



Robert Livermore, Sun Valley, 1950

#194

Robert Livermore

Born: 1909 Died: 1991

Robert Livermore, Jr. stands out among that first group of "home grown" American skiers. Not only a competitor, he also helped improve the sport.

Born in Boston in 1909, Bob Livermore first donned homemade skis at age seven at a silver mining camp in Cobalt, Ontario, where his father worked temporarily as a geologist and where Finnish and Norwegian miners encouraged the boy to try sliding on the flat surface.

From 1921 to 1929, he attended St. Mark's Preparatory School in Southboro, Massachusetts, and participated in occasional cross-country races and jumping in the winter carnival meets. Two books he read over and over were *The Ski Runner* by E.C. Richardson, and *How to Ski* by Vivian Canfield.

In 1929, as a freshman at Harvard, Livermore began to become proficient on skis. Through a friend, Robert Blach, he came into contact with Otto Schniebs, who worked in the Waltham watch factory and coached the Appalachian Alpine Club on weekends. Livermore soaked up the technique as fast as Schniebs could teach it.

With three other friends, Livermore founded the first American downhill ski club, the "Stem Like Hell Club." This group was absorbed into the Ski Club Hochenbirge in 1933.

There were overnight stays in Camden Cottage high atop Mt. Washington in New Hampshire during 1930, 1931, and 1932. It was Schniebs who first brought Livermore and his Harvard friends down the Great Gulf and over the headwall. With encouragement from such skiers as John Carleton, Charles Proctor, Joe Dodge and Alex Bright, the trips spawned the now famous Inferno Race, which tested the stamina and ability of New England skiers.

During the mid-1930s, Livermore continued to improve his alpine skills. In March 1935, at the Appalachian Alpine Club meet at Wildcat Mountain, New Hampshire, he won the downhill on the Wildcat Trail and set a course record. The following month, at Mt. Rainier, he placed sixth in the National Downhill and second in the slalom, for a combined third place.

This achievement qualified Livermore to represent the United States in 1936 at the IV Olympiad in Garmisch, Germany, where alpine skiing was recognized for the first time. The slalom course referee was Sir Arnold Lunn, the well-known Englishman who founded the Ski Club of Great Britain and invented the modern day slalom (based on speed, not style) in Mfueen in 1922. Against the more practiced Europeans, Bob came in 20th in the slalom and 23rd in the combined.

Following the Olympics, Livermore established an impressive record in Class "A" racing. In March 1937, in the National Downhill, Open and Amateur races, in Ketchum, Idaho, he came in fifth in both slalom and combined. The following year saw him place second in the Hochebirge race on the Wildcat Trail in New Hampshire and a respectable tenth in the National Downhill on the Nose Dive at Stowe, Vermont.

From 1937 to 1939, Livermore became deeply involved with Minnie Dole, Roland Palmedo, and Alex Bright in organizing the National Ski Patrol System. Livermore held Ski Patrol Badge #6 and remained very active into the 1950s.

Soon after Minnie Dole succeeded in convincing General Marshall to establish this country's first ski and mountain troops, in 1941, Bob Livermore enlisted in the Army, went through basic training and O.C.S., and joined the 85th regiment of the 10th Mountain Division.

After the war, he graduated to the veteran class of ski racing and raced occasionally with the Hochebirge Ski Club with his Class "V" Veteran's card.

Robert Livermore, Jr. was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1977.

