

RE-CREATION THROUGH RECREATION: ASPEN SKIING FROM 1870 TO 1970

by Anne Gilbert

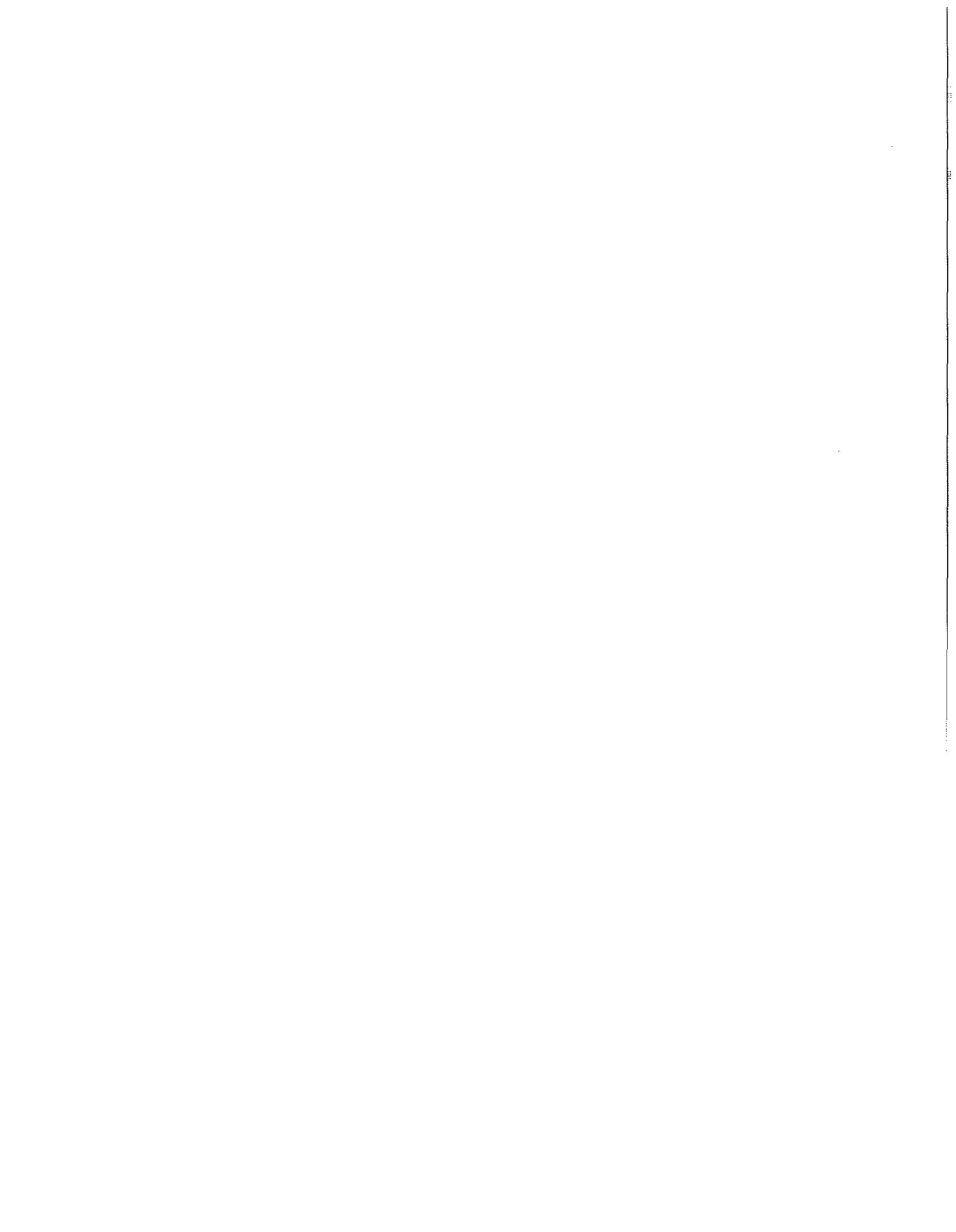
For the Aspen Historical Society

Under the Auspices of the Roaring Fork Research Fellowship

Sponsored by Ruth Whyte

May, 1995

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## INTRODUCTION

Colorado holds a place of honor in the ski world. The Rocky Mountain scenery and climate attract millions of people to Colorado every year, and 1994 Ski magazine readers ranked three Colorado areas as the best ski areas in North America.<sup>1</sup> One-fifth of the nation's 55 million skier-visits were in Colorado that year, and the state's economy, accordingly, has come to depend on skiing and the ski industry. As of 1994, the ski industry brought \$2.5 billion a year in direct and indirect revenue to Colorado, and in Colorado towns west of the continental divide, skiing accounted for one in every three jobs.<sup>2</sup>

This description of the modern ski industry is really another way of saying that people love to ski, and they love to ski in Colorado. There is something about the sport of skiing that draws them in spite of high prices, cold weather, ungainly crowds, and the risk of injury. John Litchfield, a skier since the 1930s, 10th Mountain Division veteran, and co-founder of the Aspen Ski School, said skiing is "the single greatest sport on the earth," because "it's completely individual--its all up to you. You can be wild, crazy, calm--all in the healthy outdoor air."<sup>3</sup> Most skiers agree that the ability to express yourself outdoors on a beautiful mountain provides a sense of freedom, autonomy, and connection to the landscape that no other sport can offer. The slope, the weather, and the scenery combine to create an experience that can be both peaceful and exhilarating.

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<sup>1</sup>Vail, Telluride, and Aspen Highlands ranked first, second, and third respectively. "North America's Top Ten," Ski Magazine 59 (October 1994): 80-81. Skiing magazine's top three resorts for 1994 were Vail, Val d'Isere, and Steamboat. "Our Favorite Resorts," Skiing 47 (October 1994): 106-113.

<sup>2</sup>Dirk Johnson, "The Battle Over Man-Made Snow," The New York Times, 14 November 1994, A12. A skier-visit is the ski industry's way of measuring their business; one skier paying to ski for one day makes one skier-visit.

<sup>3</sup>John Litchfield, interview by the author, 29 September 1994, Denver, tape recording, Aspen Historical Society (AHS).

While this appealing sport and its accompanying tourism have come to shape Colorado's economy, it has had an even more forceful effect upon mountain ski towns. Skiing and the ski industry have done more than revive faltering local economies; they have altered the physical landscape, brought waves of "outsiders" who become "locals" and redefine the local population, and they have even created entirely new town identities.<sup>4</sup> Modern Americans associate towns like Aspen, Telluride, and Steamboat Springs immediately with downhill skiing, yet they all have different personalities. Aspen seems full of celebrities and beautiful people living in the fast lane, Telluride attracts upper middle-class hippies who like bluegrass music, and Steamboat remains the home of Billy the Kidd and other western lore. Resort marketing experts and the pop culture rumor mill deserve most of the credit for generating these images, but the fact that so many people believe them almost makes these images real.

In this 1990s world of advertising glitz and the tourist industry, a local history of skiing takes on new meaning. Communities have often taken an interest in their own roots; now is the time to discuss how those roots connect with more recent changes and issues. A history of skiing in Aspen takes readers from its often romanticized beginning as a silver mining boom town, leads them through its generally forgotten quiet years, and leaves them amidst the controversies of Snowmass expansion, housing shortages, and four-lane highways. With any luck, this ski history will explain why these controversies came to be, and how Aspen's identity has grown and changed from a Victorian boom town, to a sleepy rural county seat, to (more recently) the home of Hunter Thompson and Planet Hollywood.

Prospectors founded Aspen in 1879, the year before the government pushed the Ute Indians out of the Roaring Fork Valley and all of Colorado. Aspen's population and tempo grew along with its silver mines, especially after the railroads connected Aspen's

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<sup>4</sup>Beyond creating identities, the ski industry has even created towns themselves--in places where there had been no towns at all. Vail is the most striking example of this; Snowmass fits in as well.

mines to distant smelters and markets in 1886. The Panic of 1893 and the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, however, put an end to the boom years rather quickly. Miners moved on in search of jobs, and from 1893 to the 1940s, Aspen experienced its "quiet years." Ranching and farming along the Roaring Fork Valley, county offices, and the long-lived hope for silver mining's revival, kept Aspen from becoming another one of Colorado's ghost towns. Aspen's next economic boom would come not from silver, but from skiing, culture, and tourism. Aspen is still experiencing that boom--and the problems that come along with it--today.

The story of skiing and the ski industry's growth in Aspen is more complex than one might think. There was no one person or institution who made it happen; neither the Highland Bavarian Corporation, Andre Roch, the 10th Mountain Division, Friedl Pfeifer, Walter Paepcke, nor D.R.C. Brown, Jr. flung Aspen into ski fame. Rather, they all interacted with Aspen residents and visitors, old timers and outsiders, to shape Aspen's ski history. People, furthermore, cannot accept responsibility alone. Aspen's physical landscape and its non-human inhabitants also played a role in this story. Geological formation, climate, and water resources might have had more to do with Aspen's mining, ranching, and skiing than anything else. Local fish and game populations helped residents survive and drew tourists to Aspen from the 19th century to the 1990s.

From the 1870s to the 1970s skiing in Aspen has continually added to and complicated the mix of people who call Aspen home. It has created and re-created popular images of Aspen that in turn attract more and different people to the region. It has matured from a recreational sport to part of a national tourist industry characterized by big business and controversial development issues. Finally, skiing in Aspen has at once marketed and developed a landscape that had similarly sustained Aspen's mining population. Aspen's ski history tells the story of a town with a distinct mix of locals and outsiders, recreation and culture, and landscape and sport.

## CHAPTER ONE: FROM MINERS TO OUTDOORSMEN, 1860-1930

The sport of skiing first came west in the mid-19th century, when Scandinavian miners participated in the Gold Rush to California. By the 1850s entire populations of mining towns were using homemade skis to get around in the winter. These skis ranged from eight to twelve feet in length, had simple straps for bindings, and skiers used one long pole for balance, steering, and as a brake. Doctors, clergymen, women, men, and children depended upon these "snowshoes" for transportation in an inhospitable winter environment.<sup>5</sup> Frank A. Bishop was the first recorded skiing mail carrier in California, but John A. Thorenson, known as "Snowshoe Thompson," would become the most well-known. He carried mail ninety miles over the Sierra mountains, from Carson Valley to Placerville, in 1856 and 1857. One contemporary called him "a man who laughs at storms and avalanches and safely walks where others fall and perish." Now Thompson has become part of American ski folklore.<sup>6</sup>

White settlers and miners of all colors rushed to California after 1849; Colorado did not interest them initially. The discovery of gold at Pikes Peak in 1859, however, brought a flood of miners and settlers to the region, where they worked their way into the Rockies in search of valuable ore. Coloradans, like Californians, used "Norwegian snowshoes" to get from here to there. Jim Baker, leader of the Marcy expedition in 1857 during the Mormon War, carved out a pair of skis and used them to find Cochoyeta Pass, east of what is now Gunnison. His was the first documented use of

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<sup>5</sup>The terms "ski" and "skiing" did not come into popular use in America until 1900, and various spellings of the term continued until 1920. Until 1900, westerners referred to skis as Norwegian snowshoes. E. John B. Allen, From Skisport to Skiing: One Hundred Years of an American Sport, 1840-1940 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>(John Allen 1993, 16)

skis in Colorado.<sup>7</sup> Early Coloradans learned how to ski from their Scandinavian companions, and traveled to, from, and within isolated towns on their homemade snowshoes. Mailmen logged more miles than most, and became well-known skiers. Colorado's most celebrated early skier was John Dyer, a Methodist minister who established churches in Fairplay, Alma, and Breckenridge in the early 1860s. In 1864 he got a contract to carry mail over Mosquito Pass to Oro City (later known as Leadville), and his winter preaching and mail carrying route led him from Fairplay to Alma, over Mosquito Pass to Oro, down the Arkansas canyon to Granite, over Weston Pass to South Park, and back to Fairplay.<sup>8</sup> Swan Nilson carried mail from Silverton to Ophir (he was buried in a slide on December 23, 1883), Albert Johnson skied the route from Crystal over Shofield Pass to Gothic and Crested Butte, and still others skied from Steamboat to Georgetown, all through the San Juan Mountains, and in the Sawatch Range.<sup>9</sup>

Of course ministers and mail carriers were not the only ones who knew how to ski; residence in an isolated 19th century mining community qualified--and practically required--everyone to ski. Miners, hunters, trappers, doctors, editors, farmers, women, and children all learned how. During the winter of 1879-80 the miners in Irwin (a mining camp near Kebler Pass above Crested Butte) could not get to Crested Butte and had to ski over Ophir Pass to get supplies from a ranch north of Gunnison.<sup>10</sup> Mining town residents also skied in order to run errands and make social visits. One California wedding party skied to Grass Valley for the ceremony, and on to La Porte afterwards. A Mrs. Stevens and her daughter even skied across the Sierra range with a group of men--the locals held a dance in honor of the occasion.<sup>11</sup> Colorado mining town

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<sup>7</sup>Abbott Fay, Ski Tracks in the Rockies: A Century of Colorado Skiing (Cordillera Press, Inc., 1984), 3. Colonel Marcy noted Baker's use of skis in his journal.

<sup>8</sup>(Fay 1984, 3); (John Allen 1993, 35)

<sup>9</sup>(Fay 1984, 3)

<sup>10</sup>(Fay 1984, 4)

<sup>11</sup>(John Allen 1993, 15-16)

residents were not much different; two skiers once trekked over Independence Pass to Leadville in order to get some oysters to stuff the entree for a Christmas party the Aspen men decided to throw for the few women in camp.<sup>12</sup>

Skiing offered western mountain town residents a necessary means of transportation during often hostile winters; it also helped them pass the time away. Miners took to skiing for fun as well as necessity, and they raced each other down from the mines at night. The older miners at White Pine, Colorado (west of Monarch Pass) had a surprise coming to them when they challenged A.F. Nathan to a race for oysters and cigars down from the diggings on Clover Mountain. Nathan had been practicing secretly and beat them soundly.<sup>13</sup> From these informal contests arose local ski clubs, which organized races and carnivals for everyone. California miners formed the first ski clubs in Onion Valley and La Porte in January of 1861.<sup>14</sup> Local ski clubs fostered competition and rivalries between neighboring camps and raised money for purses to go to the winner. The first documented competition in Colorado happened in 1883, between miners at the Star Mine in Irwin. In 1886 Crested Butte established a ski club, and held what some consider to be the first American ski meet, between Crested Butte and Gunnison ski club racers.<sup>15</sup> During the later 1880s more Colorado miners formed local clubs which often became the base of their winter social lives. The Mount Sneffles Snowshoe Club in Ouray, for instance, combined snacks and alcoholic beverages with their ski meetings.

#### Early Skiing in Aspen

Western miners thus skied to get places, and they skied for fun. Early Aspen residents were no different. During the winter snow made it almost impossible to move

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<sup>12</sup>(Fay 1984, 5)

<sup>13</sup>(Fay 1984, 5)

<sup>14</sup>(John Allen 1993, 20)

<sup>15</sup>(Fay 1984, 1)

around without skis; by February of 1880--the first winter white settlers spent in Aspen--Henry Staats measured 52 feet of snow.<sup>16</sup> "In this emergency," Warner Root wrote, "we were thrown upon our own resources and set about to provide something to navigate with." Luckily for them all, two of the town's original settlers--Swedes--introduced Norwegian snowshoes to the community during that first winter of 1879. Root recalled that "tools adapted to the making of snowshoes were scarce in camp but notwithstanding this drawback it was not long till each member of the party had at least two pair." They became experts at making and using these Norwegian snowshoes, he said, quite soon.<sup>17</sup> These silver prospectors, like the gold prospectors in California, increased their chances of staking a claim because they could live in the mountains during winter. Other documented uses of skis during Aspen's early mining years included one man's journey home for Christmas. A blizzard kept W.B. Devereaux's stage from getting over Independence Pass, so he made a pair of skis from barrel staves and skied home to Aspen. He arrived home, only to spend the holidays in bed from "temporary physical collapse."<sup>18</sup> Two other ambitious early Aspen residents skied over Independence Pass to get oysters for a Christmas party. The most compelling use of skis occurred during the winter of 1899, when probably the worst storm in Colorado's history hit. The people of Hunters Pass, a little mining town about 20 miles southeast of Aspen and now the ghost town of Independence, began to run out of food. In response to the storm's persistence, the residents proceeded to dismantle their homes, build 75 pairs of skis, and escape en masse to the safety of Aspen.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Henry Staats in Frank L. Wentworth, Aspen on the Roaring Fork (Lakewood CO: Francis B. Rizzari, 1950), 55.

<sup>17</sup>Warner Root, in Wentworth, 121, and Warner Root, "Aspen," Aspen Times first issue, 18 April 1881, reprinted in Aspen Times 4 January 1979.

<sup>18</sup>(Fay 1984, 4) Fay does not note the date or source, probably the Aspen Times wrote about it.

<sup>19</sup>Elder, "From Hunters Pass," Aspen Daily Times 4 February 1899, 5, as cited in Jack A. Benson, "Before Skiing Was Fun," Western Historical Quarterly (October 1977), 437.

While I have only found parenthetical evidence of a local ski club in Aspen during its silver boom years, Aspen residents probably used their skis for fun as well as for transportation.<sup>20</sup> Even some residents of Hunters Pass treated their escape lightly, and advertised it as a race of the Hunters Pass Tenderfoot Snowshoe Club, for which the entry fee was one ham sandwich.<sup>21</sup> Aspen's local population of Swedes kept the practice of skiing going, if the weather was not reason enough. The 1890 census noted 179 Swedes living in Pitkin County that year; they made up 9% of the population. By 1930, 57 Pitkin County residents had come from Sweden, and 43 had Swedish parents.<sup>22</sup> Hildur Hoaglund Anderson was one of the latter. She was born in Aspen in 1907, and remembered her mother putting on parties for local Swedes when she was a child. She also remembered Ole and Greta Anderson taking her skiing one day in 1920.<sup>23</sup>

Skiing persisted in Aspen, albeit quietly, despite the silver crash of 1893 and the exodus of miners. The few people who stayed in Aspen continually hoped for a resurgence of silver mining, working at the mines that remained open and digging for silver, lead, and zinc. These folks who stayed in town and their children kept skiing. Even those who farmed and ranched along the Roaring Fork Valley and relied on horses and sleighs for winter transportation skied every now and then. Russ Holmes was born on his parents' Owl Creek ranch, and skied there as a kid "straight down on homemade skis," he said.<sup>24</sup> Quite a number of Aspen locals remember skiing during the 1920s and early 1930s. Some even skied to deliver the mail. Fred Willoughby, who moved to Aspen in 1922 where his father operated the Midnight Mine, worked in the mine on

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<sup>20</sup>One 1936 Aspen Times article noted that "In former years a winter sports club was organized and flourished for several seasons and enjoyed a large patronage." See "To Organize a Winter Sports Club in the City," Aspen Times, 10 December, 1936. Chances are Aspen did have a ski club during the mining years.

<sup>21</sup>(Elder 1899, 5, as in Benson 1977, 437)

<sup>22</sup>U.S. Census, 1930.

<sup>23</sup>Hildur Anderson, interviewed by Ramona Markalunas, 18 January 1979, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>24</sup>Mary Eshbaugh Hayes, "The Town Got Excited About Skiing," Aspen Times, 2 March 1978, Skiing 1938-45 file, AHS.

weekends and delivered the mail to the camp in Queen's Gulch. His favorite winter route home was through Tourtolette Park because the mine dumps there were so steep he could go fast enough to make his skis turn.<sup>25</sup> He and his brother Frank used one pole and big homemade skis with toe straps, and they would climb from the Midnight Mine to the Buckhorn Saddle and ski down to town on Aspen Mountain. Other people in town--those less stout of heart than the Willoughby boys--climbed to the upper end of Aspen Street and skied down that slope.<sup>26</sup>

More like the Willoughbys were Frank and John Dolinsek, who were born in Aspen in 1923 and 1925 respectively. They and many other kids who skied before 1936 lived in Aspen's East End. Frank said "I did ski. We tied boards on our feet and went for it. We would slide off a pile of snow from the shed roof. There were some cow paths on Aspen Mountain that we would follow."<sup>27</sup> Jim Snyder, also born in 1923 in Aspen, probably skied in the late 1920s and early 1930s with them. "The neighborhood bunch used to make their own skis," he said. "We'd get in one of these old buildings and rip up the hardwood floor. Of course, in the East End, a lot of us had pigs, and we had a big old feeding tub that they used to cook food for the pigs. My grandmother had a good one. So we'd get these boards and fill that with water, put a fire under it, and steam-curl the end of a board." Snyder would then plane a groove down the middle, make bindings with leather straps and rubber from car inner tubes, and head outside with his friends.<sup>28</sup> These East End Aspen kids skied for fun in a place where miners had once skied for necessity. The skiing legacy of those Aspen miners, the cultural legacy of Swedish immigrants and the reality of long, snowy winters kept people skiing in the years between Aspen's mining boom and its birth as a potential ski resort.

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<sup>25</sup>Miner and Ski Pioneer Fred Willoughby Dies, Aspen Times, 27 January 1983, 8-A. Clipping in Willoughby biography file, AHS.

<sup>26</sup>Frank Willoughby, "Aspen Skiing: An Account by Frank Willoughby," n.d., manuscript, Early Skiing File, AHS.

<sup>27</sup>Kathleen Krieger Daily and Gaylord T. Guenin, Aspen: The Quiet Years (Aspen, CO: Red Ink Inc., 1994), 220.

<sup>28</sup>(Daily 1994, 468)

## Colorado Outdoorspeople Take to Skis

While these local kids ransacked houses for wood, tromped up mountains and bombed down them, other more sophisticated Coloradans were also learning how to ski. During the 1910s and the 1920s a number of upper-class Americans were taking up the sport. Alpine skiing, or downhill skiing, took root in Austria and other parts of western Europe during this time period, even becoming part of the Austrian military effort in World War One. Americans vacationing in Europe took up the sport, which emphasized skiing downhill over the more Scandinavian cross-country type skiing and jumping.<sup>29</sup> Other Americans learned to ski because they were outdoor enthusiasts who appreciated wilderness and outdoor exercise. John Muir and Enos Mills, famous for their naturalist observations in California and Colorado, both used skis for winter travel. Still other Americans learned to ski at college, where ski teams were sprouting up in the interest of promoting healthy bodies and healthy minds. All these sorts of Americans tended to be wealthy, urban, and educated, and they helped make skiing a leisure sport for the wealthy. After all, it took money and time to equip oneself and travel to the mountains for fun. National changes during the 1920s furthered skiing's popularity. More people had leisure time than ever before, and cars and trains made mountain landscapes accessible to the masses. European influences of Hannes Schneider's Arlberg school and Arnold Lunn's slalom racing, the growth of college racing teams, and the increasing availability of outdoor excursions, combined to make skiing more and more popular in the United States.

Graduates of college outing clubs and upper-class outdoorspeople started forming clubs, which served as both social clubs and ski clubs. Colorado was no exception--in fact the landscape encouraged such endeavors as it beckoned Denver outdoor enthusiasts

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<sup>29</sup>See John Allen, From Skisport to Skiing for a more thorough analysis of this transition.

to the Rocky Mountains. One of the first and longest lived clubs began in 1912. Members of the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) took winter outings on skis as early as 1915, and held annual "winter sports" trips to Fern and Odessa Lakes in the Rocky Mountain National Park. By the 1920s CMC companion clubs had formed in Colorado Springs, Boulder, and Estes Park.<sup>30</sup> One ski publication noted that "The Colorado Mountain Club, not primarily a ski club, has nevertheless been responsible for much of the early expansion of the skiing idea as a 'vay of life' in Colorado."<sup>31</sup> Leadville, Dillon, and Frisco residents formed ski clubs in the 1910s, but they were probably more closely related to the miner's ski clubs than those of the urban outdoor enthusiasts. Urban ski clubs made outings in the 1920s and 1930s to places including Brook Forest, Chicago Lake, Homewood Park, Nederland and Lake Eldora, Lost Park, and St. Mary's Glacier.<sup>32</sup> In 1930 a group of upper-class Denver ski enthusiasts formed the Arlberg Club, which would help promote Winter Park ski area. By 1936 interest in skiing had grown to the degree that skiers formed the Colorado Winter Sports Council, forerunner to the Rocky Mountain Ski Association. The sports council sponsored competitions in jumping, cross-country, downhill and slalom events.

#### The First Colorado Ski Areas

Colorado ski areas sprouted up in direct response to the demands of these ski clubs. Members of the CMC built a ski jump on Genesee Mountain outside of Denver in 1919. Dr. Menefree Howard, head of the Denver Winter Sports Club, bought ten acres there with a lease on 300 more, where they held meets which attracted thousands of Denverites.<sup>33</sup> Denver skiers had to ride the train to reach Steamboat Springs and the

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<sup>30</sup>(Fay 1984, 16)

<sup>31</sup>Evelyn Runnette, "Skiing With the CMC," The Ski Bulletin, 19 March, 1937, 6. The author made reference to the Austrian influence on Colorado skiing with her "vay of life" phrasing.

<sup>32</sup>(Fay 1984, 18)

<sup>33</sup>(Fay 1984, 15)

Winter Park area, and the completion of the Moffat Tunnel in 1927 improved access and the popularity of skiing in both of those areas. Berthoud Pass was another area popular with Denver skiers, where a Denver department store (the May Company) financed Colorado's first rope tow in 1937.

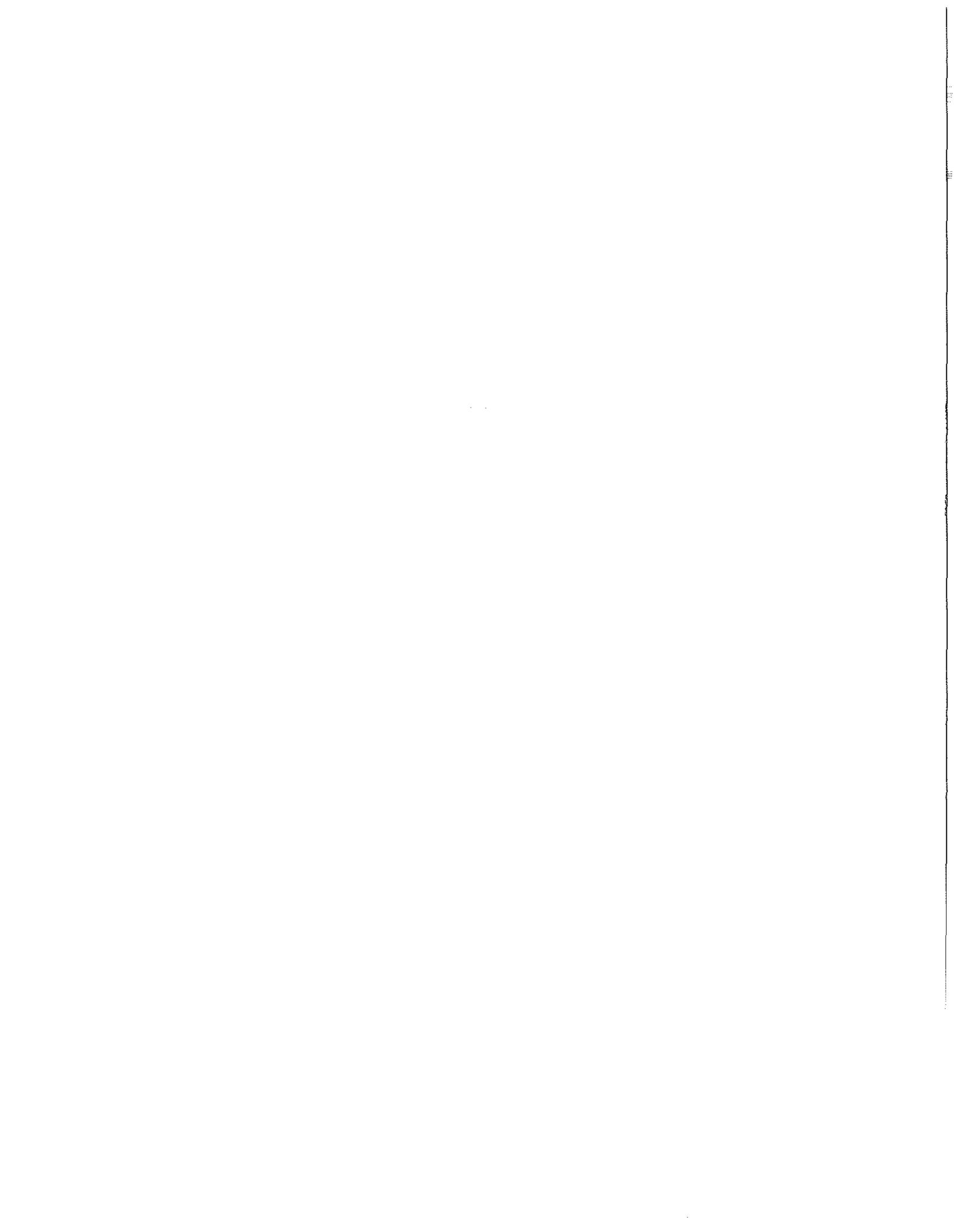
Still other Colorado ski areas grew in more isolated towns, where small organizations reminiscent of 19th century miners' clubs encouraged skiing. Hot Sulphur Springs and the not too distant Steamboat Springs had early competitions among Scandinavian residents. Steamboat Springs had its first winter carnival in 1914, which included a ski jumping contest, women's ski races down main street, men's cross-country "challenges," and children's contests.<sup>34</sup> Gunnison was more active in skiing than most towns in the 1920s and 1930s because of its skiing coal miners in nearby Crested Butte and Irwin, and because it was full of restless college students. In 1916 a Western State business professor introduced skiing to an enthusiastic group of locals and students; people have been skiing there ever since.

