2021 and 2022 are banner years for anniversaries in the upper Roaring Fork Valley. The oldest operating business in town, The Aspen Times, marked 145 years in 2021, and Aspen Snowmass kicked off a commemorative 75th season of lift-served skiing on Aspen Mountain. This year, Aspen Gay Ski Week—the oldest annual, week-long gay ski event in the nation—celebrated its 45th anniversary in January, and Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club has been teaching snowsports to local kids for 85 years. This town’s history is growing old! As the years pass, the community continues to adapt to new realities and Aspen Historical Society is hard at work preserving and sharing the stories that define our collective roots, for the future.

Over the last year, AHS undertook extensive projects to enhance interpretation, improve public access, and increase engagement with area history for years to come. These included a renovation to install Victorian-era wallpaper in the first-floor rooms at the Wheeler/Stallard Museum, an overhaul to AHS’s online public archives and online video library, and new partnerships to expand public history programming in the community. These and other efforts improve visitor experience both at our sites and online, and we are thrilled to share the results with the community.

Though the last few years have been difficult, the anniversary celebrations offer nostalgic and fun peeks at the past. This is AHS’s mission—to preserve and share all the stories, the highs and the lows, the banner moments and the day-to-day, whatever the future has in store. AHS stewards your stories to foster a sense of community and encourage a vested and informed interest in the future of this community. Thanks to your continued support and engagement, there is a bright future ahead for preserving the past.

Sincerely,

Kelly Murphy
President & CEO

75 SEASONS

In December 1946, the world’s longest chairlift opened at Aspen Mountain, delivering skiers up to 11,212 feet where the brand-new Sundeck welcomed them with a warm fireplace and views across Castle Creek Valley. That year, the newly formed Aspen Skiing Corporation embarked on a path that would lead to its modern reputation as one of the top resort operators in the world. What started as a dream among WWII veterans, sports enthusiasts, engineers, and entrepreneurs has grown to a 75-year-old family-owned company that hosts more than a million skier visits on its slopes each year.

This season’s festivities not only mark the anniversary, but also celebrate the community’s unique role in the origins of snowsports in the United States. In this valley, skiing was born among miners testing ways to maneuver in the snow, but it took hold in the early years after the war, when dreams for European-style ski resorts in the western United States became a reality. Skiing remains central to the identity of this community and, 75 years later, many would say Aspen Skiing Corporation’s first annual report included a self-fulfilling prophecy: to make “Aspen the finest ski area in North America for all types of skiers.”

In honor of this milestone anniversary, the historical images in this publication (with the exception of the staff selections and the supporters spotlight) were selected from the Aspen Skiing Company Collection, which includes images taken by several local photographers.

(in order of appearance):
Aspen and Aspen Mountain circa 1970 (Miggs Durrance); Top of Aspen Mountain circa 1970 (Miggs Durrance); Skiers on Snowmass circa 1965; a party at Gretl’s on Aspen Mountain in 1968 (Bob Krueger); Skier on Aspen Mountain in 1968; a couple on Ruthie’s Run on Aspen Mountain circa 1965; Andre Roch on Aspen Mountain in 1949 (Fritz Kaeser); Tourtelotte Park on Aspen Mountain in 1967; ski-packing Aspen Mountain circa 1965; 1976 men’s World Cup on Aspen Mountain; Sundeck on Aspen Mountain circa 1965 (Miggs Durrance)
LOCAL HISTORY
Pre-1879 Ute people hunt in the upper Roaring Fork Valley and its tributaries
1879 Miners use “Norwegian skis” for transportation; ranchers test wooden skis for recreation
1895 Billy Fiske, Andre Roch, and Ted Ryan propose a ski area on Hayden Peak and build Highland Bavarian Lodge; plans are halted by WWI
1897 Roaring Fork Winter Sports Club organizes (now Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club)
1941-10th Mtn. Division soldiers train in the area, many return and help develop skiing in the U.S.
1945 Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke begin investing in Aspen, including plans for ski lifts with Friedl Pfeifer, who opens Aspen Ski School
1946 Aspen Ski Corporation forms
1948 Sardy Field officially opens for commercial air service
1951 Aspen hosts its first Wintersköl celebration
1958 Whipple Van Ness Jones opens Aspen Highlands
1959 Skil Patrol begins Cloud Nine deck jump
1983 Aspen Skiing Company
1993 Whip Jones donates resort to Harvard University, which sells to Gerald Hines, who partners with Aspen Skiing Company, which assumes operations
2001 Highlands Patrol raises the Epic flag
2002 Highlands Bowl terrain opens
2005 Snowmass Village Town Council approves Base Village development plan to include the Elk Camp gondola, Village Express high-speed chair, and the “Skittles” gondola
2010 Fossils of mammoths, mastodons, a giant sloth, and many other Ice Age animals and plants are discovered in the Ziegler Reservoir expansion

