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Wallace “Bunny” Bertram

Born: 1908 Died: 1981

Information submitted by Phillip Camp, Executive Director, New England Ski Areas Council, in a nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame

Wallace “Bunny” Bertram’s association with skiing began at Dartmouth College where he was captain of the Winter Sports Team. At that time snowshoeing was the predominant winter sporting event, and Bunny was an outstanding snowshoer, receiving varsity letters his junior and senior years.



After graduating in 1931, Bunny Bertram continued his association with the Dartmouth Winter Sports Team, participating in some of the earliest “down mountain” races on skis held at Mt. Washington in 1932.

While Bunny’s dedication to the Dartmouth team continued during the early 1930s as coach of the “B” ski team, his destiny lay in the hills surrounding Woodstock, Vermont, where he would, in 1935, erect the first continuously operating ski tow in the nation.

The nation’s first ski tow (or ski way as it was called then) was built on Gilbert’s Hill outside Woodstock, Vermont, in 1934. Technical problems plagued the tow however, and Bunny, who was then working as a part-time “ski instructor” for the White Cupboard Inn in Woodstock, Vermont, was asked to set up the tow for the 1934-35 season. Bunny adapted a ski tow modeled after a Ferris wheel he had seen one summer. That tow became the first continuously operating ski tow in the United States. Two years later Bunny moved his successful operation to an adjacent ridge known as Hill Number Six. That hill evolved into Suicide Six which Bunny would own and operate for the next 25 years.

From 1937-1961 Bunny developed Suicide Six into one of the premier race training hills in the United States. During those years Suicide Six, and Bunny, were host to many Dartmouth championship ski teams, along with several Olympic racers including Tom Corcoran, Brooks Dodge, Bill Beck, Dick Durrance, Betsy Snite, and Gretchen Frazier. Sir Arnold Lund, the inventor of the slalom said after a visit to Suicide Six that it was the best slalom training hill he had ever seen.

Bunny’s other achievements during those years as owner and operator of Suicide Six include:

Bunny pioneered the first NASTAR type races. Skiers would race a course down the face of Suicide Six to earn one of three special pins. The races were open to anyone, and to win the gold pin (top prize) a racer had to beat the fastest pace setters time.

In 1948, under Bunny’s guidance, America’s first certification test for ski instructors was held at Suicide Six.

In 1954, Bunny installed a Poma type ski lift at Suicide Six – the first of its kind in New England.

In 1956, Bunny assisted Joe Jones in setting up the Mid Vermont Junior Ski Council: the first consolidated youth racing program to the nation.

Bunny was president for many years of the Woodstock Ski Runners (one of the first ski clubs in the U.S.) He was also active in the Vermont Ski Council, the USEASA, and the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce.

Bunny had three children, the youngest of them Lynn. He coached two Junior National teams in 1963 and 1964. She held the distinction of being the only American woman to be certified as a French ski instructor.

Bunny Bertram was truly one of the greats in skisport history. He was one of the men who developed skiing into the sport it is today.

Wallace “Bunny” Bertram was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1981.

