

heritage

North Shore Winter Heritage

The traditions of winter sport on Hollyburn Mountain began in the 1920s when outdoor enthusiasts built their own cabins, ski jumps and trails. John Broderick was one of the early adventurers who wrote the following story for the West Vancouver Museum and Archives for its Hollyburn Collection.

Happy Holidays...

by John Broderick

They didn't have a torch, or flags or trumpet fanfares, but way back in the '30s a little B.C. village hosted its own winter games. That village was West Vancouver. West Van's Hollyburn Mountain boasted a new skiers' centre, Hollyburn Lodge, and the skiers had a club called Hollyburn Pacific Ski Club. There was a ski jump too, built by Nels Nelson, one of Canada's top jumpers. Downhill and slalom runs were laid out on a slope called "The Shoulder."

The winners got medals and wore them as proudly as Olympic athletes.

In those days you could win races on homemade skis clamped to the same boots you wore up the trail.

My brother Don and I were introduced to this exciting winter world after our family moved to West Vancouver in 1931. We were Prairie boys so everything here was new to us. Our new school friends told us about "the Ridge" (that's what most West Vancouverites called Hollyburn in those days). Then they took us up the old 22nd Street Trail. At that time there was no road into the ski area. From where we lived, a 15-20 minute

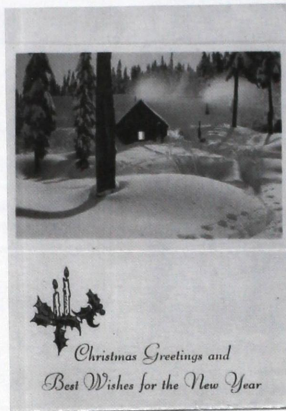
walk brought us to where the trail commenced. No use looking for that trail now; it is long overgrown.

For us, going up for the first time was a thrilling experience. We hiked through our first forest, drank from a sparkling mountain stream, picked wild blueberries, and, most exciting of all, we saw real, genuine, log cabins. The boys told us that all the fittings for these cabins had to be carried up the trail. The people who were building, improving or repairing them packed up tools and lumber, dismantled stoves, bedsprings and yes—kitchen sinks—on their backs.

That's not all; sometime in the mid-'30s, 19 men wrestled a piano up the trail. They carried it in shifts on long poles. When they set her down in the Hollyburn Pacific Ski Club's boys' cabin, there was a rousing celebration. What happened to the piano? It developed a fatal case of "out-of-tune-itis." It never quite got over the shock and indignity of being bounced on poles over the rocky trail, and the hammering it took from the ski club boys finished it off.

Two Swedes, Oscar and Ole, operated the Hollyburn Lodge during its heyday. They had a bottomless urn

A Christmas card from the Hollyburn Collection at the West Vancouver Museum and Archives picturing the Hollyburn Ski Camp Lodge, which was built in 1926. The photo was taken at night.



People using the ski jump on Hollyburn Mountain the old-fashioned way. The photo is circa 1930s and is part of the Hollyburn Collection at the West Vancouver Museum and Archives.