Aspen's local population did not build their own ski area, probably because the most enthusiastic skiing population there was a bunch of kids from the East End who didn't seem to mind tromping up mountains. Aspen residents did not form their own ski club until outsiders recommended it and helped locals build a place to ski. The term "quiet years" thus applied to Aspen skiing as much as it applied to mining and economic activity in general. Aspen skiing did not blossom in the 1910s or 1920s, furthermore, because Denver skiers could get to Genesee, Berthoud Pass, Winter Park, and Steamboat Springs more easily than they could get to Aspen--where a ski area had yet to be built.

This scenario changed in 1936.

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<sup>34</sup>(Fay 1984, 10)



## **CHAPTER TWO: LOCALS AND OUTSIDERS BRING ASPEN SKIING TO LIFE IN THE 1930S**

During the 1930s a number of trends came together to produce a new level of American skiing, despite the fact that the nation was going through the Great Depression. Upper-class Americans who had vacationed in Europe sought less costly alternatives in the Rocky Mountains, and technological advances like the rope tow, manufactured skis, and better bindings made skiing more accessible and appealing. Many Europeans fleeing Hitler came to the United States and became coaches and instructors, lending an air of professionalism and romance to the sport in the process. Americans also gained exposure to the international world of skiing from the 1932 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York. This combination of technology, demand (at least on the part of the wealthy), and available experts created a national climate of support for skiing.

Development of a successful ski area required appropriate landscape and snow conditions, local support, and a lot of money. One of the most famous American ski resorts started business in 1936, the baby of Union Pacific Railroad magnate Averill Harriman. He and his team of developers and promotional experts created Sun Valley to be an elite ski resort. They had great weather, railroad access, a group of Austrian ski instructors, and the nation's first chairlift (adapted from a banana conveyor). Sun Valley became known as America's St. Moritz even as it was under construction. The fame and early success of Sun Valley made investors eager to explore competitive sites in Colorado. In Aspen, local residents hoping for economic revival, investors, sportsmen, European experts, and a local skiers converged to generate a surge of support for downhill skiing in the Ashcroft, Mt. Hayden, and Aspen areas.

## The Highland Bavarian Corporation

The three men most commonly associated with the growth of Aspen skiing in the 1930s are T.J. Flynn, Ted Ryan, and Billy Fiske. Together they formed the Highland Bavarian Corporation and built a lodge up the Castle Creek Valley from Aspen. T.J. Flynn was the "local" of the bunch, although he resided in California. Frank Willoughby called him "a semi-retired ex-Aspenite."<sup>35</sup> Flynn's father, Thomas J. Flynn, had come to Aspen in 1887 and worked in the coal business. Later he became interested in mining, and left Aspen in 1910 to go to Ontario, where he was one of the original syndicate that bought the famous McIntire mine.<sup>36</sup> His son T.J. spent much of his youth in Aspen, and according to Ted Ryan, felt quite nostalgic towards the town.<sup>37</sup> Flynn recalled Scandinavian miners in Aspen skiing for recreation--climbing to the top of Highland ridge, skiing down towards the Willoughby cabin, ending up near the Top Lift mine, and proclaiming these slopes and conditions the best they had ever experienced.<sup>38</sup> Apparently Flynn kept some financial connections to Aspen after he moved away and owned some land near the Montezuma Mine. In the spring of 1936 Flynn was living in Pasadena, California and looking for investors to revive Aspen's sleepy economy.

Billy Fiske, it seemed, was looking for adventure. Fiske was an American graduate of Cambridge College in England, where he had learned to fly planes with some of his Cambridge classmates. Fiske had also discovered the Swiss Alps, and took up bobsled racing with the same enthusiasm he seemed to bring to any risky endeavor. He led U.S. bobsled teams in the 1928 and 1932 Olympics to win gold medals--he was only

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<sup>35</sup>(Willoughby, 2)

<sup>36</sup>"Thomas J. Flynn, Former Businessman, Succumbs," clipping in Thomas and Elizabeth Flynn biographical file, AHS.

<sup>37</sup>Theodore S. Ryan, interviewed by George Madsen, Jr., 23, 26, and 30 March 1965, transcript of three "Commentary" programs recorded and broadcast over KSNO, manuscript, Highland Bavarian Corporation file, AHS, 7.

<sup>38</sup>T.J. Flynn, "History of Winter Sports Developments at Aspen," Aspen Times, n.d., clipping, Skiing 1938-45 file, AHS.

16 years old in 1928 and became the youngest man to win a gold medal at the winter Olympics. He also established a series of unbroken records on the Cresta Run at his favorite resort, St. Moritz.<sup>39</sup> Fiske belonged to a wealthy banking family, whose business connections brought him to work in the New York investment banking firm of Dillon and Read after he graduated from Cambridge. Ted Ryan said that Fiske "had a love for the mountains and a real heart for outdoor sport," and thought Fiske was saddened when he had to leave Europe and work in New York. "He really loathed the confines of Wall Street," Ryan said. "The company sent him to sell and perhaps buy securities in Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and the rest, but his heart was always in the Alps."<sup>40</sup> Fiske was selling bonds in 1936, when he met T.J. Flynn at a party in Pasadena, California.

Different people tell different accounts of that party. According to Fiske's California associates and Ted Ryan, T.J. Flynn tried to sell Fiske a silver mine (probably the Montezuma Mine), and Fiske was not interested. Flynn called Fiske repeatedly trying to get him to invest, and eventually Fiske decided that this area of Colorado might be ideal for a winter sports center.<sup>41</sup> Flynn told the story differently. He said that during the party when most of the guests were talking about polo, Fiske engaged him in a discussion of other sports, which quickly led to skiing and the landscape around Aspen.<sup>42</sup> No matter what actually happened at that party, the end result was Billy Fiske and Robert Rowan (of the Los Angeles real estate company) climbing into a single motor Stinson plane and flying out to see Ashcroft in July of 1936. They landed on a golf course in Glenwood Springs, met Flynn there and Fred Willoughby in Aspen, and took a drive up the back side of Aspen Mountain past the Midnight Mine. From there they saw the summer snowfields on Mt. Hayden and the meadows leading down to the intersection of

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<sup>39</sup>(Willoughby, 2); (Flynn 1965, 5)

<sup>40</sup>(Ryan 1965, 6)

<sup>41</sup>(Ryan 1965, 8)

<sup>42</sup>(Flynn, "History of Winter Sports Developments At Aspen")

Castle and Conundrum Creeks--landscape more scenic than they had ever seen in the United States. Fiske told Flynn "Tom, you have it, this is the place."<sup>43</sup> The little ranch called Highland nestled in an alpine landscape would become a great winter sports center. Flynn, Fiske, and Rowan decided to build a lodge on Bill Tagert's meadows there, hire some experts to explore the surrounding mountains and map the possibilities for winter sports, and form a company to support the development and encourage others to invest. Rowan and Fiske thus became the first investors in the Highland Bavarian Corporation.

Fiske called on his friend Ted Ryan to represent the company. Ted Ryan came from Connecticut, grandson of the famous Thomas Fortune Ryan, who made a fortune(!) in the mining business.<sup>44</sup> Having come from a wealthy family, Ryan had traveled widely and developed a taste for winter sports. He said "I had known Billy [Fiske] and winter sports in Europe for a long, long time . . . He was at the winter Olympics at Garmisch-Partenkirchen."<sup>45</sup> Ryan was working in New York in 1936 when Fiske came home and started making phone calls to garner support for the Highland project. Ryan took over operation of the newly established Highland Bavarian Corporation and promoted the Aspen area in the East.

The Highland Bavarian Corporation moved quickly after that, taking options on Bill Tagert's ranch at the junction of Castle and Conundrum Creeks, and on "Tagert's Lake Ranch" up the Roaring Fork River. That September(1936) they started construction of the Highland Bavarian Lodge on the banks of Castle Creek. By early December it was complete along with a pump house, ski room, and a barn for the sleigh horses. This lodge would house skiers and potential investors during the coming winter, and later become the center of the proposed resort. It had a dining room and living room, both heated by a big fireplace, and two double-decker bunkrooms with enough beds to sleep sixteen. That

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<sup>43</sup>(Flynn, "History of Winter Sports Developoments At Aspen")

<sup>44</sup>(Willoughby, 2)

<sup>45</sup>(Ryan, 1965, 5)

fall, Flynn, Fiske, and Ryan announced to the Aspen Lions Club that they planned to build one of the greatest winter sports centers in the United States and Europe.

Aspenites were enthusiastic, to say the least. The Aspen Times ran a headline that said "Winter Resort Plans Are Revealed; Aspen May Become Leading Snow Sports City in Entire United States." The following text read "Aspen will be key city for all sporting activities and may again rise to the glories that were hers as the "Crystal City of the Rockies" during the boom days of the early nineties." The article began: "The greatest news that the residents of Aspen have ever heard in the past 30 years was given out last Monday evening at the regular meeting of the Lions Club." The author went on to describe the nation's growing enthusiasm for winter sports and noted that 8,000 Americans went to Europe last year to see the winter Olympics. This winter resort, he wrote, is "the greatest economic boom that this community will enjoy since the early '90s," it "will be one of the greatest things that can ever be dreamed of, not only for this immediate vicinity, but for the state as well. In former years millions and millions of dollars worth of wealth was taken out of Aspen. Now there is a chance for that much and more to be brought back into Aspen." The author called upon Aspen and Pitkin County citizens to give "a determined, enthusiastic, and cooperative effort" to Flynn and Fiske.<sup>46</sup> Between Fiske, Flynn, and Ryan, the Highland Bavarian Corporation had vitality and enthusiasm, initial financial backing, business organization, and local connections. Aspen's population, long since hoping for some economic revival, supported the idea of the Highland Bavarian Lodge with vigor.

Andre Roch and Gunther Langes

Flynn, Fiske, and Ryan wanted a team of experts to survey the snow conditions and recreational advantages of the area so they could plan their full-fledged resort. Fiske's knowledge and connections enabled them to get mountaineers Andre Roch from

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<sup>46</sup>Aspen Times, 26 November, 1936.

Switzerland and Gunther Langes from Italy to spend a year exploring the area. Initially Roch found Aspen a depressing town, and lamented that the slopes Flynn, Ryan, and Fiske hoped to develop could not hold snow since they faced south or west.<sup>47</sup> He saw steep cliffs and gullies, slopes so steep the danger of avalanches prevented him from skiing them, and forests that reached to 11,500 feet, above which the snow was continually blasted by west winds. "You will understand," he wrote, "that we were not exactly in a skier's paradise and that we did not look forward with enthusiasm to the winter we were to spend here." Roch was shocked to learn that the Highland Bavarian Corporation had already launched an advertising campaign and that guests arriving that winter would expect to ski.<sup>48</sup> Roch and Langes explored all of Aspen's surrounding mountains, looking for a more appropriate site for the Highland Bavarian Corporation's main resort. On the last day of December, they climbed up Lost Man Valley to above Independence Pass, and down Hunter Creek Valley fifteen miles back to Aspen. By the time they finally arrived in town, it was 1937. The mountains across from the Highland Bavarian Lodge, Richmond Hill, held little promise from Roch and Langes' point of view. "Its slopes were either too steep, exposed to too much sun, covered by dense forest, or battered by strong winds." They recognized that even the best slopes, those running down into Aspen, were endangered by avalanches.<sup>49</sup> Roch and Langes probably felt their trip had been a waste of their time.

Until they saw Ashcroft and Mt. Hayden. Back in December they had noted that Ashcroft lay in the center of a natural bowl surrounded by high peaks, and that the east and north-facing slopes seemed well-suited for skiing. Roch made one attempt to climb Mt. Hayden in the middle of January, but high winds turned him back. Guiding for guests at the Highland Bavarian kept Roch and Langes busy until May, when they and Billy Fiske

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<sup>47</sup>Andre Roch, Ernest H. Blake, translator, "A Once and Future Resort: A Winter in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado," Colorado Heritage, 4 (1985), 19. This article was originally published in French for the 1937 Swiss Academic Ski Club yearbook.

<sup>48</sup>(Roch 1937, 19)

<sup>49</sup>(Roch 1937, 20)

climbed Mt. Hayden. Roch described it as "easily the most magnificent ski trip of the winter." The slopes above treeline "offered the promise of superb skiing," and "the view was quite overwhelming." He thought the slopes leading down to Ashcroft "can be compared with the best of the Parsenn. Immense schusses, where your face freezes in the wind and clouds of powder snow rise behind you, make the skier seem like a rocket shooting along the ground."<sup>50</sup> This trip was so successful that Roch climbed Mt. Hayden three more times. He went once with a group of famed skiers and instructors from the East including Otto Schneibs, Florian Haemerle, Henrich Scheinsbach, and Bill Blanchard. Another time he went with Thor Grosword and Frank Ashley, two of the best skiers from Denver, and lastly with Fred and Frank Willoughby, who would lead the Aspen community into competitive skiing. Roch wrote "Each time we felt the same enthusiasm, as no one had ever seen more splendid skiing country before."<sup>51</sup> His enthusiasm for the Ashcroft area was reinforced by his trip up Castle Peak, the highest in the region. "The climb was more demanding than Hayden Peak, but even more rewarding," he wrote. "The descent was again a series of basins and steps, one more rewarding than the next."<sup>52</sup> To make sure they scouted out all the possible areas for skiing, Roch explored Green Mountain, Lost Man Valley, and climbed Mt. Elbert as well.

Roch had spent almost an entire year in Aspen, from November of 1936 until June 1937. During that time period he explored all the surrounding mountains and took panoramic photographs that won widespread acclaim. He and Langes wrote a detailed survey analyzing the Aspen area's potential as a winter sports center.<sup>53</sup> Roch and Langes concluded that "Aspen would constitute an ideal center to open the magnificent Ashcroft region, which once developed, would be a resort without any competition."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>(Roch 1937, 21)

<sup>51</sup>(Roch 1937, 21)

<sup>52</sup>(Roch 1937, 21)

<sup>53</sup>It is unclear exactly how long Langes stayed in Aspen. He was homesick and did not develop such a love for the town as did Roch, so Langes returned to Europe before June of 1937. Roch would return to Aspen at least four times from the 1940s to the 1980s.

<sup>54</sup>(Roch 1937, 23)

They plotted fifteen different runs skiers could take from Mt. Hayden to Castle Creek, some of which would be six miles long.<sup>55</sup> Roch envisioned the resort that would be Ashcroft, including a Swiss village, hotels for 2,000 skiers, a lift servicing ski trails, jumping hills, and sled courses, and a cable car leading to more ski trails and a hotel which would offer spring and summer skiing. Roch realized that Aspen's summer tourist possibilities were also strong, and wrote that "it is easy to see that America could find here a resort that would in no way be inferior to anything in the Alps." "But let us not worry," he concluded, "the more Americans enjoy skiing, the more they will want to visit our alpine ski resorts. All we must do is receive them well."<sup>56</sup>

#### Highland Bavarian Publicity and the Lodge's First Season

Amidst all the surveys and planning, the Highland Bavarian Lodge opened to the public for business on December 26, 1936. Needless to say, the whole community felt excited about it and helped the lodge celebrate its opening with a bang. The Aspen band played a few numbers, some locals entertained the crowd on their skis and toboggans, and Roch and Langes introduced themselves and offered their instructional services to "everyone who was interested." Mayor Willoughby and State Senator W.H. Twining offered their congratulations to the Highland Bavarian Corporation founders, and Flynn raised the club flag.<sup>57</sup> Even during these ceremonies, the Highland Bavarian was entertaining its first guests. Frank Ashley, Colorado's downhill champion, stayed at the lodge with ten others from Denver and gave demonstrations of the sport on opening day.<sup>58</sup> The newspaper noted that Thor Grosword, prominent Norwegian ski jumper and

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<sup>55</sup>Andre Roch interviewed by George Madsen, 16 February 1967, tape recording #C55, AHS.

<sup>56</sup>(Roch 1937, 23)

<sup>57</sup>"Highland Bavarian Winter Sport Club Dedicated Sunday," The Glenwood Post, 24 December, 1936, 1, 8. Highland Bavarian Corporation file, AHS. Other sources, including Flynn, date the Highland's official opening to the public on December 26; the ceremony could have been earlier.

<sup>58</sup>The other visitors from Denver were Norman Burwis, Stephen A. Hart, R.A. Grillo, Paul E. Grimes, Gretl Arndt, Martha Wilcox, William Hodges, Jr., Joseph Hodges,

Denver ski manufacturer, was planning to visit soon and would give an exhibition on New Year's Day.<sup>59</sup>

Andre Roch had found the perfect place to develop a ski resort. He knew that Americans in the 1930s were interested in skiing, and they would pay to ski at a resort reminiscent of the Alps. The Highland Bavarian Corporation did its best to attract investors and garner enthusiasm for their project. Bringing in experts from Europe was their first move, an appropriate one since Europeans had been leading ski tours through the Alps and hosting tourists at mountain resorts for decades. Beyond their experience and skills, Roch and Langes lent a sense of legitimacy to the entire project by virtue of their homelands. Americans associated Austrian, Swiss, and other alpine Europeans with skiing--because they knew of alpine resorts or the international racing scene. Fiske, Flynn, and Ryan named their lodge and corporation consciously, and recalled the Alps with their lodge's architecture, as well. Averill Harriman tapped into similar appeal by hiring Austrian ski school instructors at Sun Valley. The next step for the Highland Bavarian Corporation was to get more well-known experts to endorse the region and their proposed resort. Frank Ashley and Thor Grosword helped immensely in this endeavor. Fiske also convinced famed Dartmouth ski coach Otto Schneibs to visit in the fall and bring his annual coaching school to the Highland Bavarian Lodge in March. The Aspen Times noted that "this is probably the highest recommendation or recognition that can be accorded any winter sports center in the country."<sup>60</sup> Schneibs declared that the Highland Bavarian ski courses, scenery, and snow conditions were as good, if not better, than any he had seen in Europe. T.J. Flynn was so happy that he got Schneibs' signed evaluation on paper and included it in his information packet on the Highland

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Thomas Harrison, and John Harrison. The Hodges family would become involved in the Aspen Ski Corporation during the 1940s.

<sup>59</sup>Thor Grosword opened his ski factory in 1932, and manufactured skis there until 1951. Many Colorado recreational and competitive skiers used Grosword skis.

<sup>60</sup>Aspen Times, 4 March, 1937, 1.

Bavarian Corporation.<sup>61</sup> The German Ski Team came to practice in Aspen that April, boosting the region's reputation even farther.

The Highland Bavarian Corporation also relied on more common promotional strategies. Fiske and Ryan sold the lodge by word of mouth to all of their skiing friends in Hollywood (Fiske's home) and in the East, which added up to quite an influential group. Lowell Thomas, for instance, came to ski in Aspen in 1936 and would return regularly in later years.<sup>62</sup> Flynn shot some Technicolor film of the Aspen mountain scenery, the opening of the Highland lodge, the Aspen Ski Club carnival, and Otto Schneibs "with a party of five famous champions zooming down the five mile run from the top of Mt. Hayden . . . perhaps the most thrilling ski picture ever filmed." He showed this promotional film at travel expositions in Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, in the hopes that travel bureaus would start to promote the area, as well.<sup>63</sup>

The most powerful piece of advertising was a little brochure that Robert Benchley wrote and illustrated in 1936, entitled "How to Aspen." (Benchley, a popular New Yorker humorist, was friends with Billy Fiske and Ted Ryan.) The brochure included photographs of instructors Roch and Langes, the beautiful scenery around the Highland lodge, the rates--\$7.00 a day per person, American Plan--and an entertaining text. Comparison to the Alps remained the predominant theme. Benchley wrote: "Aspen, Colorado, is a place where you can indulge in winter sports without having to get a passport, wrestle with the Atlantic, stop in Paris at the expense of your health, and come all the way back again." He went on to say "You can have just as good a time falling down

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<sup>61</sup>T.J. Flynn, "Highland-Bavarian Lodge, Highland, Colorado," Highland Bavarian Corporation file, AHS.

<sup>62</sup>Don Elisha remembers carrying Thomas' skis and skiing with Thomas in 1936. He stayed at the Hotel Jerome, so it is unclear if he patronized the Highland Bavarian facilities or perhaps skied on the boat tow in 1937. (Daily 1994, 235)

<sup>63</sup>"Aspen Ski Films Shown at Chicago Travel Exposition," Aspen Times, 10 June, 1937, 1.

there as you can on any of the European slopes. If, by any chance, you want to stand up, you can go just as fast as you could down an Alp."<sup>64</sup>

Benchley told a tongue-in-cheek version of the (then brief) history of the Highland Bavarian Corporation. He described T.J. Flynn's promotion of Aspen to Fiske as a "story that had all the elements of a pipe dream . . . when he [Flynn] had finished [describing the scenic splendor of the place] they offered him a drink, and asked him if he had read any good books lately." Fiske and his friends finally flew out to Aspen "to shut him up," took a look around them, "and immediately elected him Class President as soon as they could speak." The Highland Bavarian and its inception thus became legend.

Benchley's brochure and the rumors generated by Fiske, Ryan, and Flynn created enough interest for the eastern-based Ski Bulletin to publish an article entitled "I'm Aspen You," documenting the author's troubled search for information about Aspen. She answered some questions about the Highland Bavarian's first season, but probably did more to promote the Highland Bavarian Corporation by piquing people's curiosity and tickling their funnybone.<sup>65</sup> Despite the Highland Bavarian's youth and relative obscurity, its early advertising and Benchley's brochure worked--the lodge welcomed quite a number of visitors during its first season. In February, the Colorado Mountain Club made its Annual Outing to Aspen rather than its usual trip to Fern Lake in Estes Park. An article in the Ski Bulletin describing the CMC's trip said "Those who went are not 'aspen' about Aspen any more--they're telling everyone that Aspen is just what you've been 'aspen' for."<sup>66</sup> A week later the Ski Bulletin published a section about Colorado skiing and one author wrote that "the publicity given to Aspen by Robert Benchley has brought in a good many eastern skiers, and the Bavarian Lodge has been full

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<sup>64</sup>Robert Benchley, "How to Aspen," pamphlet, Skiing: Aspen, History file, AHS.

<sup>65</sup>Delphine Carpenter, "I'm Aspen You," The Ski Bulletin VII (5 February 1937), 5.

<sup>66</sup>Evelyn Runnette, "Skiing With the CMC," The Ski Bulletin (19 March, 1937), 7.

all winter." He mentioned the success of the CMC members' recent trip, and that they planned to return during spring vacation.<sup>67</sup>

Visits by members of the prestigious CMC brought Aspen skiing into the spotlight--both through the Ski Bulletin and through Denver's high society. Judge McCarthy, head of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, skied at the Highland that winter. Still other well-off outdoorspeople found their way to Aspen with groups such as the Arlberg Club. Founded in 1930 by Denverites interested in taking weekend ski trips around Colorado, the Arlberg Club served as a social club as well. Indeed, skiing in the 1930s was a highly social sport. Arlberg Club members skied mainly at West Portal, what is now Winter Park. They built a clubhouse there and proved instrumental to the growth of early skiing in that region. During the winter of 1936-37, however, some of them began traveling to Aspen. The Highland's very first paying guests, in fact, were from the Arlberg Club. Frank Ashley, George Berger, and William Hodges were present for the opening ceremonies after Christmas. Berger and the Hodges would later take on significant roles in the Aspen Ski Corporation of the late 1940s. The tight social circle of Denver skiers--and American skiers, for that matter--helped Fiske, Flynn, and Ryan gather business and support for the Highland Bavarian Lodge.

#### The Aspen Ski Club

Aspen locals may have had less income than urban outdoorspeople, but they were not short on enthusiasm or athletic skill. Aspen residents looked forward to the economic revival the Highland Bavarian and its Ashcroft resort would bring them, and they reveled in the sport of skiing like never before. After 1936 the few who had been skiing on the back of Aspen Mountain, on deer trails, or on hills near their ranches found themselves part of a burgeoning skiing populace. Part of Andre Roch's job was to generate local support for skiing, and he made it his business to teach Aspenites to ski.

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<sup>67</sup>"Rocky Mountain Notes: Definite Advantages," The Ski Bulletin (26 March) 1937, 15.

As Ted Ryan put it, "he put the spark of skiing into the natives of Aspen."<sup>68</sup> Roch and local skiers came together to establish the Roaring Fork Winter Sports Club. The Aspen Times on December 10, 1936 advertised a meeting for everyone interested in winter sports in order to organize a club. "With this city rapidly becoming a winter sports center," the author wrote, "it is only natural that our local citizens should avail themselves of the opportunities and facilities which this community is endowed with and organize a club that will be second to none on the Western slope."<sup>69</sup> About 30 men, women, and children showed up to the first meeting, including Fred, Frank, and Frances Willoughby.<sup>70</sup> They had skied down the back of Aspen Mountain since they were small, and formed the backbone of the ski club. Frank Willoughby was its first president.

Roch started the Roaring Fork Winter Sports Club--later to become the Aspen Ski Club--by holding ski lessons on Maroon Creek Road every Sunday. Ryan recalled that "all the elders and the youngsters--the Willoughbys and all the rest, took lessons from Andre then."<sup>71</sup> They skied at the foot of where Highlands is now, and on the base of Buttermilk. Andre Roch described the difficulty of finding a slope easy enough for the Aspen beginners. "We had a slalom and on every turn they fell, stood up, went to the next slalom [turn], but that was the beginning."<sup>72</sup> Mike Magnifico learned how to ski that year, and the cobbler would prove to be a loyal and long-standing club supporter, not to mention the first ski equipment merchant in Aspen. In addition to instructing, Roch used ski club money to buy skis for club members from Thor Grosword in Denver. The RFWSC also provided facilities for members and guests to dance and give parties; the

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<sup>68</sup>(Ryan 1965, 13)

<sup>69</sup>"To Organize a Winter Sports Club in the City," Aspen Times, 10 December, 1936, clipping, Organizations: Aspen Ski Club file, AHS. See also "Winter Sports Club Plans Are Well Underway," Aspen Times, 17 December, 1936.

<sup>70</sup>(Willoughby, 3); Barbara Taylor, "Herron: How Skiing Began in Aspen," Aspen Times, 3 March 1977, 3-B.

<sup>71</sup>(Ryan 1965, 13)

<sup>72</sup>(Roch 1967)

same facilities doubled as a warming hut and meeting house.<sup>73</sup> In February of 1937 the club held its first race, on the slopes opposite the Highland Bavarian Lodge on Richmond Hill. Frank Willoughby won the Senior Men's trophy, and the star skier for the women was Doris Sheehan, who later became Doris Willoughby.<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth Oblock Sinclair remembers her older sister going up to watch--she was too young to go herself.<sup>75</sup> According to the Aspen Times, crowds from Glenwood, Rifle, and Grand Junction came to watch the slalom, downhill, and jumping contests.<sup>76</sup> The Ski Club only grew in popularity, even after Roch and Langes left. Roch said "maybe thirty people started skiing, but the year after we were off, I think everybody who could walk started to ski. It was good success, but you know when we were here they were kind of shy to try skiing."<sup>77</sup> Roch and the Aspen Ski Club thus got local residents interested in skiing, ski racing, and in developing Aspen as a ski center.

#### The Roch Run and the Boat Tow

Together Roch and the Ski Club made Aspen's most famous ski run, as well. Roch and Langes promoted development of the Ashcroft area as potentially the best ski resort in the world. They realized, however, that it would be years at least before those plans could become reality. Roch recognized the potential for very good skiing on Aspen Mountain as well, which was closer to town and so more feasible as a short-term community project. In May of 1937 before he left town, Roch walked up Aspen Mountain and marked out what he thought would be a good ski run. Frank Willoughby recalled that "he [Roch] impressed on the club a need for a difficult but excellent downhill race course to attract publicity for Aspen skiing, which would make all-over development of the

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<sup>73</sup>(Taylor 1977)

<sup>74</sup>(Ryan 1965, 14-15)

<sup>75</sup>Elizabeth Oblock Sinclair, interview by the author, 26 July 1994, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>76</sup>Aspen Times, 4 March, 1937, 1.

<sup>77</sup>(Roch 1967)

mountain easier and faster."<sup>78</sup> Their mutual goal of reviving Aspen's economy remained central to their plans.

The Ski Club continued its business even after Roch returned to Switzerland that June. Over the summer a group made entirely of Ski Club volunteers cut the Roch Run on Aspen Mountain. The Willoughbys, Mike Magnifico, Laurence Elisha, the Dolinseks, Jim Snyder, and the Tekoucichs all donated their time. They finished in the fall of 1937. The original Roch Run started at the present terminal of the No. 8 lift, followed the ridge down through Zaugg Park, then it went east of Ruthie's through the corkscrew and finished at the upper end of Monarch Street. The lower part was widened for beginners and intermediates.<sup>79</sup> That same summer, volunteers from the Ski Club built a tow to carry skiers up the lower part of Aspen Mountain. It became known as the boat tow. This tow had an old Studebaker motor, two old mine hoists, and two sleds that carried about 10 people each, which moved up the hill on a snow track with a half inch cable. One boat loaded with people would go up the hill to the second road as its empty partner descended. The only trouble with it was that occasionally a loaded boat went off course and tipped off the snow bridge, dumping its passengers into the gully twenty feet below.<sup>80</sup> The Ski Club charged a small fee of 10¢ or so for the use of this tow--they didn't charge extra for the gully ride. Skiers who wanted to ski all of Aspen Mountain and weren't inclined to hike all the way up could ride with the miners on their way to the Willoughby's Midnight Mine and hike from there.<sup>81</sup> Occasionally the Willoughbys would tow skiers up the rest of the way in a sled behind a type of snow cat. Aspen's early growth as a ski area depended upon local volunteer labor and enthusiasm as much as it depended upon outside influences like the Highland Bavarian Corporation and Andre Roch.

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<sup>78</sup>(Willoughby, 3)

<sup>79</sup>(Willoughby, 4)

<sup>80</sup>(Willoughby, 4)

<sup>81</sup>Elizabeth Paepcke did this when she came skiing in 1938 with a group of friends.