ASPEN MOUNTAIN
1936-38 Volunteers cut Roch Run and build a “boat tow” that hauls skiers to Summer Road
1939 Area’s first ski race, hosted by Rocky Mountain Ski Association
1941 First of many U.S. National Championships
1946 Lift 1 and Lift 2 unofficially open in December (dedicated January 1947), the Sundeck is built
1950 First FIS World Championship alpine ski races held outside of Europe
1968 Hosts first World Cup ski races in the second year of the FIS circuit
1986 Silver Queen Gondola opens—the longest single-stage gondola in the world
2001 Last area mountain to allow snowboarding
2019 Aspen Skiing Company receives approval to expand into Pandora’s with additional terrain and new lift

ASPEN HIGHLANDS
1958 Whipple Van Ness Jones opens Aspen Highlands
1973 Skil Patrol begins Cloud Nine deck jump
1983 Snowboarding allowed
1993 Whip Jones donates resort to Harvard University, which sells to Gerald Hines, who partners with Aspen Skiing Company, which assumes operations
1998 Construction begins on new Highlands Village
2002 Highland Bowl terrain opens

POWDER DAYS
Highlands Patrol raises the Epic flag

BUTTERMILK
1958 Friedl Pfeifer opens Buttermilk Mountain
1963 Aspen Ski Corporation buys Buttermilk
1964 Tiehack area opens, served by a T-Bar
1966 Expands to West Buttermilk
1977 First snowmaking installed on a local hill
1985 Snowboarding allowed
2002-22 Hosts X Games every January (longest X Games in one location)

SNOWMASS
1962 Snowcats run ski tours on the Big Burn
1964 U.S. Forest Service grants approvals for Snowmass-at-Aspen Ski Area
1967 Aspen Ski Corp. opens Snowmass-at-Aspen with five chairlifts and a restaurant at Sam’s Knob
1973 First National Brotherhood of Skiers summit
1988 Snowboarding allowed
1995 Two Creeks base area opens with access to Elk Camp
1997 Cirque lift opens (first lift powered solely by wind energy), completing the nation’s longest lift served vertical rise of 4,406 feet
2005 Snowmass Village Town Council approves Base Village development plan to include the Elk Camp gondola, Village Express high-speed chair, and the “Skittles” gondola
2010 Fossils of mammoths, mastodons, a giant sloth, and many other Ice Age animals and plants are discovered in the Ziegler Reservoir expansion

SNOWSPORTS MILESTONES IN ASPEN & SNOWMASS
WINTER TOURS
(summer tours begin mid-June)
Hotel Jerome Tour
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30 p.m.
Historical Downtown Walking Tour
Wednesdays & Fridays, 1:30 p.m.
Wheeler Opera House Tour
Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m.
AHS Archives Tour
Tuesday, March 15, 11 a.m.
Tours by appointment:
History Coach Electric Vehicle Tour
Victorian West End Walking Tour
bauhaus architectural walking tour

WHEELER/STALLARD MUSEUM
Tuesday - Saturday (through April 17; open for the summer May 31)
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
ARCHIVES & COMMUNITY GALLERY
By appointment, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

SUMMER SEASON SITES
(open mid-June, hours vary)
Holden/Marolt Mining & Ranching Museum
Ashcroft Ghost Town
Independence Ghost Town

REMAINING PROGRAMS
Virtual Retro Films Series with Aspen Film
Final release March 8
Time Travel Tuesdays: Aspen History 101 & Aspen Extreme
March 8
History on Stage: Billy Fiske
March 12
Retro Films in Aspen & Snowmass
Aspen: March 15, April 12
Snowmass: March 18
History Lessons with Larry
March 17: Mining and Its Impacts

SITES, PROGRAMS, & EVENTS more at aspenhistory.org

ARCHIVES & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

RETRO FILMS
Building on the success of the in-person Retro Film Series held at the Limelight Aspen for the past several years, AHS and Aspen Film joined forces in 2021 to offer a virtual program for the public to enjoy from the comfort of their homes. Close to 2,000 viewers tuned in to watch the history of skiing and the local resort community unfold. Both the in-person and virtual series are back in 2022. Spanning several decades and showcasing beloved film favorites as well as newly digitized footage, the lineups include historical "feature" films, promotional videos, and documentary-style clips that explore skiing’s illustrious past in the Aspen/Snowmass area and beyond.

