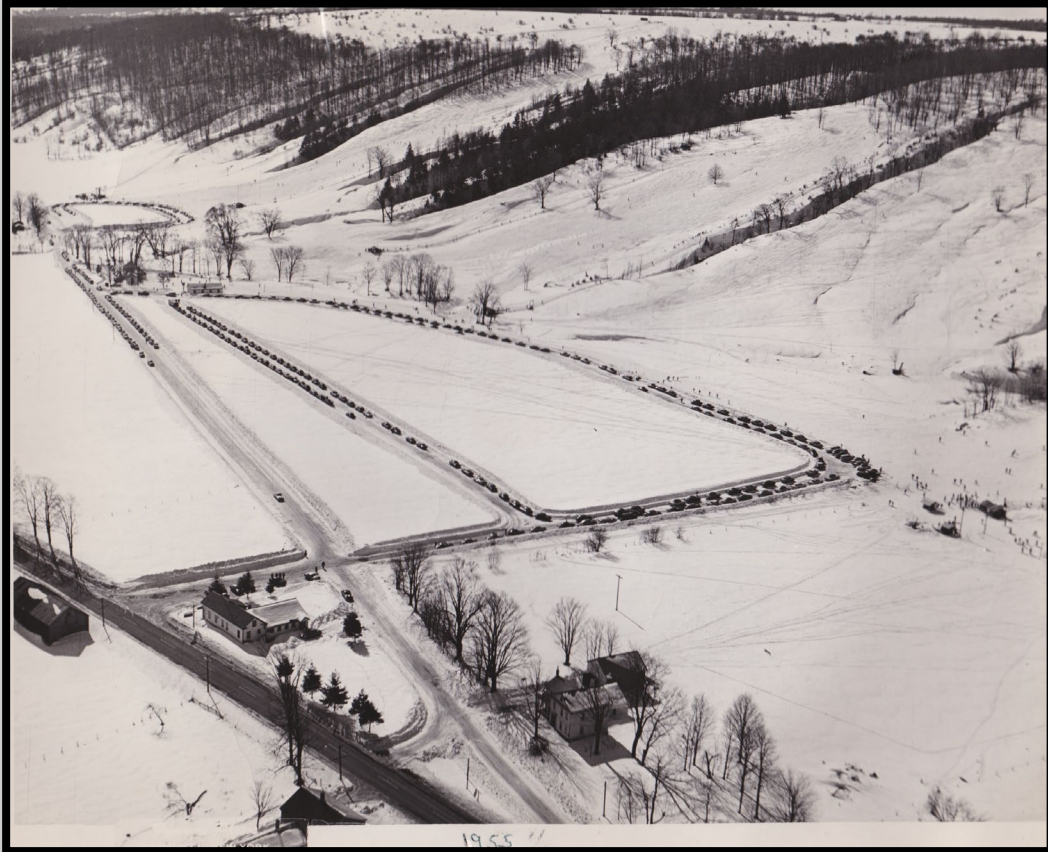
Ski Patrol



60s-70s

An era of elegance

Turin is Booming





Towpath Lodge

One of the many hotspots that emerged to accommodate skiers at the Ridge.

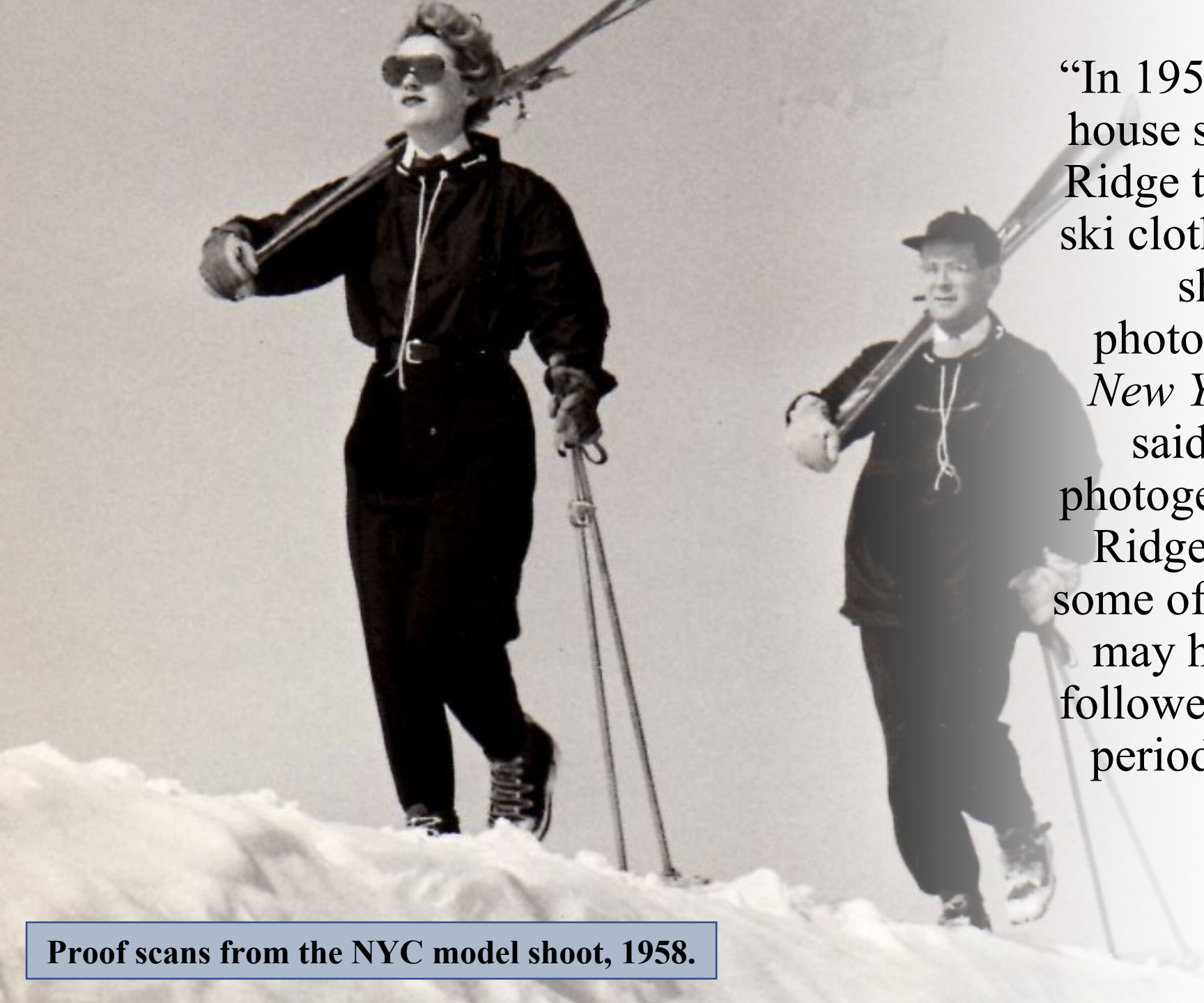


Ruth and Emily Williams

“It wasn’t long before the word spread. The two Williams families did a bang-up job of marketing their enterprise. Both couples were ever-present on the slopes of Snow Ridge and in the chalet après ski chatting with patrons.

