

## **HISTORY: 30s & 40s, THE EARLY YEARS**

This article about our Club's history is presented as we celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> year.

On Sunday morning January 12, 1936, some twenty individuals gathered at Union Station in Washington, DC. Although most in the assemblage were strangers, a spirit of true camaraderie was achieved from the beginning. The adventurers used a special railroad car to travel to the little farming town of Glencoe, PA, made their way to a local hill, and began to ski. The town had never seen such a sight in its life, and turned out en masse. The residents enthusiastically cheered each of the spills that the city folk experienced. At sunset, the skiers departed their new found paradise, and rode back to Washington. This was the first organized activity by what would later be known as the Ski Club of Washington, DC. So, in a real sense, SCWDC was born on that day.

That first winter for the Club was snow-abundant; and nine trips to Glencoe transpired that season. One of those trips became our Club's first overnight activity, when our skiers were hosted overnight by local farmers.

It didn't take long for the Club to become seriously organized. In the spring of 1936, the first Bylaws were established. In the fall, the Club gathered at the Willard Hotel to select its first formal administration. Membership dues were one dollar.

Several years later, our nation was engaged in World War II, and everything changed. Gas rationing was a reality here, and so some skiers boarded the train at Union Station, and traveled to Canada where there was no gas rationing. Many Club members went off to war. Hal Leich, an SCWDC founding father, said to Jack Davidson when he too had to leave: "... just keep the Club going, Jack, so we'll have something to come back to." And, of course, the Club did keep going.

The Club's first sponsored long-distance ski trip was to Gray Rocks, Canada, in 1948. By 1949, the Club had 300 members, \$1000 in the bank, owned a portable rope tow that could fit in a car trunk, and skied in Rock Creek Park.

Then there were our social beginnings. In July-September 1949, there was a beach party, fishing trip, and square dance. Because each was a complete success, the Club in October set up a permanent Social Committee.

*The above was largely derived from the SCWDC 50th Anniversary History Book*