complete the sled of a desired length and width. As crude as they were, they provided many happy hours of sledding for the four of us kids.

By using hard oak boards for runners, then planing the bottom edges of them until they were smooth, Dad made sleds that fulfilled our needs quite well. Continued use on a well-packed or frozen sled run tended to make the runners even smoother and we could attain a fair amount of speed with them. Since the runners were rigid, we had to guide those sleds by dragging a foot in the snow. The rider dragged the foot on the same side as the direction he wanted to go. Unfortunately, this reduced our speed materially and it also tended to throw the snow out of our sled run. We didn't worry about the wear on our shoes or boots as much as our parents did. And we could repair the damage to the run by shovelling more snow to replace it, then re-packing it.

The era of the wooden sleds came to an abrupt end for us about 1931 at Christmas. Even though money at the Shafer home was in short supply, my parents decided to surprise me and Harry by giving us new sleds with steel runners for Christmas. Dad must have bought the sleds at one of the stores in Walton and brought them home while we kids were in school. He hid them under my parents' bed and planned to surprise us Christmas morning when we traditionally opened our gifts. There was a good snow on the ground a few days before Christmas and Dad suggested that we prepare an extra special sled run the day before Christmas. He explained that we deserved a faster and better place to ride our old wooden sleds. He helped us to pack the snow by pulling a sheet of tin roofing, with us sitting on it, over the surface several times. We even carried water and sprinkled it on the surface to freeze. All of Dad's sudden interest in our sledding led Harry to suspect that we were getting new sleds. I was naive enough that I never became one bit suspicious.

We arose early Christmas morning and ate a hurried breakfast. When Harry didn't see new sleds, he couldn't control his curiosity and began hunting for them. Of course it didn't take him long to find them. He could see while they were still under the bed that one sled was longer and higher than the other so he immediately claimed it for himself. He regretted his decision almost as soon as we began sledding on the new sled run because mine was both faster and much easier to steer. I don't remember the name of his sled but mine was a Flexible Flyer. I have been told recently that they are still considered one of the very best sleds on the market.

Ice skating never became popular around Walton. I suppose it was because the only ice available was on the Pocatalico River which