NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 89
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Editor
Gail M Cramer

WINTER SPORTS IN NORTHVILLE

1938, '39, '40, '41, '48

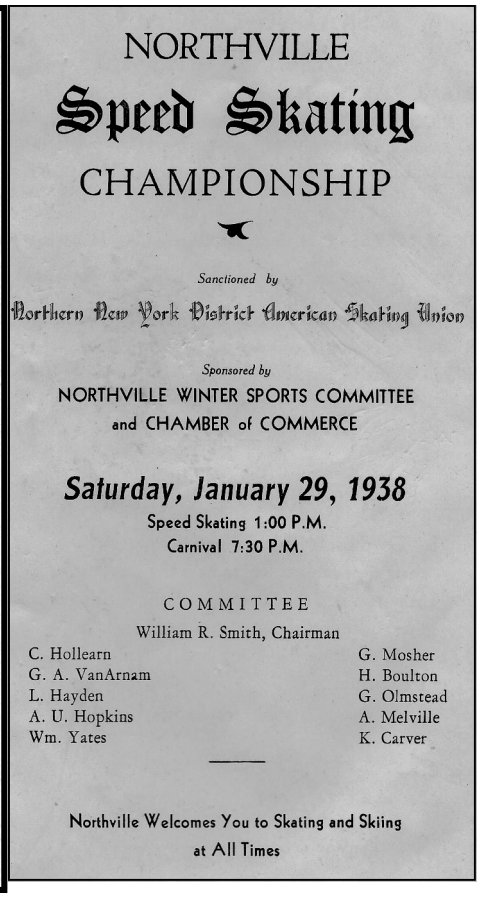
The winters of 1938, '39, '40, '41 and '48 were highlighted with Ice Skating Championship races on Northville's Little Lake. These events were sponsored by the Northville Chamber of Commerce. Thousands of spectators arrived in Northville to witness races by skaters that belonged to Ice Skating Clubs all over New York State. Our local businesses worked together to make these events successful as you will read in some of the articles that will be included in this newsletter.

SKATING RACES IN NORTHVILLE

1938

Winter Sports Carnival Set for Jan. 29; Sanctioned by Skating Union

NORTHVILLE—Arthur Melville, A. U. Hopkins, James Levine and Gordon Mosher visited Albany on Sunday to attend the A. S. U. skating races held at Lincoln Park. The purpose of the visit was to obtain official sanction for skating races to be held in Northville on January 29. The Northville committee met with the officials of the New York state division of the American Skating Union and received their approval for the above date. This event it is reported, will be the biggest athletic event ever held in Northville.



NORTHVILLE
Speed Skating
CHAMPIONSHIP

Sanctioned by
Northern New York District American Skating Union

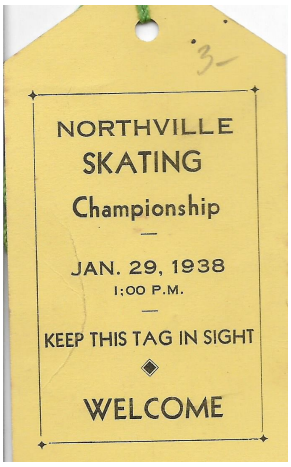
Sponsored by
NORTHVILLE WINTER SPORTS COMMITTEE
and CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Saturday, January 29, 1938
Speed Skating 1:00 P.M.
Carnival 7:30 P.M.

COMMITTEE
William R. Smith, Chairman

C. Hollearn	G. Mosher
G. A. VanArnam	H. Boulton
L. Hayden	G. Olmstead
A. U. Hopkins	A. Melville
Wm. Yates	K. Carver

Northville Welcomes You to Skating and Skiing at All Times



NORTHVILLE
SKATING
Championship

JAN. 29, 1938
1:00 P.M.

KEEP THIS TAG IN SIGHT

WELCOME

Top of Water Street . Clarence Davison patrolling the streets as Northville expects nearly 2000 people to be arriving for the skating events. Note Cruikshank's hardware store on the left where Allen and Palmer's parking lot is today

In 1938 two toboggan slides were built. Doug Parker told, "The toboggan slides were near the north end of the Little Lake on the west side. Frozen snow and ice was used to create a fast ride. Each person brought their own toboggan. If you didn't have your own toboggan it was easy to catch a ride with someone who had one. Early in the winter when there was only a little snow you could coast all the way across the little lake."

Advertized in the 1938 program was a NEW SKI TOW. "Northville has installed a New Electric Ski Tow on their Ski Hill at the North end of the Little Lake and invite you to spend the week-ends Skiing and Riding on the Tow"

In 1941 it was a real cold - 20 below zero during the skating events. A school bus was left running near the meet so the skaters could warm up between races.

There was also the little one room building at the foot of Water Street hill that had a pot belly wood stove in the middle of the room where skaters could get warm but it was too small to accommodate very many.

