



Canaan Valley's reputation for long winters with abundant amounts of snow paid off in the early 1950s. During the winter of 1949–1950, skiers from the Ski Club of Washington, D.C. (SCWDC), found in West Virginia what they were looking for. After a winter of less than normal snowfall in most of the Eastern United States, skiers were hungry for powder and also fell in love with the Canaan Valley view. (Courtesy USDA Forest Service, Monongahela National Forest.)



With lots of enthusiasm and elbow grease, members of SCWDC and supportive locals installed a used rope tow on Cabin Mountain that was powered by an old truck motor and chassis. Organizations like the Blackwater Civic Association and Davis Ski Club Council, along with local businessmen and citizens like Belmont Cleaver, Ed Filler, Ralph Good, Jim Meyer, William Miller, and Gerald Parks, supported the concept and development of the fledgling industry. (Courtesy David F. Strahin.)



Robert "Bob" Barton developed and managed the Weiss Knob Ski Area. Barton installed a 1,240-foot rope tow in 1955 to make ready for customers at this first commercial ski area south of the Mason-Dixon Line. In January 1956, the first official ski week at Weiss Knob Ski Area began. The Weiss Knob Ski Area was the predecessor to the present-day Canaan Valley Resort ski area. (Courtesy John Lutz.)

Before skiing came to Canaan Valley, a rope tow was something that got one out of the snow, not to the snow. Today, it is hard to believe that in 1955, this rope tow was the state-of-the-art technology that moved skiers to the top of the mountain. By the early 1970s, chair lifts arrived in the valley and provided a more sophisticated means of getting up the slope. (Courtesy John Lutz.)





Ed Filler, at far left, was a local businessman who encouraged the growth of the ski industry on Canaan Valley's Cabin Mountain. He was the chairman of the Blackwater Civic Association's Ski Cooperation Committee and probably was one of the few local people who had "ski" in his vocabulary. Filler had received ski training while in the army.



With skiing in Canaan Valley came a variety of après ski events connected with the sport. During Winter Carnival festivities, which began in 1955, associated events included a parade, torch light skiing, ice skating, and a slalom race in costume. The Snowball Dance was held at the Davis High School gym, with the crowning of a carnival queen. Sunday morning brought the blessing of the skis at St. Veronica's Catholic Church in Davis. (Courtesy John Lutz.)