



Journal of the New England Ski Museum

Summer 2017

Issue Number 105

Skiing In the Granite State Part One of the Museum's 2017 Exhibit

By Jeff Leich



Dick Smith, New England Ski Museum

*Tuckerman Ravine is an iconic New Hampshire backcountry ski destination.
This 1957 skier exits the Sluice with the Lip in the background.*

Granite State Skiing in Perspective

New Hampshire was the epicenter of American skiing from the 1930s into the 1950s when the focus shifted west to higher mountains and deeper, more consistent snowfall. Skiing first became popular as a sport and recreation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in northern Europe, notably the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Austria. As the new sport crossed the Atlantic, it became established in and around

the northeastern port cities of New York and Boston, which had hinterlands noted for hills and mountains, snowy winters, resorts, and established transportation networks. Due largely to its proximity to Boston, New Hampshire rose to an early, though brief, prominence as a site for recreational skiing in the United States. The state's influential role was due as well to the passionate interests of three distinct groups: the Scandinavian working class immigrants who flooded into the Berlin paper mills in the late 1800s; the Dartmouth Outing Club students

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New England Ski Museum

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Mission

New England Ski Museum collects, conserves, and exhibits elements of ski history for the purposes of research, education, and inspiration.

Specifically, the Museum:

- ❖ collects and preserves examples of ski equipment, clothing, art, and ephemera;
- ❖ collects and preserves photographic records, films, and historic documents of skiing;
- ❖ maintains a reference library of ski literature, including books and periodicals;
- ❖ collects and preserves memorabilia of the 10th Mountain Division;
- ❖ maintains an oral history library of notable skiers;
- ❖ provides exhibitions about the history of skiing and its importance to social and economic development; and
- ❖ provides education programs for its community.

Paul Valar Society

Have you considered including New England Ski Museum in your estate plan?

By including a financial bequest to the Museum in their estate planning, Paul Valar Society members continue the Museum's mission to preserve the history and heritage of skiing beyond their lifetime. The Society takes its name from Paul Valar, the charismatic and influential ski school director and coach who was the first president of the New England Ski Museum.

If you have made provision for the Museum in your planning, we would appreciate knowing that so we can thank you. Bequests need not meet any particular threshold, and the amount of the bequest need not be shared with the Museum. If you are considering such a step in concert with your financial advisor, a Museum board member or senior staffer can provide more information.

*Journal of the
New England Ski Museum*

is published in March, June, September and December and sent as a benefit to all members.

We welcome your questions, comments, and letters.

Jeff Leich, Editor

Graphic Design by Sherwin Dodge Printers, Littleton, NH

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I hope that you've enjoyed the summer months wherever you call home or where your travels and vacations have taken you. In past letters I've remarked about the many accomplishments of our illustrious Board members. I encourage you to visit our website and take the time to read through the biographies of our directors on our Board page.

One Board member I'm quite proud of is my friend Ted Sutton, who has served as a Director since 1997. This past May Ted was presented with the United States Ski and Snowboard Association's very prestigious Julius Blegen Award. This award is presented in memory of Julius Blegen, an outstanding

contributor to the snow sport. Blegen was the U.S. cross country champion in 1911-1912, the founding president of the Central Division in 1927 and coach of the 1932 Olympic ski team. It is considered to be the highest service award by the USSA!

For more than five decades Ted has been one of America's most valuable "go to" leaders in alpine ski racing. Dexter Paine, Chairman of the USSA, made this final award of this year's USSA Congress and stated: "Ted Sutton is the quintessential volunteer. He has taken his passion for skiing and decades of experience in the ski industry to provide a lifetime of support for ski racing-most notably in providing his expertise in the design and safety of race courses."

One need only look at the nationally and internationally known past recipients of this award since 1946 to appreciate the magnitude and honor of this recognition. Congratulations Ted!

Director's Report

By Jeff Leich



This has been a busy summer for the board and staff as fundraising and planning for the Eastern Slope branch continues. The response to our capital campaign has been extremely gratifying, and we are close enough to our goal that our campaign team will announce the results early this fall. For the moment it is enough to say that

sufficient funding is on hand for us to proceed with renovations and exhibit installation on schedule.

The fundraising effort has benefited significantly by the Mount Washington Valley volunteer group calling themselves the Downhill Divas. The Divas have arranged a series of events and raffles in the North Conway area, the latest of which is a golf tournament to be held at the North Conway Country Club on September 25. The country club is within sight of our new branch location and the event will be a reasonable way for us to ease into the neighborhood. The tournament proceeds will go toward the capital campaign, as will the revenue from a unique raffle whose winner will be drawn at the golf tournament.

We are very fortunate that a friend of the Museum has given us an official NFL football signed by New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, which we are raffling off now as the new NFL season approaches. The raffle benefits the Eastern

Slope branch, and details on the golf tournament and the raffle are on the Museum's website under Museum News.

In late June the Museum signed a lease with the owner of the former North Conway Community Center, the Gibson Woodbury Charitable Foundation, and the foundation has been performing exterior renovations that include new siding, windows, roof, tree removal, handicapped access ramp and public bathrooms.

Our interior renovations will begin soon, with L.A. Drew of North Conway serving as general contractor. Exhibit fabrication is proceeding off-site now, and later this fall the fabricator, 42 design fab of Indian Orchard, Massachusetts, will be in North Conway to install the extensive exhibit elements. In the meantime, I have been working on exhibit text, while Jeremy Davis of the board is writing detailed sketches of lost New England Ski areas which will be the basis of an audio-visual exhibit in the new branch.

If all goes as planned we will be opening the Eastern Slope branch at the end of 2017, while our normal operations will continue at the Franconia Notch branch. In December 2017 the Franconia museum will mark its 35th year of operation, and the organization itself will be 40. Those four decades of the ski museum's existence are thanks largely to the support of thousands of dedicated members, past and present, and for that the museum's board is extremely grateful, and gratified now to expand our horizon to a second location.

who became enamored of the sport in the 1910s and 1920s; and the generally older, more staid membership of the Boston-based Appalachian Mountain Club.

As a result of these positive influences, New Hampshire became established as a skiing hub by the early 1930s, just as the popularity of the new sport was beginning to escalate. Downhill skiing techniques, developed in Europe by professional ski instructors such as Hannes Schneider, were popular in the teens and twenties, and Dartmouth followed closely new skiing developments on the Continent. Many who learned skiing in college outing clubs kept up the activity as they moved into a variety of careers, becoming advocates for the sport. Owners of summer inns in the White Mountains and elsewhere quickly saw the potential for a winter season; state agencies also foresaw future revenue and mounted publicity campaigns.¹

By the time World War II brought the development of downhill skiing to a temporary halt, most elements of the modern ski industry had arrived in New Hampshire, many of them for the first time in this country. New Hampshire can fairly profess to be the first American location where these aspects of the sport were seen: down-mountain trails cut specifically for skiing; new developments in downhill racing; overhead wire-rope ski tows; an aerial tramway and other innovative conveyances for skiers; professional ski patrols; a systematic method of ski-slope grooming; the first professional ski school; the concept of Alpine-style ski villages and associated sales of real estate; the profession of ski resort planning; and governmental ski-lift safety board and skier statutes. Taken together, these elements

combined to form the structure of an entirely new tourism industry.

In the winter of 1967 two new ski areas opened in central New Hampshire, in Waterville Valley and at Loon Mountain in Lincoln. Geographically close, separated only by the Mount Osceola range, the two resorts were connected by similarities, differentiated by contrasts, and together represented a high water mark of sorts for ski development in the Granite State.

By the time Waterville Valley and Loon Mountain, adjacent to the new Interstate 93 highway, began operating, New Hampshire had lost its early lead to Vermont and western states. The creation of these two large resorts in the White Mountains came at a time when skiing was growing rapidly and new areas were being built throughout New England. That growth rate would slow within five to seven years, and economic headwinds would force many smaller areas to cease operations. Several major ski areas were constructed after the 1967 debut of Loon and Waterville, notably Bretton Woods and Jackson Ski Touring, but the heyday had passed and in retrospect the birth of the twin areas on either side of Mount Osceola represented a crest of ski area development in the state.



Endnotes

¹Albert S. Carlson, "Ski Geography of New England," *Economic Geography* 18 (July 1942): 318.



New England Ski Museum

An AMC group skis the Wapack Trail in February, 1930. The trail ran from Mount Watatic to Pack Monadnock, giving rise to the acronym.

Diverse Pioneers: Three Clubs Inaugurate New Hampshire Skiing

The Nansen Ski Club

Though there may have been scattered, undocumented instances of individuals using skis in New Hampshire before then, skiing in the state first received notice in the mill town of Berlin sometime in the early 1880s. Located in the northern forests at a series of waterfalls along the Androscoggin River, Berlin was well-situated to become a lumber and paper town. In 1877, the town's first pulp mill, the Forest Fibre Company was established by Henry H. Furbish, the inventor of a process to manufacture wood pulp suitable for paper making.¹ Sawmills had existed in Berlin since 1826, but it was the rapid expansion of the pulp and paper industry after 1877 that seems to have increased the demand for labor sufficiently to attract immigrants, chiefly from Canada but also from Sweden and Norway, to the city.