Perry, tall athletic, square-jawed with a million dollar smile, was as gregarious as they come... His wife, Ruth, charming and attractive, was always a fashion plate on the slopes. Lawton... a natty dresser, he stood out on the slopes... His lovely wife, Emily, adored by all for her warmth and kindness, was close friends with Emily, and for many years together set the tone of casual elegance that made Snow Ridge a magnet for affluent families from all over upstate New York: Syracuse, Watertown, Rochester, Utica, Rome.”

White Magic, p. 14



“In 1958, a top New York fashion house sent professionals to Snow Ridge to model their latest line of ski clothing on the slopes. Photos, shot by a professional photographer, appeared in *The New York Herald Tribune*. It is said that a few of the more photogenic personages around the Ridge were also invited to don some of the fashionable duds. This may have set the tone for what followed shortly at Snow Ridge, a period I refer to as “The Era of Elegance.”

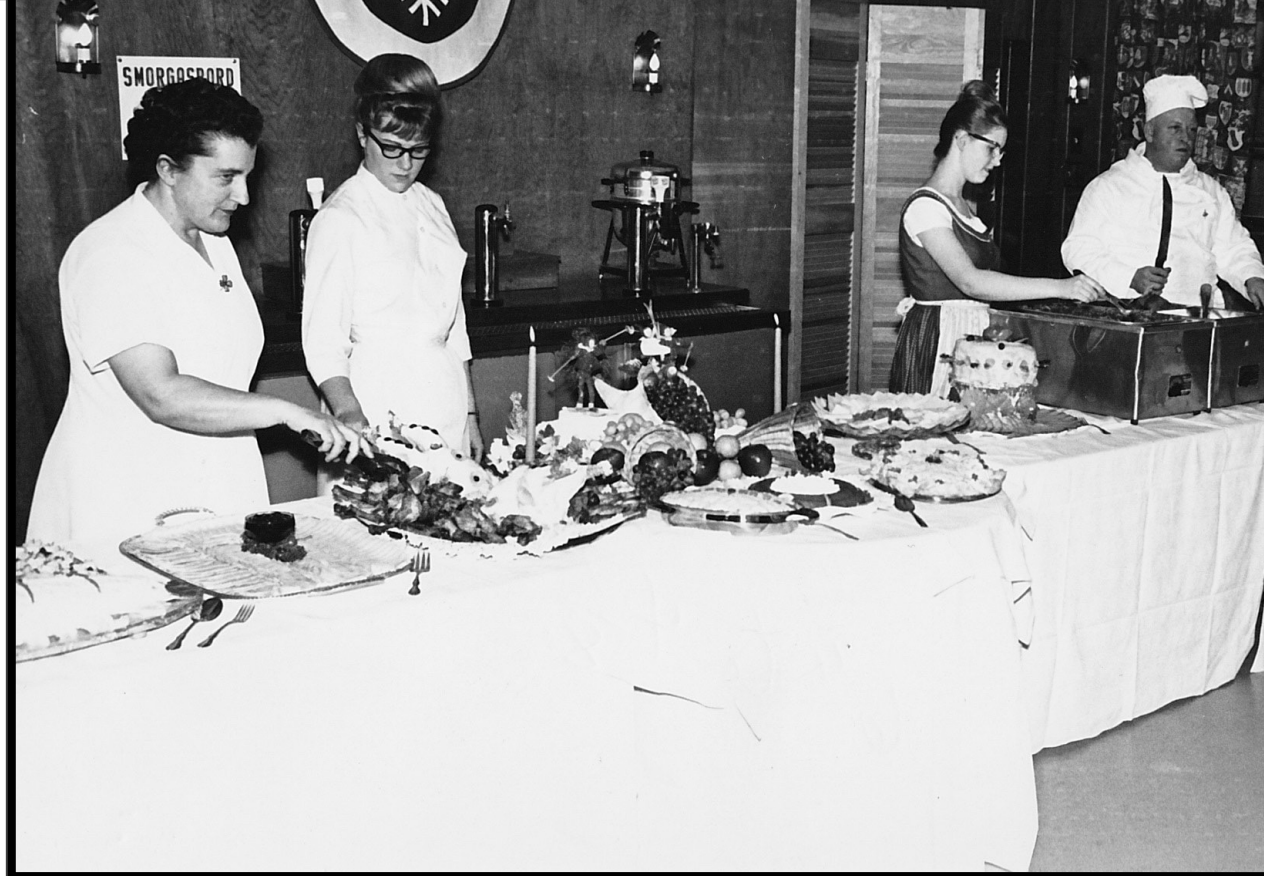
White Magic, p. 102

Proof scans from the NYC model shoot, 1958.



Après Ski

- Live music
- Tea dancing
- Fancy dress
- Dinner parties
- Families hosting
- Cocktail parties



Candlelight

Catered dinners at the Candlelight Restaurant.
The bar was known as the “Mahogany Ridge”

According to Ann Frei, part of the reason women wore long skirts and dresses was to sneak long johns under them!

