

Dear Mr. Raddell,

Halifax, Nov 22nd 1959.

I am interested in skiing (of the winter type). Your town has been given considerable publicity this summer with an American "tourist" and his skis. It was one of the best news shots and stories of the year. The "tourist" writes me his skis are now in London England where he will ski at Xmas with his wife in Switzerland. Perhaps you might use this in one of your books.

Was wondering if in your research you ever found any trace of Indians or others with skis only snowshoes I suppose. About 1920 start in NS the ski club here founded in 1925. At that time the BLUENOSE ski company started in Liverpool later moved to Annapolis and in 1932 was the largest in British Empire 35,000 pairs ready for shipment. I am historian of the Halifax Ski Club and hope some day to do an article on this.

Comments on these matters invited.

D. H. Mahon
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D. H. MAHON
4 Cambridge Street
Halifax NS

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS



Thomas H. Raddel
Liverpool, N. S.

Nov. 24, 1959

Mr. D.H.Mahon,
4 Cambridge Street,
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Mr. Mahon,

I'm afraid I can't add much to the knowledge you have.

The Indians of Nova Scotia used snowshoes. Nothing like skis.

I remember well the Liverpool ski factory, started by the late Clifford Millard in the 1920's. The business was taken over and transferred to Annapolis by Annapolis interests about 1929 or shortly thereafter. The old buildings of the ski factory here passed into various hands, and burned down two or three years ago while serving as a laundry.

The ski factory was an example of Millard's business acumen, for he had no local inspiration. One saw a few children slithering awkwardly along the streets here on skis during the early 1920's -- Christmas presents whose novelty soon wore off. I can't remember a single adult enthusiast until my friend J. Austin Parker returned to Milton, Queens County in 1926. He had spent three years with a wood-pulp mill at Murray Bay, P.Q., where everybody ski'd, and he had learned something of the art. He used skis on journeys about the woods along the Mersey River at every opportunity. (He is now Vice-President of the Mersey Paper Company, and finds no time for such frivolities !)

The first ski expert to drift into these parts was a Swede named Tor Gloersen, a forester who came here to work for the newly-fledged Mersey Paper Company in 1929. He was said to be a scion of Swedish nobility, and he went back to Sweden about 1933. During the winters he was here he gave some wonderful demonstrations of skiing, though he was hampered by the South Shore's lack of steep hills and long cleared slopes. After that one saw more and more people using skis, but subject to these handicaps.

Austin Parker shared with three others (including myself) a log hunting cabin at Eagle Lake, where we frequently spent week-ends, summer and winter. The journey there involved a tramp of 2½ miles through the woods from the nearest motor road. On one January occasion in the 1930's he made a bet that he could beat me to the camp, he on skis and I on snowshoes. I won it hands down -- or perhaps I should say feet-down. With my short "bear-paw" snowshoes I could wangle my way through bush that gave him a lot of trouble, although he could outdistance me where there was a straight run in the open. There were just too many thickets.

At Caledonia, North Queens, there are some fairly good slopes cleared for pasture, but I don't think much skiing is done, even there. Here on the South Shore we have what is probably the mildest climate in all Canada east of the Rockies. Not enough snow, and too many thaws.

J.H.R.