Among those Norwegians was Olaf (Spike) Olesen, born in Norway about 1866 and arriving in Berlin around 1882. Early historical articles of the Nansen Ski Club credit Olesen with sparking interest in skiing when he arrived, building skis for himself and friends, and

assembling a core of some nine Norwegian immigrants that formed a club they first called simply the *Skiklubben*. The name was changed to Berlin Mills Ski Club about 1886 to reflect the employer of most club members. The brief, and sometimes conflicting histories of the club found in the Nansen's later event programs suggest that the ski club went through periods of dormancy between its founding and 1907, when it was renamed as the *Skiklubben* Fritjof Nansen in honor of the Norwegian explorer whose 1888 crossing of Greenland on skis excited interest in skiing throughout the northern world. From the time of its 1907 re-invention and its 1912 opening to men of all nationalities rather than just Norwegians, the club was active in all aspects of skiing, and a handful of Nansen Ski Club members acted as emissaries of skiing throughout New England.²

In 1923, the Nansen club ran the first of its Mount Washington Marathon Ski Runs, a hybrid of downhill and cross-country that started at the Halfway House on the Mount Washington carriage road and ran all the way to Berlin, some 20 miles distant. At least



The Nansen Ski Club built several ski jumps on Paine's Hill in Berlin. In 1922 this jump, planned to be the largest in the east, was constructed by Olaf Olesen based on plans from the Steamboat Springs, Colorado jump. Jumpers recorded distances of around 110 feet from this jump, disappointing those who hoped that the records set at Brattleboro, Vermont could be matched or exceeded. Ski jumping was the most important aspect of skiing to the Nansen club membership, yet members were also active in cross-country and down-mountain skiing.



This Nansen Ski Club group includes its two 1932 Olympians in their U.S. team uniforms. Bob Reid, on the left, won the 1924 Mt. Washington Marathon Ski Run, traversing the approximately 20-mile distance from the Halfway House on Mount Washington to Berlin in two hours fifty-five minutes, and eight years later was still in condition to represent the U.S. at Lake Placid. Erling Anderson, in uniform on the right, was one of the greatest Nansen ski jumpers in the 1930s, despite ignoring his doctor's orders not to jump. After Anderson lost part of his jaw in a 1925 hunting accident, his doctors used part of his hip in reconstructive surgery, and they forbade him to jump. "I was always being asked why I skied after all those operations," he told Sel Hannah years later. "My answer—I loved the sport."

four of these events were held in the mid-1920s, with city native Bob Reid competing in at least two. In 1932, Reid was still in competitive condition, and he represented the U.S. in the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid. Reid won the marathon in 1924, and received a large, elaborate silver trophy donated by John Wingate Weeks, the Lancaster, New Hampshire native who as a congressman from Massachusetts had sponsored the Weeks Act of 1911 that authorized federal land purchases for national forest holdings in the east. The White Mountain National Forest that resulted from the Weeks Act would be a major factor in ski area development after World War II.³ Why the Nansen's Mount Washington Ski Marathons were never credited by historians as among the first downhill races in the country is not clear. Simple lack of awareness, the hybrid nature of the marathons, or social factors in a class-conscious age are among the likely elements.

Widely known for its focus on the traditional Scandinavian sport of ski jumping, in the decades before Alpine skiing started its growth to popularity, some Nansen Ski Club members popularized skiing well outside the city. The club claimed that it influenced the birth of

skiing at Dartmouth, the University of New Hampshire, Williams, Norwich University and Bates. Perhaps the ultimate skiing influencer to emerge from Berlin was Selden Hannah, who grew up in the city and was a Nansen member from his early years. Sel Hannah would attend Dartmouth, then become one of the earliest ski area design professionals. Hannah and the company he helped found, Sno-engineering (now Sno-e), provided professional planning services to hundreds of ski resorts around the world.⁴

The Appalachian Mountain Club

Known as the earliest conservation organization in the country, the Appalachian Mountain Club, founded in Boston in 1876 by educated, well-to-do scientists and explorers, became an early force in the popularization of skiing. A great deal of their skiing was focused in New Hampshire, so that beginning in the 1920s AMC skiers were important in promulgating the sport and making it possible for it to grow rapidly. Significant leaders in ski instruction, ski trail building, access to skiing terrain via snow trains, and an early ski publication, the AMC also made early impacts in ski racing and ski venue development.

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This group of Nansen Ski Club juniors at the Halfway House on Mount Washington was likely taken in the spring when they skied on snowfields still lingering above timberline.

Sel Hannah grew up in Berlin, skied with the Nansen Ski Club, and as an adult became one of the first to practice ski area design in a professional capacity. In Berlin his family lived on First Avenue, just below the Russian Orthodox church. When he was a child, his father took him to Norwegian Village where he saw the ski jumping at Paine's Hill. "That trip changed my life," he wrote in later years. "Ski jumping fascinated me." His father bought him a pair of Tubbs skis, and from then on, skis and skiing would be a part of Sel Hannah's life.



Courtesy of Joan Hannah



This Appalachian Mountain Club group is depicted on a 1935 trip to the Laurentians in which they skied from inn to inn for a week, for a distance of some 100 miles from St. Jovite to Shawbridge. Among the members were Betty Welch, center, and Bill Whitney, to her right. They would marry shortly after the trip, then purchase the Moody Farm in Jackson, New Hampshire and operate a ski area for many years.



AMC skier Ruth Miller is seen at the base of the Uncanonic ski trail near Manchester, New Hampshire, where there was a funicular which was used for skiing in the early 1930s. Ruth Miller would marry William P. Fowler, the chairman of AMC's committee on skiing. He was also the companion of future Loon Mountain founder Sherman Adams when the pair made an 83-mile trek from Littleton to Hanover in under 24 hours as Dartmouth students in 1920.



Cardigan Lodge in Alexandria was renovated by the AMC from an existing farmstead into a ski cabin in the mid-1930s. Ski slopes can be seen behind and to the right of the barn. Cardigan and the AMC's other ski center in Pinkham Notch attracted skiers just before it became apparent that ski tows would be a major component of ski areas.



H. H. Leitch

Although a contemporary of Fred Harris at Dartmouth described the view of the DOC and skiing held by a majority of students in 1911 as being “a bit off” (Wakefield, Mass. Daily Item, January 7, 1941), skiing became popular at the college soon thereafter. 4,800-foot Mount Moosilauke provided the closest alpine skiing terrain to the college. The summit house behind these two DOC skiers was operated by the club as a summer hikers’ shelter.



H. H. Leitch

Charles N. Proctor, seen on the left in this 1929 photo taken in the snowfields of Mount Moosilauke, would become one of the first American ski professionals, teaching skiing, operating a ski shop, facilitating the development of the first chairlift, and operating ski areas.



H. H. Leich

The DOC's 1927 down-mountain race on the Moosilauke carriage road has been called the first modern form of downhill ski competition in the U.S. This image shows the start of the 1929 DOC race over the same course.

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At a time when most American skiers had no training, when such instruction was critical given the crude nature of the equipment at the time, AMC members had the good fortune to discover that German émigré Otto Schniebs, living and working near Boston, was an experienced ski instructor with not only a deep knowledge of the Arlberg technique, but an engaging personality as well. Otto Schniebs began giving lessons to the AMC in 1928. "For the first time learning to ski became easy in this country," recalled William Fowler of the AMC's skiing committee⁵.

Probably the greatest impact of the AMC on the growth of skiing came with its role in arranging for the Boston & Maine Railroad to run weekend snow trains from Boston to various ski destinations to the north. Two AMC members, A. John Holden, Jr. and Park Carpenter were instrumental in suggesting the plan to the railroad, and the concept's immediate success in the winter of 1931, when 8,371 skiers rode the snow trains, insured its continuation. Five years later in 1936, ridership had topped 23,000, and other railroads in northern cities had adopted the idea. In the Depression years in which the snow trains operated, many had no other way to reach the mountains. The appeal of snow trains surpassed the mere access to ski country, though—the socializing among the largely young, like-minded passengers spread the culture of skiing and facilitated friendships, and likely more than a few marriages.

The AMC started publication of *The Ski Bulletin* in 1931 to communicate plans for upcoming snow train excursions and to disseminate snow condition reports from New England ski

destinations. Within a few years until its 1942 demise this publication became the first national ski periodical, publishing articles from the far-flung corners of American ski country.

The club's New Hampshire ski lodges at Pinkham Notch and Cardigan near Alexandria developed into the centers of ski trail networks in the mid-1930s just before the widespread adoption of ski tows. AMC ski instructors taught technique and held classification tests, and club ski races held on the Wildcat Trail and others developed expertise in ski race officiating by those charged with refereeing the events, most notably Joe Dodge and Douglas Burckett.

