

Memories of a Young Lad in the Bay...Mid 1920s

By Warren Thornley

Easily the most vivid memory of my youth in The BAY is, the occasional opportunity to join in a ride thru the center of town on a large BOB-SLED built and owned by Piehl's Lumber Yard. This sled was NO toy...large enough to carry 8-10 young children...plus the two adults required to handle the long and heavy sled. One adult to steer using a level steering wheel and another at the rear of the sled to operate the manual brakes. One long board ran the length of the sled as did foot rests on either side. One's first look at this "toy" was of its length and weight.

I don't believe any of we younger ones gave any thought to the possible danger involved in our moments of fear-fun! As I look back...ANY sort of crash at speed would have been a disaster...but then youth is spared these fears.



Bob-sled, possibly similar to the one owned by Piehl's Lumber Yard

The sequence (*ride*) would follow this sequence:

Locate the town Constable and get his approval for the run(s). Locate two adult size men to operate the sled. Easiest chore, find about ten children to take the ride. THEN, and then only would they release the sled...and we'd all pitch in to haul it up the hill till we were even with the entrance of

Yerkes property.

ALL ABOARD! And we slowly began the ride down the hill ...picking up speed that most certainly exceeded ANYTHING else traveling our streets.

When we reached a point about opposite SOUTHWICK'S HARDWARE STORE, which is the building just opposite (*from*) the library, we'd all scream at the top of our lungs and in a flash we'd round the slight bend and drop at our highest speed, right thru the center of town, passing the Constable who'd stopped any traffic present...usually horse and wagons. Now we'd leave the road and cut thru the PARK and then out onto the ice-covered bay waters. A good driver would have us stopped on the far side against Cedar Point Park, near the road. If agreed upon we'd do 'er again...OR others could claim a ride, fair's fair...NO argument!

To this day, I've NEVER EVER had a more exciting ride! My first was probably in 1929-30; this is 2004 and I'm 82! The terrible speed coupled with the growl of the heavy runners on the snow and ice couldn't be duplicated...you'd hafta ride it!

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