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Dorice Taylor

Born: 1901 Died: 1987

Submitted by Ben Rinaldo – proudly endorsed by Doug Pfeiffer

Shortly after the turn of the century Dorice Taylor was born in the small town of DuBois, Pennsylvania, in the Alleghany Mountains. It was there at the age of eight that she saw her first pair of skis, and within a few weeks the local wagon shop, at the father's urging made a pair for her. Her ski career was thus launched, and by the time she reached high school she received a gift of her first pair of commercially made skis, the very first such pair even seen in DuBois.



It was about this time that Dorice Taylor demonstrated her first skills as a writer. Upon graduating from high school, she went to Smith College where she kept up her skiing. Her writing career also flowered there as she received straight 'A's in her writing courses.

Upon leaving school she became a teacher, having taken extra credit courses at Cornell and at Oxford in England. In the following years, she rose to the head of the English Department at the school where she taught.

In 1931, she married Everett 'Phez' Taylor who was then employed in the trust department of a New York City bank, having graduated in law from Yale after a collegiate career at Dartmouth. Dorice, having given up teaching for marriage, decided to return to work when she was offered a job at Macy's. After a couple of years Phez felt that the long hours at Macy's were interfering with their marriage, so Dorice left the mercantile field and returned to teaching at Hewitt's, a very fashionable girl's school in New York City. In 1936, the year that Sun Valley opened, a borax slide was installed at Saks Fifth Avenue where people could take ski lessons, and Dorice was able to convince the people at Hewitt's that ski lessons should be added to the curriculum. She was made chaperone for the girls when they went to Saks, and she took her first lessons in controlled skiing. During the Christmas recess she and Phez went to Canada and she was able to try out her new skills on snow for the first time.

The next winter, although they had planned to return to Canada, they were intrigued by the Union Pacific's new streamliner, the City of Los Angeles, on display at Grand Central station before taking its maiden voyage to Sun Valley. They bought tickets for that first run, and upon arriving were the very first guests ever to register at the brand new Challenger Inn. This was Christmas, 1937.

For the next several years, Dorice and Phez spent every possible vacation at Sun Valley, and since he had always wanted to be a country lawyer, they decided to move West and make Sun Valley their home.

During World War II Sun Valley closed to skiers, and Phez went into the Army. Dorice returned to New York and Hewitt's. After the war, Sun Valley re-opened in 1946 and the Taylors returned. When she found herself becoming involved with playing bridge instead of writing, she asked Steve Hannigan, then the publicity man for Sun Valley, if he would give her a job. He said yes, and the career that led her to becoming the most famous publicity person in U.S. skiing was off to a start. At first she was assistant to whoever was in charge of P.R., but as these people changed every year or two, she soon knew more about Sun Valley than any of them. When publicity was taken over by Union Pacific, who then owned and operated the area, she was elevated to director of public relations.

When, at a later date, Bill Janss bought out the railroad, she was kept on the job until her retirement at the age of seventy. When Janss sold the property, the new owners, once again put her on the payroll as a special consultant.

She was the one person, after Steve Hannigan who put Sun Valley on the map. Her home town releases to local newspapers told the folks who were seen skiing at Sun Valley. She started and continued the best photo file in skiing, and if there was a special request from the press for a photo, she saw to it that the photo was taken. She kept the media informed on a weekly basis of things going on with a tip sheet that she published.

This was recognized by the United States Ski Writers Association when in 1971 they awarded her their Golden Quill Award for her "outstanding contributions to American skiing."

To cap her career, at the age of eighty, she has published a book of her reminiscences entitled *Sun Valley*. It tells of the world famous people who visited there, and about the real history of skiing in the nation.

Dorice Taylor was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1984.