This little wooden building was also used by the local children and adults to rest and get warm. There were benches all round the walls where you could sit to put on your skates and warm up after sometimes being outside for hours.

The Skating rink was the largest in New York State, The rink was lined with trees to mark the perimeter of the rink. No one was supposed to go beyond the trees. In this picture you can see cars lined up along Water Street, also the little wooden shack where the pot belly stove was. Notice also the posts on the ice to mark off the racing track.

Northville Chamber to Back 5th Skating Championship January 1

To Be Brought Here For Sectional Affair

1948

The Northville Chamber of Commerce announces that it will stage its fifth Central Adirondack outdoor amateur skating championship meet in the village on New Year's Day and over 150 known skating stars from several nearby states are expected to participate in one or more of the events.

The last event, under auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, was held in 1941, and because of the war, and the restricted conditions, the meet was postponed. George A. VanArnam, of the Northville Chamber of Commerce, recently conferred with the Northern New York Skating Association and obtained the holiday date for the big attraction.

When the last championship meet was held seven years ago from the coming date, the event was a success because of the excellent cooperation of the Chamber of Commerce membership.

Corey General Chairman

Invitations will be sent to the following skating clubs: Glens Falls, Troy, Fort Plain, North Adams, Saranac Lake, Newburgh, Amsterdam, Lake Placid, Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, Pittsfield.

Chairmen of the Northville organization to develop this meet follow: General Chairman Herbert G. Corey; co-chairman Mr. Van Arnam; registration of entrees, Gordon H. Berry and Graham W. Olmstead; souvenir programs, Claude A. Lipe Jr.; rink supervision and lighting, Mr. Fryer; decorations, Clarence Van Vranken; official badges, Beryl J. Aston; publicity, J. S. Mendenhall; official photographs, Paul H. Wilson; tag sales, Edward Mills; official announcer, Mr. La Rowe; trophies and medals, Herman J. Serfis; official banquet, Mr. Langer, Mr. Mosher, co-chairman; housing, Robert Van Arnam. Each chairman will appoint his own committee to work with them.

Posters to advertise the event are being designed by Mel Graff, well known artist, and they will be distributed throughout the territory covered by all various skating club participating.

Rink Available to All

Because of the amount of hard work involved to get the rink in top shape for this meet, the Chamber of Commerce voted to sponsor keeping the rink open for eight weeks, for the use of all, with Eddie Izzo as general supervisor. In cooperation with the Village Board, an attendant will be present at the rink from 3 to 9 P. M. on school days, from 10 A. M. to 10 P. M. on Saturdays, and 1 to 10 P. M. on Sundays. The rink will be closed all day on December 30 and 31 to prepare it for New Years Day.

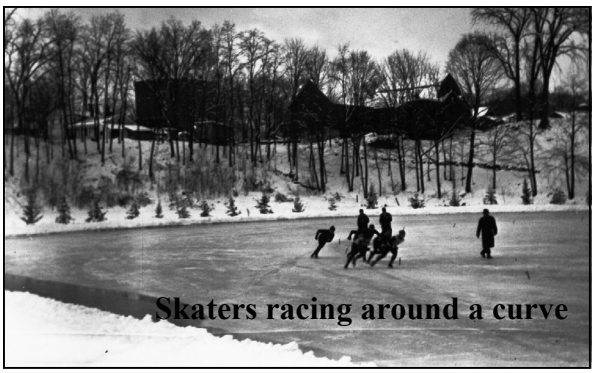
From 150 to 200 visiting skaters are expected to participate, and because of the distance to travel, from 65 to 70 of these will have to be housed by local residents. Robert Van Arnam, chairman of the housing committee, asks that town folk open their homes to the special group for overnight lodging and breakfast. Those who will and can accomodate one or more of these skaters are asked to notify Mr. Van Arnam at once.

1948 was the last meet in Northville. In 1949 the meets were moved to Saratoga.

Meals were served the skaters at the central school cafeteria. A pancake dinner with all the trimmings was given by the Northville Chamber of Commerce to all visiting competing skaters and officials. The dinner was served by the women of the PTA. Mrs. Ralph Scheer was in charge of the kitchen and Miss Helen Mendenhall of the dinning room, assisted by high school students; Jeanne Ferguson, Audrey Carrino, Lucille Heath, Shirley Harrington, and Helen Williams

In 1940 a luncheon was served to the skaters and officials at the Central School Cafeteria by the Northville Garden Club.

Some of the racing events included 220, 440, 880 yards and one-mile races. There were several divisions: Men's, Women's, Juvenile boys and Juvenile girls under 14. Jr. Boys and Jr. Girls under16. Intermediate boys and girls under 18, and a special class for "midgets' under 12. There was also a "Three Mile Special" that was eligible for senior skaters only.