The motivation of AMC members in taking up skiing was chiefly in the use of skis as a means to access mountains and wild country. The club's commitment to and involvement in Alpine skiing faded beginning in the 1950s and 1960s as ski tows and lifts and all the associated development that came in their wake became unmistakable. Around this time, however, a second wave of involvement in skiing by AMC people began, as some former trail crew and hut summer employees of the club developed or operated Alpine ski areas in New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, and several others had leadership roles at *Skiing* magazine and the National Ski Areas Association.

By the 1970s, the club's interest in skiing had largely become channeled to the Nordic aspects of skiing, and the organization had taken some public stands in opposition to Alpine resort expansion proposals. Few in the club now remember the unlikely role played

by this conservation group in the early propagation of Alpine skiing in New Hampshire and beyond.

The Dartmouth Outing Club

The Dartmouth Outing Club was formed in 1909, following a proposal by Dartmouth junior Fred Harris of Brattleboro, Vermont. Harris' concept of a club focused on outdoor activities, especially in winter, caught fire in the isolated college where winter had previously meant hibernation and ennui. Having learned to ski as a youth in Brattleboro, Harris advocated skiing, among other winter sports, and the club was soon offering trips on skis and snowshoes to the alpine terrain of Mounts Moosilauke and Washington, as well as destinations closer to Hanover.

Like the Nansen club, which was inspired by skiing in its Norwegian variant, and the AMC, influenced by German ski developments in the person of Otto Schniebs and the ski trains of Munich, Dartmouth had a connection to a third variety of skiing concepts, that of the British winter colony in Switzerland. Professor Charles A. Proctor, a faculty advisor of the DOC, was a correspondent of Arnold Lunn, the unquestioned leader of the British skiers centered in Mürren where new forms of ski competition were being created in the first decades of the 20th century.

Learning of the new race format being called slalom by Lunn and his followers, Proctor and the DOC ran the first experimental slalom in this country in Hanover in 1925. This was a decidedly unimpressive debut of one of the major disciplines of modern ski racing, with DOC skiers swinging through a short course marked by pine branches.⁶ The DOC's next premier of a competition form was somewhat more robust. Dartmouth ski coach Anton Diettrich arranged a downhill race on March 8, 1927 on the Moosilauke carriage road. A handful of racers set off at timed intervals and crouched, schussed, spilled, got up and schussed again down through a tunnel of trees, a vertical descent of about 2,700 feet⁷. Winner of the race was Charles N. Proctor, son of the faculty advisor and a future U.S. Olympic skier. Yet another new race format emerged in the state in 1937, and though that first U.S. giant slalom race in Tuckerman Ravine was sponsored by the Amateur Ski Club of New York in memory of its member Franklin Edson III, the DOC played a large role in that event. Dick Durrance, Dartmouth's star racer of the 1930s, aware of the hazards of downhill racing that had taken the life of Edson, advocated transplanting the recently developed giant slalom format from Europe as a way of lessening the speed and danger of downhill. Dartmouth's coach Walter Prager set the course, and Durrance was the winner. Three of today's ski race formats then, were arguably introduced to this country between 1925 and 1937, all through events held in the Granite State.

Dartmouth became known as the leader in intercollegiate skiing in the 1930s, based on the sheer number of undergraduates joining the DOC, the skiing expeditions to the White Mountains, and the success of its ski teams year after year. That success was due in part to the series of inspirational European ski coaches hired by the college who oversaw the teams. Beginning with Hungarian national Anton Diettrich, who learned from Matthias Zdarsky and

Georg Bilgeri, the two foremost Austrian instructors before the age of Hannes Schneider, Dartmouth coaches kept college skiers informed of the most recent techniques and philosophies from Europe. German Raab of Munich, Guido Reuge of Zurich, Harald Paumgarten of Austria, Otto Schniebs of Germany and Walter Prager of Davos all influenced generations of DOC skiers from the mid-1920s until the mid-1950s.⁸

The DOC became one of the most popular extracurricular activities on campus, and over decades thousands of undergraduates were introduced to skiing under its auspices. Unlike the Nansen club with its largely working class membership that did not travel widely save for jumping tournaments, and the AMC, whose skiers were mostly in mid-career or older, the DOC unleashed on the world hundreds of youthful graduates each year with a strong passion for their unique winter sport that they took with them wherever their colleges degrees obtained employment for them. DOC alumni would be a potent group of skiing missionaries in New Hampshire and the country.



Endnotes

¹ John K. Rule, "The Brown Company: From North Country Sawmill to World-Leading Paper Manufacturer," *Historical New Hampshire*, 68, 1&2, Fall-Winter 2014, 7-8.

² "History of the Nansen Ski Club," *Program: United States Eastern Amateur Ski Championship and Winter Carnival, Berlin, N.H., Feb. 19 and 20, 1926*, 9-27. "History of Nansen Ski Club," *Official Program: FIS World Championship and Olympic Tryouts, Berlin, New Hampshire, February 25-26, 1939*, 7.

³ "History of the Nansen Ski Club," 1926, 29.

⁴ "Nansen Ski Club," *Year Book, United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association*. (Bellows Falls, Vermont, 1929), 83.

⁵ William P. Fowler, "New Hampshire Becomes Ski Conscious," *Appalachia*, December 1978, 122-124.

⁶ Charles N. Proctor, "History and Development of Skiing in America," in Roland Palmedo, Ed., *Skiing: The International Sport*. (New York: Derrrydale Press, 1937), 62

⁷ Kenneth D. Cuddeback, "The First American Downhill Race," *American Ski Annual (1941-42)*, 26-30. In subsequent years, the course was shortened to eliminate some flat sections, and the finish line was established at a DOC lean-to called Camp Misery. From the South Peak of Moosilauke to Camp Misery the vertical drop was about 2,300 feet.

⁸ Proctor, "History and Development of Skiing in America," 64-65.

Preparing the Way



New England Ski Museum

Films taken by John McCrillis of the DOC's Moosilauke down-mountain race convinced the National Ski Association to sanction the first National Downhill Championship on the Moosilauke carriage road on March 12, 1933. Sixty-nine racers finished the race on the twisting carriage road, with the winner, Henry "Bem" Woods, finishing with a time just under 8 minutes for the 2.8-mile, 2,300-foot course. The finish of the 1933 National Downhill is shown here. The sign on the right indicates that spectators could not take skis above the finish line.

With interest and passion for skiing well-established by the three geographically and socially diverse clubs that first brought skiing to New Hampshire, those entranced by the new sport needed places to ski, the skills to ski effectively, and beginning in the mid-1930s, they could ease their uphill climbs using the tows and lifts that were just being invented. For skiers, New Hampshire soon provided the trails, the technique instruction, and the tows.

Down-Mountain Ski Trails

New Hampshire was the scene of the first American efforts to create trails through the forests specifically for skiing. Some members of the Appalachian Mountain Club began this work in 1923, trimming and widening the new Wapack Trail in the southern part of the state into a ridgetop cross-country twenty-one-mile ski route that traversed the numerous summits from Mount Watatic, on the Massachusetts border, to North Pack Monadnock.¹

In the summer of 1931, the enthusiasm for building ski trails moved north as the Winnepesaukee Ski Club, whose territory was near the lake of the same name in the central part of the

state, cut a ski trail over Mounts Gunstock and Belknap, with a 1,200-foot vertical drop from the summit of Belknap. This trail was the site of the Eastern Downhill Championships held in February 1932.²

Katharine Peckett of Peckett's Inn on Sugar Hill convinced a group of local hotel owners in the summer of 1932 to contribute money toward hiring local workers to hew a major ski trail from the summit of 4,077-foot Cannon Mountain in the White Mountains. Duke Dimitri von Leuchtenberg, then teaching skiing at Peckett's fledgling Arlberg ski school, marked out the trail's course over land owned by the State of New Hampshire and by the heirs of hotel owner Richard Taft, for whom the trail was named. The Richard Taft Trail was the first trail to be attempted on a four-thousand-foot mountain, and it proved to be too large a job for the local crew to complete in one summer. It took the participation of a federal agency that would come to be called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to finish the Taft Trail in the summer of 1933.³

The Richard Taft Trail became the prototype for numerous ski trail construction projects in the state, and, in turn, these projects would become a pattern for other New England states. After President Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration in March 1933, several skiers prominent in the state, such as former Rhodes Scholar and Manchester attorney John P. Carleton, worked to bring ski trail projects to the attention of state and federal agencies in the hope that the new jobs programs that the president and Congress were expected to unveil might be utilized for the benefit of the ski community. Carleton and his associates formed a committee to present their ideas, which resulted in support from the New Hampshire State Forestry Department and from James E. Scott, supervisor of the White Mountain National Forest.⁴ By mid-July 1933, the first CCC ski-trail project, Wildcat Trail in Pinkham Notch, commenced, and after a massive effort, forty miles of new ski trails opened to the public in 1934.⁵



Otto Schniebs is shown here on an AMC trip on Pack Monadnock along the Wapack Trail on April 29, 1929. Skiers could take a train from Boston to Greenfield, New Hampshire, ski south on the 21-mile Wapack Trail, and return on a late train from Ashburnham, Massachusetts. The AMC's Arthur Comey and the Harvard Mountaineering Club's Tom Cabot helped clear the summer footpath for skiing in the mid-1920s.

