



**Jasper-Yellowhead  
Museum & Archives**

## Historically Inclined

February 26 is the Second Annual Friends of Jasper National Park Caribou Loppet but Jasper has a long tradition of ski racing. Joan Robson's recollections of skiing found in the JYMA archives, stated that Roy Hargeaves made two pairs

of skis prior to WWI. She noted that there were only two pairs of skis in Jasper in 1920, one owned by Pete Withers and the other by Teddy James. Pete Withers started exploring Jasper's backcountry on skis with Doug and Vern Jeffery, travelling into Evelyn Pass, Little Shovel Pass and the Bald Hills.

As interest in skiing grew, a ski club was formed and trails around Patricia and Pyramid Lakes were cut out. Some of the first Ski Club members were Frank Burstrom, Tiny Johnson, George McAlpine, Jack Brewster, Dave Hartley and George Prowse.

Annual cross country races were held and one of the longest was from Maligne Canyon to Medicine Lake and back to Jasper. By 1924 there were about 40 members in the Ski Club. Some of the outings included sleighing up to Patricia Lake and ski-joring behind Happy Riley's horses. Ski-joring behind a car was also an option when Doug Jeffery towed up to 10 skiers behind an old Cadillac.

Major Fred Brewster was president of the Jasper Park Ski Club in the 1937 and the club fundraised and staged ski meets. The "local boys put up a very excellent showing" in the seven mile cross country race. Later, the event attracted participants from outside the town of Jasper.

Ski trips to Maligne Lake, Signal, Watchtower, Shangri-la and the Tonquin have always been popular and longer trips, like the 1930's trip to Banff, were written up in the newspapers.

The Ski Club began to organize downhill and slalom events at Mount Edith Cavell and began to develop facilities at Whistlers Mountain. The hill was cleared by hand and two floored tent cabins were put in the high country. The club even made an attempt to develop a ski jump on the golf course at Jasper Park Lodge. Once Whistlers Ski Hill opened, cross-country skiing became less popular although many skiers started from town on their skis to get to Whistlers.

There have been many changes to the sport of skiing over the years but cross-country skiing is still a wonderful way to spend a winter afternoon. Be sure to check out the Caribou Loppet on Saturday,

February 26. Please be sure to pre-register with The Friends of Jasper National Park at 852-4767.