

Leadville Skiing Perfect— Even if You Fall Through

By JACK FOSTER

LEADVILLE, Colo., March 22.—Max Vawter, energetic young editor of the Leadville Herald-Democrat, dropped me a note the other day saying that the people up here think that we haven't written enough about the wonderful skiing conditions at nearby Cooper Hill.

"Come up and try the tow yourself some day," wrote Max. "It's a mile and a quarter of pure unadulterated beauty."

So this afternoon I accepted the challenge. You see, I am one member of Denver's Chamber of Commerce who takes their winter sports program seriously. After reading their eloquent brochure, I raced out, bought skis, clop-hopper shoes, jacket and glasses, and for weeks have been risking life and limb in an effort to be a true citizen of our state.

Certainly I expect the new Chamber president, Robert McIlvaine, to do no less. The failure of the outgoing president, Charles Voigt, to skim over the snowy slopes himself, as the Chamber recommended to others, has been a source of painful surprise to me.

BUT, at any rate, up the mile-and-a-quarter tow at Cooper Hill I went this afternoon, and I must say that if one must risk his neck anywhere, this is the most beautiful place I know.

The tow itself was built by the army for practicing mountain troops from nearby Camp Hale, and now it is being operated by the Forest Service, under the direction of Jack Graw. It is the easiest riding tow I've ever tried. It costs 90 cents a day, and even if you aren't worth a dime on skis it's a magnificent thrill just to be up there.

When you reach the 17th post, you can look across at the spectacular Saguache Range with the two highest mountains in the state, Elbert and Massive, reaching like giants toward the blue.

On the left, as you go up, is the well-packed course, and on the right is a forest of green with unbroken snow. The course itself up to about the last quarter mile is a comparatively easy drop, and I negotiated it several times, averaging no more than three spills to each slalom—or is it a schuss?

BUT if you ride all the way to the top the fall is too fast for innocents such as I. So I decided to come down on the other side through the unbroken snow

and forest of green. It was my theory that with plenty of trees around you always can find something to hold on to.

But just listen. In unbroken snow, as I was to find with sorrow, there are hollow places beneath the surface, and I was skimming along, a veritable white symphony, when all of a sudden I fell through. S'help me, I fell in up to my ears.

And from then on down the descent was one labor of Hercules after another. But far be it from me to suggest that my regrettable experience is typical. Nimbler legs will find Cooper Hill, with its mountainous magnificence, one of their greater joys—and certainly the folks in charge of skiing here are the finest folks there are.

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STEVE FERKOVICH, manager of the Safeway Store, is head of the recreation council. He takes his four-year-old son skiing, holding him tightly between his own skis, and down the hill together they fly.

Bill Copper, just back from service, is head of the ski patrol. "What does the ski patrol do, Bill?"

"Take care of skiers who get in trouble," said Bill. "Like, for example, the man who broke his leg in three places today."

"Migosh, did someone do that?"

"Oh, yes," he replied soberly. "It happens now and then. But I don't think you are in danger. You have to get up speed to get hurt."