Arlberg Ski Technique

Hannes Schneider, an Austrian national from St. Anton was the well-known developer of the Arlberg ski technique, named for his home region in western Austria. Schneider's unique contribution was twofold: he refined a ski technique in which a student could progress through a series of increasingly sophisticated maneuvers, and he combined this technique with an organizational approach that ushered large numbers of skiers in ascending class levels through this progression. German filmmaker Dr. Arnold Fanck featured Schneider's skiing, making him an international sports celebrity, and the Hannes Schneider Ski School brought unprecedented prosperity to St. Anton.

In the winter of 1928, German émigré Otto Schniebs appeared in the U.S. He soon came to the attention of the Appalachian Mountain Club, by the next winter he was teaching lessons to the club on metropolitan golf courses and on their weeklong excursion to Littleton, New Hampshire. Schniebs was the first instructor trained in the Arlberg technique to teach in the US and after several years honing the skills of AMC skiers he became a legendary ski coach at Dartmouth.

The Arlberg technique held promise for the growing population of New England skiers who had much enthusiasm but little or no expertise. The earliest Arlberg ski school at a ski resort in the country was in Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, at the inn owned by the Peckett family. Katharine Peckett, a skier herself, arranged to keep the inn open for the 1929–30 winter season, so that two European ski teachers could offer Arlberg ski instruction there. Peckett's attracted a well-to-do clientele and became the rendezvous for a network of skiers whose social standing increased the cachet of the new sport.⁶

In the spring of 1934 Carroll Reed, co-founder of the White Mountain Ski Runners club and a committed skier, incurred a spinal fracture on the Wildcat Trail. While recovering from his injuries, Reed saw an article about Schneider's ski school and convinced innkeepers in Jackson to fund the costs of retaining an instructor from St. Anton for the 1937 winter season. Schneider sent one of his most experienced instructors, Benno Rybizka, who conducted thousands of ski lessons that winter despite notably poor snow conditions. Once established, the American Branch of the Hannes Schneider Ski School grew from two to four Austrian instructors, and in 1939 political upheaval in Europe brought Schneider himself to North Conway.

Harvey Dow Gibson, president of Manufacturer's Trust Company in New York, whose youth had been spent in North Conway, was working to develop Mount Cranmore as a ski area. As part of this project Gibson bought Carroll Reed's interest in the Jackson ski school and moved it to North Conway. Gibson had international financial connections forged through his work with relief commissions following the First World War.⁷

As a leading citizen of St. Anton, Hannes Schneider was courted by the emerging National Socialist party in the mid-1930s. Schneider adamantly refused to enter the Nazi orbit and

Continued on page 15

The Richard Taft ski trail, cut through the forest on a shoulder of Cannon Mountain, was designed by Duke Dimitri von Leuchtenberg, a ski instructor at Peckett's Inn, and built by a combination of local workers and Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. It was the earliest trail in the country designed for downhill skiing, and when it was skiable in the winter of 1933, it was clearly superior to the carriage roads on Moosilauke and Washington that were the only high mountain options up until that time. The slopes around the Taft trail seen in this photo today are the site of the U.S.S.A. training site at Mittersill.



New England Ski Museum



New England Ski Museum

People in the U.S. fell in love with skiing when hardly anyone in the country knew how to ski. Learning to ski was much more difficult than it is today, because ski equipment was much less sophisticated. Those who developed techniques to control the long skis of the time were Europeans. Though this image was probably posed with tongue in cheek, in the absence of instructors many Americans did resort to books to absorb ski technique.



Katharine Peckett recruited Austrian ski instructors to teach at her family's inn, Peckett's on Sugar Hill, beginning in the winter of 1930. The ebullient showman Sig Buchmayr was one of the most memorable of the Austrians, and remained in the U.S. for the rest of his life.

Continued from page 13

was thereafter marked as an opponent by Nazi party members based in Innsbruck. Days after the *Anschluss* of March 1938, local Nazis imprisoned Schneider and made one of their own the head of his ski school. Schneider had made many friends, and one was Dr. Karl Rösen, a German attorney active in organized skiing who had enough influence with the German Nazis to have Schneider transferred to his custody under house arrest in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. There Schneider languished for months, held apart from his family and confined, yet safe for the moment from the Austrian Nazis. He likely posed a bureaucratic dilemma for the German Nazis who were aware of his international following.⁸

Gibson, now hosting the American Branch of the Hannes Schneider Ski School in North Conway, was the chair of the American Committee for the Short Term Creditors of Germany. The committee's German government contact was Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank, and Gibson evidently used his leverage as a creditor and his friendship with Schacht to negotiate Schneider's release. Much remains unknown about the details of the deal between Gibson and the Germans, but

the outcome was that Schneider and his family were allowed to leave Europe, and the *skimeister* took up residence in North Conway at the head of the Hannes Schneider Ski School at Mount Cranmore in February 1939.⁹

The presence of Hannes Schneider, the virtual creator of the downhill skiing phenomenon with all its associated prosperity, made North Conway a world capital of the sport until his death in 1955. The ski school and Mount Cranmore thrived, helped by the ease of access from Boston provided by snow trains and by regular visits from internationally known ski figures, such as Arnold Lunn. New Hampshire's place as the hub of alpine skiing in mid-century America was assured.

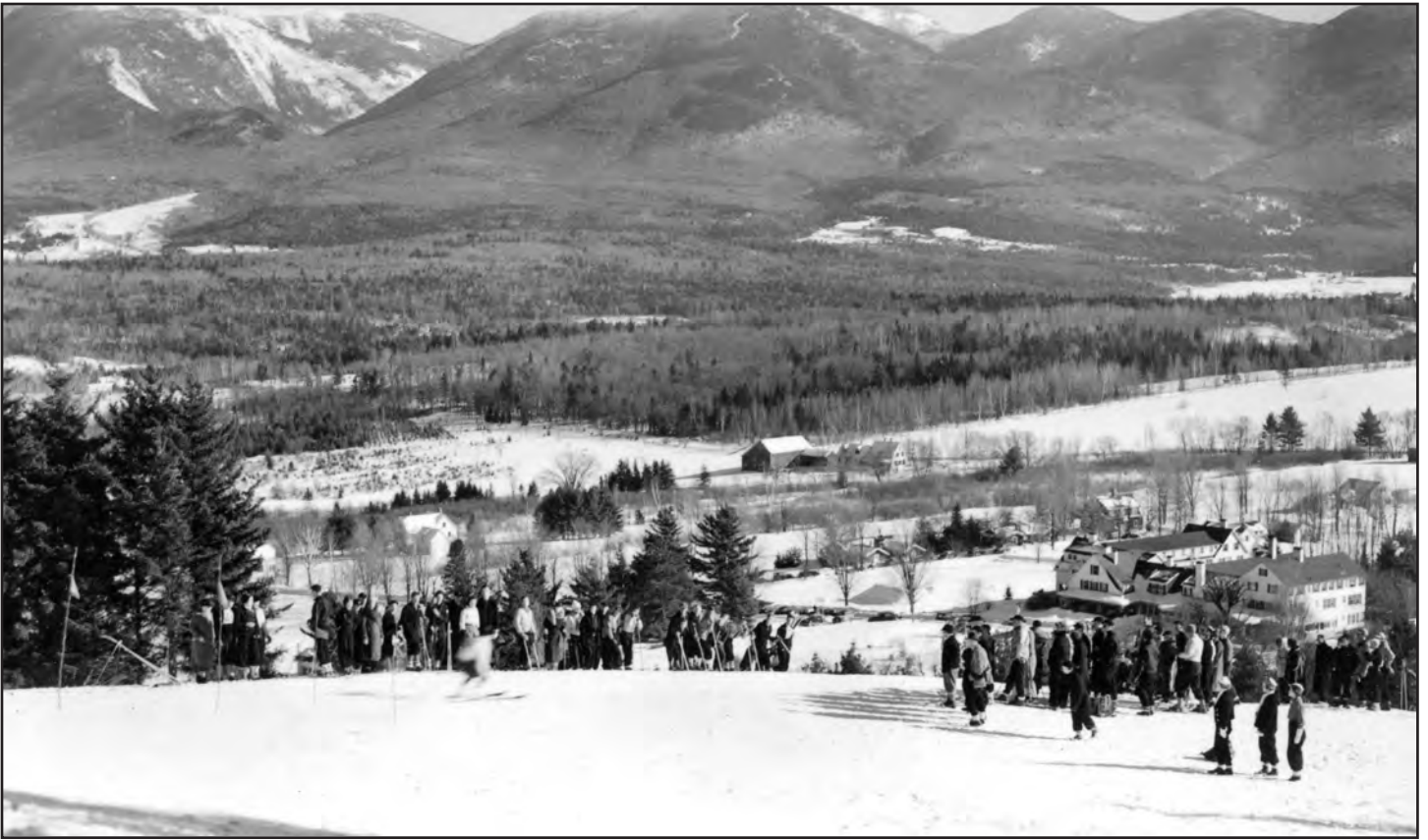
Innovations in Ski Tows and Lifts

After the rope tow had been introduced to North America at Shawbridge, Quebec, in 1933 and at Woodstock, Vermont, in 1934, experimentation and innovation in forms of uphill ski conveyances demonstrated the vigor of the nascent skiing movement in New Hampshire. New Hampshire inventor George Morton devised several unique ski-tow variations, and several forms of aerial lifts were deployed in the state for the first time in America.

