



Sebago
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEBAGO ECHOES

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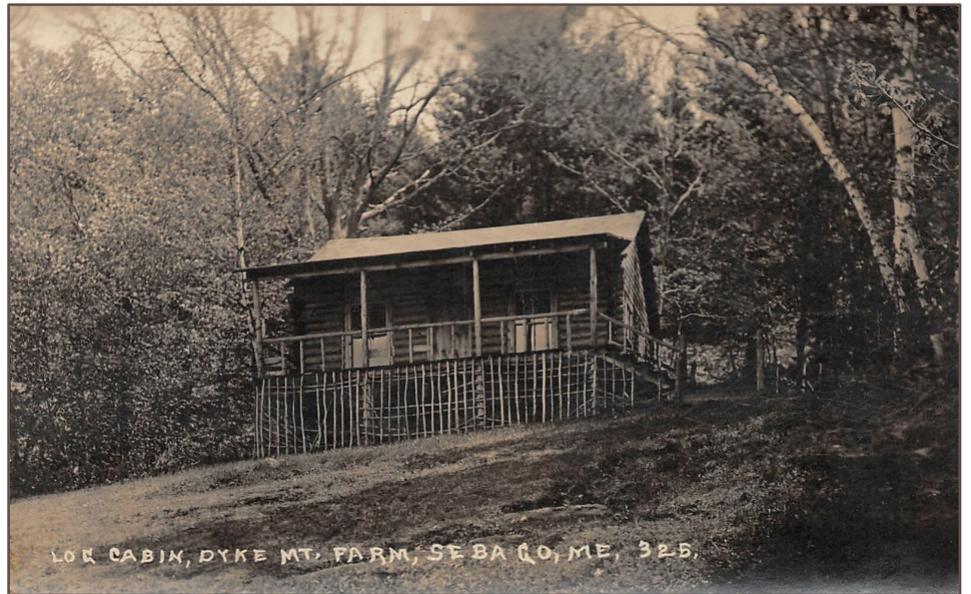
SKI SEBAGO!

As Shawnee Peak returned to its historical name of Pleasant Mountain Ski Area this summer, our minds turned to the history of skiing in these parts and remembered that Sebago once had its own ski area. Even before the first trail was cut on Pleasant Mountain, a series of ski trails wound down the side of Dyke Mountain.

It started in 1934, seven years after fire had leveled the Dyke Mtn Inn, when Grace Dyke rented a small cabin that stood up the hill from the site of the Inn to the Deering High Ski Club. A newspaper account from 1936 tells the story:

Completely Equipped By Deering Ski Club, "Ski Haven" Opens For Third Year Seven Runs Cut By School Skiers

"Ski Haven," three seasons ago, was a bare, uninhabited summer cottage. Alone and bleak, it stood tucked up against a fringe of woods on the wind-swept side of Dyke Mountain, a spur of Douglas Hill. Last week the picture was a new one. Smoke curled lazily upward, and the scene was one of activity. Skis and poles weren't stacked crazily about the little cabin as they will be throughout the coming snow season, but the vicinity of the camp bustled with boys occupied with a dozen odd jobs, working to put the rendezvous-to-be of hundreds of Portland's skiers into shape for the season. Loaned to the Deering High School Ski Club through the courtesy of Miss Grace Dyke, the little summer camp has undergone a complete transformation in the two seasons in which it has been the club's skiing base. This year additions and improvements have made the camp even more complete than it was last year, when Ski Haven was a very comfortable stopping place. The interesting part of it is that every bit of the many hours of work that has gone



A postcard of the Ski Haven cabin, now gone, but the stone fireplace can still be seen standing on the hill.

into the cabin's completion was provided by Deering High skiers—the girls pitching in just as heartily as the boys—and by Theodore Johnson, D. H. S. ski coach. Not only has the cabin been completely equipped, but a total of seven trails, several of them new this year, have been completed on the adjacent hillside, chief of

which is a sporty race trail starting at the summit of Dyke Mountain. In this work, too, the girls lent a hand in cutting brush and clearing the courses, which were plotted by Coach Johnson. Attractively located with a northwesterly exposure affording a magnificent view toward the White Mountains, Ski Haven is for the same

