

A Pictorial History of Women in Skiing



In 1555 Olaus Magnus wrote a *A Description of Northern Peoples*, a book about the history, customs and folklore of Sweden. The book included many wood block prints which are the earliest published images of skiers. Among them is this one, the first published image of a women on skis.



This photo of Bertha Files was taken in the 1890's outside of Bangor. Bertha graduated from Bates and taught history at Bangor High School.

Country Life In America magazine, in December 1903, wrote, "No Sport is more invigorating or better develops all the muscles of the body than a day's run on skees."

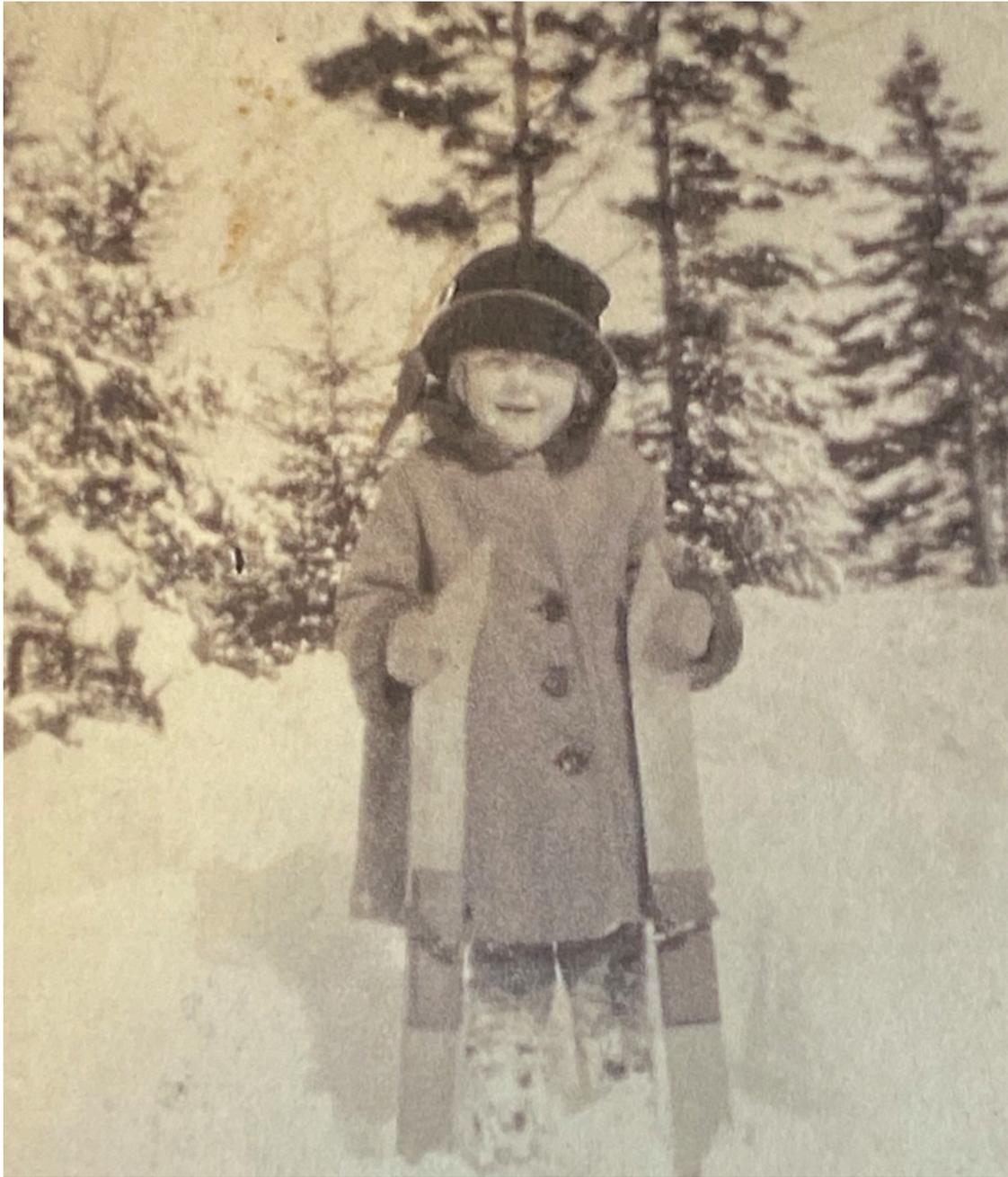


In 1905 Theo Johnsen started making skis under the name of Tajco. Since so few people skied he wrote a book, *The Winter Sport of Skeeing*, to explain the sport, and to sell more skis. This was the first ski book in North America.

Johnson wrote, *"Any skidor will tell you that skeeing is the most exhilarating, most fascinating, most healthful and most delightful of all winter sports, and that indulged in sensibly and not to excess, it is the ideal outdoor pastime for everybody, young and old."*