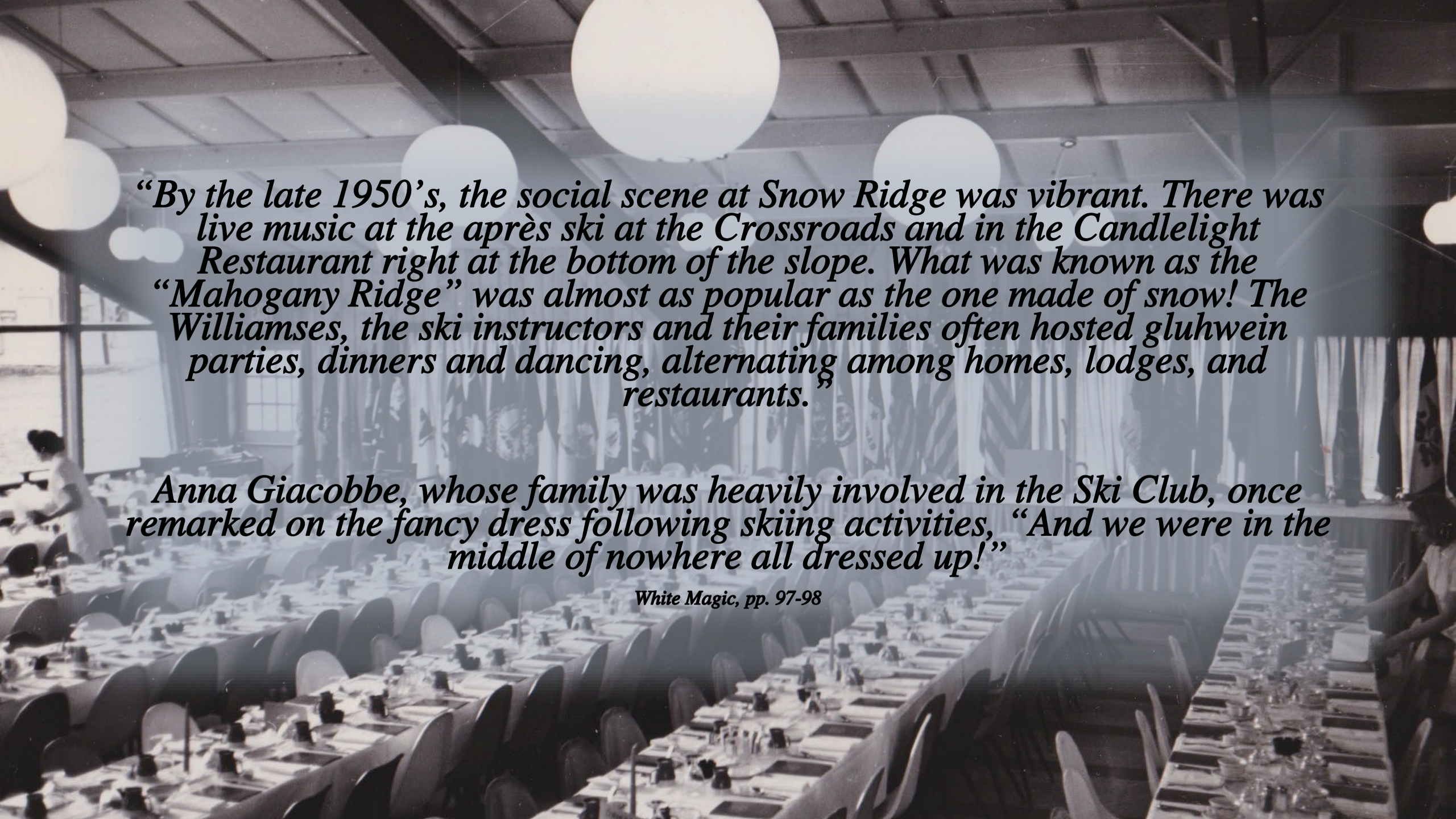


Tailgate Picnics

Snow Ridge, and Turin, had an atmosphere of fun and togetherness, from the very formal events and get-togethers to the very casual.



Cookouts on top of Snowpocket & Watch Pocket
Snack Bar, 1970s



“By the late 1950’s, the social scene at Snow Ridge was vibrant. There was live music at the après ski at the Crossroads and in the Candlelight Restaurant right at the bottom of the slope. What was known as the “Mahogany Ridge” was almost as popular as the one made of snow! The Williamses, the ski instructors and their families often hosted gluhwein parties, dinners and dancing, alternating among homes, lodges, and restaurants.”

Anna Giacobbe, whose family was heavily involved in the Ski Club, once remarked on the fancy dress following skiing activities, “And we were in the middle of nowhere all dressed up!”

White Magic, pp. 97-98



Ski School and Racing



- 151 JUDY HELMSTETTER
- 160 PETER WILLIAMS, LYONS FALLS
- 135 GRIFF HUGHES, PORT LEYDEN
- 166 JERRY HOBART
- 155 DIETTA LILLHOLT
- 153 MARCIA THOMSON
- 156 ROGER HOPKINS, ROCHESTER



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SKI WEEK
 at
SNOW RIDGE
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 Room and board
 (B and D)

all for \$58.95 6 days - 6 nights
 for information write
 Learn to Ski Week • Turin, New York



Dear Snow Ridge:
 Woe is us! Woe is the day
 That Donna took our man away!
 Woe is us! That such as we
 Should see the day that we just ski!
 Now, who will gaze into our eyes
 And whisper big white skiing lies?
 Who will praise our skiing grace
 Even when we're on our face?
 And when we slalom thru the flags
 Who will guide our zigs and zags?
 Who, oh who will calm our nerves
 When we parallel 'round the curves?
 Who will say like Stein we ski
 As we go schussing up a tree?
 Who will thrill our Cross Road's life
 Now that Rudy has a wife?
 Woe is us! We poor lost souls
 We've nothing left but skis and poles!
 Snow Ridge, please, please send our way
 A bachelor like our Rudy K.....!!

LES GIRLS

*From Dick Fischer's Ski News Buffalo, N.Y.

