

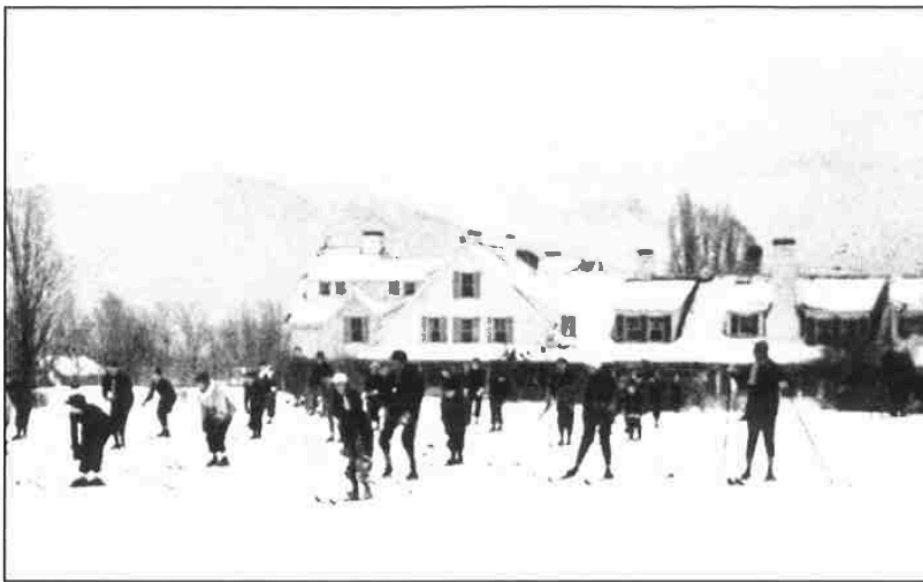
#237

## Katharine Peckett Holman

Born: 1906 Died: ?

*“Katharine Peckett of Franconia, NH, has perhaps contributed more to skiing in the US. than any other girl. She established the first large ski school, bringing expert instructors from Europe.” –Norman Vaughn, SKI FEVER, 1936.*

Katharine Peckett, born in Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, on July 8, 1906, grew up in her father's big inn, the incomparable panorama of the White Mountains, with Lafayette and



Peckett's-on-Sugar Hill

Ski class exercising – early 1930s – 1st ski school in the United States

Cannon almost at arm's length. The rambling, sloping grounds which became a legend in American ski history, had been developed, over the years, by her father, Robert P. (Papa) Peckett. In 1892, at age 21, he had joined family ownership in hotel property. A fire destroyed their Franconia Inn in November 1907, and a farmhouse which had been acquired from a Mr. Goodnow and moved across the road in 1893, became the core of the Peckett's-on-Sugar Hill which was to play a very important role in developing the sport of skiing in this country. The family always had enjoyed winter sports such as tobogganing, bob-sledding and skiing, and, on Washington's Birthday weekend in 1900, they took their first guests. Word spread, and in time Peckett's-on-Sugar Hill became a small world of its own, tucked away in the forests and hills. It was a world of culture and affluence, grace and manners, and peopled by those who enjoyed the vigor of outdoor activities in concert with an excellent kitchen. Over the years, its clientele read like a "Who's Who": chief justices of the Supreme Court, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Lowell Thomas, Minot Dole and many notables from the theatre and other professions. Laurence Rockefeller spent his honeymoon at Peckett's-on-Sugar Hill.

In October 1928, at the age of 22, Katharine Peckett, the youngest of three children born to Katharine Belknap and Robert P. Peckett, enrolled at the Cuisine de Paris cooking school in Paris for a six month course. During the Christmas break, she spent her holiday skiing at Engleberg, Switzerland. Much taken by the grand hotels and gracious living and aware of the need of Peckett's to increase its winter income, she encouraged her parents to make the trip to Engelberg in February 1929. They were impressed by the ski school operation and ski technique, and enthusiastically gave Kate the go-ahead for a ski school at Peckett's. Returning to Sugar Hill in the spring of 1929, Miss Peckett supervised and worked at clearing the side hill adjacent to the now many-winged farmhouse. This became the major slope for the first bona-fide ski school in America in the winter of 1929-1930. The first two instructors were German, one being Herman Glatfelder. Thus ski history was made.

Katharine Holman was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1982.



Katharine Peckett, Early 1930s