The Ski Club carried out its final construction projects of the thirties with the help of the federal government. While Aspen and the Highland Bavarian Corporation had been gearing up for the Mt. Hayden project, while Averill Harriman had been building his resort in Sun Valley Idaho, and while American outdoorspeople had been taking up skiing wholeheartedly, most of the nation fell victim to the Great Depression. The Depression did not seem to dampen enthusiasm for skiing. Americans who were avid skiers by the 1930s generally had the financial means to continue. For towns like Aspen, skiing represented a potential economic boom during the quiet years. The federal government encouraged the development of ski trails, paying men to clear them through organizations like the Civilian Conservation Corps. Aspen benefited from federal funds when Blaine Bray got the WPA to sponsor a project, along with the City of Aspen, to build a jumping hill, a warming hut at the top of the Roch Run, and a clubhouse. The jump was known as the Willoughby jump, and the clubhouse is at the top of Monarch street, part of Paul Wirth's residence.<sup>82</sup> Though these may seem to be inconsequential projects when viewed from the 1990s, they showed that the Aspen Ski Club had begun to take on a life of its own. Aspenites were skiing more than ever before, and they had a racing course that would draw outside interest in the town.

The Aspen Ski Club hosted races regularly on the Roch Run. At first these races pitted Aspen skiers against peers from Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction, and other nearby towns.<sup>83</sup> These local competitions honed racers' skills, and a number of familiar faces finished strong, most notably the Willoughbys and the Tekoucichs. George Tekoucich acquired quite a reputation: everyone knew he could win--if he finished in one piece and stayed on the course. He said "You understand I was a good racer? Yeah. I

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<sup>82</sup>(Willoughby, 5)

<sup>83</sup> Elizabeth Oblock Sinclair remembered the Samuelsons, the Gallaghers, and Pat Lumston coming up from Glenwood often. (Sinclair 1994)

skied on my head more than I did on my feet."<sup>84</sup> Quite a few people remember a spill he took so hard that his boot came off in a tree.

As its reputation grew, Aspen attracted larger and more important races, which in turn brought more people and more notoriety to the town. The first regional championship hosted in Aspen was the 1938 Southern Rocky Mountain Championships, which Aspen hosted again in 1939 and 1940. Since the boat tow only went as far as the bottom of the corkscrew, competitors hiked to the top of the Roch Run. Barney McLean, one of Colorado's leading early racers and member of three Olympic teams, first visited Aspen for the championships in 1938.<sup>85</sup> McLean remembered competitors putting skins on their skis to hike to the top of the course, or if the snow was hard enough, taking their skis off and hiking up.<sup>86</sup> The downhill race started at the top of the old No.1 lift and took a little over four minutes to race--there was about a foot and a half of snow, unpacked, and "nobody really knew very much about turning or anything else."<sup>87</sup> In 1939 six Aspen locals competed in the regional championships on the "fastest and toughest ski course in the U.S."<sup>88</sup> Denver skiers rode in and stayed on Judge Symes' private railroad car--he ran the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and supported his daughter's skiing endeavors.<sup>89</sup> Aspen was so successful in hosting these divisional championships that the

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<sup>84</sup>(Daily 1994, 499) George also went by the name Buttons. "Never had his shirt buttoned," one person remembered, "even in the middle of winter. When he would race on Aspen Mountain, he would come flying down the hill, his ol' bare hairy chest and his shirt flying behind him. He was a great skier." (Daily 1994, 645)

<sup>85</sup>Laurence Elisha, owner of the Hotel Jerome and active member of the Ski Club, put McLean up for free at the hotel so he could come to Aspen from Hot Sulphur Springs and race.

<sup>86</sup>Barney McLean, interview by Ruth Whyte, March 1993, Aspen, tape recording #C90, AHS.

<sup>87</sup>Barney McLean, interview by Ruth Whyte, 15 October 1986, Aspen, tape recording #C89, AHS. McLean won the slalom and the combined medals that year.

<sup>88</sup>"Record Crowd Will See Running of Rocky Mountain Ski Assoc. Downhill and Slalom Races Here Saturday, Sunday," Aspen Times 2 March, 1939, 1, clipping, Aspen Ski Club file, AHS. The local racers competing in the championships were: Bud Davey, Jerry Hiatt, Jay Sitzer, George and Leo Tekoucich, and Audrey Fordham.

<sup>89</sup>Dutch Hodges, "The Beginning of the Dream," manuscript, 1986, Skiing: Aspen, History file, AHS, 2. Dutch Hodges married Bill Hodges, son of William V. Hodges who invested in the Aspen Skiing Corporation and served as its president during the 1940s

United States Ski Association asked them to host the National Downhill and Slalom Championships in 1941.<sup>90</sup> That was the occasion for Fritz Benedict's first visit to Aspen; he qualified for the race by winning the Arizona downhill championship.<sup>91</sup> He took the train and hitchhiked to town, only to break his skis before the race. (He was relieved not to have to test his skills on the daunting Roch Run.) These races brought competitors to Aspen from all over the country, and symbolized a successful union of outside and local forces. It took the initiative and expertise of Roch and Langes to start up Aspen's Ski Club, but local residents followed through and held races on their own with flying colors.

#### The End of the Highland Bavarian Dream

While Aspenites volunteered their labor and boosted skiing on their own mountain, T.J. Flynn, Billy Fiske, and Ted Ryan were trying to get development of the Mt. Hayden project underway. They had a large task in front of them. After Roch and Langes finished their reports on the landscape and snow conditions, Ted Ryan and the Highland Bavarian Corporation hired a group of engineers to determine what facilities the resort would need. They concluded (in 1939) that in order to carry passengers up to where they could use the upper basins and see the best view, the Highland Bavarian Corporation would have to build a passenger tramway from the ghost town of Ashcroft to the top of Mt. Hayden. The tramway would rise 4,000 feet over a distance of almost four miles, and cost about one million dollars.<sup>92</sup> The Corporation could only manage the task if a governmental agency sponsored the project.

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and 1950s. She compiled this document from interviews with her father-in-law and from Ski Corporation records.

<sup>90</sup>McLean returned to Aspen for the Nationals and was disqualified for taking a gate wrong after having the two fastest slalom runs. Toni Matt, one of the best downhill racers of the time, won.

<sup>91</sup>(Daily 1994, 545)

<sup>92</sup>T.J. Flynn, "Mount Hayden to Date," The Ski Bulletin, 8 December, 1939, 6.

In addition to building a tramway, the Highland Bavarian Corporation had to establish title to the land at the base of their ski area, the would-be resort town of Ashcroft. In April 1938 the Pitkin County Commissioners canceled all delinquent taxes on the town site of Ashcroft so Charles F. Garlington, a representative of the Corporation, could receive a free and clear title to the land.<sup>93</sup> In May the State Treasurer approved the action of the county commissioners, and on February 26, 1940, a special session of the district court officially declared Ashcroft abandoned and turned the townsite over to the Highland Bavarian.<sup>94</sup> In order to prevent a monopoly of private development, the Highland Bavarian Corporation gave the U.S. Forest Service a deed to one-half of the valley floor. The mountains themselves were already part of the National Forest, and the Corporation proposed that the U.S. Forest Service own and operate the tramway by leasing it to a commission.<sup>95</sup> In yet another plea for support, Flynn wrote in 1939: "The Hayden region is one of the last spots in our country that is preserved in its primitive glory; it belongs to all of the people of the United States. Can we not offer it, something that is our very own, to the world's winter sports?"<sup>96</sup> He offered up Ashcroft to the nation's skiers and planned to develop the very landscape he promoted as primitive.

The Highland Bavarian Corporation suggested a rather unusual development strategy at first. One of their goals was to revive the economy for those who still lived in Ashcroft. To that end, they encouraged individual families to live there year round by donating help in building homes and land for gardens and livestock. Those people visiting the town would be able to choose from a variety of hotels.<sup>97</sup> In the summer of 1941 Ted

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<sup>93</sup>Unidentified manuscript, Highland Bavarian Corporation file, AHS, 171.

<sup>94</sup>Private interview with Ted Ryan, 23 July 1975; Rocky Mountain News, 8 May, 1938, 5; Aspen Times, 29 February 1940, 2. As cited in unidentified manuscript, AHS, 171.

<sup>95</sup>(Flynn 1939)

<sup>96</sup>(Flynn 1939)

<sup>97</sup>Aspen Times, 25 April, 1940, 1.

Ryan brought New York architect Ellery Husted to the Ashcroft site. He investigated power, water, telephone, and soil conditions, and returned excited about the project. Husted also considered a variety of architectural styles for the potential base village, and decided that restoring the old mining town and developing in a similar log house style would fit the local history and landscape, interest American tourists, and offer better publicity opportunities than a Bavarian or Swiss village. Husted imagined a Williamsburg of the Old West in Ashcroft.<sup>98</sup> Tramway access to incredible scenery combined with this western town would make Ashcroft a year-round resort. Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into World War II, however, interrupted these plans before they were finalized.

The War also put a hold on the Highland Bavarian Corporation's efforts to finance their tramway. Ted Ryan had negotiated with American Steel and Wire for an estimate on the aerial tramway to Mt. Hayden. T.J. Flynn had lobbied western railroads and the U.S. Forest Service to help with the estimated \$1.25 million cost. His lobbying coup, however, was convincing the Colorado State Legislature to pass an "emergency measure" in March of 1941, authorizing the creation of a Colorado Aerial Tramway Commission and providing for the sale of \$650,000 worth of bonds. Flynn and Ryan hoped that once they presented plans for profitable facilities in Ashcroft, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation would buy these bonds.<sup>99</sup> Flynn and Ryan pursued planning and financing for the Highland Bavarian Corporation, but by September of 1940 they did so with less vigor. Billy Fiske was dead.

While at Cambridge Fiske had learned how to fly airplanes and joined the Royal Air Force Defense of London Squadron 601. Rumor had it that the reason he did not participate in the 1936 Olympics in Germany was because he refused to compete in front

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<sup>98</sup>(Ryan 1965, 24)

<sup>99</sup>(Ryan 1965, 22)

of Adolph Hitler.<sup>100</sup> Three days before war broke out in Europe, the Royal Air Force (RAF) called Fiske back to England and he and six other Americans joined the RAF as volunteers a few weeks later. Fiske flew his first combat mission on the sixth day of the Battle of Britain. On August 16 Germans raked his Spitfire with machine guns and he barely made it back to the base. He crash landed his plane and died in the hospital later that night. Fiske was the first American killed in action with the RAF in World War II; now there is a plaque dedicated to him at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Fiske's death, as well as the impending American involvement in the war, quelled Ryan's enthusiasm for the Hayden project. "Frankly," he said, "after Billy was killed, I had little heart for putting steel into ski lifts when all the world knew that it was just a matter of time when the U.S.A. would be getting into the war."<sup>101</sup> Still, Flynn and Ryan got the bond issue passed and architectural plans started anyway. Ellery Husted expressed his enthusiasm for the project to Ryan again in September of 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor that December 7, however, pushed all thoughts of resort development from Ryan's mind. After Pearl Harbor the head of the Highland Bavarian Corporation, the company that was to develop Ashcroft into the best ski resort in the world and single-handedly revive Aspen's economy, went straight to Washington and offered its land to the U.S. Army Ski Troops for one dollar.

## Conclusion

The 1930s proved to be a watershed decade for Aspen's ski history, although the town changed very little in some respects. Jobs were scarce, local residents all knew one another, they had gardens and livestock in what is now downtown Aspen, and the Hotel Jerome offered the only rooms and meals for miles. Historians studying economic growth, population change, or quality of life would find little exceptional about the

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<sup>100</sup>Bud Greenspan, "He Was Absolutely Fearless," Parade Magazine, 12 August, 1990, 12.

<sup>101</sup>(Ryan 1965, 22)

1930s in Aspen. The Highland Bavarian Corporation brought relatively few visitors to the area and failed to get past the planning stages of their Mt. Hayden project. The Aspen Ski Club organized a traditional mining camp sport but could not offer paying jobs to anyone.

The Highland Bavarian and the Aspen Ski Club both proved central, however, to the development of Aspen skiing. Flynn, Ryan, Fiske, Roch, and the Corporation plugged Aspen into the world of wealthy outdoorspeople and competitors who kept skiing despite the Great Depression. Even though the Ashcroft resort never took shape, the Highland Bavarian Lodge introduced influential people--from Denver to Europe--to the scenery and snow conditions of the area. These visitors did as much to promote the Highland Bavarian and the Aspen area as the corporation's public relations efforts.

In addition to bringing influential outsiders to town, the 1930s also saw rising organization and promotion on a local level. The growth of the Aspen Ski Club represented a resurgence of enthusiasm in a sport that Scandinavian miners had introduced to the town more than fifty years earlier. Nearby towns brought their ski teams to Aspen and spread news of the Roch Run across the western slope. The National Championships of 1941 brought skiers from all over the country and even Europe to Aspen. Outsiders like Fiske, Ryan, and Roch sparked enthusiasm in the local population--an enthusiasm that operated under its own power as soon as Roch and the Highland Bavarian Corporation left the wheel. The Highland Bavarian and the Ski Club together ensured that Aspen gained fame with both upper-class Arlberg and CMC members and with western slope teenagers who liked to ski as fast as possible. These connections would resurface after World War II and produce a different kind of ski resort in Aspen. In the meantime, still another sort of skier would frequent the Roch Run.

### CHAPTER THREE: WORLD WAR II AND THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION

World War II retarded the growth of ski areas all over the country. Gas rationing limited weekend trips to the mountains, and the materials and technology that would have developed ski areas went to the war effort instead. These trends closed down the Highland Bavarian during the war and ended up postponing the development of Ashcroft and Mt. Hayden indefinitely. Local residents kept skiing on Aspen Mountain, however, because it required few resources to run, most skiers lived in town, and there was still nothing better to do during the winters. The boat tow and the Hotel Jerome were the extent of Aspen's ski resort in the early 1940s, but the town could certainly boast of an incredible landscape. Aspen Mountain once dominated the town with its mines, now its Roch Run held watch over the community and attracted a particular sort of wartime skier to Aspen.

The 10th Mountain Division was the brain child of Minot Dole, a Connecticut insurance broker and ski enthusiast who founded the National Ski Patrol. In February of 1939 he and Robert Langely, president of the National Ski Association, went on the Hochbirge Ski Club of Boston's annual outing to Bromley, VT, and got into a discussion of the Russo-Finnish War. Both men respected the Finnish Army's ski troops and noted their ability to out-maneuver the Russians in winter conditions. By 1939 American involvement in the war seemed only a matter of time, and by 1940 some Americans feared a German invasion. Dole and Langley set out to establish a division of skiers and mountaineers to fight for the United States.<sup>102</sup> Dole lobbied endlessly, and in April

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<sup>102</sup>There are a number of sources on the 10th Mountain Division. I used mainly Hal Burton, The Ski Troops (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971) and Jack A. Benson, "Skiing at Camp Hale: Mountain Troops During World War II," Western Historical Quarterly (April 1984), 163-174. See also C. Minot Dole, Adventures in Skiing (New York, 1965), and Curtis Casewit, Mountain Troopers: The Story of the Tenth Mountain Division (New York, 1972).

1941 General George C. Marshall ordered the Army to find a suitable site for training a division of troops to climb, ski, and fight in a winter mountain landscape. The Army established the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment in November of 1941, based in Fort Lewis, Washington, until they could find a year-round site. Charley McLean, a racer from Dartmouth College, was the first soldier to report. The 87th Regiment trained that year on Mt. Rainier and ultimately joined the 85th and 86th Regiments in Camp Hale to form the 10th Mountain Division.

Minot Dole kept up his efforts to support the ski troops. While most members of the 87th Regiment had become expert mountaineers and skiers at Fort Lewis, the soldiers who joined them at Camp Hale had not. Members of the 10th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop from South Dakota and the 31st Dixie Division from Louisiana felt out of place, to say the least, in the mountains. This strange mix of soldiers, and the fact that Division ski instructors often found themselves directing officers of higher rank than they, created more chaos than skill. When a tactical exercise in February of 1943 ended with 30% of the participants in the infirmary from frostbite or exhaustion, officials in Washington DC realized that training at Camp Hale was not going well. In an effort to remedy the situation, the Army and Minot Dole came together to make the National Ski Patrol--the first civilian agency to operate in this capacity--official recruiters for the 10th Mountain Division.<sup>103</sup> Prospective soldiers wanting to join the ski troops had to present three letters of recommendation to a local representative of the ski patrol. If he judged volunteer competent, the patrolman gave him documentation to present at his induction center to insure that he would end up at Camp Hale.<sup>104</sup>

In this manner, the 10th Mountain Division collected some of the most famous skiers and mountain men from America, and even some from Europe. By June of 1943 Camp Hale housed some of the biggest ski names in the country. Walter Prager, Hannes

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<sup>103</sup>(Benson 1984, 169)

<sup>104</sup>(Benson 1984, 169); (Dole 1965, 108-110) and Frank Elkins, "G.I. Skiing," American Ski Annual (1944), 49-51.

Schneider, Friedl Pfeifer, Herbert Schneider, and Arthur Douchette had come from Europe to coach college teams or instruct skiing, and ended up getting American citizenship so they could fight with the Tenth. Famous mountaineers besides Prager and Pfeifer included Paul Petzoldt who had climbed the Himalayan peak K-2, and David Brower, who had climbed peaks in the American West. Famous competitors included Pfeifer, who had won the Arlberg-Kandahar downhill, Herbert Klein of Sugar Bowl, California, Andy Ranson and Fritz Kramer of Stowe, Vermont, and Johnny Litchfield, Percy Rideout, and Florian Haemmerle of Sun Valley, Idaho.<sup>105</sup> Torger Tokle was the U.S. National jumping champion. Aspen local George Tekoucich and one-time visitor Fritz Benedict joined up with the Tenth, as did men like Charley McLean and Steve Knowlton, who came directly from their college racing teams. Other well-known skiers who became part of the 10th Mountain Division included Gordy Wren, Bob Balch, Larry Jump, Harold "Pop" Sorenson, John Jay, Robert Parker, Pete Seibert, and Austrian Toni Matt.<sup>106</sup> The National Ski Patrol recruiters encouraged all outdoorsmen to volunteer, and they ended up attracting Forest Service and Park Service rangers, trappers, hunting guides, and ranchers as well as skiers.

This Division became the largest volunteer fighting force in World War II. The attraction the Tenth held for skiers made it unlike any other division in the Army. "Certainly there were infinitely more college grads and college students," one member wrote, "infinitely more men from moneyed families, and [they were] the only group of men in the Army who found common cause in sport."<sup>107</sup> Wealthy outdoorsmen, European professionals, college athletes, and mountain town locals all came together in the 10th Mountain Division. World War II and the U.S. Army thus united groups of skiers who had common interests but different socio-economic backgrounds, different social circles, and different skiing histories. The unity that this group would develop--

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<sup>105</sup>(Benson 1984, 169)

<sup>106</sup>(Fay 1984, 29)

<sup>107</sup>(Burton 1971, 143)

they still have annual reunions and ski trips--would change the Colorado ski world drastically after the war.

#### From Fort Lewis to Camp Hale

The 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment came into being in the Spring of 1941 and spent its first year at Fort Lewis in Washington. While the 87th trained on Mt. Rainier, the Army searched for more permanent headquarters. One potential site near the northwest corner of Yellowstone Park got turned down by the President himself, whose uncle, Frederick Delano, expressed concern to his nephew over the safety the Park's wildlife and geological wonders. FDR and the trumpeter swan proved too strong for the Army, and they looked elsewhere. Another possible site was Ashcroft, which Ted Ryan had offered to the Army for \$1 for the duration of the war. (Ryan's patriotism may have been accompanied by the knowledge that his project would benefit from the publicity Ashcroft would attract as a military base.) Ashcroft was too difficult to access for the Army, however, as the nearest railhead was twelve miles away in Aspen. Wheeler Junction, the present home of Copper Mountain, was inaccessible from other towns in the winter, and thus the Army turned it down as well.

The Army settled on Pando, Colorado, as the future home of the 10th Mountain Division. Six miles north of Leadville, Pando had plenty of room for 20,000 soldiers, was surrounded by national forest that the army did not have to purchase in order to use, and had a supportive local community. Most importantly, a major U.S. highway connected the site with Colorado Springs and Denver to the east and with Salt Lake City to the west, and a transcontinental railroad stopped at nearby Tennessee Pass. The Army named the camp after Brigadier General Irving Hale, a native of Colorado, veteran of the Spanish-American War, and one of the founders of the VFW.<sup>108</sup> Construction began at Pando in April of 1942.

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<sup>108</sup>(Benson 1984, 165)

In August, before Camp Hale opened, a test detachment from the 87th in Fort Lewis arrived at Ashcroft. They may have come to take another look at the site, or more probably to get acclimated to the Rocky Mountains. They camped along the trees above Toklat and built a fireplace out of rock, into which they cemented a jar holding a list of their names.<sup>109</sup> Twenty-five skier-mountaineers, 25 mule skimmers, ten service personnel, and three officers spent their time hiking the valley, climbing and rappelling off the mountains, and building bridges. They built a teepee bridge over Castle Creek at the beaver ponds, a bridge over Maroon Creek for jeeps, and a foot bridge near Aspen. They also held an open house and demonstration for the residents of Aspen.<sup>110</sup> This group left Ashcroft in November, when Camp Hale opened and the 85th, 86th, and 87th Regiments joined to become the 10th Mountain Division.

Camp Hale quickly became known as "Camp Hell." Construction was not finished when troops moved in during November, mud claimed vehicle after vehicle, and pollution from the frequent trains stayed trapped above the base, producing a cough that became known as the "Pando Hack." Camp Hale's altitude of 10,000 feet also proved troublesome to the soldiers, making exercises and maneuvers more difficult than usual. Many soldiers fell ill to frostbite and exhaustion during their 1943 winter tactical exercise. The training was so difficult, John Jay argued, that "anyone who transfers to combat from Camp Hale is a coward."<sup>111</sup> Part of their training was learning to ski (many had yet to learn), and to that end the Army built the longest T-bar in the world at the time atop Tennessee Pass on Cooper Hill.

One of the most important characteristics of Camp Hale for Colorado ski history was its location in the Rocky Mountains. Pando may have been "hell," but the surrounding landscape's beauty could take a person's breath away. Members of the ski troops skied, hiked, and climbed all over the Leadville region, becoming familiar with

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<sup>109</sup>(Sinclair 1994)

<sup>110</sup>unidentified manuscript, AHS, 175.

<sup>111</sup>(Burton 1971, 127)

its 12,000 and 13,000 foot peaks. Many skiers from Europe or different parts of the United States had never seen the Rocky Mountains before, and quite a few of them became enamored with the landscape.

#### The 10th Mountain Division and Aspen

Few soldiers chose to spend their free time at Camp Hale. Members of the ski troops traveled far and wide on the weekends; the guest house for officers' wives was seventy miles west in Glenwood Springs. Some soldiers took the train to Denver, and others explored the western slope. Leadville, the closest town only six miles distant, was out of bounds because of its reputation for sin.<sup>112</sup> As a result, many soldiers turned towards Aspen. The test detachment of the 87th had been there in the fall of 1942, other members had raced on the Roch Run, and a few such as George Tekoucich called Aspen home. Still others marched to Aspen as part of their training. Friedl Pfeifer made his first trip to Aspen as part of the third platoon of the Tenth Reconnaissance in June of 1943. They marched over Red Mountain and crossed Hunter Creek, at which point their captain ordered them to fall out and shave, so they would look good when they arrived in town. Pfeifer wrote "Even as the townspeople cheered our arrival, I was filled more with the beauty of Aspen than I was proud of our accomplishment. The mountain peaks looming over the town made me feel like I was returning to St. Anton."<sup>113</sup> On his next leave, Pfeifer and Percy Rideout came to Aspen and hiked Aspen Mountain.

Soldiers and officers went to Aspen for training, but mostly for fun. Those who didn't get enough skiing on Cooper Hill came to Aspen and the Roch Run for more. The boat tow operated throughout the war, and carried a number of Army men up to the bottom of the corkscrew. Setting up slalom courses and practicing their racing skills

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<sup>112</sup>The Army lifted its ban on Leadville in 1942 after local leaders passed sanitation laws, tried to close down the red light district, and set up services to control venereal disease. (Fay 1984, 29)

<sup>113</sup>Friedl Pfeifer with Morten Lund, Nice Goin': My Life on Skis (Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc, 1993), 111.

with the locals seemed to be a popular pastime. Some of them had their wives stay in Aspen while they were stationed at Camp Hale and made the town their temporary home. One Aspenite recalled that "during the war, every weekend the place was full of skiers and GIs that came over. They stayed at the hotel and they skied."<sup>114</sup> Laurence Elisha offered a room and a steak to 10th Mountain soldiers for \$1 each and his Aspen Crud--a concoction of whiskey and ice cream--gained fame within the soldiers' social circles.<sup>115</sup> Camp Hale thus provided Aspen with a fair amount of business during the war years, business from avid skiers who had not been previously introduced to the town or its skiing resources.

#### Italy and After

Members of the 10th stayed at Camp Hale while World War II raged on, training and fighting low morale, until five months after D Day. In November 1944 the 10th was sent to Italy, where it remained until Germany surrendered in May 1945. While only three platoons used their skis, the division's training in mountain climbing proved valuable. Their job was to take Riva Ridge and then the German stronghold the ridge protected, Mt. Belvedere. The 86th Regiment climbed up the steep face of Riva Ridge in the night and set up an aerial tramway to transport supplies and casualties. They suffered relatively few. The 85th and 87th, however, had a more difficult time taking Mt. Belvedere. Their ultimate success opened the route north through the Po Valley to the Alps, and the 10th led the advance, chasing the German Army across the Po River and to the old Austrian border faster than anyone had thought possible. Of the 10th Mountain Division 992 died, including Bob Balch and Torger Tokle. Friedl Pfeifer, Pete Seibert, Percy Rideout, and Lt. Bob Dole all suffered injuries. The German Army surrendered in May of 1945, and the 10th Mountain Division disbanded in October.

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<sup>114</sup>(Sinclair 1994)

<sup>115</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 113) Fritz Benedict also came to Aspen to ski and drink. (Daily 1994, 546)

Camp Hale was mostly dismantled after 1945. Fort Carson in Colorado Springs incorporated some remnants. Cooper Hill, the ski area, got use again after the Korean War broke out and new soldiers learned how to ski. Later, the Army used the camp for war games including Operation Ski Jump in 1954, Hail Storm in 1955, and Cold Spot and Lode Star Baker in 1956. In July of 1965 the Army turned the camp over to the General Services Administration for disposal.<sup>116</sup> A few small Colorado ski areas bought the old lift equipment to run their local areas and Army turned the area over to Lake County, which runs the area Ski Cooper to this day.

Many of the members of the 10th Mountain Division, rather than rest, returned to the ski world with unmatched enthusiasm. Their experience at Camp Hale and in Italy united this group of outdoorsmen and introduced them to the Rocky Mountain landscape-- a landscape rich in skiing potential. Many chose to return to Colorado and search for jobs that would enable them to keep skiing. In the process, these men would supply the driving energy behind the post-war skiing boom. Those who returned to Aspen after the war included Friedl Pfeifer, Johnny Litchfield, Percy Rideout, Steve Knowlton, Stuart Mace, Len Woods, Dick Wright, Fritz Benedict, Curt Chase, Toni Matt, Robert Parker, Pete Seibert, and John Jay. Pete Seibert and Robert Parker would go on to develop Vail, Larry Jump opened a ski area at Arapahoe Basin, Gordy Wren managed Loveland Basin and then Steamboat Springs, Barney McLean went back to Hot Sulphur Springs, Crosby Perry-Smith and Pop Sorenson went to Winter Park, Steve Knowlton started Ski Broadmoor, Paul Duke went to Breckenridge, Gerry Cunningham opened Gerry's Mountain Sports, and Merrill Hastings published Skiing magazine in Denver.<sup>117</sup>

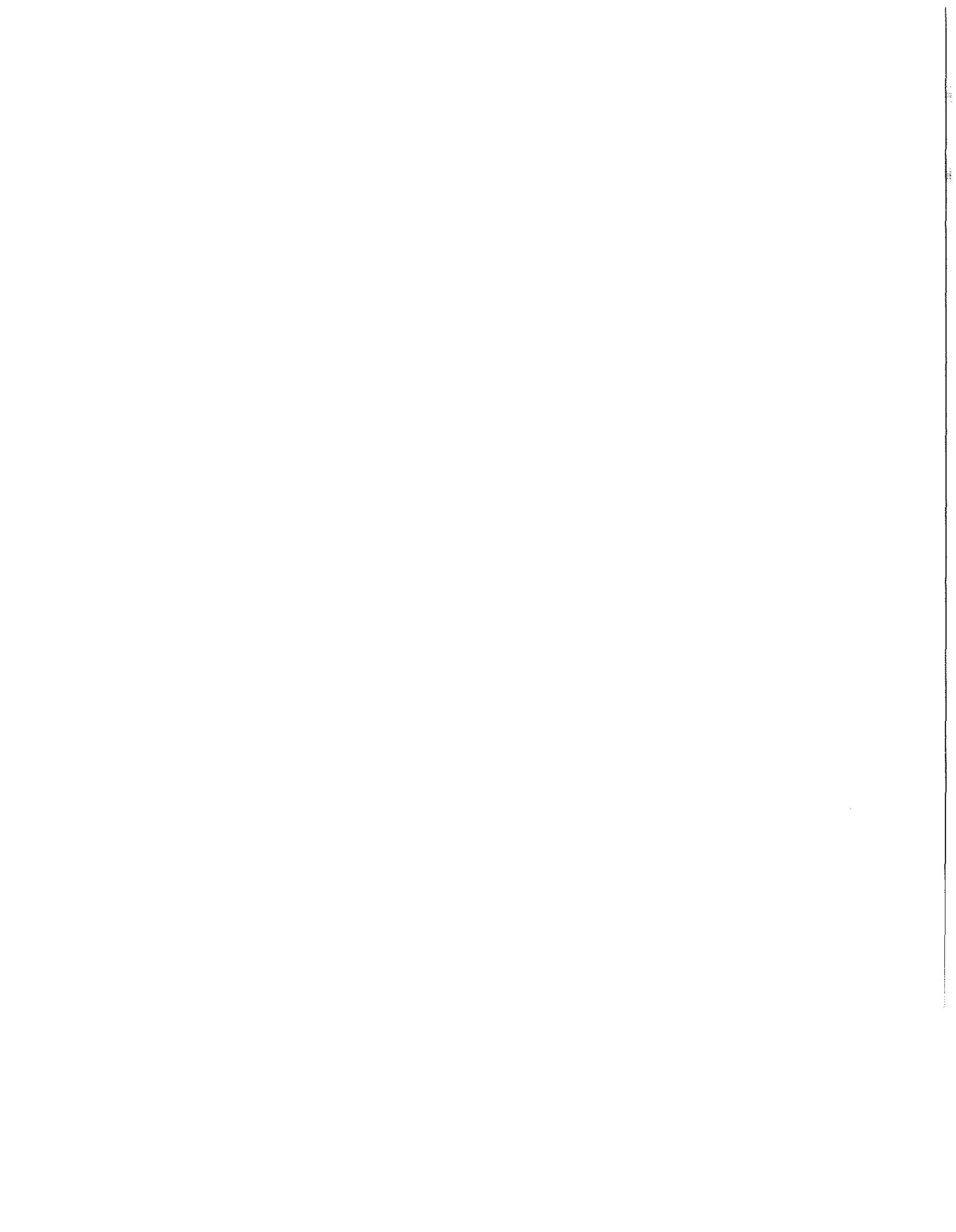
The 10th Mountain Division affected Aspen's skiing basically the same way it affected Colorado skiing in general. It brought a group of men who loved to ski together in a beautiful mountain landscape and made them want to return after the war. Members

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<sup>116</sup>(Fay 1984, 31)

<sup>117</sup>(Fay 1984, 34)

of the 10th created a critical mass of men who wanted to start up skiing as a business--so they could keep skiing, live in the mountains, and earn some money in the process. Before the war wealthy resort-goers, college athletes, and mountain town skiers shared little but their love for the sport. After becoming part of the 10th Mountain Division, they shared a difficult wartime experience, a circle of new friends, and a vision for the future of skiing in Colorado. After the war they worked to make that vision come true.