“SKI SEBAGO” CONT’D

reason open to the prevailing north-west winds. This necessitated careful “chinking” of all cracks in the cabin’s exterior, and this year a complete job of weather stripping has made the cabin completely weather-tight. But with the heating apparatus available, Ski Haven might even be without window-glass and still be livable. In the comparatively small single room is a huge stone fireplace, an old-fashioned heater, and this year a range has been installed. At last reports, all three had never been operated at once, and may never need to be. Installed on either side of the fireplace this year were six permanent bunks, tiered in threes. Rummage sales raised funds for bedding, and some of

the girls fashioned neat green spreads on which “Ski Haven” is sewed in white letters. Previously, temporary cots had been used for overnight trips to Ski Haven. The interior of the cabin is decidedly intriguing to the visitor. It is decorated mainly with huge foreign skiing posters, and a number of framed pictures of Deering skiers in action. A Dartmouth fraternity banner, the property of Coach Johnson, who was prominent in the Dartmouth Outing Club while at college, occupies a conspicuous place. Overhead hangs a huge wagon wheel, used as a rack for drying clothes. Books and magazines lie invitingly about on tables and stands. In the fireplace are attractive andirons, made by

some of the boys, bearing the inscription “D. H. S. Ski Club.” Outside, on the long piazza, a novel sign with pointer, the work of George Barker, announces whether or not the camp is vacant or occupied. Under the porch rafters a toboggan is ready, “just in case,” for possible skiing accident emergencies. The Deering High ski trails, and open slopes which extend over several acres in front of the cabin, are open to any skiers from Portland ski clubs, and visitors will be welcomed at the cabin. Parents of Deering High skiers are especially invited to see the club in action, and inspect its snug little cabin on the side of Dyke Mountain.

The Ski Haven trails included the 2.4 mi Langlauf Trail, a cross-country trail that looped down from Douglas Mountain to the cabin, and the .4 mi race trail that ran straight down the hill from a point above the cabin to Dyke Mt Rd. Later, another downhill run was added, a .7 mi trail leading from the side of Douglas to the road, named the Hilton Trail after the club’s coach.

These were the days before skiers expected to be carried effortlessly to the top of the slopes, and the area had no lifts. Skiers walked up the hill, either with laborious side-stepping, or with ski skins. These were long thin strips of animal pelt complete with fur, looped onto the bottom of the skis. They provided just enough traction to allow skiers to walk slowly and carefully up the hill. At the top of the slope, the skins would be taken off the skis and rolled up in a pocket, and the skier was ready for one hard-earned run.

After Grace Dyke’s death in 1938, a group called Ski Haven, Inc. was formed to buy the Dyke Farm and its surrounding 100 acres. The house was turned into a ski lodge, which could accommodate 25 skiers at a time, with the original cabin still available to house overflow. Boys and girls alternated weekends at the lodge, under the chaperonage of faculty members. The club taught beginners on the slopes around the house and honed the skills of more advanced skiers, fielding both a boys’ and a girls’ racing team that competed throughout Maine. Off-season, the house was used



From a Portland Press Herald 1952 article:

“Deering Skiers’ Rendezvous:

This fine old farmhouse and barn is the weekend rendezvous of the Deering High School Ski Club. Located near Douglas Hill, the eight-room dwelling will accommodate 25 students. Besides this building, there is a cabin nearby where ten skiers can spend the night. An inn, once on the property and a popular resort, burned years ago. Students have painted, renovated and decorated their ski haven since it was purchased in 1940.”

“SKI SEBAGO” CONT'D



“Ready to Race: Janet Kimball, left, and Mildred Schmidtman, members of the Deering High School Ski Club, are shown on one of the slopes at Douglas Hill, Sebago, where the group spends week ends at the club’s headquarters, a former farm house and 100 acres of rolling land 30 miles from Portland.”

for an annual fall dance and club parties, and served as a base camp for hiking trips.

The sport of skiing was changing quickly, though. Lifts were starting to appear; Pleasant Mountain began putting in rope tows and T-bars. Other commercial ski operations through the Northeast did the same. After the end of World War II, the club shifted its focus to Pleasant Mountain, and gradually activity at Dyke Mountain ceased. The property was sold in 1953 to D. Kilton Andrew, whose family was connected to the ski club. The property is still owned by his family.

The Ski Museum of Maine, which now holds a collection of documents and memorabilia from Ski Haven, remarks: “Today, Ski Haven remains as a pin on the map of Maine’s ‘Lost Ski Areas’ and is featured as a small portion of The Mountains of Maine exhibit at the Ski Museum. A curious traveler may still find the open north-facing fields, where Ted Johnson and Avon Hilton taught the Deering skiers, on the Dyke Mountain Road.”

Thanks to Kilt Andrew for sharing memories of Ski Haven.

