



#139

Luggi Foeger

Born: 1907 Died: 1992

Skiers who knew Luggi Foeger rated him as “one of the true complete mountain men” of the world. His skiing and mountaineering flourished from earliest recollections in Austria’s Tyrol to become acclaimed throughout North America as a beloved top international competitor turned ski teacher, mountain trooper, photographer, motion picture director, area developer and, lastly, a homespun landscape architect whose ski slope development techniques have been applauded by conservationist-minded experts.

Luggi Foeger’s blue-blooded ski heritage reaches back to the grand old man himself – Hannes Schneider. Luggi in 1938 was given 24 hours grace to depart his homeland by Hitler’s Nazis who, meanwhile tossed Schneider into jail. The same group of American skiers who eventually secured Schneider’s release and sponsored the great one to America also became instrumental in establishing Luggi in the United States and Canada as a moving force in ski programs having the support of the National Ski Association of America and the Canadian

Amateur Ski Association. At the request of Dr. Don Tressider of Yosemite, Luggi reached California just ahead of World War II to head up the ski school at Badger Pass. Luggi was a member the 10th Mountain Division. Luggi’s onetime commanding officer, H.E. Link, Colonel USAR, told how:

“During his tour of duty Luggi made many important contributions to the research and development of the original system of military skiing which was adopted then and has been used by the United States Army with few modifications ever since. Luggi also contributed immeasurably to the publication of the first United States Army Field Manual on military skiing. In the summer of 1943 Luggi served with me as a supervisor in the original Military Assault Climbing School at Camp Hale and the West Virginia Maneuver Area. Because of his outstanding abilities and judgment Luggi was continually called upon for his advice and opinions during the decision-making processes while the 10th was mobilizing and training at Camp Hale. He worked closely with Minnie Dole during our somewhat turbulent days at Camp Hale and kept Minnie advised with invaluable ‘grass root’ information whenever a crisis arose.”

Luggi during the mid-fifties briefly moved in and out of ski teaching... to become a movie maker in Hollywood. Behind him there was experience in such world-famous films of the early thirties as “Ski Chase,” preceded by “The Wonder of the Snow-Shoes,” “The Fox Hunt on Skis” and others. And then there was ski racing.

Although dimmed by his other accomplishments, Luggi during the 1926 to 1932 era raced for the Ski Club Arlberg. His successes included: in six Parsen Derbies a second, third and fourth placing; in the Arlberg-Kandahar he always placed within the top ten and as high as fourth; he won the Schwarzwald Race and also held a second place. In 1929 Luggi won the Voralberg Championship at Bodelle, a downhill; he also captured the Downhill at Tschagguns in 1928 and at that time was selected to the Austrian F.I.S. Team. In America his racing career was brief, including a top placing in the prestigious Far West Kandahar at Yosemite in 1939 – an event which he subsequently directed on several occasions, including its last time out in the Far West Division several years ago.

It was former USSA President Byron Nishkian who persuaded Luggi to give up Hollywood for the snowy slopes at Alpine Meadows. “It just seemed unthinkable to me that Luggi Foeger shouldn’t be teaching skiing somewhere,” Byron has recalled. Soon after Byron and friends had put together planning for Alpine Meadows, a delegation appeared at the Foeger residence in Manhattan Beach – and the man with a blue-blooded ski heritage was on his way back to the Sierra Nevada ski country.

Luggi Foeger was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1973.