## CHAPTER FOUR: ASPEN ENTERS THE SKI INDUSTRY, 1945-55

During the ten years after World War II the ski world started to boom. A variety of post-war developments contributed to the birth of the ski industry. People had more money after World War II than ever before. The average worker's income in 1960 was 35% higher than it had been in 1945, and Americans entered the consumer culture with a bang. They bought new cars--58 million of them during the 1950s--and drove them all over the country.<sup>118</sup> They also enjoyed more leisure time. By 1950 daily, weekend, and vacation leisure hours constituted over 34% of Americans' waking lives, and in 1959 each American took over one week of paid vacation.<sup>119</sup> Skiers could also outfit themselves more easily after the war than before. Equipment originally intended for the 10th Mountain Division became surplus after the war, and enabled civilians to purchase high quality ski equipment cheaply. These national changes produced more potential skiers than ever, and American businessmen knew it. Furthermore, the decline of wartime demands on technology and materials left the door open for private enterprise. After World War II, investors teamed up with ski enthusiasts--often 10th Mountain Division veterans--to develop new areas and improve old ones. Armed with new leadership, technology, and more potential customers than ever before, the post-World War II ski industry began in earnest. The main distinction between pre- and post-WWII ski areas was that earlier areas focused on local ski clubs (such as Aspen Mountain's boat tow) or a few elite clientele (such as the Highland Bavarian Lodge), while post-WWII ski areas simply sought as much business as possible--they wanted to make a

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<sup>118</sup>Paul S. Boyer, et. al., The Enduring Vision, vol. 2 (Lexington MA: DC Heath and Co., 1990), 1017, 1018, 1022.

<sup>119</sup>Marion Clawson and Jack L. Knetsch, Economics of Outdoor Recreation (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 16-17.

profit off of skiing. To that end, business organizations grew up along with larger ski areas and started what we now call the ski industry.

New ski areas and improved older ones started up in Colorado after the war. In 1946 Max Dercum, Larry Jump, Thor Grosword, and Dick Durrance formed Arapahoe Basin, Incorporated, and opened two chairlifts there by the 1948-49 season.<sup>120</sup> In 1947 Berthoud Pass opened the nation's first double chairlift, and in 1948 Winter Park--formally opened as a ski area and Denver City Park in 1940--boasted three T-bars and four rope tows.<sup>121</sup> By 1950 Colorado ski areas had lifts and runs for people all over the state. Aspen, Cedaredge, Climax, Arapahoe Basin, Loveland Basin, Berthoud Pass, Winter Park, Allenspark, Hidden Valley, Cameron Pass, Red Mountain, Grand Mesa, Gunnison (at Cement Creek), Hot Sulphur Springs, Cooper Hill, Mancos Hill, Wolf Creek Pass, Monarch Pass, and Steamboat Springs all had at least a rope tow, and many had T-bars or a chair lift as well.<sup>122</sup> Post-war consumer culture and the nation-wide growth of tourism, combined with beginning of the ski industry, meant that people no longer had to belong to an elite club or live in a mountain town in order to ski. Skiing was catching on all over the state, with local residents as well as with visitors from Denver or outside Colorado. Aspen took part in these post-war developments wholeheartedly.

#### The Aspen Skiing Corporation Comes to Life

As with other ski areas and ski towns, Aspen joined the ski industry when ski enthusiasts teamed up with willing investors to build a ski area that would attract destination skiers (those staying for a week or more) as well as local skiers and competitors. And like many other Colorado ski areas, 10th Mountain Division veterans

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<sup>120</sup>(Fay 1984, 41-42)

<sup>121</sup>(Fay 1984, 42); Grand County Historical Association volunteers, Winter Park: Colorado's Favorite for Fifty Years, 1940-1990 (Winter Park Recreational Association, 1989), 192.

<sup>122</sup>"Skiing Centers of Colorado," Colorado Wonderland (December 1950), 21.

provided enthusiasm for developing Aspen. While these vets had enough energy to set the ski world afire, they generally did not have the money necessary to build a ski resort. They spent much of their time, then, searching for investors. In Aspen's case, Friedl Pfeifer, Johnny Litchfield, and Percy Rideout teamed up with Chicago business magnate Walter Paepcke and other investors to form the Aspen Skiing Corporation in 1946. The qualities and goals of this team, however, when applied to Aspen's landscape and local population, turned Aspen into a ski area distinct from others in Colorado. The timeliness of their partnership also made it one of the earliest and best developed resorts in the West.

One part of the equation resulting in the Aspen Ski Corporation came from members of the 10th Mountain Division and the attraction they felt to Aspen after having been stationed at Camp Hale. Ski racers from the Tenth including Johnny Litchfield, Percy Rideout, Steve Knowlton, Fritz Benedict, and Len Woods enjoyed Aspen during their leaves so much that they made it their home after the war.<sup>123</sup> They all sought--and found--jobs there that would enable them to keep skiing. Friedl Pfeifer, who had grown up in the Austrian resort town of St. Anton and become a ski instructor under Hannes Schneider, realized Aspen's potential as a ski resort the first time he went there on maneuvers in the summer of 1943. He went back the next weekend to explore the terrain and "feed the dream [he] had of building a new resort in this place."<sup>124</sup> He hiked up the north side of Aspen Mountain and saw Mt. Hayden and peaks all across the horizon. "The sight was a match for anything in the Alps. I envisioned the runs cut naturally with the contours of the mountain, blending with the meadows, gorges, and glades. There would be terrain for any level skier."<sup>125</sup> Pfeifer was so excited about developing Aspen after the war that Laurence Elisha brought him to a town council meeting that very night

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<sup>123</sup>Stuart Mace, a 10th Mountain Division veteran but not a ski racer, also moved to Aspen after the war and built Toklat lodge in Ashcroft, where he raised and trained sled dogs.

<sup>124</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 111)

<sup>125</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 113)

and he found the members supportive of his ideas. He had appealed to a set of residents, after all, who were quite familiar with skiing and the idea that it could raise the town's economy to its old silver-boom levels.

Aspen's local resources made up the next part of the equation for Aspen's success as a ski area. Aspen Mountain and the surrounding peaks had been there long before any humans had, and the same landscape that had made silver mining so successful offered the potential for equal riches from winter recreations. Rather than ore, however, skiers took interest in skiing terrain, snow quality, and scenery. In addition to a valuable landscape, Aspen had a vibrant local population. Andre Roch had mobilized an entire community around skiing, and taught most of them to ski in the process. The Ski Club's boat tow and competitions on the Roch Run drew recreational and competitive skiers to Aspen from all over the country, even after the Highland Bavarian's business dropped. During the war the GIs from Camp Hale infused local skiers with energy and talent, and continued the shift in focus of Aspen skiing from Ashcroft and Mt. Hayden to Aspen Mountain. Competitive skiing and resort development paused during the war, but Aspen and its residents were waiting at the starting blocks as soon as the war ended.

Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke contributed the third and final ingredient that, when combined with the first two, launched Aspen into the ski world with a bang. Most simply put, they invested and attracted the money necessary to develop Aspen's ski area. They did much more than that, however, and it was the particular goals they had for Aspen that made the town more than just a ski area. Walter Paepcke was not simply a businessman or wealthy socialite; he united business with high culture throughout his life. Born in 1896, he went to Chicago's Latin School and then Yale, where he studied economics and German literature. He married Elizabeth Nitze in 1922, who was daughter of Romance Language professor William A. Nitze. He inherited his father's Chicago Mill and Lumber Company, but in 1926 he established a new business to improve cardboard shipping, and demonstrated his brilliance in design and marketing

through his Container Corporation of America. He hired Herbert Bayer, a student at Walter Gropius' Bauhaus, as a design consultant for the CCA in 1938. Both men believed deeply in the need to unite modern design and consumer culture, and they worked together to integrate arts, the intellect, and consumer capitalism. Elizabeth Paepcke, herself extremely intelligent and more interested in the arts than her husband, supported her husband's cause.<sup>126</sup>

The Paepckes had vacationed with the Nitzes in Estes Park for years, and Walter wanted to buy some land in the region to please his nature-loving wife. In 1936 they bought a 7,500 acre ranch called Perry Park 65 miles south of Denver. The Paepckes' circle of friends knew about the skiing in Aspen. Their friends had probably heard about the Highland Bavarian Lodge from Fiske or Ryan's word of mouth campaign in the business world. The Paepckes may have also found out about Aspen through Elizabeth's brother, Paul Nitze. He was a banker in New York at Dillon and Read investment house, the same firm Billy Fiske was working for when he met T.J. Flynn and started up the Highland Bavarian Corporation. Fiske had in fact asked Nitze to become an investor, but Nitze felt misgivings about the Mt. Hayden project.<sup>127</sup> No matter how they had heard about Aspen, when Elizabeth and some visitors to Perry Park in 1938 were confronted with broken pipes and the prospect of a dismal weekend, they traveled to Aspen to ski instead. Mrs. Paepcke described their trip to Aspen in 1938 as one to a practically deserted ghost town, which, from her perspective, it probably was. Stories also tend to take on lives of their own, however, and some Aspen locals feel Paepcke's description was inaccurate--that Aspen had more vitality than she noted.<sup>128</sup> Regardless of the state of the town, she was taken with Aspen and Aspen Mountain. She and her friends rode up

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<sup>126</sup>See James Sloan Allen, The Romance of Commerce and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) for an in-depth analysis of Paepcke's business, goals, and endeavors in Chicago and Aspen.

<sup>127</sup>Paul Nitze, interview by the author, 20 July 1994, Aspen, audio recording, AHS.

<sup>128</sup>(Sinclair 1994) She emphasized the ghost-like qualities of Aspen and recalled that the Jerome lobby had only one naked lightbulb, that the few stores in town were rarely open, and generally that Aspen was more dead than alive.

to the Midnight Mine on the Willoughby's truck and climbed the rest of the way. "At the top we halted in frozen admiration," she wrote. "Mountain range after mountain range succeeded another, rising and falling like storm driven waves, crested with streamers of snow blowing straight out from each icy, perpendicular 14,000 foot peak. In all that landscape of rock, snow and ice there was neither print of animal nor track of man. We were alone as though the world had just been created and we were its first inhabitants."<sup>129</sup> Elizabeth Paepcke was not an accomplished skier, but she appreciated Aspen Mountain and the local scenery nonetheless.

Elizabeth Paepcke returned from Aspen full of enthusiasm and hopes of returning. Her husband, wrapped up in his latest project, nodded and said "maybe in the summer." He remembered her reaction, however, when his entrepreneurial nature led him looking for a town he could re-create as a cultural center. Unbeknownst to his wife, Paepcke did some research on the town and liked what he learned. When the couple went for a visit in May of 1945, he made arrangements with Judge Shaw to purchase a number of properties and presented his wife with a special gift--the Lamb house.<sup>130</sup> He formed the Aspen Company to manage his real estate investments in late 1945. Paepcke thus invested in a town which had houses and lots available for little more than back taxes, a beautiful landscape, and "the physical evidence of a community life."<sup>131</sup> These attributes had the makings for what the Paepckes understood as the ideal community. "Aspen had everything . . . it had fishing, climbing, skiing. Aspen had so much to add to leisure, to the renewal of the inner spirit. It was the perfect setting for music, art, education . . . all the things that make life worth living."<sup>132</sup> Elizabeth and

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<sup>129</sup>Elizabeth Paepcke, "Memories of Aspen," manuscript, n.d., Elizabeth Paepcke biography file, AHS, 7.

<sup>130</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1983, 131)

<sup>131</sup>I'm not exactly sure what this means--probably that Paepcke liked the old Victorian buildings and imagined Aspen as a romantic mining town during its boom--a town that he could restore to its past glory.

<sup>132</sup>Mary Eshbaugh Hayes, "The Way It Was . . . And the Way It Is," Aspen Times 21 August 1975, 1B.

Walter Paepcke saw the opportunity to create their vision of a cultural community, with the perfect balance of intellectual and physical activity, in Aspen. To that end, Walter encouraged particular sorts of people to come to Aspen. "We want writers and scientists and artists and businessmen," he said, "and we want them to be [permanent] citizens of Aspen, not seasonal visitors. We want to recapture the old town meeting spirit of earlier days. We want Aspen to be a model of what American towns can be."<sup>133</sup> He bought a house for Herbert Bayer and his wife so they could help him with his project, and they moved to Aspen in 1946.<sup>134</sup> Paepcke wanted to restore and recreate Aspen according to his romantic notion of its past glory and his goal of creating a cultural community. He somewhat naively believed that the local residents would embrace his plans; some did not.

Most local residents still hoped for the revival of silver mining, and they supported skiing and tourism as less than ideal substitutes. Art, music, and literature were even farther from former miners' preferred activity. The most famous example of locals resisting Paepcke's influence was their refusal to accept free paint for their houses, since with the paint they had to also accept Herbert Bayer's design advice and the assumption that their neighborhoods needed sprucing up in the first place. Some locals remember Paepcke being sensitive to their needs on some issues, such as their long-standing use of neighboring empty lots. Town residents often used these lots for gardens and livestock, and when they went on sale at the courthouse, he did not bid against the locals.<sup>135</sup>

Paepcke thus juggled his goals with the desires and reality of the local population in Aspen. Similarly, he had to come to terms with the skiers. Aspen's growth as a ski

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<sup>133</sup>Charles Leavelle, "Design for Real Living Found by Chicagoan in Ghost City He Revived," unidentified newspaper article, 1947, Walter Paepcke biography file, AHS.

<sup>134</sup>Paepcke bought innumerable properties in Aspen and did much to create his dream of a cultural and intellectual community there. Since the focus of this paper is Aspen skiing, I will not go into Paepcke's cultural goals and achievements in any depth.

<sup>135</sup>(Sinclair 1994)

town did not quite mesh with his culturally ideal community, and he was wary of the type of crowd skiing would attract. He could not deny, however, Aspen's growing popularity in this area, especially after the war when 10th Mountain veterans chose to return to Aspen and develop it as a resort. Having committed himself to the town, and purchased and thoroughly renovated the Hotel Jerome, Paepcke accepted Aspen's skiing future and tried to make it his own. He called on his brother-in-law Paul Nitze to join in on the venture, saying "let's divide Aspen three ways. Pussy [Elizabeth] will be in charge of taste and culture; I'll be in charge of business and mind and you be in charge of the body, i.e. skiing."<sup>136</sup> Given Nitze's enthusiasm for skiing, his past association with Billy Fiske, and his sister and brother-in-law's enthusiasm for Aspen, he accepted wholeheartedly.

Both Paepcke and Nitze had extensive business experience, but neither of them knew enough about skiing or had the desire to run a resort. Friedl Pfeifer did, and was in the market for some investors. He returned to Aspen in August of 1945 to renew the townspeople's enthusiasm for building a ski resort. That September Walter Paepcke called Pfeifer and invited him to Perry Park to discuss Aspen. Despite being mistaken for a newly-hired Mexican turkey drover, Pfeifer and Paepcke had a useful meeting. Pfeifer wrote "Mr. Paepcke was not a skier, but recognized the sport as a key to the town's vitality. He conceded that skiing would provide a piece to his plan. So we agreed in theory to a new and improved image of Aspen. He did not, however, agree to finance any of my plans. I was certain culture would never be bigger than skiing, but I did admire Paepcke's vision for the future."<sup>137</sup> Pfeifer returned to Aspen after being discharged from the Army in October, 1945, and arranged a meeting with the ski club. In the interest of developing Aspen skiing, they agreed to establish an annual downhill/slalom combined ski race and name it the Roch Cup, and they let Pfeifer take

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<sup>136</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1983, 140)

<sup>137</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 127, 129)

over management of the boat tow. Pfeifer moved his family to a rented house on Main Street and established a ski school, with Percy Rideout and Johnny Litchfield (also 10th Mountain veterans) and himself as co-directors. Pfeifer and a number of locals including the Willoughbys, Mike Magnifico, and Mike Garish, rigged up a rope tow and widened some trails. The Ski School opened for business on December 18, 1945.<sup>138</sup> In his efforts to promote the new area and ski school, Pfeifer had a film made of himself, Johnny and Jean Litchfield, and Percy Rideout skiing on Aspen Mountain, Snowmass, and Mt. Hayden. He entitled it "Why Aspen?" and Percy Rideout took it with him to show to ski clubs and travel organizations across the country.

Although Walter Paepcke had not chosen to finance Pfeifer's plans initially, they eventually agreed to develop ski lifts and lodging in Aspen together. Paepcke's Aspen Company would take responsibility for housing, and it was the Aspen Company that took a long-term lease on and renovated the Hotel Jerome. They would establish another company to develop Aspen's skiing. Pfeifer had convinced Denver mining engineer Harold Klock to establish a company with him initially, but had no luck raising money with Denver banks or individual investors.<sup>139</sup> Pfeifer finally agreed to give up control of the Aspen Ski Company in return for Paepcke's help in raising money. In addition, Pfeifer received 25,000 shares of stock and exclusive rights to run the ski school.<sup>140</sup>

Pfeifer had gotten Fred Willoughby to survey a lift line to the top of Aspen Mountain in 1945, and Paepcke estimated that it would cost \$150,000. To build the lift and capitalize the Aspen Skiing Corporation would cost \$300,000.<sup>141</sup> Paepcke and Pfeifer pulled together investors and solicited subscriptions for \$25,000 each, which some groups split into \$5,000 blocks.<sup>142</sup> Paul Nitze put up \$75,000, making him the

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<sup>138</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 129-132)

<sup>139</sup>(Hodges 1986, 4)

<sup>140</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 139)

<sup>141</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1983, 140)

<sup>142</sup>Money from the subscriptions would go towards both the Aspen Company and the Aspen Skiing Corporation. Paepcke assumably did this in order to develop Aspen more evenly and to control growth more closely; he did not consider skiing the most important

major investor (at more than double Paepcke's investment) until 1978, when Twentieth Century Fox bought the Aspen Skiing Company. Harold Klock, George Berger, who would become president of Colorado National Bank in Denver, William Hodges, also a Denver businessman, Eugene Lilly, a Colorado Springs businessman and close friend of the Paepckes, Aspen local and landowner D.R.C. Brown, Joseph Binns, executive vice president of Hilton hotels, and Minot Dole of the National Ski Patrol and 10th Mountain Division fame, all invested significant sums as well.<sup>143</sup> Even Ted Ryan, who had by that time abandoned his plans of developing Mt. Hayden, invested in the company. The Aspen Skiing Corporation became incorporated on January 21, 1946, with a board of trustees consisting of Paepcke, Nitze, Pfeifer, George Berger, and Robert Collins.<sup>144</sup> Finally it seemed like something was really going to happen to Aspen skiing. Enthusiasm from 10th Mountain Division veterans, local support of a developed ski area, and financing from Paepcke and his acquaintances all combined to create the end result of the Aspen Skiing Corporation.

Regional papers anticipated and celebrated Aspen's entrance into the ski industry. The Denver Post magazine in spring of 1946 ran the headline "Money Fever Is Running in Aspen Again: Famed Silver Town Looks to Day When It Will Be World Ski Capital." The author went on to describe Aspen as "astir with hope, with expectation of prosperity and renewed vitality. Almost a ghost town since the death of its fabulous mining days near the close of the last century, it has been chosen by a group of wealthy industrialists as the site for the development of what will be, if present plans are realized, one of the greatest resorts in the United States, playground of the world's rich ski, fishing,

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aspect of Aspen's growth. I am not sure how long this policy lasted. Documents show investors buying shares in the ASC throughout the 1950s with no notification or evidence that they were simultaneously investing in the Aspen Company.

<sup>143</sup>Klock became president of the Aspen Skiing Corporation for its first seven months, after which George Berger took the job until 1950, when William Hodges became president. "Historical Dates on Aspen's Ski History, 1935-1946," 1987, AHS.

<sup>144</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1983, 141)

hunting, and climbing enthusiasts."<sup>145</sup> It seems Aspen's reputation as a playground for the rich and famous began even before construction on the first lift began. Paepcke's involvement in Aspen made the town's simultaneous development as a cultural center and ski resort possible, and he would help draw influential people to Aspen. This combination of skiing and culture would make Aspen distinct from other early Colorado ski areas.

At the same time that the Aspen Skiing Corporation focused on Aspen Mountain's development, the Highland Bavarian Corporation's Mt. Hayden project faded. After the war Ted Ryan, who was president of the Highland Corporation, decided he would rather not see Ashcroft and the Castle Creek Valley developed. Ryan gave Stuart Mace a lifetime lease on one acre of land in Ashcroft, where Mace built Toklat lodge and acted as overseer of the Highland Bavarian land. In 1953 Ryan deeded 15 acres of the Ashcroft townsite to the U.S. Forest Service to ensure its protection.<sup>146</sup>

#### The Aspen Skiing Corporation in Business

There was quite a lot to be done in order to get a lift built on Aspen Mountain. While the financial details were still being worked out, Friedl Pfeifer tried to get surface rights for those mining claims that lay over Aspen Mountain like a crazy quilt. The Willoughbys, who owned the Midnight Mine on the back side of Aspen Mountain, gave Pfeifer their immediate and full support. Pfeifer also contacted Aspen native D.R.C. Brown, Jr. and Paepcke contacted Brown's uncle Harry, secretary for Spar Consolidated Mines Company in Aspen. Both expressed caution regarding the economic strength and future of the enterprise, but supported the idea of developing Aspen Mountain as a ski area. They ultimately agreed to lease the surface rights of their claims to the Aspen

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<sup>145</sup>Jane Nes, "Money Fever Is Running In Aspen Again," Denver Post, 17 March 1946, T1.

<sup>146</sup>Stuart Mace, interviewed by Robert Cornwell and Kristina Clebsch, June and July 1979, from Cornwell and Clebsch, "Ghost's Guide to Ashcroft," 1979, manuscript, 30, AHS.

Skiing Corporation.<sup>147</sup> At the time Pfeifer turned over his ski company to Paepcke, Pfeifer had found over 400 mining claims on Aspen Mountain that were on the market for about \$12 each.<sup>148</sup> Eventually the Aspen Skiing Corporation would hire a full-time Denver lawyer whose sole job would be to find and acquire the surface rights and mining claims necessary for development and expansion.

Unlike today, the government required little from organizations that wanted to use federal land. The Forest Service was small at the time and generally supportive of ski area development. Aspen's ranger saw Pfeifer at work on the mountain one day; they talked; and the ranger got him a Forest Service permit to build lifts on the White River National Forest the next day.<sup>149</sup> The first proposed lifts would take skiers to the top of the mountain in two sections that became lift No. 1 and lift No. 2. The Aspen Skiing Corporation made a contract with American Steel and Wire to design and provide the material for the No.1 lift, and hired Bob Heron, a Denver engineer who was experienced in building mine trams, to build lift one and design and build lift No.2.<sup>150</sup> After some convincing, Paepcke and the Aspen Skiing Corporation agreed to build facilities on top of the mountain, at a cost of \$100,000. Pfeifer hired Herbert Bayer to design what would become the Sundeck.<sup>151</sup>

The equipment arrived during late summer of 1946, when construction got underway. Local Red Rowland poured the tower foundations, Frank Willoughby widened roads with his bulldozer, and Percy Rideout and a band of volunteers thinned trees and cut the Magnifico cut-off. Making easier trails for less experienced skiers was a priority. By October 15, 1946 crews had almost finished construction of the Sundeck, and progress on the No.1 lift was steady, despite severe snowstorms that slowed work.

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<sup>147</sup>Letter from Darcy Brown to Harry Brown, 7 August 1945, and letter from Harry Brown to Darcy Brown, 16 August 1945, AHS.

<sup>148</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 139)

<sup>149</sup>Friedl Pfeifer, interview by Judy Gertler, 18 August 1993, Aspen, video recording, AHS.

<sup>150</sup>(Hodges 1986, 6)

<sup>151</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 140)

Leonard Woods reported that "both Friedl and Bob Heron have been exercising their vocabularies to the full on the subject of the weather, and although the schedule of construction on the lift may be temporarily slowed down, the fact still remains that as of this winter, Aspen's liftless days are over."<sup>152</sup> The first lift would be longer, faster, and have a greater capacity than any other chair lift in the world. Woods estimated the trip up the No. 1 lift would take about half an hour. All 49 towers were in place by November.

On December 14, 1946 lifts 1 and 2 opened unofficially for business. Several hundred people turned out to try out the long No. 1 lift; Friedl Pfeifer and his three-year-old daughter rode the first chair up. Leonard Woods wrote in the Aspen Times that "the opening of the long-awaited chair lift, the finest of its type in the world, is perhaps, the first large and really tangible sign that Aspen has found a new, good, and profitable way of life. It means that we in Aspen are now carrying the ball."<sup>153</sup> The real celebration of the chair lift took place on January 11, 1947. A special train from Denver brought the Governor of Colorado F. Lee Knaus, U.S. Senator Ed Johnson, and a group of journalists, all of whom were met by a torchlight parade in Aspen. So many others came for the opening that private home owners had to take visitors in. On the 11th Knaus, Aspen Mayor Gene Robinson, and Walter Paepcke gave speeches to 2,000 listeners about Aspen's bright future, Robinson's daughter started the lift, and then some of the best skiers in the country gave slalom and jumping demonstrations. Sunday featured a parade in honor of the 10th Mountain Division, snacks at the Sundeck, and skiing for everyone. With pomp, circumstance, and regular fun, Aspen entered the burgeoning national ski industry. Aspen residents recognized the economic meaning of

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<sup>152</sup>Leonard Woods, Memorandum to the Aspen Skiing Corporation, 15 October 1946, Aspen Skiing Corporation file, AHS.

<sup>153</sup>Leonard Woods, "Aspen Ski Club to Celebrate Opening of Longest Chair Lift," Aspen Times, 12 December 1946, 1.

the event, Pfeifer and other 10th Mountain veterans realized their dream of running a ski resort in Aspen, and Aspen exuded optimism.

During its first season in 1946-47, the Aspen Skiing Corporation opened the No.1 lift, the Sundeck, a ski school run by Pfeifer, Rideout, and Litchfield, a professional Ski Patrol, safety telephones and toboggans, and three scheduled races. Lift prices cost \$2 for a single ride, \$3.75 for a day, and \$140 for a season ticket.<sup>154</sup> Partly because Aspen Mountain was challenging to ski, Aspen skiing grew slowly. Dick Durrance came to Aspen in October of 1947 to replace Frank Ashley as general manager for the Aspen Skiing Corporation (Ashley had taken another job elsewhere). Durrance had raced for Dartmouth College and competed in the 1936 Olympics, worked for Averill Harriman at Sun Valley, helped to develop the ski area at Alta, Utah, and after the war he had a job designing skis for Thor Groszold in Denver. Durrance and his wife Miggs had first come to Aspen for the 1941 National Championships because "we heard it had good skiing . . . and we also liked to race."<sup>155</sup> Durrance was impressed with the size of Aspen Mountain compared to Alta. "We thought Aspen had great potential," he said. "After the war we were offered a job and so we were very happy to come because we had seen Aspen in 1941 and were pleased with what we saw."<sup>156</sup>

When the Durrances arrived in Aspen that October in 1947, the ski area consisted of lifts No. 1 and No. 2, the Roch Run and the Magnifico cutoff. Friedl Pfeifer was busy running the ski school and was simultaneously directing the ski school at Sun Valley. The Aspen Skiing Corporation hired Durrance to manage the area, try to improve business, and attract more skiers to Aspen. His first priority was to make Aspen Mountain more skiable. To that end he cut Ruthie's Run, a wide open run to complement the narrow Roch Run. There was no Forest Service bureaucracy to wade through, so

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<sup>154</sup>(Woods 1946)

<sup>155</sup>Dick and Miggs Durrance, interview by Jeanette Darnauer, 18 August 1993, Aspen, video recording, AHS.