Rudi Kuersteiner: Charismatic, Skilled, and Innovative

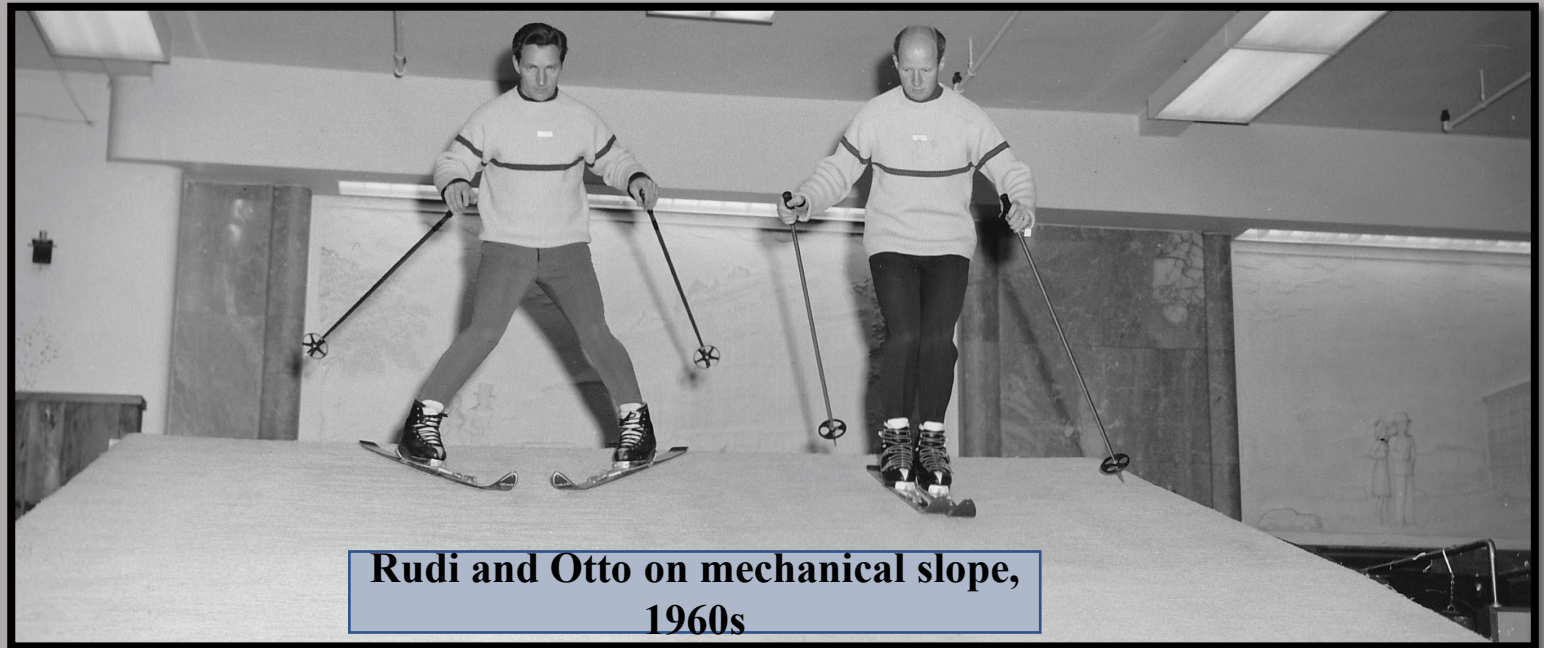


Otto and Ann Frei

Otto Frei: Hardworking,
Ambitious, and a Tough Coach



Rudi touring with the mechanical slope

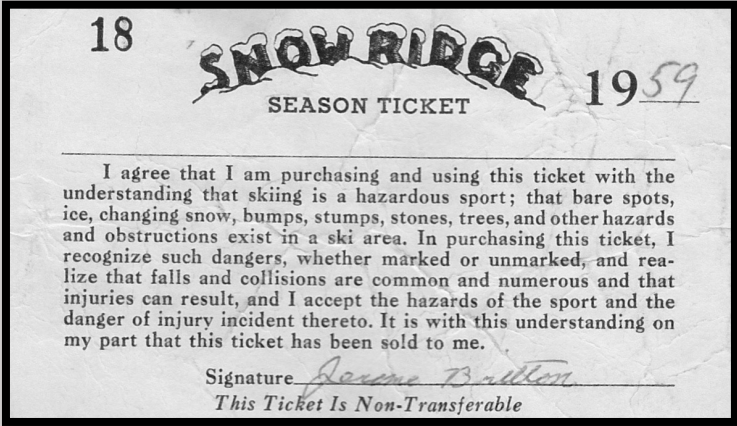


Rudi and Otto on mechanical slope,
1960s

Innovative Promotion



Junior Gibbs, ski instructor

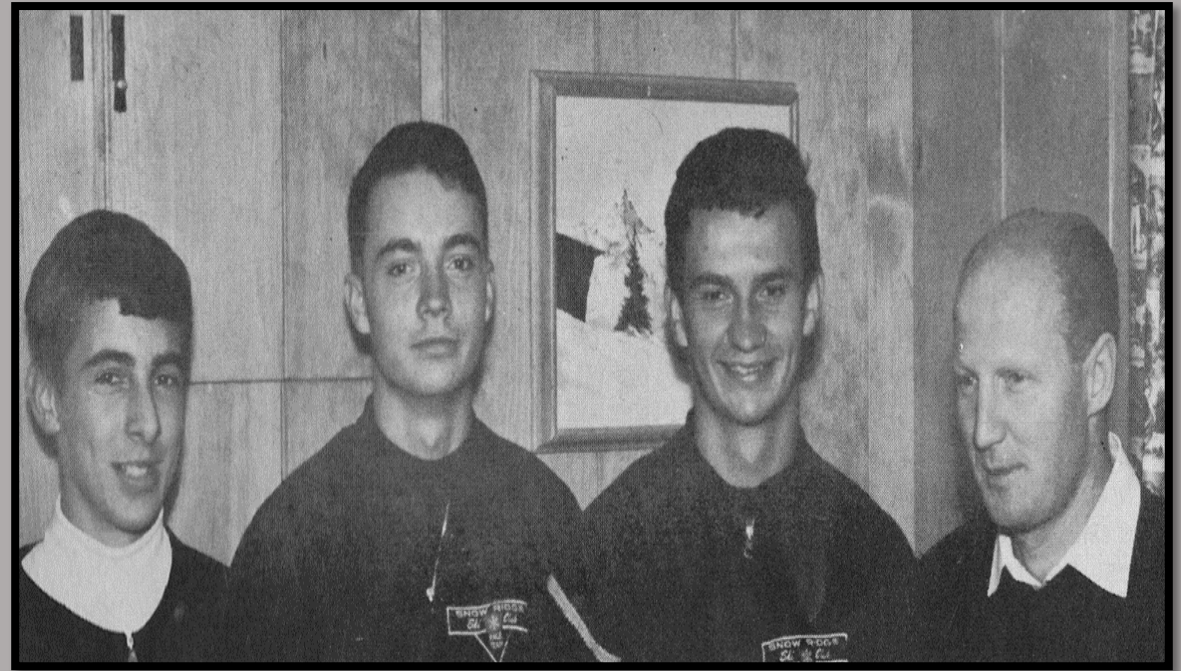
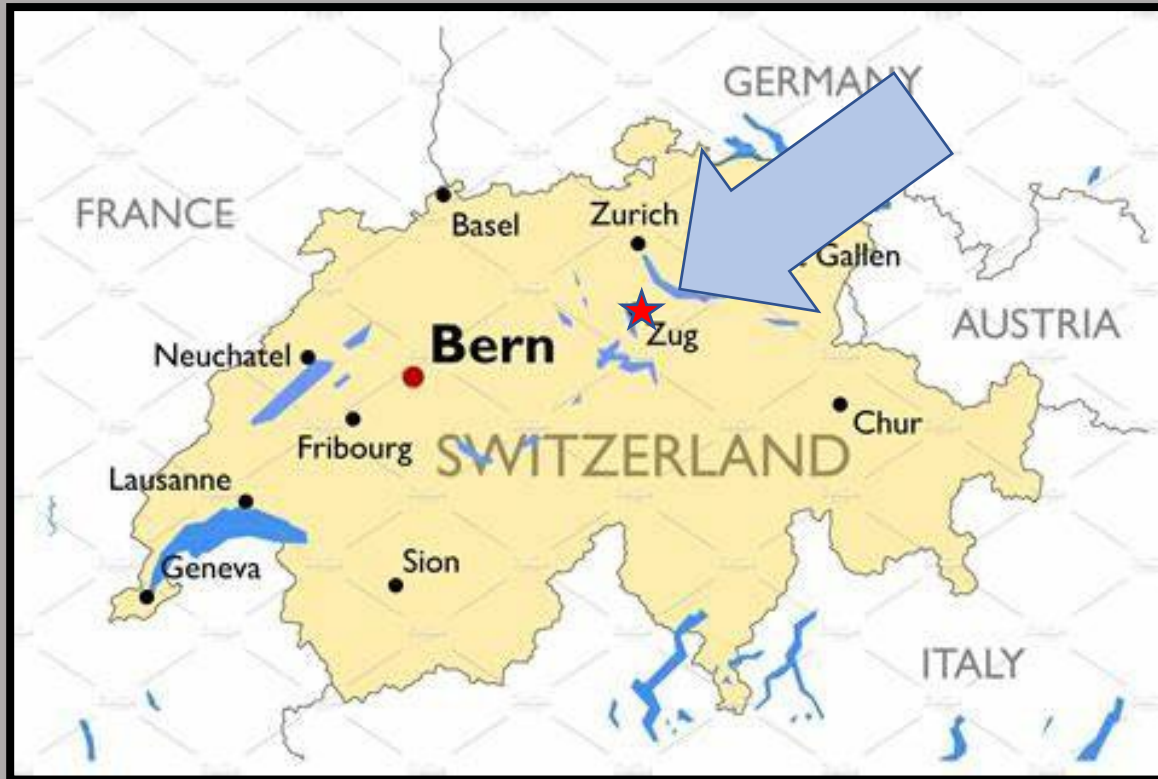


