

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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WINTER SPORT



You don't know if you don't ask! So, therefore, I'm going to ask. The neat little picture shown here, was taken by Fred Holt some time in the late 1920's or early 1930's, but that's only a guess on my part. All I know about it is what I see in the photo. This ice boat was evidently put into motion by the propeller, operated by a small gas engine. The tail fin must have been used to turn the boat as the smaller runner in the stern appears to be connected to the fin. Note the small windshields for each occupant. On the side of the ice boat there appears the name "Hummer." These two guys with their head gear and one with goggles give the impression they could go fast. I can only assume because of the background, this picture was taken on the canal perhaps around Albion.

If anyone knows anything about this kind of winter sport vehicle or who the two guys are in the picture, let me know and I will print the follow-up information. My office hours are: Mondays 9-Noon, 1-4; Thursday evenings 7:30-9:30 and Fridays 9-10 and I may be reached there by calling 589-4174.

Winter sports have certainly changed over the

last one hundred and fifty years. How charming are the Currier Ives prints of the 1860's showing hordes of people, old and young alike, skating on the old mill pond. And sleighing too, was a popular way to court a sweetheart in the 1890s. These romantic images of times past, seem so remote to us when compared to our modern day snowmobiles. Imagine what Currier and Ives would have thought if told the day would come that great quantities of artificial snow could be manufactured for ski slopes just to please those of that sport-minded ability.

I wonder if the modern snowmobile had its origins in the "Hummer" pictured here. At the Cobblestone Museum we have an ice boat which was used by Marcus Phillips of Hulberton back in the "teens." It has runners, is low to the surface, would hold two riders and was operated by a sail. They used it on the canal. Years ago the canal served as a sports arena, once it froze, for those interested in winter sport activities. My father told me that he and another person even skated to Rochester on the canal one time around 1920. Needless to say, they were pooped when they got there and rode the trolley car back home.