The first new development was the replacement of the manila rope by a cable, more properly termed wire rope, circulating above the rider, from which were suspended various types of hangers that pulled the rider uphill. The first two tows with this configuration opened in New Hampshire in the winter of 1936. The Bolgen J-bar tow in Davos, Switzerland, patented by Ernst Constam, served as a prototype for the Dartmouth Outing Club's Dartmouth Ski Tramway, built at Oak Hill in Hanover and operational in the winter of 1936. This tow had a 5/8-inch wire rope, from which hung J-shaped wooden handles. It was built by the combined efforts of the Split Ballbearing Corporation of Lebanon, New Hampshire, acting as the local contractor, and the American Steel and Wire Company of Worcester, Massachusetts, experienced in building tramways for mining and other passenger applications.¹⁰ The Hanover tow received a great deal of publicity at the time it opened and had a long history of service, finally turning its last circuit in 1985.¹¹ It did, however, constitute an infringement on the Constam patent, and when Constam himself was in New England to oversee the construction of a similar, duly licensed tow at Pico Peak, Vermont, he paid a call on the Dartmouth Outing Club manager with the intent to extract licensing fees for its use of his design.¹²

In late January 1936 a far less publicized overhead-cable ski tow opened for business in Jackson on the Moody Farm, which is today part of the Black Mountain Ski Area. The tow was a joint project of mechanic George Morton, White Mountain Power Company executive Philip Robertson, and landowner Edwin Moody, and featured an overhead cable lift with a bull wheel set at a forty-five-degree angle to the horizontal, with short ropes suspended from the cable for skiers to grasp. The angled bull wheel was problematic, and when the farm and ski tow were purchased the next year by Appalachian Mountain

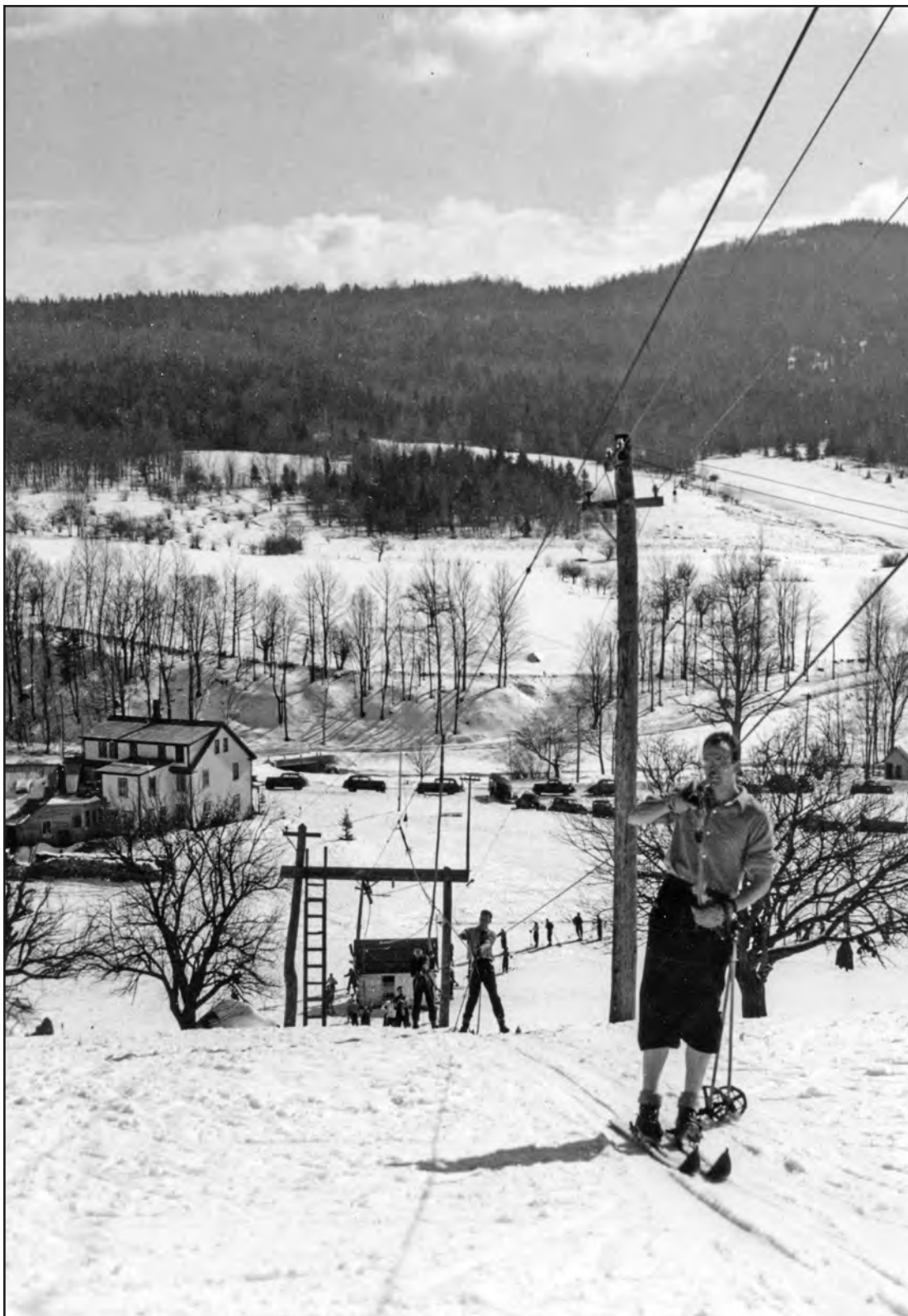
Continued on page 20



Peckett's Inn is seen in the lower right of this photograph that shows the expansive view of Cannon Mountain from the hotel. The Richard Taft ski trail can be seen as a wide S-shaped cut on the mountain, with the narrower turns of Tucker Brook trail to its right.



Harvey Dow Gibson, right, the founder of Mount Cranmore, welcomes Hannes Schneider and his wife Ludwina to North Conway on February 11, 1939. Beginning in the 1930s Schneider's Arlberg technique enabled Americans to learn skiing through instructors trained by Schneider, including Otto Schniebs, Sig Buchmayr, Sepp Ruschp and Benno Rybizka. Schneider's worldwide reputation helped establish New Hampshire as a center of the skiing universe.



H. H. Leich

This overhead cable ski tow at the Moody Farm in Jackson was one of the first two in the U.S. when it opened in 1936. The other cable tow, which began operation at the same time, was at Oak Hill in Hanover, constructed by the Dartmouth Outing Club. Edwin Moody sold his inn, farm and ski tow to Bill and Betty Whitney the next year. The Whitneys replaced the short ropes hanging from the wire rope cable that skiers grasped, seen here, that were part of Moody's design, with shovel handles that were easier to hold. This photo dates from February 1938.



The first chairlift in the east was built at Belknap Recreation Center in the summer of 1937. The first chairlift installations were at Sun Valley that previous winter. The Belknap chairlift was the first to make use of steel towers, in contrast to the wooden pylons used at Sun Valley. It may be that Charley Proctor, who was involved with the Sun Valley development of chairlifts, was helpful in connecting the Belknap developers with American Steel & Wire, which had built the Sun Valley installations.

George Morton of Bartlett, New Hampshire had been involved with designing the Moody Farm tow in 1935. When Harvey Dow Gibson was planning his new ski area at Mount Cranmore, he asked Morton to design some new form of ski lift, and Morton's resulting creation was named by Gibson as the Skimobile. This photograph shows the wire rope that ran under the wooden trestle of the Skimobile, and the connecting grip that fastened the cars to the cable. Unlike the overhead cable tows, the aerial tramway and the chairlift, which all debuted in the 1930s, the Skimobile did not inspire imitation, except for one short-lived installation in Virginia.





The Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway made Cannon's 2,000-foot vertical drop accessible to skiers beginning in the winter of 1939. For several years, no other ski lift of the time served that kind of terrain. One of two cars, named the Lafayette for the neighboring mountain, is shown here while a dozer clears the path of the downbound car.



In the winter of 1958, the first gondola lift in the country began operating at Wildcat. The Carlevaro-Savio manufacturer was Italian, and the lift with its enclosed 2-person cabin was selected by the developers for its protection from the weather. The gondola operated until 1999.

Continued from page 15

Club skiers Bill and Betty Whitney, they re-engineered the tow with a horizontal bull wheel and replaced the dangling ropes with D-handles from Sears Roebuck that were attached to lengths of locally cut saplings. For the next decade the lift was known as the Shovel Handle.¹³ Because this example did not incorporate the J-shaped hangers of Constam's patent, there was no question of patent infringement with the Moody Farm tow.