PAST EVENTS

FALL FESTIVAL 2022

Our first Fall Festival since the pandemic hit, and we couldn't have had a more perfect day for it! On Oct 15, under warm, sunny skies we gathered outside the Display Shed to show off old-time skills and activities. Sherrill Brown's sock machine, always a crowd-pleaser, was on hand; Sherrill coached Lucile Matthews on it, and Lucile went home with a new pair of socks she made during the afternoon! Dana Deering cranked ice cream, a hit with kids and adults alike. Mary Coburn showed off a spinning wheel, and Nancy Sosman churned butter with June Allen's antique churn. The Display Shed, home of our larger items that can't fit in the Museum, was opened for tours. And as always, members and visitors spent time just chatting and enjoying each others' company.

Skip Brown brought his metal detector, planning to demonstrate it by searching around the grounds of the church -- but people wanted to hear him talk about the large collection of artifacts he'd found in and around Sebago, and he never got the time. We'll have to sponsor a metal-detecting demo another time!



BEATITUDES OF A FAMILY GENEALOGIST

*Blessed are the great-grandmothers
who hoarded newspaper clippings and old letters . . .
For they tell the story of their time.*

*Blessed are all the grandfathers
who filed every legal document,
For this provides proof.*

*Blessed are the grandmothers
who preserve family Bibles and diaries,
For this is our heritage.*

*Blessed are the fathers
who elect officials that answer letters on inquiry.
For some, they are the only link to the past!*

*Blessed are the mothers
who relate family traditions and legends to the family,
For one of her children will surely remember.*

*Blessed are the relatives
who fill in family sheets with extra data,
To them we owe the family history.*

*Blessed is any family
whose members strive for the preservation of records,
For theirs is a labor of love.*

*Blessed are the children
Who will never say . . .
“Grandma, you have told that story twice today.”*

attributed to Wilma Mauk (1913-1977)

RECIPE CORNER MOLASSES DROP CAKES

(In the early 20th century, a Boston newspaper had an ongoing column called Readers' Recipes, “Contributed by N. E. Housewives. Tested and supervised by Miss Lillian Fee, Graduate of Scientific Cookery, Simmons College.” This recipe was printed in that column, probably in the late 1920s.)

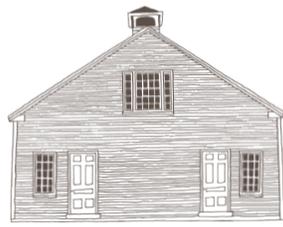
1 cup sugar
1 cup molasses
2/3 cup shortening
1/2 cup boiling water
1 cup chopped raisins
2 teaspoons soda
1 egg
5 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
a little salt

VESTA L. DOUGLAS
Douglas Hill, Me.

(Note that neither Vesta Douglas nor Miss Lillian Fee thought it necessary to include any instructions on how to bake these cookies. Some things housewives were just supposed to know!)



Vesta Lenora Douglas (1875-1933) was the daughter of Azariah and Nellie (Wakefield) Chadbourne. She married Ed Douglas, proprietor of the Douglas Inn, where these cookies were probably served. This photo, taken around 1912, shows Vesta and Ed with their children Bob and baby Helen Vesta, in front of the Douglas Inn. Helen became Mrs. Franklin Irish in 1930.



Sebago

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OUR MISSION:

To encourage and promote an interest and appreciation of the history of the Town of Sebago through the collection, research, and preservation of such information, materials, or items and to develop educational programs of historical or genealogical importance relating to Sebago's history.

MUSEUM: 347 Convene Road, Sebago, Maine 04029

MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 59, Sebago, ME 04029

EMAIL: contact@sebagohistoricalsociety.org

WEBSITE: sebagohistoricalsociety.org

MEMBERSHIP: Please become a member to support our work. An annual membership for an individual is \$10, or a family membership is \$15. Student memberships are free.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

REMINDER: Membership payments for 2023 are due now. If you haven't paid yet, please fill out the form below and send it with your check to the address above OR sign up and pay online at sebagohistoricalsociety.org/membform.php.

MEMBERSHIP FORM - PLEASE PRINT & MAIL

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Your contact information is used only to send you information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and our newsletter.

Please make checks payable to Sebago Historical Society and mail to: Sebago Historical Society, PO Box 59, Sebago, Maine 04029

Membership Level

_____ Individual: \$10

_____ Family: \$15

_____ Student: free

Donations

\$ _____ Thank you for your support!

If you would like to donate an item relating to Sebago's history, please describe it, and we will be in contact:

