

## REVELSTOKE circa 1890

Our cross country ski heritage in British Columbia is indeed rich and deep. This story recounts the pioneering efforts of early enthusiasts.

Over a century ago, in the years 1888 to 1890, a Revelstoke miner by the name of Ole Sandbert used a pair of home made skis to make the descent to the railroad tracks from his mine near Albert Canyon. These skis were referred to as "Norwegian Snowshoes" or "Slicks" by observers of the day. Sometime later, the local newspaper (The Star, November 28, 1891) reported the following spectacle, "A Norwegian Snowshoer was seen on the street for the first time Friday". These skis were ten feet long and were covered with fancy hand-carved scroll work.

Inspired by this new form of winter transportation, storekeeper, F.B. Wells then obtained a pair for

sport purposes from Minneapolis. During the next few years a group of five adventurers (F.B. Wells, W.B. Pool, J. Maunsel, T. Horn and E.L. Kinman) took regular hikes up the local mountains. So began the Revelstoke Ski Club.

'The Star' continued to document the feats of these hardy individuals, including this excerpt from the January 16th, 1892 edition, "Messrs. Pool, Lamey, Beaton and McRae arrived from Lardeau City on Thursday the 14th, having made the entire trip on Norwegian Snowshoes". The distance of that trip was roughly 70 kilometres and stands as the first long distance ski trip in Canada, as far as known. One single five foot pole was used at this time and the leader had seal hair tacked to his skis to help the others up hills. ❖

*- Muriel Rudd in Revelstoke*