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Rib Mountain Ski Club

Berg Memorial Scholarship

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### Rib Mountain's Ski History

When I was 7 years old, my father took me and my older sister to Shepherd and Schaller, and bought us snowboards. My first board was a Morall, I chose it because of the pretty blue, purple, and pink design, a small brand, and a small board. I watched as the board specialist put on my bindings, the same specialist who would later help me purchase my second board, almost 6 years later. I fell in love with boarding, even in spite of the fact that it took me a while to get a hang of the toe turn, but I've loved hitting the slopes ever since.

In 1937, the Rib Mountain ski hill opened, and it has remained a pillar of our community ever since. When it opened the hill sported a total of six runs, and a half mile ski tow, the longest one in the country at that time. Being one of the first ski resorts in North America, Rib Mountain was a popular midwest attraction, bringing in droves of skiers from Milwaukee and Chicago every weekend. James Kleiber, a former Wausau resident, from 1947 to 1963, stated "The ambulance used to make runs there every weekend," in remarks to just how lively the hill could be. In the early sixties, Rib Mountain adopted its first snow machines, Kleiber shared with me this statement:

"My uncle, George, helped install the first diesel engine in the snow machine there."

James Kleiber, was born in Wausau and lived there up until he left for the army in 1963, in his youth he was a frequent skier of the Rib Mountain Ski Hill. He states that "When I was in high school, I used to go up there during the week, because it was cheaper; you practically had the whole hill to yourself." Kleiber recalls riding the rope tow up to the Junior Headwall and taking the T-bar up to Birch Run and notes that the hill looks very different now. Today Rib Mountain Ski Hill has become Granite Peak, and now sports over 60 runs and 3 high-speed lifts.

## **References**

<https://www.skigranitepeak.com/history-of-granite-peak>

<https://ribmountainskiclub.org/about/our-history/>

Personal Interview: James Kleiber