This photo is from the 1905 book, *The Winter Sport Of Skeeing* by Theo Johnsen. The photo was shot in a studio in Portland against a hand painted background, probably by Johnsen himself. Her hat is held up by wire to create the image of speed. She is skiing with leather toe loops to hold her to the skis and is wearing high heels.



In 1925, Polly, from the Sanford area, shows off her first pair of skis



Paris Manufacturing, along with Tubbs and Bass Shoes, were the country's top ski equipment makers. This catalog from 1926 shows that women were as apt to be skiers as men.



Portland Winter Carnival - 1924

In 1924 the Portland Press Herald wrote, *“Miss Margaret Town, a winsome lass of 15, clad in an all-white sport suit electrified the crowd thrice with excellent jumps off the high runway. Remembering her from the previous year people cheered her with vim as she sailed on her swift flight through space.”*

Being female, she jumped as an “exhibition”, not as part of the competition.



Portland Winter Carnival - 1924

In 1924 the Portland Press Herald wrote, *“The Coronation ceremony is the climax of the first day of the Winter Carnival. The Queen, Miss Winona, wore a jeweled dress of pale pink satin and a robe of royal purple trimmed with ermine and the King, Major E. E. Philbrook, had an elaborate suit of bright red with a purple robe trimmed with ermine.”*