<sup>156</sup>(Durrance 1993)

Durrance simply cut the trees. He, like Pfeifer before him, worked with local volunteers. Aspen Ski Club members came out on the weekends with their tools to help clear the brush off of the trails.<sup>157</sup> Just making the trails easier attracted more skiers to Aspen, but Durrance's coup de grace was attracting the 1950 FIS Championships to Aspen. No European ski championships had ever been held in the United States and Durrance made it his personal goal to bring them to Aspen. "We prepared an extensive proposal," he said. "I got Steve Bradley (Dartmouth racer and manager of Winter Park) to come over here and help me, and Frank Willoughby, and we put together a brochure and sold the Europeans on the idea that we had a big enough mountain. We had good stuff, and we guaranteed them that we would cut trails and make it suitable for the world championships. They bought it, and so we held them in 1950."<sup>158</sup>

In addition to advertising Aspen via international competition, Durrance made ski films. Both he and his wife had gotten interested in photography, and Dick asked the Aspen Skiing Corporation board if they wanted a film of Aspen. He made his first one in 1948 and called it "Aspen in Winter." Friedl Pfeifer and Fred Iselin were directing the ski school at the time and Durrance filmed their skiing, along with his own. Gary Cooper appeared in this first film and was featured in another Durrance movie called "Snow Carnival." Durrance sent his films to ski clubs to help promote Aspen to potential clients, and copies of them now reside in the Aspen Historical Society archives. The desire to make films, in fact, ultimately led Dick and Miggs Durrance away from Aspen. He left the general manager's job in 1952, with the Aspen ski area well-established and growing steadily. Skiing would become increasingly popular through the 1980s; once its first lifts were in place and its reputation growing, Aspen would not return to its quiet years.

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<sup>157</sup>Aspen Times, 14 October 1948, 1.

<sup>158</sup>(Durrance 1993) Other directors and officers in the Aspen Skiing Corporation helped Durrance attract the FIS race, including George Berger, Ad Coors, William and Joseph Hodges, Friedl Pfeifer, and Fred Iselin.

## The Ski School and Ski Patrol

Friedl Pfeifer established the Aspen Ski School as a separate entity from the Aspen Skiing Corporation. When he relinquished control of the Corporation to Paepcke he retained the exclusive rights to run the ski school. He and Percy Rideout and Johnny Litchfield were the original co-founders, and they started business the year after the war, during the 1945-46 season. They had built a rope tow on Little Nell to supplement the boat tow in taking customers up the mountain. When they opened for business on December 18 1945, there were three ski school instructors and no students. Pfeifer started giving free lessons and running races for the local kids in order to keep things going. He offered free lessons to housewives one time and about 30 turned up. Pfeifer wrote "I never will forget the sight of those young women, mothers and grandmothers, all beautiful to me, as they tried skiing for the first time."<sup>159</sup> The Aspen Ski School's first paying customer was Mrs. Nichol, a 70 year old visitor who started showing up every morning for her ski lesson. The instructors flipped a coin to decide who would teach her that day. By February business started picking up--one early student married her instructor and became Jean Rideout. Adlai Stevenson, then Governor of Illinois, came to Aspen to visit the Paepckes and ended up in the gully, a victim of the boat tow's wanderings off the bridge.

The next season ushered in the new No. 1 chair lift and more skiers than the year before. The Ski School roster included the three founders, plus Marshall Fitzgerald, Walter Haug, Dick Wright, Andy Ransom, and Leonard Woods. Pfeifer himself was less available, as he juggled two ski schools 800 miles distant. Averill Harriman wanted to start up the Sun Valley Ski School, where Pfeifer had originally worked, and convinced Pfeifer to come back part-time. He stayed two weeks in Aspen for every one in Sun Valley, leaving Rideout and Litchfield in charge while he was away. Skiers who signed up

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<sup>159</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 132)

for lessons during the 1946-47 season could get a private lesson for \$7.50 and a half day lesson for \$3.<sup>160</sup> Over the next few years the names in Aspen's Ski School would change. Johnny Litchfield resigned and eventually moved away. Fred Iselin--a Swiss native who had been instructing at Sun Valley--came to Aspen and taught in the ski school along with his wife Elli. Iselin's humor and freestyle skiing techniques are legendary today, and after instructing for years Elli Iselin opened a sports shop famous for selling Bogner clothing as early as 1954. Sepp Uhl came to instruct at the Aspen Mountain Ski School in 1953, the year he emigrated from his native Germany. Other well-known instructors who joined Pfeifer early on included Curt Chase and Klaus Obermeyer (yes, the ski clothing Obermeyer). During the 1950s what had become the Friedl Pfeifer Ski School changed names to become the Aspen Ski School under co-directors Pfeifer and Fred Iselin.<sup>161</sup> Pfeifer's ski school was not unusual in its separation from the ski company. From the 1930s through the 1950s ski schools across the country gained legitimacy and status from those directing them--usually European immigrants to America. Ski areas recruited European ski school directors and instructors because they not only had more years of experience with ski schools and ski instruction than Americans, but they also lent a romance and mystique to the sport that attracted business. After American ski racers competed more successfully in international competitions and skiing came of age in America, fewer Europeans directed ski schools and the larger ski area corporations gradually took them over.

Aspen Mountain had a professional Ski Patrol during the Aspen Skiing Corporation's first season, usually supported by donations from skiers. That year at least six men had access to a network of telephones on Aspen Mountain to help the injured

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<sup>160</sup>(Woods 1946)

<sup>161</sup>There were 20 instructors during the 1952-53 season in addition to Friedl Pfeifer and Fred Iselin. They were: Elli Iselin, Morrie Shepard, Dick Wright, Klaus Obermeyer, Sandy Sabbatini, Knut Smith, Jim Snobble, Harry Poschman, Thelma Sabbatini, George Garcia, Kingsbury Pitcher, Karl Pfeifer, Herbert Jochum, Wendy Morse, Hans Nogler, Bob Murri, Toni Woerndle, Roy Reid, Roy Vroom, and Jack McTarnaham. Wintersköl Program, 1953, Wintersköl 1952-1961 file, AHS.

and promote skiing safety. They followed Minot Dole's National Ski Patrol policies and guidelines. During the 1947-48 season the ski patrol had grown to thirteen men, led by Leonard Woods.<sup>162</sup> These men gave toboggan rides to 121 Aspen skiers that season, most of who suffered simple ankle sprains, and the Ski Patrol reported 50 accidents--34 of which resulted in fractures. Two people dislocated their shoulders and seven got punctured by a ski pole. Woods figured that, assuming the mountain had 21,000 skier-days, the accident rate was one-fifth of one percent.<sup>163</sup> Since these early years skiers have grown increasingly dependent upon the services of the National Ski Patrol. Minot Dole incorporated them successfully into American skiing culture, despite early accusations that he was a sissy for worrying about skier safety.<sup>164</sup>

#### The Aspen Ski Club, 1940s-1950s

Until 1945 the Aspen Ski Club had developed and managed the skiing on Aspen Mountain, and it was to the Club that Friedl Pfeifer made his original pitch for a ski resort in Aspen after his discharge from the war. The Club transferred control over the boat tow on Aspen Mountain to Pfeifer in 1945 and agreed to create an annual downhill/slalom combined race to be called the Roch Cup. Members of the Ski Club also organized volunteer labor to cut new trails with Pfeifer and then Dick Durrance. Local skiers still provided necessary support for Aspen skiing in general and for the Aspen Skiing Corporation in particular. After World War II the Aspen community grew along with the Ski Corporation. New people moved to town in order to ski, to start businesses, or build vacation homes. As Aspen grew as a ski community, so too did membership in

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<sup>162</sup>Leonard Woods, "Annual Report of the Aspen Ski Patrol, 1947-48 Season," manuscript, Skiing: Ski Patrol file, AHS. The ski patrolmen for that season were: Curt Chase, Alf Shesley, Bob Dennis, Jim Ellertson, Jim Green, William Lane, Fred Maxwell, Fred Nyland, Bob Parker, Morris Shepherd, Gale Spence, Jim Voorhees, and Leonard Woods, who was the patrol leader.

<sup>163</sup>(Woods 1948, 5)

<sup>164</sup>(Burton 1971, 57) Ski Patrol members for the 1952-53 season were: Earl Eaton (leader), Roy Parker, Charles Paterson, Don Flynn, George MacDonald, Puck Worden, James Perry, and Earl Morse. Wintersköl Program, 1953.

the Aspen Ski Club grow. Growth in size, however, did not correspond to growth in responsibility. Rather, the Ski Club geared itself more towards local children and less towards ski area management. The Club sponsored instruction for kids and helped get them to regional races along the western slope. Friedl Pfeifer coached promising young Aspen skiers during the 1940s, and in the 1950s Gale Spence, who had moved to Aspen to open a retail business, coached members of the Aspen Ski Team and took them as far as the Junior National Championships.<sup>165</sup> Parents provided transportation to races closer by, driving kids to Winter Park, Climax, Steamboat Springs, and other Colorado ski areas. The Marolt boys--Bud, Max, and Bill--started in the ski club during the 1950s and went on to earn national acclaim.

#### The Roch Cup

The Ski Club hosted its own annual race in Aspen at the behest of Friedl Pfeifer. Like Roch and the Aspen Ski Club of the 1930s, Pfeifer knew that competitions would attract racers who would advertise the area to others. This downhill/slalom combined race named in honor of Andre Roch initially attracted only racers from Colorado--it would become internationally known. The Aspen Ski Club hosted the first Roch Cup in March of 1946, before the chair lift opened; twenty men and three women competed. Local people like Elizabeth Oblock who had only competed once before in her life shared the roster with seasoned college and even international competitors including Dick Durrance, Steve Knowlton, Jerry Hiatt, and Barney McLean.<sup>166</sup> It stormed on race day for the downhill, and competitors hiked up the Roch Run and skied down on a foot of unpacked powder. The slalom course on the corkscrew was steep, narrow, and fast, despite the new snow.<sup>167</sup> Crossing the road three times and avoiding the trees made the

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<sup>165</sup>Cherie Gerbaz Oates, interview by the author, 13 July 1994, Aspen, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>166</sup>Results, First Annual Roch Cup Race, 17 March 1946, Skiing: Roch Cup 1946-50 file, AHS.

<sup>167</sup>(Sinclair 1994)

course challenging as well. After that first year more and more competitors took part in the Roch Cup, and many of them appeared on the 1948 Olympic Team, the 1950 FIS Team, or the 1952 Olympic Team.<sup>168</sup> As before the war, the reputation of the Roch Run and the quality of skiing at Aspen attracted athletes to town. Steve Knowlton and Pete Seibert came to Aspen in order to train for the 1948 Olympic tryouts. They both made the team, and helped Aspen's reputation as a ski center in the process.

### The 1950 FIS Championships

Dick Durrance thought one of the best ways to advertise Aspen to the world was to have an international race there. The Aspen Skiing Corporation got the 1950 FIS Championships--the biggest international race of the year and a race that had never before been held in the United States. Durrance and a number of other Aspen skiing supporters convinced the FIS (Fédération Internationale de Ski, the international skiing federation) to let Aspen host them by showing them the size and terrain of Aspen Mountain and promising to cut trails and make it suitable for the championships. The Skiing Corporation gave Durrance a budget of \$72,000 to cut trails, install telephone lines and timing equipment, and take care of the racers while they were in town.<sup>169</sup> Durrance and local volunteers cut Spar Gulch and the Silver Queen trails, where the men's downhill and the giant slalom would be held. The women's downhill took place on Ruthie's Run. In addition to advertising, the FIS races were a good excuse to expand Aspen Mountain's available runs.

Racers began arriving in Aspen as early as December (the race wasn't until February). Stein Erikson from Norway and Friedl Pfeifer struck up a friendship during

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<sup>168</sup>Sally Niedlinger competed in her first Roch Cup in 1948, won it in 1951 and 1953, and was a member of the 1952 Olympic Team. Sally Niedlinger Hudson, interview by Ruth Whyte, 9 March 1987, tape recording, AHS. Steve Knowlton placed fourth in the 1946 Roch Cup and went on to participate in the 1950 FIS Championships.

<sup>169</sup>(Durrance 1993)

this time.<sup>170</sup> By February 1,500 competitors, coaches, officials, and spectators had booked rooms in Aspen. Local residents welcomed the competitors and housed many of them in their own homes. Denver newspapers anticipated the event with enthusiasm, predicting that "this skiing on a level never witnessed in the Colorado Rockies before will place Aspen and Colorado among the great and hallowed ski spots of the world." The author went on to say that "from at least fifteen different cold weather countries all over the world the skiers are arriving . . . and the lofty old Colorado town of Aspen is about to pop the buttons off its brocaded vest while going about its chore as hospitable host."<sup>171</sup> The whole town seemed to get caught up in the excitement of the event, and many residents re-established ties with their old homes by visiting with the competitors. Aspen locals from the mining years hailed from Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Italy and a number of other European countries. Yugoslavian racers spent every night having supper with a different Aspen family originally from that area.<sup>172</sup>

Not all competitors traveled far to get to the race, however. The American ski teams featured some Aspenites and Coloradans. Barney McLean from Hot Sulphur Springs coached the men's team which included Steve Knowlton, Gale Spence, Toni Matt, and Pete Seibert.<sup>173</sup> Friedl Pfeifer coached the women's team, to which belonged Andrea Mead, who would go on to win two Olympic gold medals in 1952. Aspen residents helped with the race in a number of ways beyond housing competitors. Fred Iselin, Dick Durrance, and Friedl Pfeifer set the courses, and many local volunteers worked as gatekeepers.<sup>174</sup> The FIS Championships put Aspen in an international spotlight, and

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<sup>170</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 162)

<sup>171</sup>Jane True, "FIS Spells 'A Word On Skis' at Aspen," Rocky Mountain Empire Magazine, 8 January, 1950, 3.

<sup>172</sup>(Sinclair 1994); Bob Collins, "Ski Stars of Many Lands Jam Aspen for World Tilt," unidentified clipping, Skiing: FIS 1950 file, AHS.

<sup>173</sup>Barney Mclean, interview by Ruth Whyte, 15 October 1986, Aspen, tape recording #C89, AHS.

<sup>174</sup>List of FIS Gatekeepers, Skiing: FIS 1950 file, AHS. Names that stand out on the list include: Herbert Bayer, Fritz Benedict, Chuck Bishop, Jed and Paul Gallagher, Joe

marked the emergence of American competitors and ski areas into the international ski world. Not only had Aspen joined the new, post-war ski industry, but the FIS races had distinguished it from all other ski areas in the nation. Like other earlier accomplishments in Aspen skiing, these races resulted from a combination of local energy and outside experience.

#### Local Residents and the Aspen Skiing Corporation

Employment of long-time residents in new businesses offers one way of examining the relationship between outsiders and locals. Quite a number of long-time Aspen residents went to work for the Aspen Skiing Corporation cutting trails, building lifts, and running machinery. Here lies one of the most direct links between Aspen's mining and skiing--individual people. Many of these people or their parents had come to Aspen to mine; they ended up working on the mountain rather than inside it. These locals were the connective tissue that held the community together through the trauma of western economic boom-bust cycles, and they were flexible enough to become part of the emerging ski industry. Aspen's growth as a resort came as a result of locals and newcomers working together--neither party could manage the project alone.

Local men started working for the Ski Corporation the year it started in 1946, and some of them stayed for a remarkably long time. Ray Bates, for example, came to Aspen in 1933 to build a water diversion tunnel and worked for the Aspen Skiing Corporation from 1946 until 1966, setting machinery and lift towers.<sup>175</sup> Ed Tekoucich worked with Bates putting in lifts for the Corporation, and stayed for about fifty years. "That was a nightmare, putting in those first lifts," he said. "There was dozens of them --Buttermilk, Snowmass, Aspen. Anytime they wanted a lift built, here they would come-a-running. But it was good money. Anything can happen when you are building

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Marsella, Teleo Caparella, Louie Zupancic, John Glidden, Don and Lowell Elisha, Louie Sparovic, Willie Hodges, Porry Robinson, Stuart Mace, Art Pfister, and Paul Duke.  
<sup>175</sup>(Daily 1994, 98)

lifts if you got a bunch of dingbats working for you."<sup>176</sup> Ed's brother George (Buttons) Tekoucich helped build the Sundeck in the summer of 1946 after he returned from fighting with the 10th Mountain Division. After they built the Sundeck they cut more trails, and then George went to work with his brothers at their sawmill in 1947, preferring that to the Ski Corporation.<sup>177</sup> Red Rowland also began working for the Aspen Skiing Corporation in 1946. His parents came to Aspen in about 1900 and his father was an engineer in the mines. Red took up farming, worked on the road crew, for the Midnight Mine, helped the Elishas at the Hotel Jerome, was foreman for a construction company, and worked on a number of water tunnels and road projects. He became the assistant manager for the Skiing Corporation in 1946 and kept working for them until he retired in 1977.<sup>178</sup> John Dolinsek worked on and off for about eight years as trail boss, and his brother Frank worked as a maintenance man and as assistant boss when Red Rowland wasn't available.<sup>179</sup> Skiing Corporation jobs were not limited to men. Edie Skiff Chisolm's father came to mine in Aspen and later bought a ranch; she worked for the Aspen Skiing Corporation for 21 years.<sup>180</sup> Countless other locals worked for the Corporation, running lifts, ticket offices, grooming equipment, and filling jobs wherever they could. They came from mining families, ranching or farming families, or from families who had worked in a variety of ways in order to get by. These men and women were used to adapting to changing economic realities because many of their families had experienced both the boom years and the "quiet years." Their ability to adapt and become part of Aspen's skiing future ensured that at least a small core community in Aspen would remain intact during a time when rising prices and land values were squeezing some locals out of Aspen.

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<sup>176</sup>(Daily 1994, 495) He didn't say who the digbats were.

<sup>177</sup>(Daily 1994, 499)

<sup>178</sup>(Daily 1994, 415-416)

<sup>179</sup>(Daily 1994, 223)

<sup>180</sup>(Daily 1994, 176) She worked in an office, not building lifts.

## Skiing and Aspen's Community

The relationships between skiing and Aspen's community are many. During the 1930s and early 1940s Aspen's community consisted primarily of people living through the "Quiet Years," hoping for the revival of silver mining and spending time with one another. This core community accepted the Highland Bavarian Corporation and Andre Roch and supported the boat tow, the Roch Cup, and the Aspen Skiing Corporation through volunteer work and the Ski Club. Long-time residents provided continuity and support for Aspen's growth as a ski resort through their continued presence and labor. In addition to those who took jobs with the Aspen Skiing Corporation, Aspen's community supported skiing by housing FIS athletes and gatekeeping in 1950, and by driving jeeps in 1954. That was the winter that the No. 1 lift broke--the main bull wheel broke a tooth off and had to be sent to Denver for repairs. The lift was down for days and skiers were leaving town in droves. In response, Red Rowland plowed the back road to the Sundeck and Aspenites carried skiers up Aspen Mountain in a convoy of about 35 jeeps.<sup>181</sup> Here is a clear-cut case of the local community supporting skiers--physically.

Aspen locals also supported skiers in other ways. Jack dePagter wanted to make sure they had fun even if it wasn't Christmas or New Year's. He also wanted to have a little fun himself. In 1951 he had lived in Aspen for two years and opened the Holland House Lodge. After New Year's the town generally slowed down, and one evening dePagter and some friends came up with way to spice up their lives and business. They created Winterskol, a toast to winter, a week long carnival that would include ski races, a parade, costume contests, ice skating shows, parties and dancing every night at a different establishment, and a coronation ball with a queen who could ski as well as look

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<sup>181</sup>Natalie Gignoux, interview by Ruth Whyte, 16 September 1986, Aspen, tape recording, AHS.

good. A group of local folks did this all in 1951 with a budget of \$50.<sup>182</sup> This diversion in 1951 became an established, annual, week-long event, when local businesses, the ski school, the Skiing Corporation, and town officials all joined for some fun--attracting visitors to town in the meantime.

While cutting trees, driving jeeps, and having parades were all activities that supported skiing, the relationship between skiing and the Aspen community changed between 1945 and 1954. A core community that had lasted through Aspen's boom and through the "quiet years" remained, but more and more people moved to Aspen after World War II and the growth of Aspen skiing. People like Mike Magnifico, Johnny Litchfield, Steve Knowlton, Fred and Elli Iselin, and Fritz Benedict all came to Aspen after the war and established businesses in town. As they moved to town and accepted local causes as their own, these people and others like them, once newcomers or outsiders, identified themselves as locals. The Aspen community, in other words, was becoming a ski community, not just a community that supported skiing. Those who had remained in Aspen throughout the quiet years were still locals, but many found themselves increasingly marginalized in Aspen's new economy. Miners, farmers, and ranchers who had once made up the very heart of Aspen's existence took jobs created by outside money and limited in their potential for upward mobility.<sup>183</sup> As Aspen's

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<sup>182</sup>"A Tribute to Jack dePagter," Wintersköl Magazine (1991), 11; Mary Eshbaugh Hayes, "The Ghost of Winterskols Past," Wintersköl (1975), both in Jack dePagter biography file, AHS. Those in on Wintersköl's generation besides dePagter were Army and Myrna Armstrong, Bill and John Herron, Tom Sardy, Lou Wille, Helen Knowland, Delphine Carpenter, Kurt Bresnitz, John Doremus, and Henry Pederson.

<sup>183</sup>See Hal Rothman's forthcoming book entitled "Devil's Bargains: Tourism and Transformation in the Twentieth Century West" for a discussion of how tourism acts as a replacement economy within a typical western boom and bust cycle. Western town residents, he argues, seek out tourism and accept it as an economic revitalization for their community, but rarely succeed in getting beyond service or manual labor employment themselves. Their local economy grows and leaves them victim to rising land values, taxes, and prices. In tourism and mining alike, outside money and big business dominate local economies and provide employment opportunities that are limited in their potential for upward mobility. Hal K. Rothman, "Devil's Bargains: Environment, Economics, and the Rise of Tourism in the American West," unpublished manuscript.

economy changed in the 1950s the community began the process of redefining itself according to its changing economy, population, and sense of direction. What made this transition even more problematic than usual for Aspen was its simultaneous growth as a cultural center.

Just as 1950 was a landmark year for Aspen's status as a ski resort, 1949 marked its emergence as an intellectual and cultural center. Walter Paepcke continued buying Aspen properties and planning his ideal community throughout the summer of 1945. He also began introducing his relatives and influential business friends to the town in the hopes that they would want to support and participate in his restoration and reformation of Aspen. Paepcke wanted the town to be more than a vacation spot for select people, "he wanted to make Aspen something of a *Kulturstaat*, a civilized state organized around culture and thriving on it."<sup>184</sup> He took most interest, then, in Aspen's cultural, educational, and architectural development. In February of 1947 Paepcke and University of Chicago Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins seized upon the idea of celebrating the 200th anniversary of Goethe's birth in Aspen. Here was the chance to bring intellectuals to Aspen, boost its culture as well as its summer economy, and honor a poet-philosopher that had given Paepcke a unique kind of spiritual nourishment.<sup>185</sup>

Paepcke established the Goethe Bicentennial Foundation that October and set out to sell Goethe, humanism, and Aspen to intellectuals across the country and even the world. After over a year of planning, advertising, and cajoling, they came. Mitropoulos and the Minneapolis Symphony, pianist Artur Schnabel, Metropolitan opera stars Mack Harrell, Jerome Hines, and Herta Glaz, black soprano Dorothy Maynor, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, and violinists Nathan Milstein and Erica Morini all came, and that was just the music.<sup>186</sup> Albert Schweitzer, José Ortega y Gasset, Guisepppe Borgese, and Thornton Wilder headlined the program, and made June and July of 1949 a landmark for Aspen

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<sup>184</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1983, 145)

<sup>185</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1993, 147)

<sup>186</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1993, 159)

culture. The Goethe Bicentennial spawned intellectual, musical, and cultural organizations under the Paepcke's guidance that continue in Aspen today. In December of 1949 Walter Paepcke created the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, an organization that would hold seminars in Aspen in order "to bring together thoughtful leaders from the fields of government, education, business and labor in an attempt to find a meeting ground which all of these groups will recognize as a common foundation for citizenship."<sup>187</sup> The Aspen Music Festival and Music School opened in June 1951, the same year the International Design Conference of Aspen started. Walter Paepcke's vision of creating an American Salzburg, of enriching Aspen's cultural life and contributing to the "cross-fertilization of ideas," shaped Aspen's community in the 1950s to a degree comparable with the growth of skiing.

Aspen's growth as a ski resort, however, endangered Paepcke's vision of a cultural mecca, especially when it became apparent that skiing would bring more money to town than music and seminars. Aspen's revival combined culture and skiing, but the ascendancy of popular recreation would surpass the beginnings of refined culture, placing Paepcke's cultural hopes at the mercy of the mass public and economic growth. "Schizophrenic Aspen," one author wrote, "would not be made whole."<sup>188</sup> Paepcke's cultural vision, Pfeifer's goal of building a premier ski resort, and locals' dream of reviving the silver boom days pulled the Aspen community in a variety of directions. Locals tended to resent Paepcke's efforts to change the image of Aspen more than they resented the Skiing Corporation's development of Aspen Mountain and the occasional influx of skiers, but both kinds of development changed the community. Winter brought young people from Colorado and farther away to try out their skis and skills on Aspen Mountain. Some wealthy Denver skiers from the Arlberg Club invested in the Aspen Skiing Corporation and bought second homes in Aspen. Other club members came up for

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<sup>187</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1993, 212, 236)

<sup>188</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1993, 143)

the weekends.<sup>189</sup> Skiers usually stayed for at least a few days--some stayed for the entire season, picking up odd jobs where they could to pay the bills. One young man who came to investigate rumors of excellent skiing ended up buying a few lots of land and opening his own lodge.<sup>190</sup> Summer brought visitors of a different cut--a bit older, connoisseurs of literature and classical music more than the Roch Run. Some people who came to Aspen crossed the boundaries between skiing and culture and were thus doubly attracted to the town. Upper-class outdoorspeople like members of the Colorado Mountain Club or Denver's Arlberg Club fit this description. Paepcke and Pfeifer shared a friend in actor and skier Gary Cooper, who built a house in town in 1948. Skiers who had raced in college such as the Durrances, Johnny Litchfield, Fritz Benedict, and many others attended the Goethe Festival and loved it. Eventually people who moved to Aspen during the 1950s would recall that they came for the skiing but stayed because of the music, or vice versa. For all these people, Aspen seemed enriched rather than divided by the "cultural riches of summer festivals and the recreational and commercial boon of winter sports."<sup>191</sup>

The combination of skiing and high culture brought hundreds and even thousands of people to Aspen. The local economy grew and changed with its new residents and visitors. Lots Walter Paepcke had bought for back taxes sold for thousands of dollars as people chose to move to or build vacation homes in Aspen. Access to Aspen improved in December of 1948 with the opening of its airport and in 1954 when the state paved route 82. Paepcke's Aspen Company refurbished the Hotel Jerome and the Wheeler Opera House to a state approaching their Victorian splendor. After the war Mike

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<sup>189</sup>Those "slat-sliding socialites" who the Denver Post noted as frequenting Aspen included Mr. and Mrs. William V. Hodges, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Coors III, Mr. and Mrs. George Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Brown, Mr. and Mrs. D.R.C. Brown (who live in nearby Carbondale), Mr. and Mrs. George Berger, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Combs. "Slat-Sliding Socialites Ski During Vacations," Denver Post, 3 April 1949.

<sup>190</sup>Charlie Paterson, interview by the author, 28 June 1994, Aspen, tape recording, AHS. Mr. Paterson owns and runs the Boomerang Lodge.

<sup>191</sup>(James Sloan Allen 1993, 158)

Magnifico's cobbler shop sold ski equipment; in 1953 he advertised it as "Magnifico's Sports Shop, Aspen's Original and Oldest."<sup>192</sup> Tenth Mountain Division veterans Johnny Litchfield, Steve Knowlton, and Fritz Benedict became local businessmen as well as ski fans. Their skills as restaurant owner, club owner, and architect, respectively, came much into demand during the late 1940s and the 1950s. By 1953 ten different establishments advertised rooms for rent in the Winterskol program, along with the popular White Kitchen Cafe and five other restaurants.<sup>193</sup> Litchfield's Red Onion and Knowlton's Golden Horn developed reputations as fun places to frequent, while businesses like Beck and Bishop's grocery and the Isis Theater continued what they had been doing for decades. The infusion of people and money into a town already rich in scenery and history led observers to comment "I hope there are places all over the country where they have discovered, like you in Aspen, how to have peace without isolationism, and prosperity without smugness, and where the feeling of friendship and welcome strikes the newcomer as keenly as the mountain air."<sup>194</sup> Aspenites would come to value these characteristics as well, especially after the success of their skiing and tourism put those characteristics at risk.

The growth of Aspen's skiing and cultural events, and the national press they attracted, plunged the residents of a quiet would-be mining town into the world of tourism.<sup>195</sup> Aspenites got their economic revival, and the transition was not always smooth or comfortable. Some saw the change from Aspen's quiet years to its birth as a

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<sup>192</sup>Aspen Wintersköl program, 1953, Wintersköl file, AHS.

<sup>193</sup>The Little Nell, Mario's Bar and Restaurant, The House by the Side of the Road, Guido's Swiss Inn and Bar, and Edie's Restaurant also advertised. The popular Red Onion and Golden Horn were not in this program.

<sup>194</sup>Laura Haddock, "Aspen Comes Back--On Skis," Christian Science Monitor, 24 January, 1948, 6.

