Digital Delights
By Alex Ames
January 2011

This is the next installment of Digital Delights from Minnesota Reflections, a MDL Listserv monthly feature highlighting interesting objects from the Minnesota Reflections collections.

Quite a few residents of our state harbor a dream of heading South for a few months to escape the cold winter, before returning to enjoy an idyllic Minnesota summer. While warm weather may seem enticing on bitterly cold mornings, all must agree that "Minnesota Winters" are one of the defining characteristics of our state—the trials and severities of which we love to tout. From our endless snowfall to our sub-zero temperatures, we take secret pride in unbearable winter conditions, as if surviving life in the tundra is testament to our innate hardiness! What is more, Minnesotans have historically made the best of the cold by finding ways to enjoy what winter has to offer.

We may hate scraping ice off our vehicles before driving to and from work, but the experiences of lumberjacks put our winter complaints into perspective. Winter was the ideal time to harvest lumber because snow cover provided a slippery surface on which to transport heavy timber: http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/scott,330

Of course, not all horse-drawn sleigh rides involved hauling white pine. Many families took time during the winter to jaunt around town: 
http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/swede,10

In Minnesota, winter has long been synonymous with hockey, a statement with which this Minnesota hockey legend would agree: http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/stc,293. Though the look of the game has changed over the years (check out the 1923 St. Thomas hockey team: http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/thomas,194), its importance as a traditional winter pastime has only deepened.

I admit I haven't been to many hockey games, but as I recall, “Zamboni” machines usually don’t have four legs: http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/nfh,148

Rough- and- tumble hockey games are not the only way to enjoy the ice in winter time, to which these young ladies would certainly attest: 
http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/stearns,1590
Despite all the fun to be had outside during a Minnesota winter, I think these two St. Cloud Teachers College (St. Cloud State University) students had the right idea: http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?stc,488

Explore Minnesota Reflections for yourself to learn about Minnesota winters of the past. Minnesota Reflections’ advanced search option is very useful if you are interested in exploring one or two particular aspects of Minnesota winters. For example, if you are curious to learn more about winter in the north woods, try narrowing your search to the collections of county historical societies located in northern Minnesota, and search for terms such as “winter” and “snow.” If urban winter experiences (such as the Minneapolis sleigh ride featured above) interest you, focus your attention on collections in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Or, a general search for these terms will return a large number of results as well. Don’t forget to get creative in your search terms; Minnesota Reflections’ contributors describe each one of their images and documents in detail, and all of the terms they included in their metadata is searchable. Even a term like “icicles” will return numerous interesting results.

Whether you enjoy curling up by a fireplace with a good book or breaking some bones on the ice, get outside and find a way to enjoy what Minnesota winter has to offer!

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