Jerry's Lift Ticket, 1959



Jerry, 1953

Jerry's Story

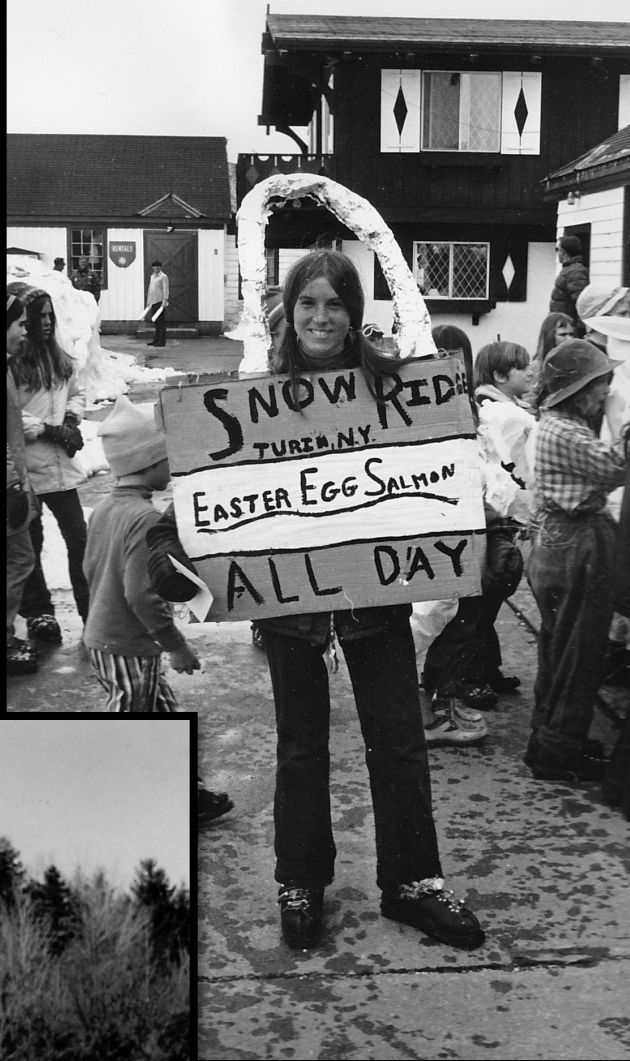


Jerome Britton, Andy Palmer, Foster Palmer, Otto Frei, 1964

Zug, Switzerland



International Trips



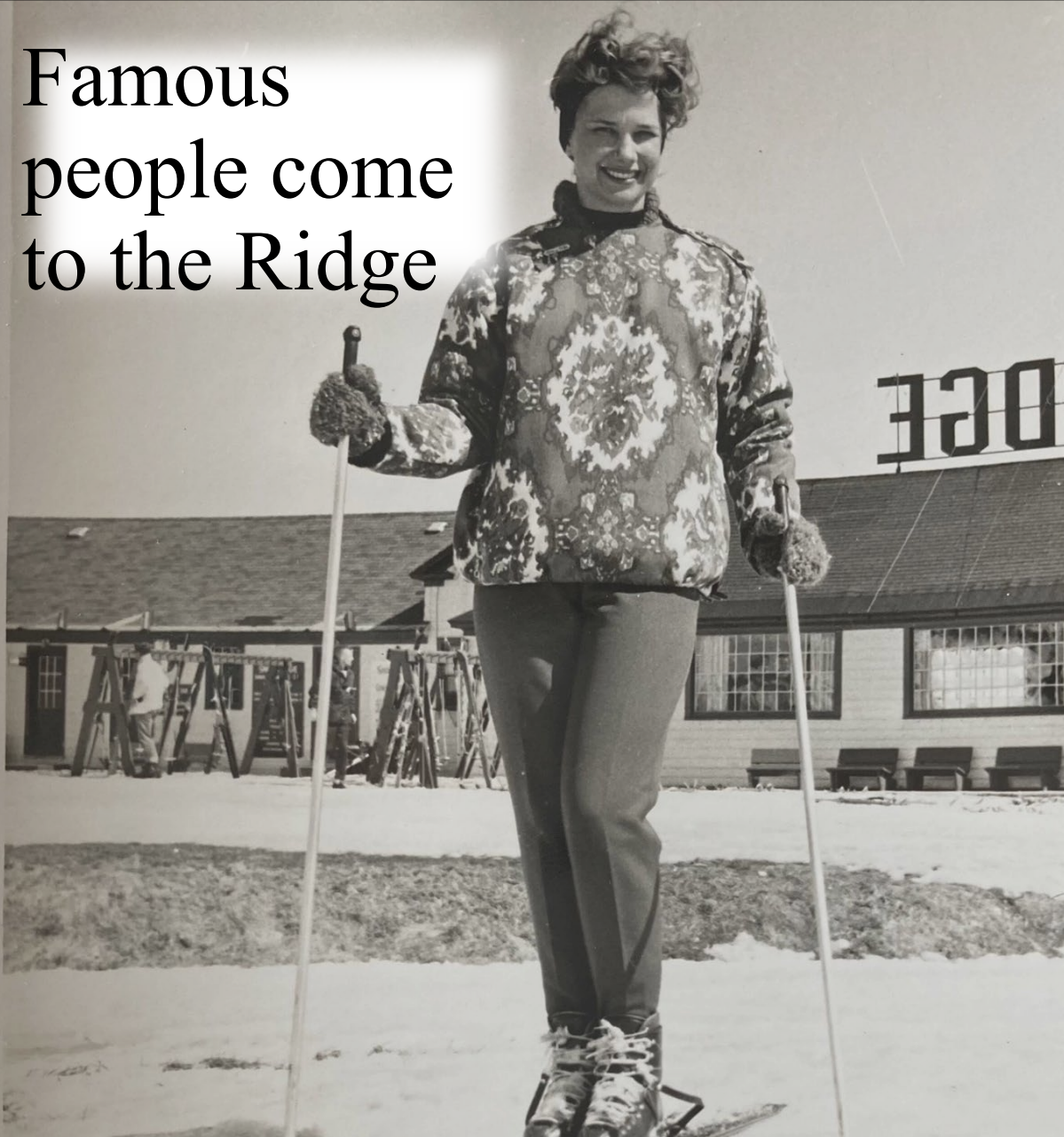
<u>Costume Prize</u>	
First Prize - Nurse - Nick Kusinski	Men
Second Prize - Indian - Ted Gaskell, Cleveland	
<u>Girls</u>	
First Prize - Easter Basket -	
Second Prize - Gypsy - Jeanne Packowski	
<u>Egg Race</u>	
<u>Girls</u>	
First - Ethel Potter	34.00
<u>Men</u>	
First - Sam Reeder	
<u>Special Racing Prize</u>	
- The Horse	
<u>Obstacle Race</u>	