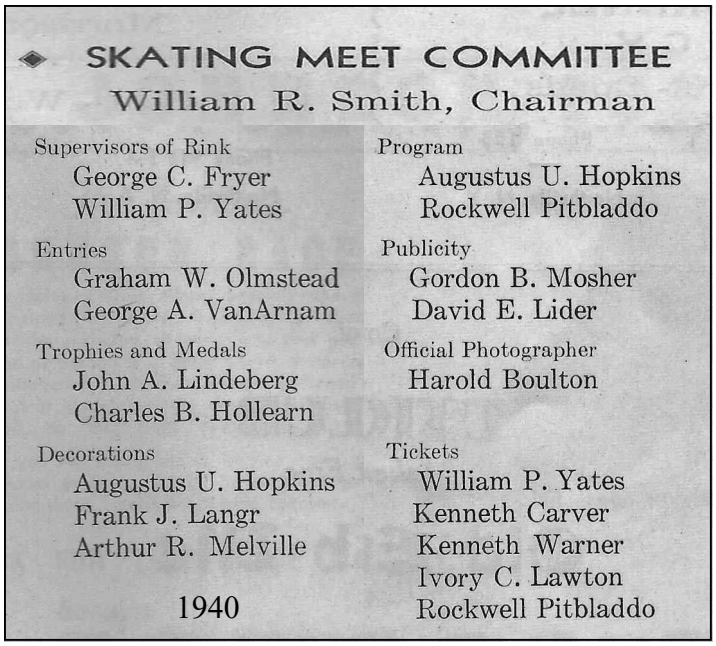


Skaters racing around a curve

Doug Parker was 23 years old in 1948. He told that he acted as Assistant Clerk of Course as he skated from the finish line to the announcer with results of the races to keep the crowd informed.

Notice how many local people participated in committees, providing food and shelter , contributions, etc. to make these events successful.

Awards of trophies and medals were on display in the window of Cruikshanks hardware store. The cost of these prizes was donated by civic –minded individuals and firms in Gloversville and Northville. Trophies were given to winners in the senior, intermediate and junior events and in the three mile race. Gold, silver and bronze medals was awarded in all events.



SKATING MEET COMMITTEE

William R. Smith, Chairman

Supervisors of Rink
George C. Fryer
William P. Yates

Entries
Graham W. Olmstead
George A. VanArnam

Trophies and Medals
John A. Lindeberg
Charles B. Hollearn

Decorations
Augustus U. Hopkins
Frank J. Langr
Arthur R. Melville

Program
Augustus U. Hopkins
Rockwell Pitbladdo

Publicity
Gordon B. Mosher
David E. Lider

Official Photographer
Harold Boulton

Tickets
William P. Yates
Kenneth Carver
Kenneth Warner
Ivory C. Lawton
Rockwell Pitbladdo

1940

One of Northville's best skaters was Jack Darby. He competed in the Intermediate boys division in 1940. He also competed in NCS skating contests while in high school. Grant Morrison recalled that some of the skaters went on to qualify for the Olympics.

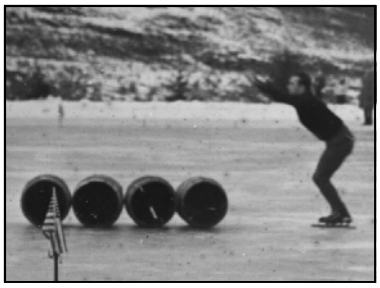
Our skating rink was used for skaters practicing for the Olympics. They said it was one of the best rinks in NYS. It was 470 feet long and 200 feet wide, one of the largest in Northern New York.

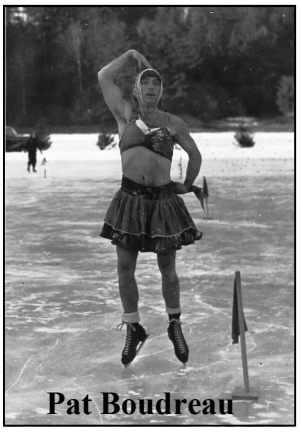
Credit needs to be given to the men who maintained the rink for the events and for the local adults and kids who skated there all winter. One time a tractor went through the ice. Roy Pearsall recalled that after it was pulled out, it was towed to Rhodes Garage on South Main Street and by the time it got there, it had frozen so the wheels wouldn't turn.

Sally Young and Warren Johnson

Entertainment was provided evenings with Sally Young and Warren Johnson of Northville who were exceptional figure skaters. There was barrel jumping, by "Bunny" Sheffield an internationally known skater. He completed a jump over ten of Northville's loveliest feminine residents.
"Pat" Boudreau from Schenectady performed on the ice with roller skates, And was famous for his ballet skating, and as a clown.
The Lake Placid Figure Skating Club also were part of the entertainment

Lake Placid Figure Skating Club Participants





Pat Boudreau