Historical ski footage stands out as some of AHS’s most treasured artifacts. The archives has digitized many priceless and often delicate film reels that have been donated to the Collection and we’re excited to share this beloved part of local history with the public.
Jane Click: U.S. Women’s ski team during the FIS World Championships in Aspen in 1950

Megan Cerise: A racer on the Niagara downhill course during the 1950 FIS on Aspen Mountain

Suzie Brady: Spring skiing on Aspen in March 1967

Suzie Brady: Spring skiing on Aspen in March 1967

Travis Lane McDiffett: Winterskol fireworks over Aspen Mountain in January 1983

Eliza Burlingame: Skiers below Peanut Butter Ridge on Aspen Mountain circa 1950

Nina Gabianelli: Lift 1 dedication in 1947

Kelly May: A skier circa 1970

Lisa Hancock: A skier on Highlands ridge looking at Mt. Hayden in 1941

Laura Calk: Ski School Meeting Place in 1952

Kelly Murphy: Highlands ski patrol Cloud Nine deck jump circa 1975

Anna Scott: Grand Prix race trail at Highlands in 1966

The AHS Archives includes more than 55,000 historical photographs from almost every era of local history. View photos and more online at archiveaspen.org, where you can order fine-art-quality prints. For research assistance contact archives@aspenhistory.org.


STAFF PICKS | Ski photos selected by AHS staff
SUMMARY FINANCIALS

ANNUAL INCOME

$195,818

ANNUAL EXPENSES

$160,015

ANNUAL SUPPORT

$238,027

ANNUAL COLLECTIONS

$244,651

ANNUAL RECIPROCAL

$234,574

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

$385,212

ANNUAL ADMINISTRATION

$33,297

ANNUAL PROGRAMS

$223,694

ANNUAL INCOME & EXPENSES

(Fiscal Year End December 31, 2021)

For complete financials, visit aspenhistorical.org

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS WHO HELP MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE

This list represents donations received in 2021.
THE HODGES FAMILY
In 2021, AHS completed a significant installation of Victorian-era wallpaper in the parlor and dining room at the Wheeler/Stallard Museum. The project was made possible by the generous and longtime support of the Hodges Family of Aspen, who have been part of the community since the mid-1930s when William Vanderveer Hodges, Jr. (front row, far left) and Joseph Gilluly Hodges (front row, middle) were guests at the opening of the Highland Bavarian Lodge. In 2001, their children established a fund to help AHS maintain the Wheeler/Stallard Museum parlor.

The wallpaper enhances interpretation of the late 19th-century house museum, which features period furniture, décor, and layout typical of Aspen’s finer Victorian homes. The wallpaper was carefully researched and selected to mimic sections of original wallpaper found in the house and uses historical hand-printed production techniques. The “American Aesthetic” style features ornate designs and rich color schemes. Thanks to this special support from the Hodges Family, visitors will enjoy a more authentic experience.

A group outside the Highland Bavarian Lodge in 1936. Aspen Historical Society, Grover Collection

CARL’S PHARMACY & MINERS’ BUILDING HARDWARE
In 1989, AHS board member and longtime Aspenite Carl Bergman spearheaded a partnership with the City of Aspen that resulted in the creation of the Holden/Marolt Mining & Ranching Museum. For the next three decades, Carl spent much of his time volunteering there, and his family and their two local businesses have been generous supporters of AHS. After Carl passed away in 2018, his wife Katie and their children Linda Brining and Bob Bergman partnered with AHS to honor Carl’s legacy by helping underwrite museum admission for car-free visitors. Thanks to their support, guests can walk, bike, bus, or ski to enjoy the museum for free. In 2008, Carl explained his passion for the museum: “I find the time and enjoy people, and feel that educating school children is rewarding beyond any comparison.”


“A group outside the Highland Bavarian Lodge in 1936. Aspen Historical Society, Grover Collection

“Carl put his heart and soul into the Holden/Marolt Museum and was an ardent supporter of AHS. Our family is honored to continue his efforts through this special donation, so that visitors of all ages can enjoy the museum and its many stories in his memory.” - Linda Brining

“A Aspen’s history is unique and rich. There is much to learn about and appreciate in this beautiful Colorado valley of the American West. Four generations of our family still live in Aspen and enjoy what it has to offer, from winter sports to summer culture. One great grandson, Philip, even interned at AHS! Our family is grateful to AHS for preserving and sharing the history with our community and visitors alike.” - Marilyn, Bill & Ann Hodges, second generation cousins

SUPPORTERS SPOTLIGHT


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SUPPORTERS SPOTLIGHT
MUSEUM AT LIFT ONE

Aspen Historical Society is honored to create a museum worthy of the area’s rich snow-sports history as part of a reinvigorated base area on Aspen Mountain. At the site where local lift-served skiing began, the museum will honor the community’s unique role in the origins of the sport. Thanks for bringing the boat tow home, Aspen!

Museum planning and a fundraising campaign are underway. To support the project, contact AHS at 970.925.3721 or development@aspenhistory.org.