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William Banks Berry

Born: 1903 Died: 1999

William Banks Berry was born in Pottsdam, New York, in 1903, but began his skisport career as a reporter for the Ottawa Journal in Ottawa, Canada. Berry's journalism career spanned more than fifty years.

Bill Berry advanced skiing in both the United States and Canada almost from its organized beginnings here in North America. His journalistic donation to skiing, oft-times on his own initiative, dated from 1922, when he reported his first ski jumping meet in Ottawa, Canada, for the *Ottawa Journal*. Not only did he write about skiing, when few others were, in the great ski jumping era in the snow belt of the East, but in the Far West he played an integral role in the development of both the nordic and alpine disciplines. From the time Bill Berry traveled west in 1928 at the age of 25, he was more than an observer, he was a creator. From 1938, when he helped revive longboard racing in the Sierra Nevada, he maintained his lifetime romance with ski history as well. He was the principal force in the continuing unfolding of the history of the earliest skiing in the United

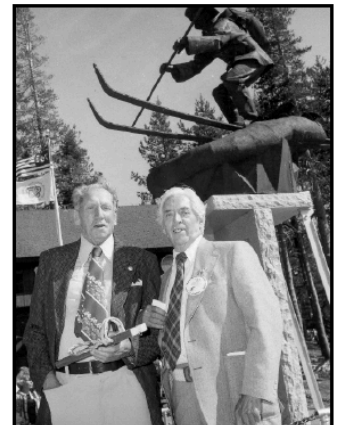
States – that by the gold miners of the Sierra Nevada from the early 1850s. He skied with most of the Honored Members of the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame. His ski competition reportage in the Lake Tahoe region starting in 1929 setting new standards of excellence.

Reviewing Bill Berry's accomplishments is like a review of American ski history. Some of the highlights of his career follows:

- Winter sports reportage commencing in 1917 for the Ottawa Journal; he reported the Dominion Bonspiel (curling) in 1917 and Ski Jumping Championships in 1922
- Reporter for the San Francisco Examiner, New York Herald-Tribune, New York Daily News, United Press, Sacramento Union, and many other periodicals of international circulation, starting in in 1920s
- Skiing reportage for the Sacramento Bee 1941-1964 and Nevada State Journal from 1928, covering as many as 8 events per weekend
- Responsible with Harold Grinden for tracing the Norwegian antecedents of American skiing
- Member of the Ski Hall of Fame Committee from 1938 when he was appointed by the late Harold Grinden, Berry single-handedly revived the program in 1966, serving as Chairman through 1972, and became Historian Emeritus in 1974
- Responsible for development of most of the museum material now duplicated in the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame. Through contacts with Nevada State officials caused the construction of two permanent building for the Squaw Valley Olympics as well as service on Organizing committees
- A driving force behind the development of Auburn Ski Club's Western America Skisport Museum at Boreal Ridge, California
- Played a leading role in the revival of longboard racing in the Sierra Nevada in 1938
- Active ski jumper in the 1928-1945 era, had skied since 1909. Was a member of the Reno Ski Club since 1929, the pioneer Auburn Ski club since 1932, and a charter member of the forerunner California Ski Association

His career spanned an era of incredible and tumultuous evolution and revolution in the world and the growth of American skiing as well. Bill Berry was America's keeper of its skisport heritage.

William Banks "Bill" Berry was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1976.



*Carl Messelt and Bill Berry
at the Snowshoe Thompson
Memorial*