<sup>195</sup>Some tourists had come to Aspen well before the growth of skiing and culture. Blaine Bray--who had orchestrated the construction of the boat tow, ski club hut, and Willoughby jump in 1937--had built some cabins at Stillwater to house visiting hunters and fishermen. Tourism attracted by the region's fish and game dated from the 19th century, though probably increased significantly after promotional strategies for skiing and culture took hold.

resort town more troublesome than the relationship between skiing and culture. Residents of Aspen and Pitkin County only reluctantly passed their first zoning laws in 1955 and 1956.<sup>196</sup> One author in 1950 said, "Aspen is a town with a split personality. Like a schizophrenic mountain Lorelei, it can't decide whether it wants to be a mining center or a vacation resort." Not only had the kind of economic activity in Aspen changed, but so had those holding the reins. "As a comparatively new resort town," the author continued, "it has become a big-business center for sports, scenery, and culture, due to the expenditure by outside capital of more than \$1,000,000 to develop the community and another \$250,000 to publicize it to the world."<sup>197</sup> Aspen had entered the tourist business.

Aspen residents--recent ones and old-timers alike--noticed Aspen's change of drivers but approved of the new direction and speed. One man who had come to Aspen during the silver boom said of the 1955 tourists: "We're getting used to 'em. They bring in the most money, so we like to see them come."<sup>198</sup> Another local who had a more humorous turn of phrase entitled his analysis of the change "Nightmare in Lace Pants." "No doctor has announced it yet," he wrote, "but the process of grafting culture onto an old mining town is entirely feasible. The operation is not wholly without pain, usually in the region of the pocketbook, but it entails no loss of blood, the convalescence is daffy but pleasant, and the result depends on whether you wanted the operation in the first place. Aspen, after much soul searching, thought it did, and today, with the graft healed, it is looking in the mirror to see what the hell happened. Its face is certainly changed, but remembering the mouldering homes, unpainted and empty, of depression days, the change is all to the good."<sup>199</sup>

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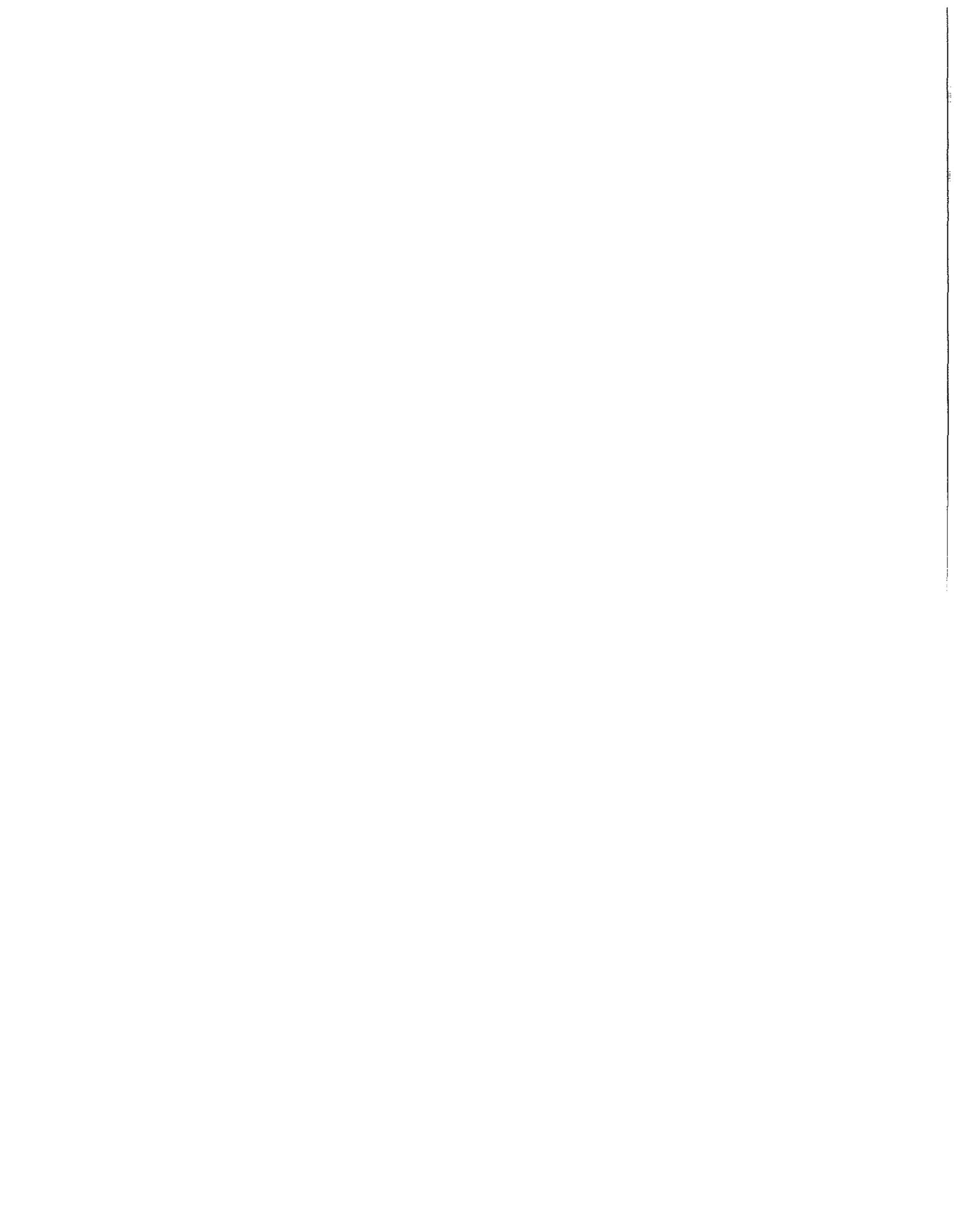
<sup>196</sup>Sally Barlow-Perez, A History of Aspen (Aspen, CO: Who Press, 1991), 75.

<sup>197</sup>Joe Alex Morris, "Aspen, Colorado," Saturday Evening Post, 14 October 1950, 27.

<sup>198</sup>Pearl Anoe, "Aspen Was No Ghost Town," Chrysler Events Owner's Magazine (August 1955), 14-15.

<sup>199</sup>Luke Short, "Nightmare in Lace Pants," Empire Magazine (1950), 12, pamphlet, Aspen file, University of Colorado at Boulder Archives.

The early 1950s thus marked a significant change in Aspen's development--its entrance into the tourist business full-time, year-round. Results of that transition included a growing economy, new residents, and a general feeling of optimism. New relationships formed among long-time Aspenites, recent residents, and visitors. Aspen's growth as a ski resort came from a cooperative effort between residents and the ski club, 10th Mountain veterans and avid skiers, and the investors Paepcke and Pfeifer attracted. Aspen's distinctiveness in the American ski world grew from the timely marriage of the development of skiing with Paepcke's vision of a cultural community, in a place where the landscape would enhance both.



## CHAPTER FIVE: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, 1955-1970

The Colorado ski industry experienced its adolescence between 1955 and 1970. Awkward and startling growth gave ski areas a youthful bravado at the same time that it raised new questions for them to face. By 1970 Colorado's ski industry had gained size, confidence, and a full set of the problems that come with maturity and responsibility. Tenth Mountain Division veterans and investors used new available technology to build ski areas and attract post-war consumers, but their efforts remained tentative until skiers made it obvious they wanted more. The 1960 Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley, California spurred the growth of skiing all over the country, and ski business in Colorado rose 42% the season after the Olympics.<sup>200</sup> When post-war lifts and ski areas could no longer handle the demand, ski areas were quick to expand old areas and build new ones. Skiers flocked to resort towns like Aspen to consume the local skiing, night life, and culture. Skiing thus became both a business and part of the tourist industry. Aspen and its residents reaped the rewards and paid the price of being one of the earliest and best-known members of the Colorado ski industry. Its culture and music shaped the community and drew summer visitors in ways other resorts would emulate in later years. In the meantime, Aspen developed an image and attracted people that war-years residents could hardly recognize.

Colorado ski industry growth in the 1950s and 1960s staggered the imagination. One ski industry brochure pointed out that in 1945 "ski lifts, by today's standards, were slow and archaic. Accommodations were practically nil. Rarely did the skier spend anything more than a few hours and the price of a lift ticket at the area." That year, it went on, skiers spent about \$50,000 at Colorado's two main ski areas, while in 1967

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<sup>200</sup>Peggy Clifford and John Macauley Smith, "The Distressing Rebirth of Aspen," Denver Post Empire Magazine, 16 August, 1970, 8.

lifts and mountain facilities for the 29 ski areas now in the state represented an investment of \$40,000,000.<sup>201</sup> By 1970 skiing contributed to the entire state's economy, marking Colorado's entrance into the tourism business.

Equally amazing growth occurred in Aspen. Lift lines for the No. 1 and No. 2 lifts grew up to two hours long, and the Skiing Corporation had trouble preventing people from cutting the line.<sup>202</sup> The Skiing Corporation responded by building the No. 3 lift from Tourtolette Park to the Sundeck in 1954, and the No. 4 lift to the top of Little Nell in 1956. The Corporation's annual report for 1960 noted that "with the tremendous growth in the popularity of skiing, there have been years when our waiting lines sometimes exceeded 60 minutes, but the construction in the last few years has cured this, and even at the busiest time of the season during the past winter waiting lines did not exceed about 10 minutes on the most popular lifts. We feel such service is better than that offered in most other popular ski resorts in the United States and abroad. However we recognize that we must anticipate a growth of about 15% a year, and it is possible that more lift construction will be undertaken in 1962."<sup>203</sup> In order to improve skiing on existing trails, the Corporation had started using caterpillar tractors with blades on the front to smooth the snow, followed by packing crews on skis. Like any growing industry, the Aspen Skiing Corporation utilized available technology to improve their product.

The Aspen Skiing Corporation was able to improve its product because the board of directors had decided almost from the start that profits would go towards expansion and development of the ski area's facilities rather than towards paying dividends. William Hodges, who had been president of the Skiing Corporation often along with George Berger during the late 1940s and early 1950s, loved to ski himself. He worked

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<sup>201</sup>Colorado Guestguide, vol. 12 (Denver: Guestguide Publications Inc., 1967), 50, pamphlet, Skiing file, AHS.

<sup>202</sup>(Hodges 1986, 10)

<sup>203</sup>(Hodges 1986, 14)

in Denver but belonged to the Arlberg Club and bought a house in Aspen so he and his family could spend as much time in town as possible. In 1958 D.R.C. Brown, a member of one of Aspen's original mining era families and an original investor in the Skiing Corporation, gave up his cattle ranching business, moved back to Aspen, and became the president of the Aspen Skiing Corporation. He would remain president for over 20 years and face more and more difficult problems as the Aspen Skiing Corporation grew during the 1960s.

### Buttermilk

One of the biggest problems with Aspen Mountain's product was that only the most experienced skiers could appreciate it. Andre Roch had stressed the importance of building a challenging run that would draw competitors to the area, but once skiing grew as a sport for everyone, this attraction became a liability. Friedl Pfeifer, whose business was to teach people how to ski, felt particularly frustrated by the difficulty of Aspen Mountain. The Corporation widened and smoothed out the Little Nell area for beginners, but even that left a rather challenging slope, and Pfeifer worried that beginners and families with young children were choosing to vacation at other ski areas. In September of 1953 Pfeifer bought 300 acres of land at the foot of what would become known as Buttermilk Mountain in the hopes of turning it into a beginner-intermediate ski area that would be connected to Aspen Mountain. The Skiing Corporation did not take Pfeifer's offer to lease his land for expansion, however, and Pfeifer found himself developing a new ski area without the direct involvement of the Corporation. He and Art Pfister, who owned land adjoining Pfeifer's at the base of Buttermilk, formed a corporation to build a new ski area and agreed to split expenses for a T-bar and a restaurant.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>204</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 184) Pfeifer sold his shares in the Aspen Skiing Corporation to raise the money he needed to start work. Fred Iselin and Billy Rubey were limited

Buttermilk ski area opened for business during the 1958-59 season, with a 4,000 foot Dopplemeyer T-bar that rose 720 vertical feet.<sup>205</sup> Pfeifer, who was still owner and head of the Aspen Ski School with Fred Iselin, met his students at Rubey Park at the ski school meeting place and then bussed them to Buttermilk for lessons. Business during the first season was slow; Buttermilk was relatively unknown outside the Roaring Fork Valley. Lift manager Artur Kuen estimated their first season visits at only a few hundred skier-days.<sup>206</sup> Business was good enough to merit limited expansion, though, and within the next few years Kuen moved the T-bar to Sterner (now Tiehack), and installed another T-bar on the bunny hill. In the effort to fund more building projects, Pfeifer recruited Robert O. Anderson, president of Atlantic Richfield Oil Co. and member of the Aspen Skiing Corporation board of directors, to become partners with him and Pfister. Anderson signed on and funded the construction of two chair lifts and the Cliffhouse restaurant at the top of the mountain, which opened in November 1962.<sup>207</sup> That year an adult day ticket cost \$5, or \$3 for children, and the corporation advertised the mountain's "ultra-wide, two and three mile trails over marvelous terrain."<sup>208</sup> In addition to having long, wide, gently-sloping trails, the Buttermilk owners worked to provide smooth skiing for its customers. To that end, they purchased a snowcat to groom trails, at about the same time that mechanical grooming equipment was smoothing snow on Aspen Mountain. Both areas thus entered the world of skiing as big

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partners in the corporation. See Mary Eshbaugh Hayes, "Buttermilk: Lookin' Good at 30," Aspen Times, 11 February 1988, C-1.

<sup>205</sup>Artur Kuen came along from Germany with the Dopplemeyer T-bar equipment to install the lift, and ended up working for Buttermilk and then Snowmass, installing and repairing countless other lifts. He still lives in the area. See Artur Kuen, interview by the author, 13 July 1994, Aspen, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>206</sup>Hayes, C-1. Paul Hauk, the Forest Service Ranger for the White River National Forest, calculated Buttermilk's 1958-59 skier-days at 16,400, compared to Aspen Mountain's 93,000 and Aspen Highlands' 30,000. Paul Hauk, "Aspen Highlands Ski Area Chronology," 1986, manuscript, Aspen Highlands file, AHS.

<sup>207</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 187)

<sup>208</sup>Buttermilk brochure, 1962-63, Buttermilk file, AHS.

business; they used available technology to attract business, and they used it to compete against other ski areas.

Competition between Buttermilk and Aspen Mountain remained low, however, because both Pfister and Anderson were on the board of directors for the Aspen Skiing Corporation as well as being partners in Buttermilk. The Aspen Skiing Corporation actually handled Buttermilk's ticket sales and marketing. The two skiing corporations came even closer together in the summer of 1963 when Friedl Pfeifer sold his interest in the Buttermilk Mountain Skiing Corporation and leased the ski area to the Aspen Skiing Corporation. He also gave up his rights to the ski school, which Fred Iselin would take over.<sup>209</sup> The Aspen Skiing Corporation would continue to expand Buttermilk, building a chairlift on Buttermilk West to open more advanced terrain for the 1965-66 season. By this time the Aspen Skiing Corporation had expanded on Aspen Mountain and taken over management of the growing Buttermilk area. Business in the ski industry was getting bigger.

#### Aspen Highlands

Aspen's ski business was growing in more places than Aspen Mountain and Buttermilk. Aspen Highlands opened the same season that Buttermilk did, the product of primarily one man. Whipple Van Ness Jones first visited Aspen in the winter of 1947-48 to confirm the rumors he had heard about Aspen's new ski area. Raised in Wisconsin and graduated from Harvard Business School, Whip Jones returned in 1949 to attend the Goethe Bicentennial. He so enjoyed the event and Aspen in the summer that he bought a house from Walter Paepcke's son-in-law the next year and moved in during 1951.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>(Pfeifer 1993, 192)

<sup>210</sup>Whip Jones, interview by the author, 12 July 1994, Aspen, transcription, AHS. Jones had been skiing at Sun Valley in the late 1930s, where he met Friedl Pfeifer and Fred Iselin. During the war he served in the Air Force, after which he skied at Aspen and then tried his hand at investment banking in St. Louis. (Hauk 1986, 1) Jones bought his property from Paepcke's then son-in-law, Leonard Woods.

Four or five years later Jones decided to purchase some land where he could live and raise some horses, so he bought the Highlands base area property from Had Deane, who owned the T Lazy 7 ranch. Initially Jones had no intentions of running a ski area at all. His new neighbors introduced him to the idea in 1957. Had Deane, Dick Wright, and Pat Henry asked Jones if he would like to invest in a ski area proposal on Sievers Mountain behind Deane's property at the mouth of Willow Creek. Paul Hauk, the local Forest Service ranger, inspected the site and found the base area too cramped and the lower slopes too steep for a viable ski area. Hauk noticed, however, the skiing potential of the Highland Peak area behind Jones' property and encouraged Jones to consider developing a major ski area there.<sup>211</sup> During the late 1950s, when ski areas were beginning to boom and few realized the degree of their environmental impact, the U.S. Forest Service played advocate rather than resisting ski area development. They encouraged Jones to build because Aspen Mountain had become too crowded.<sup>212</sup>

Whip Jones thus set about discovering the potential of his backyard and the forest service land beyond it for skiing. In August and September 1957 Jones trekked up and down the mountainside with Hauk, Dick Durrance, Friedl Pfeifer, and Fred Iselin, who all gave positive reports on the area. After more visits by Forest Service people and studies by Durrance and other consultants, Whip Jones accepted a 30-year lease on approximately 4,200 acres of National Forest land and signed it on April 16, 1958.<sup>213</sup> Jones had approached the Aspen Skiing Corporation that past September to see if they wanted to participate in the development of Highlands, but they did not. Then president William Hodges explained, as he had to Pfeifer, that the Aspen Skiing Corporation had its hands full managing Aspen Mountain. Like Pfeifer, Whip Jones decided to develop a ski

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<sup>211</sup>(Hauk 1986, 1)

<sup>212</sup>(Jones 1994) It is unclear what "too crowded" meant--whether there were too many skiers for the Aspen Mountain environment, or too many for the Skiing Corporation to provide them all with an appealing experience.

<sup>213</sup>(Hauk 1986, 2) Jones owned 156 acres at the base of the proposed area.

area on his own.<sup>214</sup> He hired Pete Seibert, a 10th Mountain Division veteran and ski racer, and Earl Eaton, former head of the ski patrol on Aspen Mountain. Both had been working at Loveland Basin and agreed to come to Highlands and lay out trails and lift line corridors. Seibert became mountain manager, Eaton organized the ski patrol, and Stein Erikson helped lay out trails and became head of the ski school. Aspen Highlands opened for the 1958-59 season with two chair lifts, a T-bar, and a short rope tow.<sup>215</sup>

During its first season Highlands had almost 30,000 skier-visits, compared to 93,000 on Aspen Mountain and 16,400 on Buttermilk. Stein Erikson did much to promote Aspen Highlands as ski school director--he was a well-known racer from Norway who had first come to Aspen for the 1950 FIS championships and became famous for doing flips on skis. Jones attributed much of Highland's early growth to Erikson's notoriety, but no one could approach Fred Iselin's charm and charisma. Aspen Highlands continued its success, especially after Fred Iselin became director of the ski school during the 1964-65 season. Iselin had come from Switzerland in 1939 and taught skiing in Yosemite, Sun Valley, and finally Aspen. In addition to his skiing talents, Iselin had a capacity for humor that set him apart from every other ski instructor or spokesman. He had fun skiing and taught everyone else to have fun, too. Paul Hauk even attributed the change from dark to colorful ski fashions to Iselin.<sup>216</sup> Aspen Highlands' success resulted from a variety of factors. It had new terrain in a time and place where skiing demand was outgrowing Aspen Mountain. It had famous, interesting ski school directors and lower rates than those of the Skiing Corporation. After 1959 it had a bus system to bring skiers from Aspen to Highlands and back, and it had more snowfall and a better view than both Aspen Mountain and Buttermilk.

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<sup>214</sup>(Hauk 1986, 1); also see "The Mountain Moguls," Aspen Times, 8 December 1977, 1-2.

<sup>215</sup>The two chairlifts were the 8,800 foot long Exhibition lift, mostly on forest land, and the 2,700 foot long Thunderbowl, on Jones' land. (Hauk 1986, 2) Seibert and Eaton would go on to develop Vail, which opened in 1962.

<sup>216</sup>"The Mountain Moguls," and (Hauk 1986, 3-4)

## Industrial Growth and Ski Country USA

As early as 1958 the Aspen area could boast of three different mountains on which visitors could ski, and three different ski companies to choose from. While the Aspen Skiing Corporation bought out Buttermilk in 1962, Aspen Highlands remained under Whip Jones' ownership and management until 1992.<sup>217</sup> Expansion and competition characterize big business, and they characterized Aspen skiing during the 1960s. All three ski areas grew during that decade along with the national appeal of skiing. The U.S. Forest Service study of Colorado ski resources in 1959 concluded that "Colorado will need at least two new chair lifts each year to keep up with the current rate of increase in pleasure skiing." The study cited Denver and Aspen as the major growth areas in Colorado.<sup>218</sup> Skiers supported the study's findings with their feet. Between 1958-59 and 1964-65 skier-visits to Aspen Mountain, Buttermilk, and Aspen Highlands soared. Buttermilk went from 16,400 to 87,500, Aspen Highlands grew from 30,000 to 68,000, and Aspen Mountain went from 93,000 to 174,000 skier-visits.<sup>219</sup> By the 1968-69 season skier use of Aspen Highlands topped 145,000 and continued to rise during the 1970s.

Growth of this magnitude forced the once young and naive ski industry to grow up and make some changes. It had to come to terms, in other words, with its size. Already ski areas were competing with one another for business and investing more and more capital into ski lifts, restaurants, and grooming equipment in the process. By 1963

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<sup>217</sup>Whip Jones owned and managed Aspen Highlands until December of 1992, when gave a portion of it to Harvard and ran it for them for a year. In December 1993 the Aspen Skiing Corporation bought the rights to the skiing operations and management from Gerald Hines, who had bought them from Harvard and Jones and kept most of the real estate himself. The Aspen Skiing Corporation had offered to buy Highlands from Jones back in 1961, when Jones' personal assets were running low. Jones managed to keep control of Highlands through a loan from the Small Business Association and an agreement between Jones, the SBA, and the Forest Service covering his special use permit. (Hauk 1986, 3)

<sup>218</sup>"Forests Draw Ski Boom Plan," Denver Post, 4 October 1959, 7E.

<sup>219</sup>(Hauk, 1986, 3)

most Colorado ski areas belonged to the Rocky Mountain Ski Area Operators' Association, itself a result of ski industry growth and the need to establish policy. Members of this group faced problems and issues increasingly representative of big business. Insurance, insurance liability, lift inspection, long-range weather forecasting, ski instructor certification, relations with the Forest Service, and unions and labor disputes all required discussion.<sup>220</sup> Members of the ski industry found themselves thrust into a world dominated more by issues of big business than the sport of skiing.

Promoters of Colorado's economy saw ski industry growth as only positive: investments and expansions by the ski industry led to more investments by skiers as they came to the state for vacation. Members of the ski industry, however, saw the need to make some adjustments. In March 1963 some members proposed the creation of another organization to address the problems and needs of ski areas in the 1960s--Ski Country USA.<sup>221</sup> This new organization would address the need "for the unification of all ski areas in the Southern Rocky Mountain area." "Nowhere in the USA," the founder wrote, "is there grouped such a vast amount of ski country with so many well established, world famous ski areas and potential of so many more."<sup>222</sup> The growth of skiing had not only created more ski areas across the state, but it led to a number of national organizations including the National Ski Patrol, the United States Ski Association, and the organization representing professional ski instructors. Ski Country USA would "be the general agency and coordinator for all ski business affiliated with this area . . . it could be the bureau of assistance and cooperation for the ski industry in Colorado and New Mexico."<sup>223</sup> Ski Country USA would also address another major

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<sup>220</sup>Minutes, Rocky Mountain Ski Area Operators' Association special meeting, 19 April 1963, Broadmoor Hotel, Colorado Springs. Aspen Skiing Collections, AHS.

<sup>221</sup>Steve Knowlton was the driving force behind the creation of this organization. Knowlton had since left Aspen and his racing career and created a ski area for the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs called Ski Broadmoor.

<sup>222</sup>Letter from Steve Knowlton to Darcy Brown, "Proposal by Rocky Mountain Ski Area Operators' Association - Ski Country USA," 14 March 1963, Aspen Skiing Corporation collection, AHS.

<sup>223</sup>(Knowlton to Brown 1963)

concern of most industries--advertising. More ski areas meant more competition, nationally and internationally in the case of skiing, and Ski Country USA would unite southern Rocky Mountain areas and promote them as a group, hopefully with support from the state. In a nutshell, Ski Country USA's object was to "combine the efforts of all businesses related to skiing in the area encompassing all members of the Rocky Mountain Ski Area Operators' Association." It would be a "mutual effort to promote, advertise, and sell skiing, lodging, transportation, et al in this area to the world. The prime motive is to bring skiers to Ski Country USA and the participation of all will benefit all."<sup>224</sup> The birth of this organization marked the passage of the ski industry into adulthood.

#### Aspen Booms As A Tourist Town

The town of Aspen could hardly remain unaffected by the changes on Aspen Mountain, the growing popularity of skiing, and the emergence of a mature ski industry. Its reputation as a town that had both excellent skiing and an interesting community drew people and dollars in amounts unprecedented since the silver era. A Denver paper characterized the town in 1966 as "Aspen, Where Everyone Skis," and listed the bank's ski-up window, the opening of condominiums, commercial buildings, new restaurants, and a hair dressing shop as evidence that skiing was changing the town. "If Colorado is the Ski Capital of the World," the author said, "then Aspen is the county seat." Aspen Airlines ran four flights daily from Denver in 1966, flying in those tourists that did not rent cars to get to Aspen. Land values rose along with tourism and new businesses; one elderly lady, the author explained, recently declined an offer of \$90,000 for her hillside "shack" and homestead land, originally valued at \$950. A good 30-foot lot--of which anyone wanting to build a house would need two--cost \$7,500. Despite the then-exorbitant cost of land, Aspen's population had risen 40% from 1960 to 1965.<sup>225</sup> This

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<sup>224</sup>(Knowlton to Brown1963)

<sup>225</sup>Al Nakkula, "Aspen, Where Everyone Skis," Rocky Mountain News, 9 January 1966, 52.

growth compelled the town to adopt an Aspen Area Master Plan in 1966 so they could control development.

During the 1960s Aspen's population rose in number and changed in character. This decade marked the ascension of the apres-ski world and Aspen's reputation as a fashionable town. Even Business Week noticed. In 1964 it ran an article entitled "Aspen's New Silver Lode: It's apres-ski, or the business of making skiers happy from the end of the ski run to the wee hours--and it's making Aspen and other ski spots happy, too."<sup>226</sup> The maturity of the ski industry entailed more than the growth of ski areas themselves, it included the growth of restaurants, bars, hotels, and image--all necessary to attract and serve skiers on vacation. Aspen excelled at this aspect of the ski industry as well. Other ski areas in Colorado had big mountains and new facilities by the mid-1960s, but "for apres-ski--the festivities after the ski run--such peripatetic members of the 'jet set' and Aspen devotees as film star Jill St. John say it has no equal. 'You can spend two weeks in Aspen and hit a different place every night.' With 30 or so bars and restaurants in a hamlet of 2,500 permanent residents, the apres-ski game in Aspen is to find the 'in' place to be at the right hour."<sup>227</sup> Night spots like the Red Onion, the Golden Horn, the Hotel Jerome, the Crystal Palace, the Abbey, Galena St. East, the Mother Lode, the Centre Bar, and the Copper Kettle entertained visitors with different combinations of food and music. Shopping at Elli's or Terese David and having tea at the Aspen Country Store also became part of the Aspen skiing scene.

Early Aspen residents had turned to skiing and winter recreation as a means for economic revival and a return to boom days, and they got their wish. Just as in 19th century mining towns, mining the miners--and now mining the skiers--proved more lucrative than anything else. The owner of the Crystal Palace explained "this is a cut-

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<sup>226</sup>"Aspen's New Silver Lode," Business Week, 24 January 1964, 30-31. Clipping, Skiing 1963-64 file, AHS.

<sup>227</sup>("Aspen's New Silver Lode," 30)

throat business here; to be successful you have to specialize."<sup>228</sup> Werner Kuster bought the Red Onion in 1953 and spent \$200,000 putting a new restaurant, bar, band stand, and dance floor. He measured the success of his business not only by the numbers of customers he served over the years, but who those customers were. Drawing people like Robert and Edward Kennedy to the Red Onion helped shape an image of Aspen as playground for the rich and famous. Aspen's reputation and its growing number of visitors combined in an accelerating cycle that constantly re-shaped the image of the town and attracted more skier-tourists. Businesses in Aspen including the Aspen Skiing Corporation thus marketed more than their products themselves; they marketed their famous customers. Gary Cooper's role became Jill St. John's, and today stars ranging from George Hamilton and Hunter Thompson to Jack Nicholson and Barbie Benton share the responsibility--unconscious or unwanted as it may be--of shaping Aspen's public image. Skier-tourists came to Aspen to consume a complicated mix of the landscape, the night life, and other visitors; they continue to do so today.

The variety of people that flocked to Aspen during the 1960s often startled residents who had lived there since the quiet years. Along with movie stars and vacationing skier-tourists came a group of people now known as ski bums. In 1965 they were just establishing their identity, and a Denver paper referred to them as "ski bums, ski-niks, or whatever you will call the young, generally broke, crowd that streams lemming-like to Aspen in the winter for a little work and a lot of skiing and kicks."<sup>229</sup> Longtime resident Jim Blanning described the ski bum a bit differently, as a skier who might come to Aspen for several years and finally stay and establish himself, like dozens of the town's businessmen.<sup>230</sup> A growing seasonal population of young skiers shaped the

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<sup>228</sup>("Aspen's New Silver Lode," 31) Mead Metcalf started work in Aspen as a piano player and went on to own the Crystal Palace.

