

Running a ski resort without electricity



An early publicity photo of Sky Tavern distributed by the Reno Chamber of Commerce. Photo/Jimmie Smith/Special Collections Department, UNR Libraries

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Today's ski resorts generally run like clockwork, every day whisking thousands of skiers high up the mountain in electric-powered chair lifts and sending them down slopes that are flattened and smoothed every night by massive grooming machines.

It's no small task. But for sheer human effort, today's preparations are nothing compared to what resort operators had to go through 70 or 80 years ago when the industry was just getting started.

Keston Ramsey opened the Sky Tavern Ski Area, just off the Mt.

Rose Highway that runs between Reno and Lake Tahoe, in December of 1945. At the time, the resort had a couple of rope tows and a T-bar lift, where you wrapped one leg around an upside down metal T attached to a moving cable and let it pull you up the slope.

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