Skiing at Saint John’s: The Early Years

Photo from PC06 p.69
One of the many wonderful club & society ledgers in the SJU Archives

Ski Club 1919 Stack 20/4 v.61 – cover and p. 3
Hilary Doerfler OSB
• 1876-1950
• physics prof
• set up first radio in 1915
• transferred to Oklahoma Abbey

Fr. Denis Parnell
• 1892-1984
• ministered in the Bahamas and to the Ojibwe

Photo from PC06 p.69
Constitution of the University Ski Club

Article I

Names:

This organization shall be known as the University Ski Club.

Article II

Object:

The objects of the club shall be the promotion of all outdoor winter sports.

Membership:

Section I. All students of the College and Senior Class are eligible for membership.

Section II. There shall be an annual fee of one dollar payable when accepted into the club. Each full member at the end of a year's service for the reason, we will all bother club property.

Article III

Authority:

The authority governing the club shall be the members. They shall elect officers of the club.

Officers:

The officers of the club shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
“The object of the club shall be the promotion of all outdoor winter sports.”
“All students of the Com'l [Commercial] and Senior Halls are eligible for membership...
There shall be an annual fee of one dollar...
This fee shall entitle the member to the use of a pair of skis for the season, as well as all other club property.”
“The club shall posess [sic] all skis, tobbaggons [sic], or any other property of outdoor winter sports, and these are to be used by members only.”

(Spelling was obviously not their forte!)
“It was decided that the ski club should have its picture taken Sunday afternoon March 9, 1919, and which they did.”

1919 Sagatagan yearbook, p. 79 (p. 40 of the pdf)
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/17055/show/17037
Note about photo from Ski Club 1919 ledger Stack 20/4 v.61 p. 13
"The Honorable Chair gave an interesting talk on the benefit of skiing, considering it from a healthy and moral standpoint."

On back: “Skiing near Watab (1917)? 3rd from R: Leo Hohmann / Lew ___ / Fr. Basil Stegman OSB”

Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
Inset from Ski Club 1919 ledger Stack 20/4 v.61 p. 20
To get the geography straight (sort of!):
Campus map from inside the covers of the 1942 *Sagatagan* yearbook
“It was decided that a trip to St. Joe should be taken on Wednesday March 5, 1919, and on Friday March 7, 1919 a trip to Avon, but the latter fell out on account of unfavorable weather...”
On the hill west of campus – now Fruit Farm Road

ca. 1920

LP225 – Unknown. Early Cross Country Skiing. (Judging by the buildings, it would have been ca. 1920.)
Ski Club members in Avon 1923

Photo from red scrapbook??
Junior Skiing and Tournament

One of the most healthful of the outdoor sports enjoyed by the Juniors during the long winter months was skiing. The youthful enthusiasts had excellent opportunities in this line of winter sport, having an access to a large sorted stock of skis, while hills varying in size and steepness are plentiful around the vicinity.
“The club shall hold two ski tournaments each season. The results of both tournaments shall decide the winners in the various events. All members of the club are strongly urged....”
“...to take part in the various events... If possible, a regular winter carnival shall be given each season under the auspices of the club...”

On back: “Junior ski jump near Watab / 1920-29 / 1922”
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
Handwritten entry from Ski Club 1919 ledger Stack 20/4 v.61 p. 6-7
On back: Fr. Denis' Ski Club conducts a Ski Meet for the enthusiasts / 1920's
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
On back: “Skiing near Watab (1917)? 3rd from R: Leo Hohmann / Lew ___ / Fr. Basil Stegman OSB”
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
Inset from Ski Club 1919 ledger Stack 20/4 v.61 p. 20
Photo: Ski jumping by Observatory from red scrapbook, ca. 1918
Tobogganers on ramp. On back: 1916
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
The nerve-testing and hair-raising toboggan slide could not be erected this winter, although efforts were made, since the earth was clothed too scantily and the winter was too mild. Hence the lads took more interest in skiing despite the fact that the cushion of grizzly winter was somewhat hard. It was not before March 7 that the much-desired ski tournament and the long contemplated ski hike could be pulled off.

1919 Sagatagan

Photo from red scrapbook in the SJU Archives
Text from 1919 Sagatagan yearbook, p. 78-79 (p. 39-40 of the pdf)
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/17055/show/17037
Tobogganers on ramp. On back: 1902 (but incorrect?)
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
Tobogganers’ (and skiers’) ramp.
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
Campus map inside the covers of the 1942 Sagatagan

Campus map from inside the covers of the 1942 Sagatagan yearbook
of the campus, another crowd of snow-seasoners was gathered to watch the first skier swish down Mount Carmel’s 400-foot scaffolding. John Kiewel, northern Norwegian star, soared off the jump for 112½ feet and made a beautiful landing—on his nose. In his wake came twenty-three other champions out to get a coveted Carnival Cup.

1936 Sagatagan

Tobogganers’ (and skiers’) ramp. Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives. Inset text from 1936 Sagatagan_Page_46
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/41634/rec/2
Randall Murphy of Duluth was the long gun in the organization of St. John’s first official ski team in the history of the school. Murphy, with the help of his teammates, rebuilt the Mount Carmel Slide, making possible jumps anywhere from 70 to 80 feet.
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Skiing

A bigger better slide—a conference championship meet—a better ski team—that is what the St. John's ski team under the direction of their untiring student coach, senior Randall Murphy, accomplished during the last season.

Veteran college men back from last year's team included coach Murphy, Jim Courtney, and Bob Strobel.

In the first Minnesota intercollegiate ski meet held at Mount Carmel, the Johnnies took third, fourth and fifth places. Four teams, representing St. Olaf, Concordia, Gustavus, and St. John's participated.

A week later, Murphy and his men capped first place in an intercollegiate meet at St. Olaf. Then, on the next day, they took part in the Tribune Park Board Meet. It was in this meet that Jim Courtney, wearing number "13", met with disaster—the result, two cracked vertebrae and a tin can to wear for a couple of months.

Though marred by his teammate's injury, Murphy thus climaxed his collegiate skiing career in a year which reached a new height in Johnny skiing.
Observatory hill has been the scene of winter activities for many a year. Before the skiers left it for Mt. Carmel it was the “big hill.” Now, besides being the hill where you get your start as a skier, it is the scene of the toboggan slide, where spills and thrills are common. It doesn’t take long to travel the long way down to the lake shore; but “it’s a long way up,” say Towne, MacArthur and Spitzig.

What goes down must come up...!

1941 Sagatagan


http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/18409/rec/4
Or...take the easy way of skiing...?

“Ski Club Fr. Denis 1920-1929”

On top: “a pull with the nag, by Jove”
On back: Ski Club Fr. Denis 1920-1929
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives
– with horsepower!

Photo from PC06 p.63
On back: “Junior ski jump near Watab / 1920-29 / 1922”
Unprocessed photo from Abbey Archives