<sup>229</sup>"Antics in Aspen: Ski Resort Life Is Loud But Not Loose," Denver Post, 4 April 1965, 87. Ralph Jackson was one of Aspen's most famous "ski bums," who started Aspen's first underground ski school.

<sup>230</sup>("Antics in Aspen" 1965)

image of Aspen as much as a few celebrities did, causing a journalist from Life magazine to characterize Aspen as more of a frenzied party town than it actually was.<sup>231</sup>

Aspen has been such a hotbed for controversy over its people and goings-on in part because of the variety of people who live there--a variety first established in the late 1940s and accelerated in the 1960s. In 1950 one author declared that "residents of Aspen defy any simple classification. Some were born there in tents or log cabins during the mining rush of the 1880s, some are grizzled prospectors who hung on after the silver boom collapsed, some are professional men who became fed up with city life,, some are young couples with capital for a modest business and a passion for skiing, and a few are moneyed individuals who stopped off for a weekend of fun and stayed to buy a house."<sup>232</sup> This author thus characterized the mix of quiet years residents, 10th Mountain Division veterans and ski enthusiasts, and those influenced by Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke's efforts to build a cultural center.

Ten years later Aspen's population grew even more varied. Many of the original residents from the quiet years found themselves priced out of the very community they had hoped to revive and so sold their land and moved down valley. Some of them remained though, working for the Aspen Skiing Corporation, running small ranches outside of town, or entering the tourist business themselves.<sup>233</sup> Skiers and colleagues of the Paepckes who came to Aspen in the 1940s or early 1950s began to identify themselves as old-timers or locals by the 1960s, since they had been present for Aspen's initial entrance into the tourist economy. During the 1960s more people were coming and going to and from Aspen than ever before; in some ways those who had lived in town for 10 or 15 years really were old-timers. Class differences as well as length of residency

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<sup>231</sup>("Antics in Aspen" 1965) Here lies the power of the press and the ability of a town's image to grow apart from reality and even change that reality in the process.

<sup>232</sup>Morris, "Aspen, Colorado," Saturday Evening Post, 14 October, 1950, 171.

<sup>233</sup>The Stapletons, for instance, once ranched and now they run a bed and breakfast on Owl Creek.

divided Aspen's population in the 1940s and continued to do so increasingly through the 1960s. One man who had recently moved to Aspen from Connecticut in 1965 commented "the thing about Aspen is that you've got the working rich and the non-working rich, the working poor and the non-working poor. Throw in about 5,000 guest skiers with a complete turnover every five or six days and that's quite a mixture."<sup>234</sup> By 1970 this mix included hippies as well, who threatened the community with their anti-establishment behavior and appearance. "The hippies at Aspen," one author wrote, "whether by appearance or way of life, have formed a sub-culture and succeeded in polarizing the town."<sup>235</sup> This weird mix of residents and visitors, old-timers and outsiders, turned Aspen into a town with a distinct character and image at the same time that it introduced problems characteristic of most urban environments.

Those residents who had lived in Aspen since its quiet years noticed the changing population and usually pointed to the 1960s as the decade of biggest change. Vic Goodhard said "the changing of Aspen was kind of gradual until the 1960s, and then it really started popping." As owner of the garbage company Goodhard was probably in the best position to measure the growth of the town. "I couldn't keep up buying garbage trucks," he recalled, "because I had Snowmass and Aspen at the same time. Just trying to keep up. You didn't know what to plan for. All of a sudden, there were new places, bigger places that demanded more service, more people."<sup>236</sup> At that point, locals noticed, Aspen became a town almost foreign in its composition and atmosphere. The town, like the Aspen Skiing Corporation, joined the tourist business and a ski industry geared to pleasing as many customers as possible. Many Aspen residents remember the days when "everybody knew everybody else," or "everyone called each other by their first name, no

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<sup>234</sup>("Antics in Aspen" 1965)

<sup>235</sup>Nancy Wood, "Aspen--Uptight About the Offbeat," Denver Post Empire Magazine, 29 March, 1970, 18.

<sup>236</sup>(Daily 1994, 253)

matter who they were."<sup>237</sup> Or they remember Aspen before condominiums crept over the town like kudzu, making it possible for masses of people to experience Aspen's skiing and night life at once. Aspen's residents who lived there since the quiet years and those who came after World War II all had their own images of how they would like to see Aspen grow. Few of them imagined the type and degree of change that the 1960s would usher in.

### Snowmass--The Ultimate Ski Resort

All of the changes that Aspen and the ski industry experienced during the 1950s and 1960s culminated in the development of Snowmass-at-Aspen and its opening in December of 1967.<sup>238</sup> This ski resort appeared where there had been only ranches before as a complete community and year-round resort, catering to destination skier-tourists. Big business management, finance, planning, advertising, and sales characterized every aspect of its construction and operation. Skiing magazine referred to its "heavyweight corporate proficiency;" another author predicted that "it may be that this most massive of American ski areas is really what American skiers have been anticipating, and at the same time dreading, for 20 years now--the Happening that would take place when American business "know how" (whatever that is) put its energies to work in the field of recreation."<sup>239</sup> It was.

Snowmass was the brainchild of William Janss, a former Olympic skier and member of the California real estate-construction-cattle millionaire Janss family. He

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<sup>237</sup>Usually they were referring to the late 1940s or the early 1950s. See Fritz Benedict in Daily, 548, and June Hodges, interview by the author, 19 June 1994, Denver, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>238</sup>The opening of Vail in 1962 predated Snowmass and its type of development. Pete Seibert and Robert Parker--both veterans of the 10th Mountain Division--planned, advertised, and constructed this complete resort where no one had actually lived before. It opened with two double chairlifts and the first gondola in the nation. (Crested Butte's gondola opened just days later.) For more information on Vail's development see Fay, Ski Tracks in the Rockies and June Simonton, Vail: Story of A Colorado Mountain Valley (Denver: Vail Chronicles, Inc., 1987).

<sup>239</sup>"All You Add is People," unidentified clipping, Snowmass file, AHS.

had contemplated building a ski resort, and in the late 1950s he landed his ski-equipped plane on the east ridge of Baldy Mountain. His winter resort would be there and in the Brush Creek valley below. Working through an Aspen realtor (Jimmy Moore), by 1961 Janss quietly purchased seven ranches in Brush Creek totaling 3,400 acres.<sup>240</sup> After buying the base area land Janss announced his intention to develop Baldy Mountain and Burnt Mountain as a ski area. He signed a contract with the Aspen Skiing Corporation under which they would operate the ski area and open in the fall of 1967. Planners and developers cut some experimental trails in 1961 and began running snow cat skiing tours the next season. The 5,000 people who skied Snowmass' powder this way paid money and gave feedback that the developers would use to plan more trails.<sup>241</sup> Over the next five years three private firms would invest \$10 million. Snowmass Skiing Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Aspen Skiing Corporation, would build the lifts and manage the skiing. Janss Colorado Corporation, a subsidiary of Janss Investment Corporation, would develop and sell the real estate with the American Cement Corporation, which invested \$4.5 million in the project.<sup>242</sup>

More trail cutting began in 1963, and the next year master planning of the resort and its villages began. Construction of three lifts and Sam's Knob restaurant was finished by 1966, but the bulk of the building took place just the year before opening. Detailed planning prevailed over every aspect of the resort. Fritz Benedict designed a plan to select lodge, residence, and other sites "with full consideration as to view, relation to all other buildings, to roads, streams, and trees. All utilities at Snowmass are underground--no unsightly telephone or electric lines." This sounds like a mean feat for any resort, but the size of Snowmass made it phenomenal. By November of 1967

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<sup>240</sup>"Work Began in '61," The Snowmass Villager, 23 October 1967, 10-D, clipping, Snowmass file, AHS.

<sup>241</sup>For more information on the development of Snowmass, see Jim Snobble, interview by the author, 11 July 1994, Aspen, tape recording, AHS.

<sup>242</sup>"Snowmass-at-Aspen--Exciting New Shangri-la of Skiing," Denver Post Empire Magazine, 12 November, 1967, 17. Janss Corporation also owned and managed Sun Valley at this time; the age of the giant ski and real estate corporations was upon us.

Snowmass was "a complete community with all utilities; five lodges, 120 condominium apartments, a dozen private residences; a conference center with a movie theater, outdoor ice rink and paddle tennis courts; four heated outdoor swimming pools, including one of Olympic size; 21 shops and boutiques, six restaurants."<sup>243</sup> (Not including the five chairlifts and the restaurant on the mountain.) In order to coordinate so many construction projects Janss used computerized planning systems most often associated with aerospace technology, typical of the Janss "corporate giant of awesome efficiency" that similarly planned a community of 45,000 north of Los Angeles.<sup>244</sup> Janss built an entire village in one year at Snowmass; he projected and planned to have ten, all of which would be complete, balanced, communities. Attention to detailed design did not stop at the village outskirts, either. Snowmass offered smooth, groomed runs as well as steeper, more challenging slopes; it had such a large mountain and extensive lift system that crowding would not be a problem.

Snowmass was more than a lot of terrain, lifts, lodging, and services. Janss and the Aspen Skiing Corporation planned it as a new kind of resort, similar in conception to Vail, which had opened in 1962. Snowmass was designed as a destination resort, a place where people would come for their vacation and spend at least a week. The ski area, ice skating rinks, paddle tennis courts, swimming pools, and a variety of restaurants and shops could occupy an entire family for weeks--even if they did not want to ski at all. A collection of old ranch buildings turned into an arts center added yet another activity to the area. Finally, Snowmass was a new kind of ski resort because it was build to attract tourists in the summer, as well. Horseback riding, hiking, fishing, and the village would provide investors with at least some income during the summer months when most ski areas lost money. The resort at Snowmass opened in December of 1967,

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<sup>243</sup>("Snowmass-at-Aspen" 1967)

<sup>244</sup>("Snowmass-at-Aspen" 1967)

complementing Aspen's multi-layered and diverse community with one that was completely constructed, all at once, with tourists and profits in mind.

### New Worries

When skiing became part of the tourist industry and skiers and tourists became one and the same people, their expectations of the mountains, the ski area, the town, and their experience changed. They behaved more like consumers of a finished product than like outdoorspeople or competitors, and seemed unreasonable to people who remembered skiing during the 1930s and 1940s. "The class of skier probably changed in the 1960s," Frank Dolinsek said. "They went from the rugged macho skier to the destination resort skier: 'I have to have my trail groomed like a billiard table.' And that costs. Then they come into the syndrome of 'Let's sue them. I can be going down a hill looking backwards, hit a tree, and I'll sue.' And that costs."<sup>245</sup> George Tekoucich had an even lower tolerance for visiting skiers. Once a successful local racer with a reputation for going all-out, Tekoucich stopped racing after they put the lift in in 1946. "Too many people," he said.<sup>246</sup> These old-time Aspenites who came to work for the Aspen Skiing Corporation noticed changes in skiers and skiing that were symptomatic of Aspen's entrance into a maturing ski industry. Aspen as a community and the Skiing Corporation as a business faced new problems resulting from the economic growth and success of skiing that so many people had hoped for during 1930s.

Residents of Aspen and even members of the ski industry itself began noticing changes for the worse and problems that they would have to address. As early as 1966 Aspen business leaders recognized "the urgent need to provide low-cost housing for the school teachers, policemen, cooks, waiters and waitresses, and others who reside here to provide the service needs of the town." "With the high price on property values," they

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<sup>245</sup>(Daily 1994, 221)

<sup>246</sup>(Daily 1994, 499)

realized, "all present investment is turned toward catering and serving the visitor, with virtually no construction aimed at serving the needs of the service people."<sup>247</sup> The tourist economy was taking over the town and attracting new kinds of people to Aspen. "These new residents," one Aspenite-since-1953 noted, "came not because they loved Aspen and the wilderness which surrounded it, not because they cherished the beauty and serenity and eccentricity of the place, not because they wanted to get off the treadmill called success but because they saw Aspen as a good place to make a buck."<sup>248</sup> Aspen's success as a ski resort had linked the region directly to corporate and consumer capitalism.

#### The 1970s And Beyond

Rather than a welcome revival, growth by 1970 had become something potentially dangerous to Aspen and its people. D.R.C. Brown, president of the Aspen Skiing Corporation, was one of the few members of the ski industry to caution Aspenites about the dangers of over-development. Land prices that had risen enough to force most quiet year residents out of town rose even faster after the condominium craze hit town. "Sites near the ski hill were sold at exorbitant prices and most units were sold before construction even started," Brown recalled. "Aspen Highlands, then Buttermilk, then Snowmass came into the picture and developers started going further afield. All up and down the valley, land which was worth from \$50 to \$250 per acre as ranch land was selling for \$1,000 to \$5,000 per acre as potential sub-division land."<sup>249</sup> These prices forced ranchers off their land and crowded a landscape once used primarily for grazing livestock. Housing developments outgrew the capacity of all four ski areas combined, creating the still unsolved dilemma of how to limit the number of people on the slopes

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<sup>247</sup>("Aspen, Where Everyone Skis" 1966)

<sup>248</sup>(Clifford and Smith 1970, 9)

<sup>249</sup>D.R.C. Brown, "The Case Against Over-Development," 3, manuscript, 18 February 1970, Aspen Skiing Corporation Collection, AHS.

and still maximize profits from real estate development. Even more problems arose from Aspen's success in the ski industry. Brown pointed out that "smog, sewage, trash, and garbage all increase as population increases. Unless these are properly handled, the environment which brought people to a resort in the first place will deteriorate, and to cope with these problems requires resources beyond the reach of the average small community."<sup>250</sup> Popularity and crowding also led to traffic and parking dilemmas, exacerbated by the fact that more and more service workers had to commute to Aspen since they could not afford to live there.

In addition to raising problems within the town, development, expansion, and participation in the tourist industry presented the Aspen Skiing Corporation and Aspen Highland's Whip Jones with new bumps in the road. Insurance companies started becoming more careful about ski area inspections and courts held ski areas responsible in more and more accident cases.<sup>251</sup> After the growth of the 1960s and the rise of the environmental movement, the U.S. Forest Service took a more critical role in the development and expansion of ski areas. They started demanding environmental impact statements for each proposed area or expansion on forest service land, and complicated the fee system for areas leasing federal land. Furthermore, competition among Colorado ski areas created a need to constantly improve lift and lodge facilities as well as slope maintenance. Each of these changes, as well as increased demand for services on the part of skier-tourists, raised the price of lift tickets and the cost of ski area development and expansion. These new hurdles finally quashed the proposed Little Annie ski area on the back of Aspen Mountain in the early 1980s and stalled the recently proposed Snowmass expansion. Ski corporations entered the world of big business to the extent that Aspen Highlands brought an anti-trust lawsuit against the Aspen Skiing Corporation and won

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<sup>250</sup>(Brown 1970, 6)

<sup>251</sup>Whip Jones, from "The Mountain Moguls," Aspen Times, 8 December 1977, 2.

\$7.5 million in 1975.<sup>252</sup> The Aspen Skiing Corporation changed management itself and left the days when its directors were avid skiers. 20th Century Fox bought out the Aspen Skiing Corporation in 1978, by which time the Corporation also owned the ski area at Breckenridge, Fortress near Banff, Canada, and holdings in Spain. In 1994 the Aspen Skiing Corporation--under its third owner since 20th Century Fox--bought out Whip Jones and Aspen Highlands. Distant corporate ownership, the problems of big business, and urban development issues now characterized an industry that, 50 years ago, barely existed.

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<sup>252</sup>Mick Ireland, "Whip Jones: Aspen's Last Ski Mogul Stays the Course," Aspen Times, 30 March 198?, clipping, Whip Jones biography file, AHS.



## CONCLUSION

From 1870 to 1970 Aspen skiing underwent a number of changes. Skiing went from being a necessary means of transportation and a local pastime during the mining and quiet years, to form the basis of a community's hope for economic revival in the 1930s, and to become part of a ski industry that took root after World War II and continues to expand today. Throughout these changing times Aspen skiing has always grown from a fertile mix of locals and outsiders. Outsiders could be Swedish prospectors in the Rocky Mountains, European experts, New York, Chicago, and Denver investors, Army veterans, or international competitors. Money and ideas coming from outside Aspen met with local enthusiasm for the sport and hope for Aspen's economic revival. The ultimate success of skiing and the growth of a mature ski industry, however, have brought new problems related to corporate business and town development along with them. The variety of people attracted to Aspen since the 1930s has created a continuing dynamic of community change and redefinition. Groups of people constantly move to Aspen and call it home, shaping Aspen's popular image by their response to an earlier version of that image. Now Aspen has a more complex reputation and mix of residents than ever. In this confusing context Aspen residents--and visitors--look to the town's history for answers--for ways to explain Aspen's weirdness and define their own place in it. A new museum that emphasizes the variety of continuing relationships among mountains, locals, outsiders, sport, tourism, art, and business will help people approach some of those answers.

### How Different Is Aspen?

It's tempting, especially for people who live there, to declare Aspen, Colorado, unique. What other town, after all, had the special mix of personalities, local residents,

landscape, and outside capital that Aspen had? Where else would high culture and skiing meld together in such a beautiful place? In some respects Aspen was distinct. While most other Colorado ski areas relied on wealthy businessmen to help finance their development, none of those investors were so influenced by the cultural and intellectual goals of Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke. The Paepckes' efforts to make Aspen an ideal intellectual community brought architects and designers to town who would shape Aspen physically, and businessmen who would help finance the Skiing Corporation and infuse the town with their spending money. The combination of skiing and high culture also attracted more educated outdoorspeople to Aspen than to other towns, and encouraged more of them to become year-round residents. Aspen's seminars and music do not separate her from other towns today; most ski towns have some celebrated summer festivals now. What made Aspen distinct was the original motivation behind those events. Paepcke had an ideal he was working towards in spite of skiing and tourism; recent ski resorts have developed arts and music festivals as a result of tourism and the need to generate some income during the summer months. Aspen's International Design Conference and the Music School and Festival have developed reputations and support that guarantee their legitimacy and purpose as separate from the Skiing Corporation.

The timing and size of Aspen's skiing growth also set it apart from other Colorado ski areas. It was the first destination ski area to develop in Colorado--Winter Park started its first lift up before WWII, but attracted mainly weekend skiers who took the train or drove from Denver. The development of Crested Butte, Winter Park, Arapahoe Basin, Steamboat Springs, and other ski areas fell short of Aspen once Aspen included Buttermilk, Aspen Highlands, and Snowmass as well as Aspen Mountain. Vail's opening in 1962 would challenge the terrain and facilities of Aspen's mountains, but lacked a community with a past.

In its mining history Aspen is more representative than distinct. Quite a few mining towns became ski resorts, including Breckenridge, Crested Butte, and Telluride.

Each of these areas has a 19th century ski history similar to Aspen's, and a landscape that offered ore as well as skiing terrain. They also had similar communities to Aspen in that they had a population of miners who continually hoped that mining would become profitable again and ended up turning to tourism for their economic revival instead. They, like Aspen, acquired a many-layered population of old-timers, residents who had been involved in early development, outside investors, and growing numbers of ski bums and skier-tourists. In their march towards development and expansion Aspen offers a similar but earlier picture. Telluride, especially, seems to have been stepping in the tracks Aspen laid from its quiet years to its development as a ski area and its image as a playground for the rich and famous. Telluride also faces pollution, housing problems, and adopted a corporate structure to plan and market its real estate and development. Old-timers welcomed economic revival but resented wealthy outsiders and developers telling them what to do; now rising prices and land values have pushed almost all of Telluride's miners out of town. Telluride is also approaching Aspen in image. Its summer bluegrass festival and its difficult ski terrain has attracted young, fun-loving people who hope to find jobs and make the town their home someday. In the meantime, however, they have to live in trailer parks or squat on forest service land. As the ski area has grown to accommodate the less-advanced skier-tourists, Telluride's hip night life and incredible scenery has drawn celebrities looking for second and third homes to the region. Aspen may have Don and Melanie, but Telluride has Oprah. Crested Butte seems to be hot on Telluride's trail to hipness and potential over-development. Its terrain attracted the World Extreme Skiing Championships in 1994 and its mountain biking trails are known across the country. In some ways, then, Aspen offers historians an earlier example of what some ski areas and towns are experiencing today.

## The Ski Industry and The West

Examining skiing and tourism in the West provides a way to demonstrate the elements of continuity in the history of some western communities. A particular landscape, accessible transportation systems, and available water fostered the growth of mining towns and allowed farming and ranching communities to exist after mining declined. Those same characteristics often came to serve the purpose of tourism as well, and so brought new consumers into communities that have depended on western lands for generations. This was certainly the case in Aspen. Aspen Mountain and its neighbors held the silver ore miners sought, the grazing land ranchers' livestock required, and terrain and scenery that would gain fame and attract tourists from all over the world. Aspen's transportation systems similarly aided miners, ranchers, and skiers. The D&RG railroad took ore to smelters, crops and livestock to market, and skiers to Denver. During Aspen's growth as a ski area its roads and airport became more and more important in bringing business to and from the area. Aspen's landscape and transportation corridors proved vital to its growth as a silver mining town, its survival as a farm and ranch community during the quiet years, and its present boom as a ski resort.

In addition to looking at regional landscape, a history of skiing and the ski industry encourages historians to understand regional economies and industries. Fitting the ski industry into the context of western history means comparing it to other industries that historians consider to be typically western, namely mining, ranching, and logging. Once approached in these terms, the ski industry looks very different from the portrait its ad campaigns promote, but it looks no less western. Mining, ranching, logging, and the ski industry have had a number of characteristics in common. They all have depended upon "western" natural resources for their survival, be they mineral deposits previously unexplored by white men, vast plains apparently waiting for cattle to graze upon their grasses, massive stands of trees ready to give themselves up for the

sake of America's growth, or beautiful mountain landscapes covered with snow five months out of the year. All four industries have commodified these natural resources and used them--to varying degrees--in an extractive way. They have also all gone through a period of small, local management before becoming dominated by big business and eastern capital; they have had to deal with labor issues as they became more dependent upon a seemingly permanent class of working people; they have faced bust cycles as a result of outside forces--in the ski industry's case years of little snowfall and national declines in leisure spending--and they have all tried to smooth out economic cycles by improving technology. Finally, each "western" industry has had to depend upon the use of federal land for its success, and so ski area managers and developers, like miners, loggers, and ranchers, have had to establish a working relationship with the federal government and its land use policies. In addition to the similarities among these four industries, the ski industry stands at the center of the history of western industry simply because in recent decades the American West has become economically dependent upon tourism and outdoor recreation.



## TIMELINE OF ASPEN SKIING

- 1857 first documented use of skis in Colorado - Marcy Expedition - near Gunnison
- 1864 Father John Dyer skied through the Rockies delivering mail and sermons
- 1879 first settlers of Aspen learned to ski from their Swedish colleagues
- 1886 Crested Butte Ski Club raced against Gunnison Ski Club in possibly the first ski meet in the country
- 1893 repeal of Sherman Silver Purchase act and Panic of 1893--silver bust
- 1899 residents of Hunters Pass (Independence) ski to Aspen for safety during month-long blizzard
- 1900s-1930s Aspen locals skied on homemade skis around Aspen
- 1910s Leadville, Dillon, Frisco, and Denver formed ski clubs
- 1912 Hot Sulphur Springs held its first winter carnival  
Colorado Mountain Club established in Denver
- 1914 Steamboat Springs held its first winter carnival
- 1915 CMC began taking annual ski trips to Rocky Mountain National Park
- 1916 Western State students and Gunnison locals took up skiing in earnest
- 1919 CMC built jump at Genessee and started holding meets there
- 1920s companion outdoor/ski clubs formed in Colorado Springs, Boulder, and Estes Park
- 1928 Moffat Tunnel completed - Denver skiers take train to West Portal area to ski
- 1930 Arlberg Club formed in Denver
- 1932 Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid, NY
- 1936
- Spring: T.J. Flynn met Billy Fiske in California
- July: Fiske, Robert Rowan, and a few of Fiske's friends flew to Aspen to look around - met Flynn and Fred Willoughby and explored Aspen Mountain and saw Mt. Hayden - Fiske returned to NY and established the Highland Bavarian Corporation with Flynn and Ted Ryan - bought Tagert's ranch on Castle and Conundrum Creeks - generated support for building a lodge
- September: construction began on the Highland Bavarian Lodge
- November: Andre Roch and Gunther Langes arrived in order to survey the area and determine its potential as a winter resort
- December: Roaring Fork Winter Sports Club, later to be the Aspen Ski Club, formed, Frank Willoughby first elected president - Sun Valley resort in Idaho opened - Highland Bavarian Lodge opened - Arlberg Club members first paying guests
- 1937
- February: RFWSC held its first race on Richmond Hill across from the Highland Bavarian Lodge - CMC made its annual winter trip to the Highland Bavarian instead of Estes Park
- March: Dartmouth ski coach and famous skier Otto Schneibs brings team to HBL
- April: German ski team trained at HBL
- May: Roch marked out plan for Roch Run on Aspen Mountain
- June: Roch and Langes return to Europe
- summer: ski club volunteers cut Roch Run - Blain Bray helped ski club volunteers build the boat tow
- winter: RFWSC, now Aspen Ski Club, operated boat tow

- 1938  
 spring: Highland Bavarian Corporation bought Ashcroft land  
 summer/fall: WPA and City of Aspen fund project to construct the Willoughby jump, a warming hut at the top of the Roch Run, and the ski club house  
 winter: Southern Rocky Mountain Ski Association slalom and downhill championships held on the Roch Run - Elizabeth Paepcke and friends visit Aspen for a ski weekend
- 1939 SRMSA Championships held on the Roch Run
- 1940 SRMSA Championships held on the Roch Run  
 State Treasurer declared Ashcroft abandoned and officially turned over the townsite to the Highland Bavarian Corporation  
 August: Billy Fiske killed in the Battle of Britain - first American killed in action with the RAF during WWII
- 1941 winter: United States Ski Association National Championships held on the Roch Run  
 March: Colorado State Legislature authorized the creation of the Colorado Aerial Tramway Commission and the sale of \$650,000 worth of bonds to finance the construction of a tramway up Mt. Hayden  
 summer: architect Ellery Husted came to Ashcroft and envisioned a "Williamsburg of the Old West" there as a Mt. Hayden base village  
 November: Army created the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment based in Ft. Lewis, Washington  
 December: Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and United States entered World War Two - Ted Ryan offered the Highland Bavarian's land in Ashcroft to the Army for the duration of the war for \$1
- 1942 April: construction began on Camp Hale in Pando, Colorado  
 August: detachment of 87th Regiment to Ashcroft  
 November: troops move dinto Camp Hale and form the 10th Mountain Division  
 winter: 10th Mountain Division soldiers skied on Aspen Mountain and stayed at the Hotel Jerome
- 1943 June: third platoon of 10th Reconnaissance--including Friedl Pfeifer--marched to Aspen on maneuvers  
 winter: 10th Mountain Division soldiers skied at Aspen and stayed at the Hotel Jerome
- 1944 November: 10th Mountain Division sent to Italy where they would take Riva Ridge, Mt. Belvedere, and open a path for the 5th Army to advance up the Po Valley
- 1945 May: German Army surrendered  
 May: Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke visited Aspen - Paepcke established the Aspen Company and began to buy up real estate  
 August: Friedl Pfeifer went to Aspen to generate support for a ski resort there  
 September: Pfeifer met with Paepcke at Perry Park to discuss Aspen's development  
 October: 10th Mountain Division disbanded  
 November: Pfeifer took over management of the boat tow and built a rope tow  
 December: Aspen Ski School opened for business with co-directors Pfeifer, Percy Rideout, and Johnny Litchfield

- 1946 January: Aspen Skiing Corporation established  
 March: first annual Roch Cup held on Aspen Mountain  
 summer: construction of lifts No.1 and No.2 and the Sundeck  
 December: unofficial opening of lift No.1
- 1947 January: official opening celebration of lift No.1 and the Sundeck
- 1948 Dick Durrance films "Aspen in Winter"  
 Fred and Elli Iselin to Aspen  
 Aspen's airport opened for business
- 1949 Goethe Bicentennial celebration
- 1950 Aspen Music Festival, Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies established  
 FIS Championships held on Spar Gulch, Silver Queen, and Ruthie's Run
- 1951 Jack dePagter and friends held the first annual Wintersköl  
 Aspen Music School established, International Design Conference of Aspen  
 established
- 1953 Friedl Pfeifer bought 300 acres at the base of Buttermilk  
 No.3 lift built from Tourtolette Park to the Sundeck
- 1954 No.1 lift broke down and locals ferried skiers up the back of Aspen Mountain in  
 jeep convoys  
 route 82 paved through town
- 1955 Aspen passed its first zoning laws  
 Whip Jones bought property at base of Highlands to raise horses
- 1956 No.4 lift built from Little Nell to Bell Mountain
- 1958 Buttermilk opened with one T-bar  
 Aspen Highlands opened with two chairlifts, a T-bar, and a rope tow  
 Stein Erikson directed Aspen Highlands Ski School
- 1959 D.R.C. Brown became president of the Aspen Skiing Corporation
- 1960 Winter Olympics held at Squaw Valley, CA
- 1962 Buttermilk installed two chairlifts and opened the Cliffhouse restaurant  
 Vail ski resort opened  
 skiing available at Snowmass via snowcat
- 1963 Aspen Skiing Corporation took over Buttermilk Mountain  
 Ski Country USA established to unite and promote southern Rocky Mountain ski  
 areas  
 construction began on Snowmass
- 1965 Buttermilk expanded and opened Buttermilk West
- 1966 Aspen Area Master Plan adopted to control growth and development
- 1967 Snowmass-at-Aspen resort opened  
 Aspen's downtown and residential streets paved
- 1968 first World Cup Race held in Aspen - Roch World Cup
- 1978 Aspen Skiing Corporation bought by 20th Century Fox



