

## The First New Year's Eve At Rugby

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Not in the memory of the oldest native of these mountains has Jack Frost held so early in the season and for so long a time so tight a grip of mother earth and so determined a spirit to make our noble streams a temporary seasonable highway. While natives welcomed the presence of so long lost an acquaintance, English colonists right heartily hailed his presence, and for weeks had hoped that the noble stream represented in the above sketch would secure to them the delightful pastime of skating. Their hopes were fully realized, as the river, from the mill and for a mile upward, had a sheet of ice four inches thick, and to this spot colonists were summoned to spend New Year's Eve.

The scene viewed from this vast sheet of ice is one never to be forgotten. The clear blue sky, the innumerable bright stars, the high pines towering above the edge of the immense rocks, and such



Figure 1: Rugby's Tabord Inn in the 1880s

rocks! bearing the weight of icicles forty feet long and four feet in diameter, besides innumerable lovely aprons of frozen water. While nature had thus so lavishly provided for the right enjoyment of our feast, sturdy settlers had, by means of immense pine knot bonfires, ingeniously

transformed the dark winding paths, the huge rocks and ice, into a fairy scene of enchanting beauty.



Figure 2: A Tennis Group at Rugby

The keen appetite of Celt and Anglo-Saxon for outdoor sports is proverbial, and the healthy pastime of skating, on this occasion, was largely and right heartily indulged in. At five minutes to twelve all were summoned to form a circle surrounding a huge bonfire. This being done, a request was made that all should join hands in good old Scotch fashion, and that for two minutes all thoughts should be directed on “auld” and beloved friends at the homes left behind. This proved a truly solemn moment, but when the hour of twelve was announced, hearty congratulations passed around the vast circle, hats and handkerchiefs were waved in the air, old and young vied with each other in giving the loudest and heartiest hurrah which had ever aroused the echoes of the neighboring hills. The health of the President of the United States and Her Majesty the Queen of England was given and right heartily responded to. All then partook of the

loving cup (hot coffee), and enthusiastically brought this memorable evening to a close by singing “God Save the Queen” and “Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot.”