The first chairlift that was constructed outside the confines of Sun Valley, Idaho, the site of its creation, was in Gilford, New Hampshire, at a Works Progress Administration project on Rowe Mountain at the Belknap Recreation Center. That a chairlift was constructed in New Hampshire in the summer of 1937, only a year after its invention signifies the keenness for new ski-related technology that characterized the state in this decade.¹⁴

The following season, 1938–39, two groundbreaking new ski lifts went into service at Cannon Mountain in Franconia and Mount Cranmore in North Conway. The two major ski developments that these lifts were designed to serve would remain the dominant resorts in the state well into the 1950s. The Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway was a Bleichert installation imported from Germany and installed by the American Steel and Wire Company in the summer of 1938.¹⁵ For a time it seemed that tramways might become the dominant ski-lift form in the United States, and Alec Bright, a Boston stockbroker and passionate skier, conducted a survey of potential sites for tramways in the White Mountains in 1934.¹⁶ Bright advocated the Cannon Tramway as a demonstration project that might lead to more tramway construction, but by the time the lift was complete, the chair lift had been invented in Sun Valley. As the chair lift proved to be more economical and less complex, it became the workhorse of the ski industry.

The other ski development, opened simultaneously at Mount Cranmore in North Conway by Harvey Dow Gibson in the winter of 1939, may well have been influenced by his friend and fellow magnate, Averill Harriman. The most significant feature of Harriman's Sun Valley, Idaho, resort had been the invention of the revolutionary chairlift, and Gibson sought to open his new resort with a similar technological flourish. He turned to George Morton, the local mechanical genius who had designed the Moody Farm lift, and charged him with creating a unique new lift as a centerpiece of the resort. The result was the Skimobile, a variation on the concept of San Francisco's cable cars, in which individual cars ascended a wooden trestle hauled by a wire rope slung under the platform. This proved to be a colorful, eye-catching, and ultimately beloved ski lift. It was, however, slow and expensive to maintain. Also its lengthy individual ride came to seem unacceptably solitary once skiers became accustomed to the double chairlift. The Skimobile was imitated in only one other location, at the Homestead in Virginia, where it was relatively short-lived.

The financing and ownership of the Cannon Tramway by the State of New Hampshire, one of the most politically conservative states in the 1930s, is indicative of the extent to which skiing, seen by many small business owners as a new source of revenue,

enjoyed robust state fiscal support despite the dire economic circumstances of the time.

Yet another new form of aerial ski lift made a North American debut in the state in the winter of 1958, this time at Wildcat in Pinkham Notch.¹⁷ Wildcat was the first ski area constructed on National Forest land in the East, and the builders planned a major resort with the CCC's Wildcat Trail as its core. The founding partners, Malcolm McLane, Mack Beal, Brooks Dodge, and George Macomber, were all internationally ranked ski racers. They were experienced with skiing at Tuckerman Ravine and hence were familiar with the sometimes harsh weather of the area. While in Europe, Beal and Dodge researched covered ski lifts as an alternative to open chairlifts. Hoping to provide greater protection from the weather, they selected an Italian manufacturer, Carlevaro-Savio, for the Wildcat installation. The result was an aerial lift from which two-person gondolas, rather than exposed chairs, were suspended. Gondolas became popular at ski resorts in the 1960s, and, because of their greater comfort compared to chairlifts, came to be seen as a marker of a significant ski resort. The Wildcat gondola was in service for four decades until decommissioned in 1999. 

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² W. P. Fowler, "Belknap Trail," *Ski Bulletin* 2 (February 12, 1932): 7.

³ White Mountain Ski Runners, *Third Annual Downhill Championship Race of the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association* (March 18, 1934), New England Ski Museum Collection, 1990L.12.21; Roger Williams, "Major Eastern Mountain Racing Trails: The Richard Taft," *American Ski Annual* (1952): 181–83.

⁴ John P. Carleton to William Fowler, May 8, 1933, William Fowler Papers, Appalachian Mountain Club Library, Boston, Mass.; Donald G. Tuttle, Executive Secretary, N.H. State Development Commission, to Robert Gould, May 19, 1933, New England Ski Museum Collection, 1999L.14.1.10.

⁵ "Winter Sports Boom Seen with New Ski Trails," *Manchester Union*, November 30, 1933; Charles N. Proctor, "New Ski Trails," *Appalachia* 19 (December 1933): 599–603.

⁶ Allen Adler, *New England & Thereabouts—A Ski Tracing* (Barton, Vt.: Netco Press, 1985), 15.

⁷ Harvey D. Gibson, *Harvey Dow Gibson: An Autobiography* (North Conway, N.H.: Reporter Press, 1951), 302.

⁸ John B. Allen, "Hannes Schneider and the Germans," *New England Ski Museum Journal* 65 (Summer 2006): 24–26.

⁹ Gibson, *Autobiography*, 307.

¹⁰ Split Ballbearing Corporation, "Modern Ski Tramways," advertisement, *Ski Bulletin* 7 (February 7, 1936): 7; "Funicular Skiing in the East," *Ski Bulletin* 7 (February 7, 1936): 10.

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¹² Hans Paschen to the Trustees of the Dartmouth Outing Club, January 27, 1941, Dartmouth Outing Club Papers, Rauner Special Collections, Dartmouth Library, Hanover, N.H., DO 1, box 62; Hans Paschen to John R. McLane, January 20, 1941, Dartmouth Outing Club Papers, DO 1, box 62.

¹³ Betty Whitney, "George Morton Created First Cable Ski Lift," *Conway Daily Sun*, December 11, 1997.

¹⁴ "Point to Big Accomplishments in Answer to Spending Critics," *Manchester Union*, May 2, 1938.

¹⁵ E. John B. Allen, "New Hampshire Skiing," *Historical New Hampshire* 36 (Spring 1981): 32.

¹⁶ "The Men and Their Machines: The War Years," *Elevator World* 15 (October 1967), New England Ski Museum Collection; A. H. Bright, "Survey of Possible Aerial Tramway Locations," typescript, July 25, 1934, box 081111, New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord, N.H.

¹⁷ An earlier gondola constructed at Sugar Bowl, California, connected the ski area's parking lot to its base area and is not considered a ski lift.

Member Profile: Ed Hastings

By Henry M. Yaple

Member Henry Yaple lives in Wyoming and frequently skis in Montana. He is the author of *Never A Bad Year for Snow! The First 75 Years at Lost Trail Pass Powder Mountain*, and the encyclopedic *Ski Bibliography published in 2004 by the International Skiing History Association*.

My spouse, Sandy, and I had been gliding along the extensive trails of the Chief Joe Cross Country Ski Area located high atop Chief Joseph Pass in southwest Montana. It was a brutally cold day so we stopped at the Gordon Reese Warming Hut because the hut keepers always keep the wood stove toasty warm. I remarked to a distinguished, silver haired gentleman warming next to me that the Reese cabin was a most elegant structure.

"I helped to build it. My name is Ed Hastings."

Mr. Hastings hailed from New England, then moved west, where he worked in avalanche control for the U.S. Forest Service. His disclosure of New England roots, and his work as a Snow Ranger at two well-known deep powder ski areas in Montana and Utah suggested that his career might interest readers of the *Journal of the New England Ski Museum*.

I had with me several copies of *Journal*, and the Summer, 2005 issue attracted his attention immediately. The front cover carried a photo of the Wildcat Mountain gondola with Mount Washington in the background. "I climbed and skied Wildcat Mountain before it was a lift served ski area, and I helped to survey it in the fall of 1955 before Wildcat was built," he told me, and I settled in to hear more.

"I was born in East Bethel, Maine, graduated from Gould Academy and skied on their ski team through high school, from 1950 through 1953. One year I broke a brand new pair of Kneissl wood skis early in the season. The coach only had a pair of 225 cm. skis to replace them. I skied slalom with the 225's, and it was nearly impossible to get through the flushes. We did not have a lift. We climbed before we could ski."

"In the summer I worked for Joe Dodge, huts manager of the Appalachian Mountain Club hut system in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Joe's son, Brooks, was a good friend. At 15, I became a muleskinner, packing a string of seven donkeys to



deliver supplies to the AMC huts. The donkeys could tell very quickly who was boss, you or them."

"I worked for the AMC during the summers of 1950, 51, 52 and 53, and became Head Muleskinner. I took supplies to the "Howard Johnson's" shelter in Tuckerman in the spring of 1951. It burned in May that year. It was rebuilt, and I helped with that project. After I came out of the U.S. Army I was the Tuckerman hutmaster from February to May, 1959. In summer, 1959, I ran the storehouse that supplied all the AMC huts."

"I moved to Missoula, Montana in August, 1959 because my sister, Barbara, lived there, and to attend the University of Montana Forestry School. I graduated with a Forest Management bachelor's degree in June, 1963. During my years in Missoula I ski patrolled at Marshall Mountain, Missoula Snow Bowl and Big

Mountain. The National Ski Patrol awarded me National number 2716 and Avalanche badge number 99.”