Events

- Easter Slalom
- Art Shows
- Fireworks
- Themed races
- Picnics

Photos from the Easter Slalom

Famous
people come
to the Ridge



Miss New York State, Kathryn T. Moden of Buffalo, 1961



A model from the NYC fashion house, 1958



Buffalo Bills Quarterback, Jack Kemp (left)

Before taking off for world ski congress at Bad Gastein, Austria, Rudi Kuers-teiner, Snow Ridge ski school director receives best wishes from Jack Kemp, Buffalo Bills star quarterback. Photo taken at Snow Ridge, Turin, N.Y.

Jack Kemp



(L to R) Renie Cox, Billy Orcutt, and Gov. Averill Harriman



Famous people come to
the Ridge

Deputy Mayor of Torino



An aerial photograph of a snowy ski slope. At the top of the slope, a blue sign with white and yellow text reads "Welcome to the 70th Celebration! Snow Ridge". The slope is flanked by dense evergreen trees. At the base of the slope, there is a model village with several small red houses with black roofs and a larger white house with a black roof. A ski lift track runs along the left side of the slope. A few skiers are visible on the slope.

80s-Present

Moving into the modern day



The Smiths

- Moved in the 50s,
- Started skiing in the 60s,
- Permanent home in '77

MANNA FROM HEAVEN — James W. Smith, general manager at Snow Ridge Ski Area in Turin, had good reason to smile as snow fell Tuesday mor-

ning. If the early storm is an omen of the winter to come, Snow Ridge could be in a for a good year after losing the holiday trade last season. Smith hopes to

open to skiers by the Friday after Thanksgiving. (Sentinel photos by John Golden)



P.T. Noyes presenting trophy to Stanley Evans

Racing and the Oneida Silversmiths



Four Snow Ridge skiers competed in the 7th annual NASTAR Championships at Steamboat - Resort at Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The finals were held at the Colorado resort last weekend. Joyce Ingalls, 50, of Turin, N.Y. (above) won the third place Schlitz Bronze Cup in the 50 and over division. With her is Billy Kidd (left) the only American ever to win a



Charlene Levitt Hinman, 1977



Andrea Arms, 1977



1977 NASTAR Finalists

NASTAR

Five Snow Ridge skiers qualified for NASTAR amateur racing program in Keystone, Colorado (1977):

Herb Magee, Paul Karaz, Charlene Baxa (nee Levitt Hinman), and Andrea Arms Rudnick. That may have been the largest group of skiers from a single ski area at the finals.



Herb McGee, Camden and Nate Owens, Turin, on the way to the lift to try grass skiing.

Grass Skiing

Grass skiing was one of the most popular events for spectators and participants alike at the 2nd annual Oktoberfest held at Snow Ridge Ski Area on Sunday, Oct. 1. "Dike" Chapman from Song Mt. was on hand for a demonstration and to advise new skiers. Chapman says, "Snow Ridge is a perfect place for grass skiing because of the chair-lift on the gentle slopes and the thick stand of grass with no rocks."

Snow Ridge has bought 24 pairs of grass skis and will rent them by the hour on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

until the snow flies, weather permitting. Says Jim Smith, Manager of Snow Ridge, "Judging from the interest shown in grass skiing at the Oktoberfest it looks like we should have purchased twice as many skis. Grass skiing is a terrific way for nonskiers to start snow skiing and it's also a great way for snow skiers to keep in shape and polish their technique. Anyone wishing to try this exciting sport should bring his own ski boots and poles."

For more information call (315) 348-8456 or write Snow Ridge, Turin, N.Y. 13473.



Grass Skiing and Free-style Skiing



Korean Olympic Ski Team days at Snow Ridge prior to Olympics to train on Snow covered slopes and the team consisted of 1 alpine skier, 3 cross country skiers,

alpine coach Joe Sik Hoe, and cross country trainer Chun Ki Kim. Of Snow Ridge, the athletes said that the skiing was good and Snow Ridge had the most natural snow they've ever seen.

1980s Olympics & Korean Ski Team

Korean Ski Team



The Concert That Never Was....

In 1980, Snow Ridge was contacted by Columbia, Polygram, and Casablanca Records to host a concert that would turn into a film, with artists like Neil Young, Rod Stewart, The Eagles, and Bob Seger lined up to play...

Will Turin Have Music Festival?

by Sue Ulrich

Turin and Snow Ridge may host a music festival and the filming of that festival for an internationally syndicated movie.

Three companies, with a project budget of \$7 million, have proposed the idea to Snow Ridge ski area and the Town of Turin. Involved are Columbia Records, Casablanca Films, of Hollywood, Calif., and Polygram Corp. of England.

Groups available for the festival and film include Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Rod Stewart, The Eagles, Bob Seger, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Joe Cocker and the Charlie Daniels Band.

The idea was proposed to the Town of Turin Planning Board at the May 1 meeting by Jim Smith of Snow Ridge.

He said the companies have selected the area because of its beauty and declared it would "be the best thing ever to happen in tourism in Lewis County."

He said record album covers as well as the film to be distributed world-wide, would promote the area, and encourage tourists to visit here.

He said \$3 to \$4 million would be spent under the project even before the day of the concert.

The companies have offered \$300,000 to the Town of Turin, \$250,000 to Snow Ridge and would post a \$100,000 cleanup bond. In addition, Smith said the corporation would provide proper sanitation, crowd control and highway usage.

Crowd control would be provided by National Events Service which also works with Dick Clark Productions, and the Buffalo Bills football team.

In addition, Smith said the group would set up its own hospital with 75 doctors and 500 nurses.

before Labor Day. One hundred thousand tickets would be sold.

Smith said, "People are saying Snow Ridge wants to host a rock concert. That is not it at all. I was approached by a corporation that chose Lewis County for its scenic beauty."

Tom Bodden, coordinator of community participation for the Tug Hill Commission, said the process for obtaining needed permits is very lengthy and "it is probably a dead issue for this year."

He said although the proposal was presented to the local government, it is not a local issue since the town is not zoned.

He said the Town of Clayton had a similar situation, but it is zoned so they were able to kill the proposal on a local level.

As it happened, the planning board was finishing preliminary work on a town plan when the idea was proposed.

The question is to be decided by Lewis County, according to Bodden. He said about 10 years ago, a county local law was passed limiting gatherings to 10,000 persons unless a special permit is issued. The law was passed in response to planned activity in Harrisville, he said.