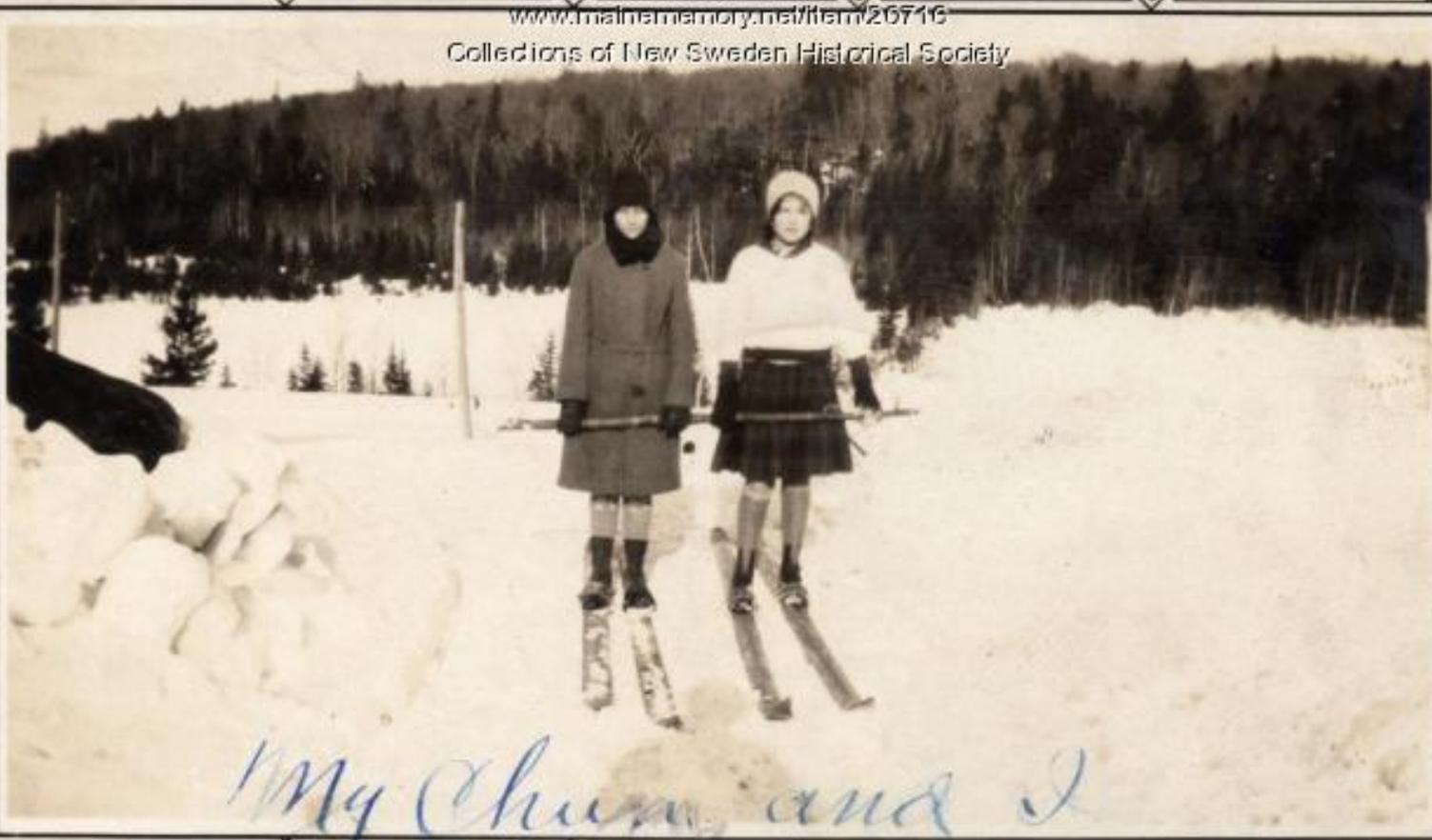
Portland Winter Carnival - 1924



In the 1920s Arctic exploration was exciting and the explorers and their dogs were stars. Sled dogs that had been in the arctic were a big part of the Carnival.

The Portland Press Herald wrote, *“This morning the Queen is to make a shopping tour with the Whitehouse dog team. She will be dressed in her imported white wool outdoor costume which was picked out for her at the Hew York Fashion Show. Her Arctic limousine with its wealth of fur robes standing in front of a Congress Street store will be evidence that the First Lady of the Realm is inside doing her carnival shopping.”*

www.maine-memory.net/item/26716
Collections of New Sweden Historical Society



My Chum and I

Evelyn + I

March 1, 1931

It was 150 years ago that Swedes arrived to settle New Sweden. That winter, 1870-71, the Swedes managed snow the way they knew how, with skis. They were the first skiers in Maine. This photo from 1931 shows two young girls in New Sweden skiing to school.



In 1935 Fryeburg offered skiers the first rope tow in Maine. The first day the tow ran Avon Hilton said, *"There were about 100 of us skiing but there were about 3,000 people watching."* Cars parked for miles on the side of the road. Many people took the train from Portland to Fryeburg. Then they rode a horse drawn hay wagon from the train station to Jockey Cap to ski or to watch the skiers.

www.mainememory.net/item/16991
Collections of Fryaburg Historical Society



Under the headline *Snow Train Smartness*, the 1936 Dunham's Trading Post catalog wrote, "*Dunham's hits a new high in smartness, in workmanship and in materials. You will find no other clothing in this field so closely approaching the needs of the active participant in winter sports.*"

www.mainememory.net/item/17654
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By the time this photo was taken in 1955 at Pleasant Mountain skiing had become an established sport. The spectators from the 1930s were now avid skiers.