“In the fall of 1963 I became a Snow Ranger at Bridger Bowl, located 15 miles north of Bozeman. At Bridger I worked regularly with John Montagne and Charles Bradley from Montana State.¹ They were studying avalanche dynamics and I was tasked with avalanche control among other duties.”

“At that time, Bridger had one T-bar and one platter pull. Permanent gun mounts for 75 mm recoilless rifles were located at the north and south ends of the ski area for avalanche control. One day when we were shooting potential avalanche starting zones from the north gun mount a hot piece of shrapnel buzzed past my head after we had fired a round. We moved the gun mount very far back down the mountain after that.”

“We kept a cache of dynamite for avalanche control in a large metal box on top of the Bridger Bowl lift. I noticed that the dynamite was ‘sweating’ or developing beads, showing that the dynamite was becoming unstable and could explode easily. After the lifts closed one day I removed the “sweating” dynamite from the metal box, and detonated it. The dynamite created a massive explosion.”

“I went to Alta as the Snow Ranger in 1966. Monty Atwater and Ed LaChapelle were at Alta then. They were studying avalanche dynamics and control intensively. Monty was developing the Avalauncher air gun. He always had a cigarette dangling from his mouth as he worked with guns and explosives doing avalanche control.”

“The dentist, Dr. Bob Smith, was kind of a thorn in my side at Alta. I have a pair of his early goggles that were handmade. Well, he became a little more agreeable after a natural avalanche destroyed his car in the parking lot.”

“I worked for the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management for 35 years in various capacities. I served as a

Fire Lookout in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Aerial Observer and Forester on the Lolo National Forest, Winter Sports Administration and Snow Ranger, for the Gallatin National Forest, Alta Head Snow Ranger, Outdoor Recreation Planning and Environmental Coordinator, and Program Coordinator in Billings, Montana for nine years. My federal service also included two stints in the U.S. Army, 1957-59 and then the Army recalled me during the 1961 Berlin crisis.”

“Pat, my wife, and I love to ski cross country. When I retired in 1992 from federal service Gordon Reese had worked out an agreement with Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest to establish the Chief Joseph Cross-Country Ski Area. It interested me, and I volunteered to help him groom trails. We did that for 11 years, and I served six years as President of the Bitterroot Ski Club. We had as many as 500 members. I also helped to build the three story log Reese warming hut, and to restore the old Forest Service cabin at May Creek. All of that work was volunteer. Both cabins were donated to the U.S. Forest Service for use by the public.”

Time flies when one is in excellent company. Conversation with Ed Hastings had been a rare treat that informed and entertained. It was, however, past time to return home. Mr. Hastings’ anecdotes were priceless vignettes of those years. He helped to control avalanches with artillery shells when avalanche dynamics were only beginning to be understood. Thanks to the hard work, courage and skill of Ed Hastings and many other hardy individuals in the field of avalanche control over five decades, skiing is now enjoyed safely and pleurably by millions each winter.



Endnotes

¹ Montagne and Bradley helped to found the Montana State graduate program in snow science. Bridger Bowl commemorated each man in the trail names Montagne Meadows and Bradley Meadows.



The Tuckerman Ravine Shelter known as Howard Johnson’s was destroyed by fire on May 8, 1951.

Original Design of the New England Ski Museum

By C. Minot “Mint” Dole



Courtesy of Sylvia Dowst

The future ski museum can be seen on the left in this 1978 photograph of construction of the second Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway.

With the renovation of the Museum’s second location in the former North Conway Community Center underway, the designer of the original Museum building at Cannon Mountain sent these reflections on his work that culminated in the December 1982 opening.

In 1982, C. Minot Dole of Dole Associates in Katonah New York was asked by the director of the New England Ski Museum to create the Ski Museum and the exhibits within. The original building was a very large 3-bay vehicle maintenance garage for Cannon Mountain. Edward C. “Ned” Collins II was the architect for Dole Associates, a marketing, industrial design and graphics firm that was in charge of all exhibit design, including creation of displays on the 10th Mountain Division and National Ski Patrol.

Minot Dole’s father, Minnie, was the founder of the National Ski Patrol System and the 10th Mountain Division that fought in Italy in 1945, so this assignment was of particular interest to Minot. Ned Collins was a long time Mad River Glen skier whose parents were early members of the Amateur Ski Club of New York.

After the location was surveyed, Ned Collins developed the basic building architecture to meet the specification of Museum executive director Dick March. A partial second floor was added as library and office space, with the ground floor split between exhibit hall and theater. The panels that support exhibits were designed in the shape of a snow flake when viewed from the

library. As renovations to the building were begun there were a number of client meetings to review the architectural design and preliminary layouts for the exhibit design.

When the Ski Museum was finished a very large opening was held with skiers, friends and supporters of the Museum flocking in to meet and greet the directors, Ned Collins and Mint Dole, the creators of the New England Ski Museum.

The Museum’s member publication, then titled *News and Notes*, reported on the opening in the October 1983 issue no. 9:

Everyone was delighted with the clean, airy building, the cleverly designed exhibit walls, the compact library perched above the magnificent helical staircase made of laminated oak, the nostalgic first exhibit on the “Beginnings of New England Skiing” and the thrilling review of ski history to be seen in the Lowell Thomas Audio-Visual Center—a magnificent 9-projector A-V system provided by a memorial donation from Lowell Thomas, Jr.

For more than three decades New England Ski Museum has welcomed over half a million visitors to its location at the base of one of New Hampshire’s finest ski areas. That museum will remain open and active even as the organization looks forward to cutting the ribbon on its new Eastern Slope Branch in North Conway.



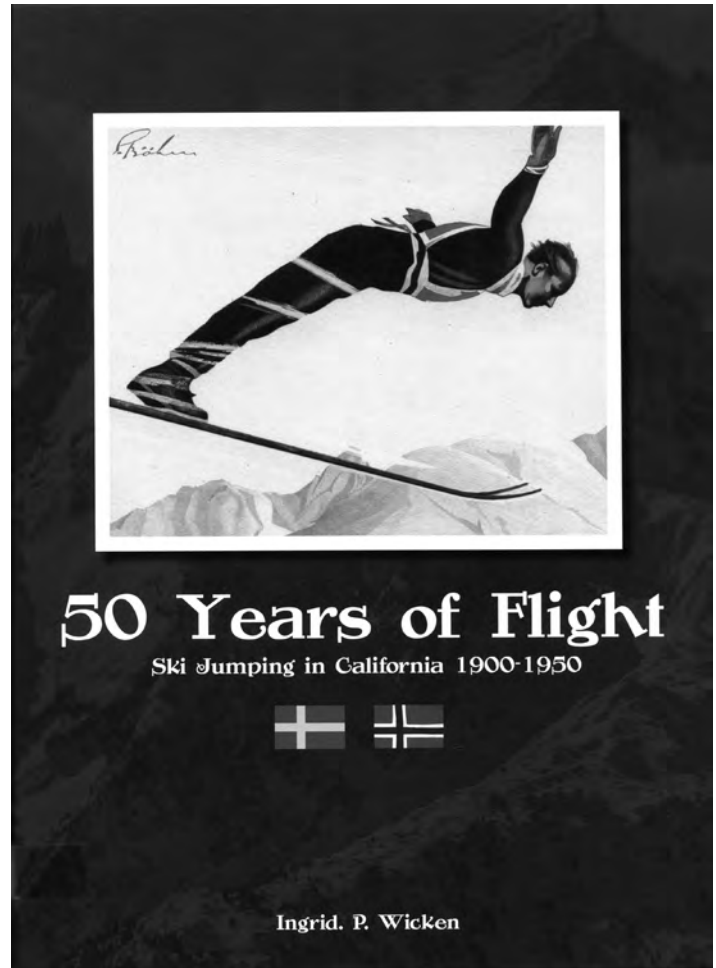
Review of Ingrid P. Wicken, *50 Years of Flight: Ski Jumping in California 1900-1950*. Norco: Vasa Press, 2017.

Characterizing Truckee as California's first winter sports resort beginning with a carnival in 1896, Wicken's chapter one lets us in to a world gone by of fun and games in the snow. Ski jumping was the major attraction—including in 1935, lighting for night performances—until the wooden structure of the jump was taken down in 1950. The next five chapters are on jumping in northern California. The Lake Tahoe Ski Club owed its success to the owners of the Tahoe Tavern who built the jump, and to the work of two of the most important men in the development of Californian skiing, Wendell Robie and Wilbur Maynard. The Auburn Ski Club was founded in 1929 and went on to become the most active of the many clubs that formed as skiing "took off" as a spectator-driven sport because of the popularity of ski jumping.

At Mount Shasta, where a tradition of utilitarian use of skis went back to pre-World War I winters, the Mount Shasta Snowmen founded a club in 1931. They immediately built a jump and for its opening brought in major figures, Alf Engen, Lars Haugen, and Halvor Halstad—top Norwegian immigrants—to show how it should be done. The club was strong enough to host the 1942 state championships. Smaller jumps are not left out, some surely unfamiliar to most readers: one near Nevada City, for example, others at Portola, and in Chester near Lake Almanor.