He said if it were not for the county law, the problem would be further removed from local control and would be referred to the state level.

Smith said it is not up to him, but the corporations, to file for the needed county permit. Before that is done however, he will attempt to get a letter from the Town of Turin stating that it will not change its zoning to exclude the event if a permit is issued.

If the letter is obtained, he said the corporation will file for the permit and also apply to the State Health Department for approval of the

What does it all mean? Probably that the county has enough laws at its disposal to severely retard the progress of any festival happening this summer. Nevertheless, the county officials must step lightly and also abide by the laws themselves. Timing is important and failure to comply with the laws by the county could open the way for a class action by the organizers of grievous individuals and involve the county in a law suit over the matter.

In the meantime, the residents of the Lyons Falls - Turin area were polling themselves this weekend feeling out their own reactions to the proposal. A sign was erected in the Brick Block Inn on Main Street in Turin asking for anyone interested in having the festival in Turin to please sign. Pattie Kelly, owner of the inn, said that about 90 persons had signed. She said that not all the names belonged to young people and that many customers who dined at the Inn on Mother's Day indicated that they would be interested in having the festival in Turin.

Harold Wiley, principal of the South Lewis Central School said that he had not heard of anyone who was for the event.

Cleon Galarneau, county legislator from the area, and Turin Supervisor Lyle Wiedrick were both reported to be against having the festival there.

Several residents contacted said that they would like to investigate the proposition further.

It is expected that the festival will be discussed at the next Town of Turin Board meeting set for Monday night, May 19. The meeting is being held a week earlier than usual due to Memorial Day observance falling the following week. Meeting at the same time in Turin will be the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has set the festival as their main issue for

At one point a member of the audience asked that the question be put to a referendum and let the people decide once and for all. This suggestion was followed by applause.

Mr. Lamanto said that Snow Ridge wasn't the only site under consideration and that at least two others might be available. He said that they might decide on one as early as Wednesday of this week.

One woman in the crowd pressed for assurances from the promoters' attorney that the local farms and towns would not be damaged in any way. Mr. Lamanto said that somewhere there has got to be faith between the people and the promoters.

A young man in the audience said that he had attended the town board meeting first. He said that he overheard someone in the crowd saying that they would come to the chamber meeting but it would be all lies. "You weren't going to be believed even before you came," the man said.

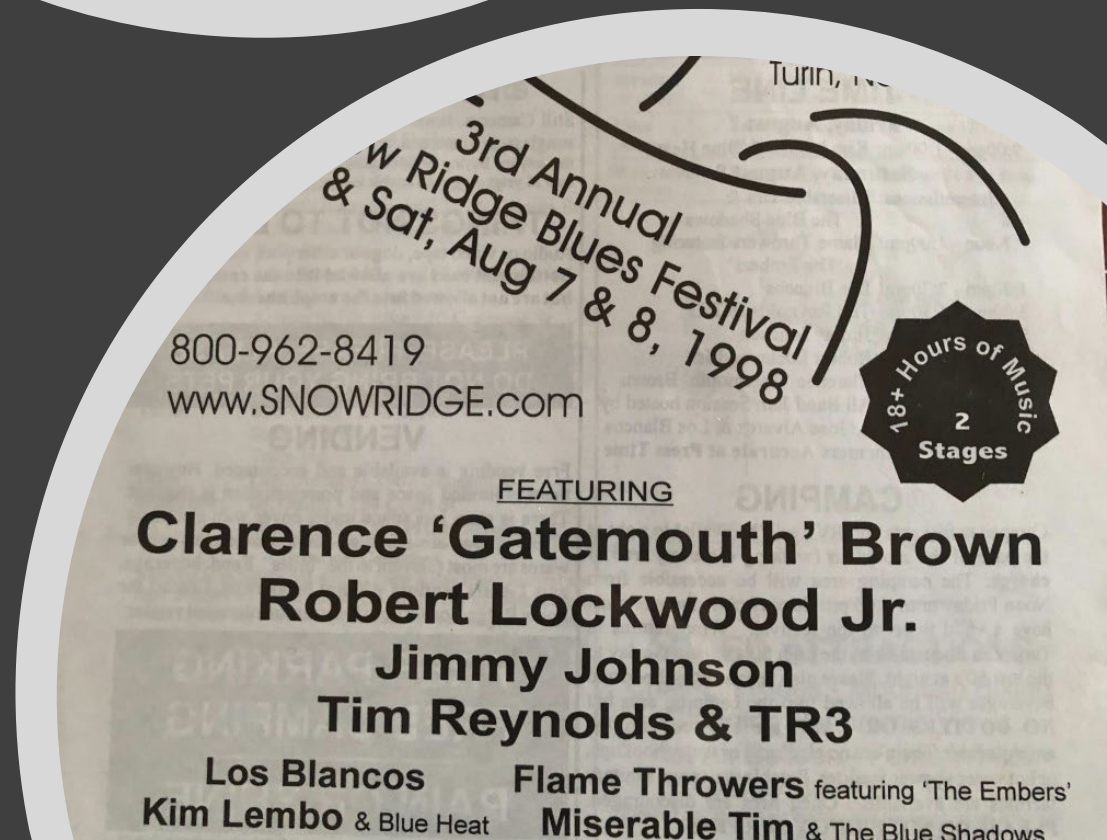
"Then goodbye!" said Mr. Lamanto. And with that the meeting ended abruptly.

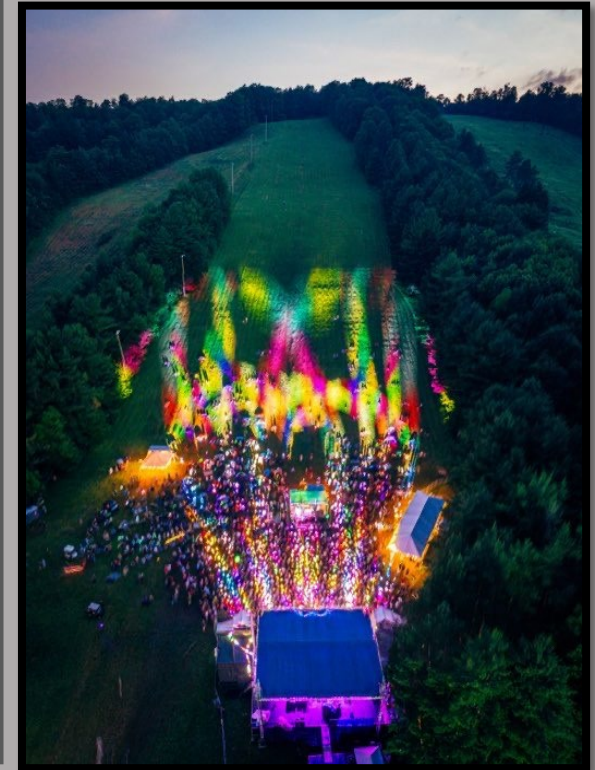
Asked later if he would still seek a permit to hold the festival, Mr. Lamanto indicated that he would not.