FIRST ANNUAL ANDRE ROCH TROPHY RACE

March 16-17, 1946

ASPEN, COLORADO

MEN'S RESULTS

Place	Name	Club	Downhill	Slalom		Points Combined
				1st Run	2nd Run	
1.	Barney McLean	U.S.A.A.F.	2:33:4	59:0	1:01:2	248
2.	Dick Durrance	Zipfelberger	2:40:0	1:01:2	1:00:1	257
3.	Jerry Hiatt	Zipfelberger	2:52:4	53:1	59:0	266
4.	Steve Knowlton	Aspen	2:57:3	1:01:0	1:15:3	267
5.	Bob Perry	Aspen	3:05:0	1:07:1	1:08:4	314
6.	Keith Wegeman	Steamboat	3:13:1	1:30:4	1:08:0	320
7.	Ralph Ball	D. U.	3:12:1	1:25:0	1:17:3	322
8.	R. Schnackenberg	Colo. Mt. Club	3:27:2	1:24:4	1:17:0	337
9.	Tom Cremer	Unattached	3:05:4	1:08:1	1:13:4	340
10.	Dave Guinney	Alta	3:55:4	1:07:0	1:06:3	342
11.	Ed Halstead	Zipfelberger	3:44:2	1:23:0	1:13:1	343
12.	Jim Patterson	Zipfelberger	3:53:3	1:11:3	1:13:0	349
13.	Morris Crawford	Steamboat	3:52:1	1:15:2	1:13:0	359
14.	Glenn Beck	Aspen	4:00:4	1:27:0	1:20:3	373
15.	C. Madalone	Aspen	4:03:1	1:21:1	1:22:0	378
16.	Paul Wegeman	Steamboat	4:07:1	1:37:0	1:16:2	386
17.	Bud Marshall	Aspen	4:27:2	1:23:4	1:20:2	407
18.	Donald Paulich	Aspen	4:32:0	1:25:4	1:27:2	413
19.	Louis Oblock	Aspen	5:08:4	1:43:0	1:43:2	474
	Gordon Wren	Excimo	2:23:0	1:06:4 D	59:4	

WOMEN'S RESULTS

Place	Name	Club	Downhill	Slalom		Points Combined
				1st Run	2nd Run	
1.	Barbara Kidder	D. U.	1:54:3	1:08:0	1:02:1	193
2.	Ruth Dickson	Unattached	4:05:0	1:37:3	1:32:3	359
3.	Elizabeth Oblock	Aspen	4:13:4	2:10:3	1:54:4	401

# 1950 FIS World Championship Results—Alpine Events

Held at Aspen, Colorado

## MEN'S DOWNHILL

Place	Name	Country	Time
1	ZENO COLO	Italy	2:34.4
2	JAMES COUETTE	France	2:35.7
3	EGON SCHIOPF	Austria	2:36.3
4	BERNARD PRERRE	Switzerland	2:37.7
5	CHRISTIAN PRAYDA	Austria	2:39.1
6	JEAN PAZZI	France	2:39.6
7	EDI MALL	Austria	2:39.9
8	HANS NOGLER	Austria	2:39.5
9	RALPH OLINGER	Switzerland	2:39.7
10	EDI ROMINGER	Switzerland	2:40.3
11	FRANZ GABL	Austria	2:41.1
12	HANS SENGER	Austria	2:41.5
13	FERNAND GROSZJAN	Switzerland	2:44.0
14	DESIRE LACROIX	France	2:44.2
15	FRANCOIS BAUD	France	2:45.3
16	GEORGES SCHNIDER	Switzerland	2:45.5
17	ALBINO ALVERA	Italy	2:46.3
18	JIM GRIFFITH	U.S.A.	2:46.5
19	SILVIO ALVERA	Italy	2:46.7
20	JACK NIELSEN	Norway	2:46.9
21	ENRIK HAIDER	Austria	2:47.1
22	GEORGE MACOMBER	U.S.A.	2:47.1
23	TINE MULEJ	Jugoslavia	2:49.0
24	HANS HANSSON	Sweden	2:49.2
25	DEAN PERKINS	U.S.A.	2:50.7
26	YVES LATRILLER	Canada	2:51.3
27	MARIUS ERIKSEN	Norway	2:51.4
28	YVAN TACHE	Canada	2:51.7
29	STEN ERIKSEN	Norway	2:51.8
30	HARNO ARENTZ	Norway	2:53.4
31	BOB RICHARDSON	Canada	2:53.8
32	JACK GRIFFIN	Canada	2:54.7
33	STIG SOLLANDER	Sweden	2:55.1
34	GEORGES PANISSET	France	2:57.2
35	PENTTI ALONEN	Finland	2:57.7
36	DAVE LAWRENCE	U.S.A.	2:58.5
37	RUDOLF GRAY	Switzerland	2:59.5
38	FERN HODI	Switzerland	2:59.7
39	AKE NILSSON	Sweden	2:59.8
40	KALLE NERGAARD	Norway	3:03.6
41	TONI MATT	U.S.A.	3:05.8
42	HERMAN OELCKERS	Chile	3:11.1
43	MATEVZ LUKANC	Jugoslavia	3:13.5
44	JOHN CLIFFORD	Canada	3:14.3
45	LUIS DE RIDDER	Argentina	3:22.6
46	ERNO VARTIANEN	Finland	3:23.8
47	HARALD ZUR NEIDEN	Holland	3:27.5
48	SEGIO NAVARETTE	Chile	3:29.1
49	GORDON MORRISON	Canada	Disq.
50	HENRI OERILLER	France	Disq.
51	CARLO GARTNER	Italy	Disq.
52	CLAUDE PENZ	France	Disq.
53	JACK REDDISH	U.S.A.	DNF
54	ERNE McCULLOUGH	Canada	DNF
55	SIXTEN ISBERG	Sweden	DNF
56	LEON GOODMAN	U.S.A.	DNF
57	ANDY TOMMY	Canada	DNF
58	CARLOS ERAS	Argentina	DNF
59	STEVE KNOWLTON	U.S.A.	DNS
60	GOTTLOB PERNER	Switzerland	DNS
61	OLEK DALMAN	Sweden	DNS

## MEN'S SLALOM

Place	Name	Country	1st	2nd	Total
1	GEORGES SCHNIDER	Switzerland	63.6	62.8	126.4
2	ZENO COLO	Italy	62.8	63.9	126.7
3	STEN ERIKSEN	Norway	62.7	65.3	128.0
4	JACK REDDISH	U.S.A.	63.9	64.5	128.4
5	JAMES COUETTE	France	65.1	63.9	129.0
5	ERNE McCULLOUGH	Canada	64.4	64.6	129.0
5	EGON SCHIOPF	Austria	64.2	64.8	129.0
8	OLEK DALMAN	Sweden	64.6	65.2	129.8
9	FRANZ GABL	Austria	64.1	65.8	129.9
10	DESIRE LACROIX	France	65.0	65.5	130.5
11	HANS NOGLER	Austria	65.3	65.3	130.6
12	JEAN PAZZI	France	66.1	65.4	131.5
13	FERNAND GROSZJAN	Switzerland	66.2	65.5	131.7
14	HANS SENGER	Austria	65.0	66.8	131.8
15	KALLE NERGAARD	Norway	66.3	66.1	132.4
16	GEORGE MACOMBER	U.S.A.	66.6	66.1	132.7
17	SILVIO ALVERA	Italy	66.4	66.5	132.9
18	JACK NIELSEN	Norway	66.7	66.8	133.5
19	CARLO GARTNER	Italy	68.2	65.5	133.7
20	SIXTEN ISBERG	Sweden	65.4	68.3	133.7
21	STIG SOLLANDER	Sweden	66.3	67.7	134.0
22	DICK MOVITZ	U.S.A.	67.7	66.5	134.2
23	EDI MALL	Austria	67.3	67.4	134.7
24	ENRIK HAIDER	Austria	67.3	68.0	135.3
25	HANS HANSSON	Sweden	67.6	68.0	135.6
26	TINE MULEJ	Jugoslavia	67.2	68.6	135.8
27	BERNARD PRERRE	Switzerland	68.6	67.5	136.1
28	YVES LATRILLER	Canada	68.4	67.8	136.2
29	EDI ROMINGER	Switzerland	61.7	66.6 + 5	136.3
30	AKE NILSSON	Sweden	68.7	69.0	137.7
31	CLAUDE PENZ	France	70.9	67.4	138.3
32	STEVE KNOWLTON	U.S.A.	68.0	70.9	138.9
33	PENTTI ALONEN	Finland	68.3	70.9	139.2
34	GEORGES PANISSET	France	65.8	68.5 + 5	139.3
35	HENRI OERILLER	France	61.6	69.9 + 5	139.5
36	DEAN PERKINS	U.S.A.	70.7	70.7	141.4
36	ERNO VARTIANEN	Finland	70.3	71.1	141.4
38	YVAN TACHE	Canada	71.1	71.3	142.4
39	DAVE LAWRENCE	U.S.A.	70.3	72.8	143.1
40	CHRISTIAN PRAYDA	Austria	71.0 + 10	62.6	143.6
41	MATEVZ LUKANC	Jugoslavia	73.3	70.8	144.1
42	GORDON MORRISON	Canada	67.1	77.3	144.4
43	RUDOLF GRAY	Switzerland	70.2	69.5 + 5	144.7
43	JACK GRIFFIN	Canada	73.7	71.0	144.7

## MEN'S GIANT SLALOM

Place	Name	Country	Time
1	ZENO COLO	Italy	1:54.4
2	FERNAND GROSZJAN	Switzerland	1:55.2
3	JAMES COUETTE	France	1:55.3
4	HENRI OERILLER	France	1:55.8
5	GEORGES SCHNIDER	Switzerland	1:55.9
6	CARLO GARTNER	Italy	1:56.0
7	GEORGES PANISSET	France	1:56.3
8	GOTTORM ISBERG	Norway	1:56.5
9	SILVIO ALVERA	Italy	1:56.8
10	JEAN PAZZI	France	1:56.9
11	STEN ERIKSEN	Norway	1:57.1
12	CHRISTIAN PRAYDA	Austria	1:57.3
13	BERNARD PRERRE	Switzerland	1:57.7
13	HANS SENGER	Austria	1:57.7
15	ERNE McCULLOUGH	Canada	1:57.8
15	ALBINO ALVERA	Italy	1:57.8
17	CLAUDE PENZ	France	1:58.0
18	OLEK DALMAN	Sweden	1:58.6
19	EDI ROMINGER	Switzerland	1:59.1
20	EGON SCHIOPF	Austria	1:59.2
21	DESIRE LACROIX	France	1:59.6
22	STIG SOLLANDER	Sweden	1:59.7
23	RUDOLF GRAY	Switzerland	2:01.0
24	ENRIK HAIDER	Austria	2:01.6
25	HANS HANSSON	Sweden	2:02.0
26	EDI MALL	Austria	2:02.2
27	JACK REDDISH	U.S.A.	2:02.0
28	FRANCOIS BAUD	France	2:03.0
29	HARNO ARENTZ	Norway	2:03.3
29	TINE MULEJ	Jugoslavia	2:03.3
31	AKE NILSSON	Sweden	2:03.6
32	RALPH OLINGER	Switzerland	2:03.7
33	JACK NIELSEN, JR.	Norway	2:03.9
33	JIM GRIFFITH	Norway	2:03.9
35	FRANZ GABL	Austria	2:04.2
36	HANS SENGER	Austria	2:04.6
36	FRANZ GABL	Austria	2:04.6
38	JACK GRIFFIN	Canada	2:04.8
39	BROOKS DODGE	U.S.A.	2:04.9
39	ANDY TOMMY	Canada	2:04.9
41	KALLE NERGAARD	Norway	2:05.2
42	TONI MATT	U.S.A.	2:05.5
43	PER KLIPGORN	Norway	2:06.6
44	STEVE KNOWLTON	U.S.A.	2:06.7
45	SIXTEN ISBERG	Sweden	2:06.8
46	DICK MOVITZ	U.S.A.	2:06.9
47	GEORGE MACOMBER	U.S.A.	2:07.7
48	PENTTI ALONEN	Finland	2:09.2
49	MARIUS ERIKSEN	Norway	2:09.9
50	ERNO VARTIANEN	Finland	2:11.0
51	BOB RICHARDSON	Canada	2:11.9
52	MATEVZ LUKANC	Jugoslavia	2:13.5
52	JOHN CLIFFORD	Canada	2:13.5
54	LEON GOODMAN	U.S.A.	2:13.9
55	GORDON MORRISON	Canada	2:14.4
56	SEGIO NAVARETTE	Chile	2:20.7
57	HARALD ZUR NEIDEN	Holland	2:22.1
58	LUIS DE RIDDER	Argentina	2:23.3
59	HERMAN OELCKERS	Chile	2:25.9
59	JATME ERRAZURIZ	Chile	2:27.5
60	CARLOS ERAS	Argentina	3:14.3
61	YVES LATRILLER	Canada	Disq.
61	YVAN TACHE	Canada	Disq.

## WOMEN'S DOWNHILL

Place	Name	Country	Time
1	TRUDE BEISER-JOCHUM	Austria	2:06.6
2	ERIKA MAHRINGER	Austria	2:07.3
3	GEORGETTE THIOLEKRE-MILLER	France	2:08.4
4	ANNELIES SCHIUI-PROX-AUF	Austria	2:08.6
5	KATY RODOLPH	U.S.A.	2:08.9
6	LUCERNE SCHMITZ-COUTTET	France	2:10.0
7	JANNETTE BURR	U.S.A.	2:10.7
8	SUZANNE THIOLEKRE	France	2:11.0
9	DAGMAR ROM	Austria	2:11.1
10	RESI HAMMERER	Austria	2:11.3
11	LIDIA GASTRIN	Austria	2:11.8
12	ANDREA MEAD	U.S.A.	2:12.9
13	SARAH THOMASSON	Sweden	2:14.0
14	IRHONA GILLES	U.S.A.	2:14.9
15	ROSEMARIE BLEDER	Switzerland	2:16.3
16	CELINA SECHI	Italy	2:16.9
17	MICHELLE DESMAZIERRE	France	2:17.6
18	PAULA KANN	U.S.A.	2:20.5
19	SANDRA TOMLINSON	Canada	2:21.9
20	SUZY HARRIS RYTING	U.S.A.	2:23.7
21	LAURA ALLIN	Canada	2:26.2
22	LOIS WOODWORTH	Canada	2:26.7
23	EYVY PINCHING	England	2:28.3
24	ROSE MARIE SCHUTZ	Canada	2:32.1
	OLIVIA AUNONI	Switzerland	DNF
	JACQUELINE MARTEL	France	DNF
	MARGARET OWEN	Canada	DNF
	HERIT STENSBY	Norway	DNS

## WOMEN'S GIANT SLALOM

Place	Name	Country	Time
1	DAGMAR ROM	Austria	1:29.6
2	TRUDE BEISER-JOCHUM	Austria	1:29.8
3	LUCERNE SCHMITZ-COUTTET	France	1:30.0
4	ERIKA MAHRINGER	Austria	1:31.8
5	ANNELIES SCHIUI-PROX-AUF	Austria	1:31.9
6	LYDIA GASTRIN	Austria	1:32.7
7	RESI HAMMERER	Austria	1:33.1
8	KATY RODOLPH	U.S.A.	1:33.4
9	ANDREA MEAD	Austria	1:33.5
10	MICHELLE DESMAZIERRE	France	1:33.8
11	SARAH THOMASSON	Sweden	1:34.1
12	CELINA SECHI	Italy	1:34.3
13	JACQUELINE MARTEL	France	1:35.3
14	SUZY HARRIS RYTING	U.S.A.	1:36.2
15	OLIVIA AUNONI	Switzerland	1:36.3
16	GEORGETTE THIOLEKRE-MILLER	France	1:36.9
17	ROSEMARIE BLEDER	Switzerland	1:38.2
18	PAULA KANN	U.S.A.	1:38.5
19	JANNETTE BURR	U.S.A.	1:41.1
20	LOIS WOODWORTH	Canada	1:43.4
21	BRYNHILD GRAMMORN	U.S.A.	1:43.5
22	EYVY PINCHING	England	1:45.2
22	LAURA ALLIN	Canada	1:45.2
24	ROSEMARIE BLEDER	Norway	1:46.1
25	HERIT STENSBY	Norway	1:49.8
26	ROSEMARIE SCHUTZ	Canada	1:57.7
27	SANDRA TOMLINSON	Canada	2:06.6
	MARGARET OWEN	Canada	Disq.
	JOHN CLIFFORD	Canada	72.8
	MARIUS ERIKSEN	Norway	78.8
	HERMAN OELCKERS	Chile	77.0
	ALBINO ALVERA	Italy	70.6
	LUIS DE RIDDER	Argentina	75.6
	ALEC McDODGAL	Canada	77.9
	HARNO ARENTZ	Norway	69.7
	FRANZ GABL	Austria	60.6 + 5
	SEGIO NAVARETTE	Chile	69.6
	JATME ERRAZURIZ	Chile	76.6
	HARALD ZUR NEIDEN	Holland	79.5
	JIM GEORGES	Canada	80.7
	BROOKS DODGE	U.S.A.	96.4
	PER KLIPGORN	U.S.A.	100.9
	TONI MATT	U.S.A.	76.1
	RALPH OLINGER	Switzerland	100.9 + 5
			DNF
			Scratched

## WOMEN'S SLALOM

Place	Name	Country	1st	2nd	Total
1	DAGMAR ROM	Austria	53.2	54.6	1:47.8
2	ERIKA MAHRINGER	Austria	54.4	53.5	1:47.9
3	CELINA SECHI	Italy	54.1	55.4	1:49.5
4	ANNELIES SCHIUI-PROX-AUF	Austria	54.4	55.5	1:49.9
5	LUCERNE SCHMITZ-COUTTET	France	55.1	55.9	1:51.0
6	ANDREA MEAD	U.S.A.	56.9	54.8	1:51.7
7	TRUDE BEISER-JOCHUM	Austria	54.8	59.6	1:54.4
8	GEORGETTE THIOLEKRE-MILLER	France	57.4	57.7	1:55.1
9	RESI HAMMERER	Austria	57.4	58.4	1:55.8
10	OLIVIA AUNONI	Switzerland	58.3	57.9	1:56.2
11	OLIVIA AUNONI	Switzerland	58.7	59.2	1:57.9
12	ROSEMARIE BLEDER-PROX-AUF	France	58.7	60.9	1:59.6
13	MICHELLE DESMAZIERRE	France	61.9	58.2	2:00.1
14	JANNETTE BURR	U.S.A.	62.3	60.3	2:02.6
15	JACQUELINE MARTEL	France	63.0	60.3	2:03.3
16	LOIS WOODWORTH	Canada	61.8	65.6	2:07.4
17	PAULA KANN	U.S.A.	68.4	60.1	2:08.5
18	SARAH THOMASSON	Sweden	73.5	58.2	2:11.7
19	SUZY HARRIS RYTING	U.S.A.	60.2	71.6	2:11.8
20	LAURA ALLIN	Canada	65.4	67.3	2:12.7
21	SUZANNE THIOLEKRE	France	72.2	61.0	2:13.2
22	EYVY PINCHING	England	68.8	69.2	2:17

# Aspen Ski Club, Inc.

Aspen, Colorado

## REGULAR MEMBERS, ASPEN SKI CLUB, SEASON 1950-51

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Robert Barnard     | 51. Don Paulich           |
| 2. Herbert Bayer          | 52. Loraine Paulsen       |
| 3. Fritz Benedict         | 53. Fred Pearce           |
| 4. Mrs. Fritz Benedict    | 54. Mrs. Robert Perry     |
| 5. John Benninghoff       | 55. Robert Perry          |
| 6. Mrs. Robert Bingham    | 56. Field Pfeifer         |
| 7. Robert Bingham         | 57. Art Pfister           |
| 8. Charles O. Bishop      | 58. Roy Reid              |
| 9. Mrs. Charles O. Bishop | 59. Mrs. Tom Sardy        |
| 10. Delphine Carpenter    | 60. Tom Sardy             |
| 11. Virginia Chamberlain  | 61. Peter Seibert         |
| 12. Alf Chesley           | 62. Morris Shepard        |
| 13. Gerald Clarke         | 63. Henry Sievers         |
| 14. Mrs. Gerald Clarke    | 64. Gale Spence           |
| 15. Robert Collins        | 65. Wesley Thorpe         |
| 16. Gary Cooper           | 66. Doris Willoughby      |
| 17. Mrs. Gary Cooper      | 67. Frances Willoughby    |
| 18. Don Elisha            | 68. Frank Willoughby      |
| 19. Lowell Elisha         | 69. Anina Woods           |
| 20. Lawrence Elisha       | 70. Leonard Woods         |
| 21. Charles Fifield       | 71. Richard Wright        |
| 22. Florence Glidden      | 72. Mrs. W. Lucas Woodall |
| 23. Fred Glidden          | 73. W. Lucas Woodall      |
| 24. Michael Anne Healey   |                           |
| 25. Mary Heatherman       |                           |
| 26. Barbara Henry         |                           |
| 27. Patrick Henry         |                           |
| 28. Charles Hightower     |                           |
| 29. Virginia Horne        |                           |
| 30. Robert B. Hurst       |                           |
| 31. Clarke Ilgen          |                           |
| 32. Eileen Ilgen          |                           |
| 33. Carl Jonas            |                           |
| 34. Mrs. Carl Jonas       |                           |
| 35. Fritz Kaeser          |                           |
| 36. Mrs. Fritz Kaeser     |                           |
| 37. Steve Knowlton        |                           |
| 38. Mrs. Robert Lewis     |                           |
| 39. Dr. Robert Lewis      |                           |
| 40. Mrs. Mike Magnifico   |                           |
| 41. Mike Magnifico        |                           |
| 42. Bud Marolt            |                           |
| 43. Joy Maxwell           |                           |
| 44. Ray Maxwell           |                           |
| 45. Wendy Morse           |                           |
| 46. Mrs. Wendy Morse      |                           |
| 47. S.W. MacIntyre        |                           |
| 48. Freeman J. Nash       |                           |
| 49. Mrs. Louis J. Pastore |                           |
| 50. Louis J. Pastore      |                           |

*James W. Jacobs  
Rifle Colo.*

*Phil Wright  
Jon Wright*

TABLE 1  
 SKIER VISITS<sup>a</sup> FOR THE STATE OF COLORADO

Season	Visits	Percent Increase
1953-54	192,500	- %
1954-55	204,640	6.3
1955-56	264,051	29.0
1956-57	274,225	3.9
1957-58	338,499	23.4
1958-59	386,298	14.1
1959-60	458,549	18.7
1960-61	451,223	- 1.6
1961-62	571,125	26.6
1962-63	562,235	- 1.6
1963-64	817,518	45.4
1964-65	1,102,690	34.9
1965-66	1,168,159	5.9
1966-67	1,410,641	20.8
1967-68	1,813,210	28.5
1968-69	2,329,546	28.5
1969-70	2,741,101	17.7
1970-71	2,997,953	9.4
1971-72	3,260,155	8.7
1972-73	3,974,250	21.9
1973-74	4,304,787	8.3
1974-75	5,194,720	20.7
1975-76	5,965,172	14.8
1976-77	3,653,409 (bad snow)	-38.8
1977-78	6,648,866	82.0
1978-79	7,215,316	8.5
1979-80	7,887,181	9.3
1980-81	5,498,962 (bad snow)	-30.3
1981-82	7,616,699	38.5
1982-83	8,200,442	7.7
1983-84	8,617,318	5.1
1984-85	9,052,345	5.0
1985-86	9,110,597	0.6
1986-87	9,453,359	3.7

<sup>a</sup>National Ski Areas Association defines skier visit as: One person visiting a ski area for all or any part of a day or night for the purpose of skiing. This is the total number of lift tickets issued. Skier visits include full-day, half-day, night, complimentary, adult, child, season, or any other ticket types that give a skier the use of an area's facilities. Where single rides or coupon books are an important source of revenue, equivalent skier days are computed from these sources. Each ticket sold for night skiing is included as a skier visit. Skier visits is an actual total count and includes season ticket use.

Source: Colorado Ski Country USA and U.S. Forest Service figures.

from: Kathleen A. O'Brien, "The Colorado Ski Industry: Highlights of The 1986-87 Season," Business Research Division, Graduate School of Business Administration, Boulder, CO

TABLE 13  
 NUMBER OF OUT-OF-STATE SKIERS AND ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES  
 IN COLORADO, 1955-1969

Season	Number	Expenditures <sup>a</sup>
1955-1956	30,000	\$ 3,000,000
1956-1957	45,000	4,500,000
1957-1958	60,000	6,000,000
1958-1959	75,000	7,500,000
1959-1960	140,000	14,000,000
1960-1961	147,000	14,700,000
1961-1962	188,263	18,826,300
1962-1963	188,000	18,800,000
1963-1964	240,000	24,000,000
1964-1965	329,000	32,900,000
1965-1966	384,700	38,470,000
1966-1967	412,600	41,260,000
1967-1968 <sup>b</sup>	742,275	25,330,958
1968-1969 <sup>b</sup>	986,020	33,981,194

<sup>a</sup>Estimated

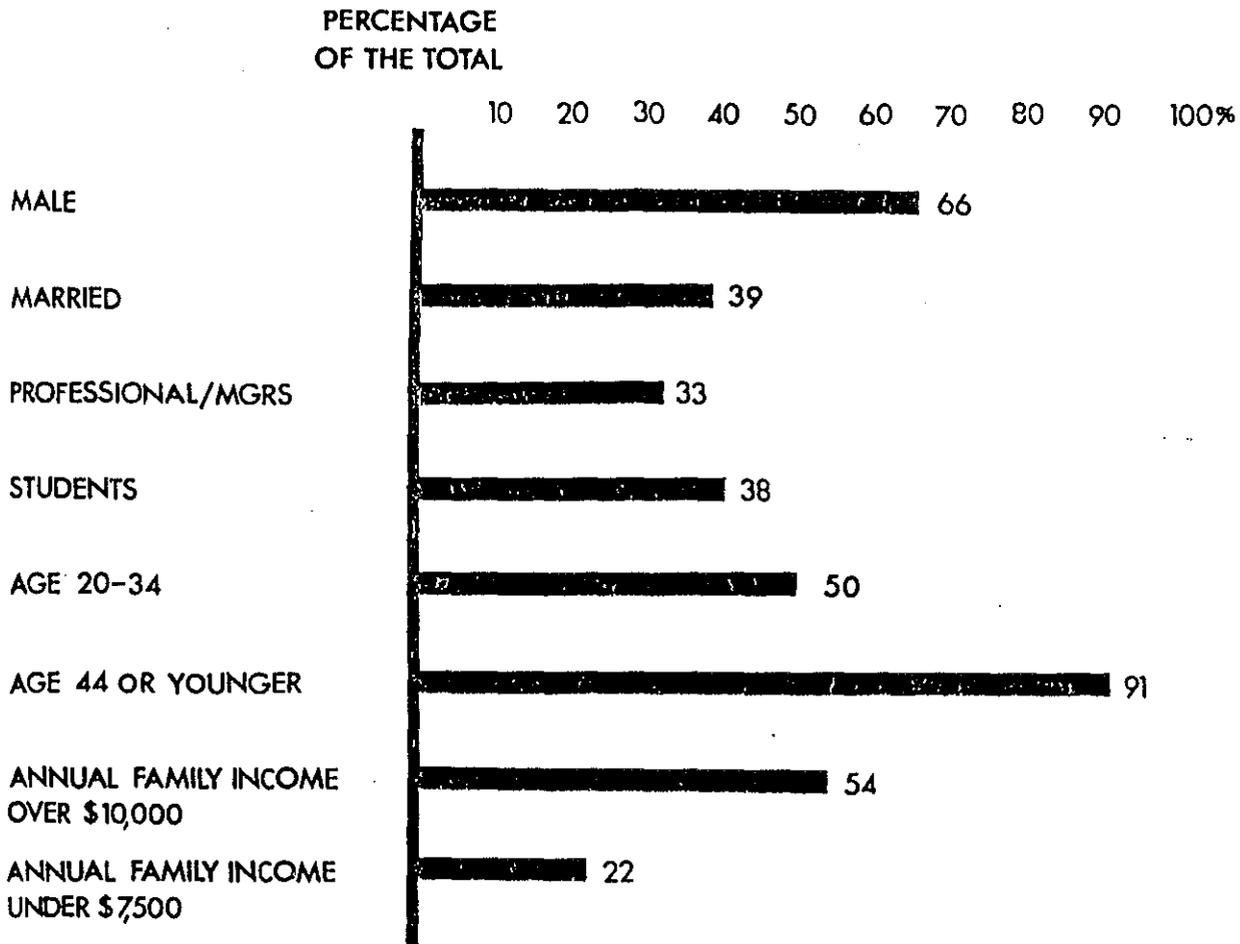
<sup>b</sup>1967-1968 was the first season when number of skiers and expenditures was reported in terms of skier-days.

Source: Colorado Visitors Bureau, 225 W. Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colorado; and Denver Research Institute, University Park, Denver, Colorado.

from Gerald L. Allen. "Colorado Ski and Winter Recreation Statistics, 1969"  
 Business Research Division, Graduate School of Business Administration  
 Boulder, Colorado 80302

FIGURE 2

### Characteristics of Skiers in Colorado



(Allen, 1969)

SOURCE: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF AN ON-SITE SKIER SURVEY, 1967-68,  
INDUSTRIAL ECONOMICS DIVISION, DENVER RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, DENVER, COLORADO.

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### **Newspapers and Magazines**

The following are a list of the newspapers and magazines that have the most material on Aspen ski history. Other western slope newspapers and many national magazines also have articles on Aspen; those I have used are cited in the footnotes.

The Aspen Times

The Rocky Mountain News

The Denver Post

The Ski Bulletin

Ski Magazine

Skiing Magazine

The American Ski Annual