Wicken then turns to southern California. Until the advent of sport skiing, southern California had been promoted as the land of sunshine and roses. In five chapters, the author analyzes Big Bear Lake, already a summer resort in 1888 and in 1917, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, a winter rival to Truckee. Lake Arrowhead and Big Pines come in for analysis as well. However, more important in the long run, the California Chamber of Commerce came to realize that there was money to be made in sporting among the snow. But winter sporting meant ski jumping and its popularity was almost entirely spectator-driven. Only when alpine ski lifts created a participatory sport did 50 years of flight give way to the derring-do of downhill and slalom skiing on prepared ski trails, "signaling the end to the heyday of Californian ski jumping."

Related to ski jumping and its popularity were other concerns that Wicken analyzes throughout the book: opening up of roads in winter—especially important for Mount Lassen, for example. Vital connections made by the railroads (particularly the Southern Pacific) gave access to the resorts. Wicken has excellent descriptions of the ski jumping tournaments in the 1930s, held in Berkeley (of all places) when six rail cars hauled in 11,000 cubic feet of snow



Ingrid P. Wicken's 50 Years of Flight: Ski Jumping in California

so that 50,000 could watch the show (even if only 5,000 paid!). The Auburn Ski Club was asked to put on a jumping meet in connection with the 1939 World's Fair (also known as the Golden Gate International Exposition) on Treasure Island in San Francisco bay. As Wicken puts it, "a unique combination of man-made snow, on a man-made jump [186 feet high], on a man-made island." Eight thousand watched from inside the grounds while another 40,000 looked on from outside, some from their yachts anchored near-by!

This handsomely produced hard-cover book of 155 pages concludes with an appendix of a ski jumping time line, and a bibliography. Among the attractions of the book are the many supporting images, mostly from Wicken's collection. Photographs of the stars, teams, jumps, jumping action, evocative views from the different eras and advertisements portray ski jumping's spectator-driven popularity from c.1900 to 1950.

Aquile in Guerra (Eagles in War)

We have just received the 25th anniversary volume of *Aquile in Guerra (Eagles in War)*, the journal of the *Società Storico Guerra Bianca* (Historical Society of the White War), that is, the war fought in the Dolomites of northern Italy from 1915-1918. There are 16 articles in this lavishly produced journal including E. John B. Allen, “L’avventurosa vita del marchese Nicolò degli Albizzi,” (The

adventurous life of the Marquis Nicolò degli Albizzi). Readers of the museum’s *Journal* issues 98 (Fall 2015) and 100 (Spring 2016) may remember the article on Albizzi. This, in the Italian journal, is longer and from time to time has more detail but in all, tells the same tale of the expert-jester-maverick marquis and his dark side. The article is enhanced by 20 photographs, some not included in the museum’s journal.

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EASTERN SLOPE EXPANSION CAMPAIGN
Donations and Pledges Received from October 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017
(continued from page 27)

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(continued from page 28)

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April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017

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DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM

April 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017

These friends of the Museum made donations separate from membership dues during the dates shown. The list includes gifts to the Annual Fund Drive and general donations. We extend our gratitude for your generous support, which is critical to our success.

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Letters

Journal 105

Dear Editor,

I just want to tell you how much I enjoy the quarterly journal you all put together! The histories you put together are wonderful, full of eccentric, fascinating characters from the past. If the ski industry is any indication of what was happening domestically elsewhere at the same time, there's no question what made America great during those expansive years after the war.

Thanks for the great reading, photos and dedication to retrieving the rich history of this wonderful sport and our beloved New England mountains!

Lucy K. Wyman
Via e-mail

Dear Editor,

I read the Spring 2017 *Journal* # 104 with great interest! But I have a few little notes on the caption of the Steve Knowlton photo on page 14.

The Mount Mangart Great Ski Race (Giant Slalom) took place on June 3, 1945. The Grossglockner Ski Race took place on June 23, 1945 (Downhill) and June 24, 1945 (Slalom).

The Mount Mangart Great Ski Race results were: 1st place, 1st Sgt. Walter Prager, HQ 3rd, 87th, 1:05.2; 2nd place, Sgt. Steve Knowlton, HQ 86th, 1:11.4; 3rd place, Pfc. Sigi Engl, G 87th, 1:13.4. Steve Knowlton did not win that race as you wrote in the *Journal*.

There are still many veiled details concerning the Mount Mangart Great Ski Race. I am very glad to have had a chance to meet Mr. Karl Stingl and Mr. John Woodward, 10th Mountain Division veterans, at Watertown, New York in July 2010 and talk with them about the Mount Mangart Great Ski Race. But our time to talk was too short!

There were many great skiers in the "Did Not Finish" results of the Mount Mangart race, including Herbert Schneider, Dev Jennings, Bil Dunaway, John Litchfield, Fritz Kramer, Arthur Doucette, Walter Neuron, and Dave Judson. Only 24 crossed the finish line of the 76 at the start. I found some reasons:

In the last years I visited the location of the race many times, during summer and winter. The terrain there is very steep, especially in the upper part, about one half of the slope. After the start position, the slope was very narrow because of terrain and snow conditions. It was quite unsafe to fall there!

Snow conditions on June 3, 1945 were difficult, although there was much more snow compared with recent decades. According to Karl Stingl, a racer in the 1945 race, the snow was wet and decayed. That is why they called the slope the "Laundry Chute".

The racers did not use their original ski equipment. According to Mr. Stingl, they used German "gebirgsjäger" skies which they found hidden in one farmer's barn near Lake Garda in Italy. The 10th Mountain Division was there just before they got the order to move near the River Soca (Issonso) and Mount Mangart. There is an interesting question: Why their original US military skis were not with Division on their way to Italian battle theatre? On that question Mr. Stingl laughed and answered: "Maybe some smart Sergeant decided so!" But, it would be interesting to find a real reason!

The racers had a big lack of ski training! By my knowledge, they last did ski training in the winter of 1943-1944 and they had the last Division ski race in 1943 at Camp Hale. They only did some skiing in the days before the race, in the last days of May 1945.

Our Slovenian Association of Mountain Soldiers hopes to organize an International Seminar on the Mount Mangart Great Ski Race, maybe for the 75th anniversary of the race or in the year before, 2019. Attendance from the USA will be very appreciated! In January 1945, half a year before the end of WWII, there was a winter skiing competition of Slovenian Partizans, the so called "Partizan's Winter Olympic Games" in Cerklje, Slovenia, January 20th and 21st, 1945. There are some thoughts to combine both events as topics of the seminar. In my mind both race competitions are the "jewels" of skiing history!

In a few months I hope to know more on the initiative.

With best Slovenian greeting-- SMUK!

Brigadier (Ret.) Janez Kavcar
Slovenian Association of Mountain Soldiers
Via e-mail

People and Events of the New England Ski Museum

Jamie Gemmitti



Joan Wallen, left and Peter Hines, right of North American Snowsports Journalists Association-East with the winners of the 2017 Don A. Metivier Golden Ski Award just after the presentation at the museum's exhibit opening party. George Steffey of Lyme, New Hampshire and Patricia Mangan of Derby, New York, both Dartmouth students, received the award as the most promising junior alpine racers in the east. In the background is an early Tucker Sno-cat used at Waterville Valley, which owner Don Johnson of Campton, New Hampshire displayed at the museum for several weeks.



Dick Hamilton, left, board member David Ingemie and Steve Marcum at the exhibit opening party in June.

Jamie Gemmitti

Jamie Gemmitti



Stan Judge, left, long-time general manager at Wildcat and Nat Putnam of Cannon Mountain caught up with each other at the exhibit opening.



Deb Moore, left, Anna McIntyre and Janet Capaul, all Waterville Valley personalities, at the opening of the 2017 exhibit which includes stories on the fifty years of Waterville and Loon Mountain.

Jamie Gemmitti



UPCOMING EVENTS

Golf Tournament

To benefit the Eastern Slope Expansion Campaign
Monday September 25, 2017
North Conway Country Club, North Conway, New
Hampshire

Annual Meeting and Dinner

Saturday November 4, 2017
McLane Family Lodge, Dartmouth Skiway, Lyme, New
Hampshire
With the Presentation of the
12th annual Spirit of Skiing Award
To the Caldwell Family

Boston.com Ski & Snowboard Expo

November 9-12, 2017
Visit our booth at the Expo at the Seaport
World Trade Center

CURRENT EXHIBITS

Through June, 2018

New England Ski Museum, Franconia Notch, NH
Skiing in the Granite State

Bethel Historical Society, Bethel, Maine
The Mountains of Maine: Skiing in the Pine Tree State

Bretton Woods Resort Base Lodge, Bretton Woods NH
*The Mountain Troops and Mountain Culture
in Postwar America*

Intervale Scenic Vista, Route 16, Intervale NH
Skiing in the Mount Washington Valley

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