

Mt. Abram Ski Slopes By Donald Cross

In 1958, Stuart, Norton and Donald Cross were operating a logging business called Cross Brothers. That winter we were cutting on Mt. Abram's northwest side where we owned two hundred acres. At noon we would gather in a trailer for a warm lunch. There were discussions on different financial adventures.

Ronald Snyder, one of our loggers, suggested taking trees off a mountain and making a ski slope. The next day we had so much snow we had to snowshoe up across a big part of Mt. Abram in order to get to work.

That noon Norton said, "Why wouldn't that (Mt. Abram) make a good ski slope?" There was much discussion between the brothers. We had to contact people who owned parcels needed to make the package complete.

Robert Cole was one of the big landowners - Doc Ames another. They were both eager to see us get started. Right away we bought parcels from Cole and Ames. This was enough for parking and a few slopes.

One night Addison Saunders and Mike Thurston came to Stuart's house and wanted to know if they could buy a portion of land Cross Bros. owned at Sunday River. They planned for a ski area. Stuart told them, "No; we were planning a ski area ourselves." They were disappointed and left.

A few days later the same two came back and said, "Why not have two ski areas in Bethel?" The three brothers did a lot of thinking about this. We felt that we would be doing a good deed for the town of Bethel if we agreed to help. We actually owned 400 acres where most of the (Sunday River) slopes are concentrated; at the same time they only wanted around 50 acres.

We agreed and took some stock and season passes for our three families. Yes, we were all skiers. We lived beside the ski slope on Vernon Street. We had used that hill before 1943, when we all went into World War II, made jumps there, etc., so we all liked to ski.

Stuart, Norton and Donald were the ones to form Mt. Abram Ski Slopes. At this time, Cross Bros. owned 10,000 acres and, if we were going to start a ski area, we still planned to log and keep both businesses going.

December 1960 - Mount Abram Ski Slopes opened with an event attended by 250.

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