The Chamber meeting which had begun about 7:30 lasted until 9:30. At the close, James Scanlon, chamber president, repeated that the chamber was not taking stand on the issue but had put the festival on their agenda in order to better understand the issue.

Music – 90s

- An ongoing musical tradition at Snow Ridge
- Blues
 - Son Seals
 - Robert Lockwood Jr
 - Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown
- Country
 - Toby Keith
 - Brad Paisley
 - Mark Chesnut
 - Joe Diffie





MOE.down

An ongoing three-day festival hosted by MOE for seventeen years.



Special Olympics

Nick – what's
happening now?



Technology Changes

- Night skiing
- Snowmaking
- Grooming
- New winter sports and activities (tubing, snowmobiling, etc)



Snowmaking

- In the early years, formal grooming was unheard of and snowmaking was exclusively done by the elements
- If snow needed moving around in the 40s, snow had to be moved by vehicle, and local youngsters were offered free lift tickets in exchange for packing the slopes by foot
- Snowmaking was first installed at Snow Ridge in 1993
- Today, Snow Ridge has:
 - 5 state of the art fan guns
 - 2 air and water sticks



Grooming



Tundra Snowcat, early years



Modern Grooming Apparatus

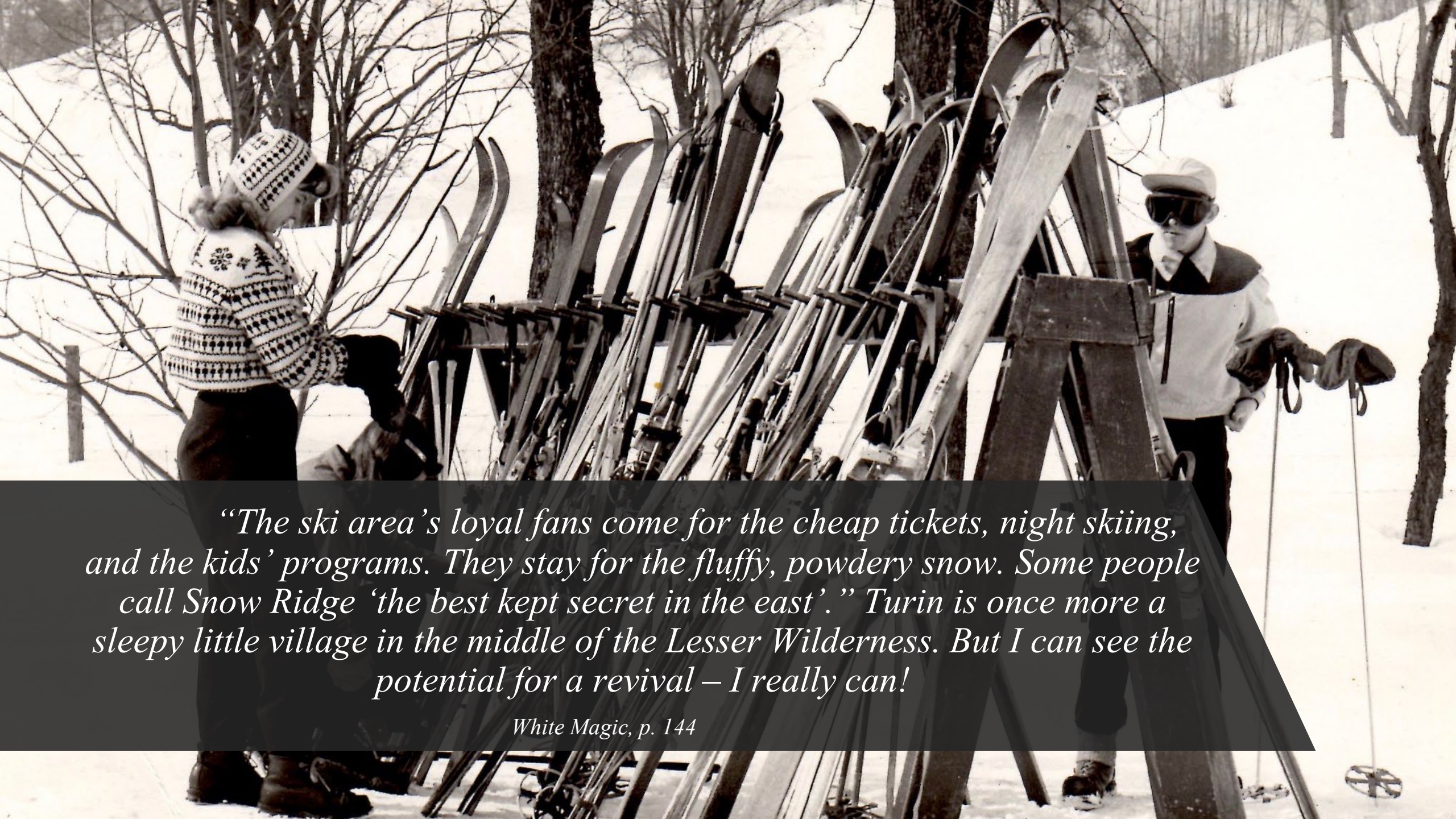


Year-Round Resort and Events





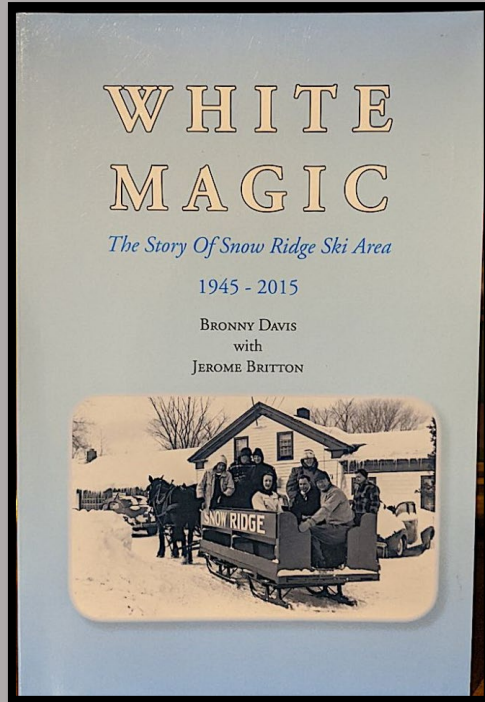
Trail Expansion



“The ski area’s loyal fans come for the cheap tickets, night skiing, and the kids’ programs. They stay for the fluffy, powdery snow. Some people call Snow Ridge ‘the best kept secret in the east’.” Turin is once more a sleepy little village in the middle of the Lesser Wilderness. But I can see the potential for a revival – I really can!

White Magic, p. 144

Acknowledgements



*White Magic: The Story of Snow
Ridge Ski Area*

Bronny Davis with Jerome Britton



Photos

Snow Ridge Archives

& Tom Smith



Cookout and NASTAR
Photos

David Hinman

Books are available on location today!



Questions?