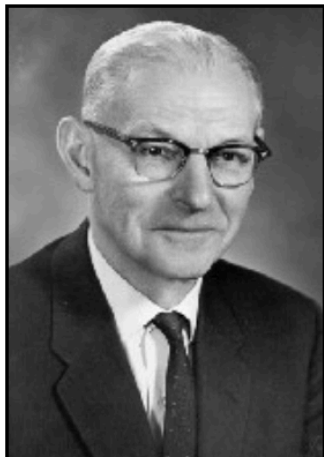


#39

John W. McCrillis

Born: 1897 Born: 1991



John W. McCrillis was among the first skiers to recognize the importance of alpine ski racing. As a delegate to the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association convention in 1932, McCrillis helped convince the delegates to sanction alpine events.

Born in Newport, New Hampshire in 1897, John W. McCrillis began skiing in his backyard as a young boy. During his four years at Dartmouth College, he was active in the activities of the Dartmouth Outing Club. Its founder, Fred Harris, was one of his lifelong friends.

While serving on the Dartmouth Outing Club committees of Cabin and Trail and Intercollegiate Winter Sports, McCrillis interested many of his contemporaries, including Sherman Adams, in ski touring and cross-country jumping competition.

At college, ski races were both intercollegiate and intramural. In 1918, McCrillis was a member of a team that defeated Middlebury at the Dartmouth Winter Carnival. Some years later, when skiing was recognized as a major intercollegiate sport, McCrillis was awarded a varsity letter as a member of the Dartmouth Winter Sports Team of 1918.

The early twenties found McCrillis in the Pacific Northwest, where skiing was still almost unknown as a sport. As a teacher at the Moran School for boys near Seattle, he led students on the first ski ascents to Anvil Rock (9,000 feet) and to Camp Muir (11,000 feet) on Mount Rainier. McCrillis also joined the Mountaineers of Seattle. From 1921 to 1924, he was an official ski instructor for the group, most of whom were still on snowshoes. He was also a member of the first Mountaineers ski committee, in 1924.

In January 1930, McCrillis started organized ski instruction at the local high school. A number of his pupils went on to join the 10th Mountain Division. One of his former students, Curtis Chase, became director of the Aspen Ski School.

As a member of the Dartmouth Alumni Committee, McCrillis helped develop the Mt. Mooselauke Ravine Camp and ski trails, including "Hells Highway." As a delegate of the U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association, he showed his film of the Moosilauke downhill race at the NDA annual convention in Chicago, in 1932. "Mister Racing" as he was known, helped convince delegates who had never witnessed such a race that it should be a recognized event. The convention sanctioned the race for the following year. With 80 contenders and John McCrillis as referee, the Moosilauke Carriage Road was the site of the first National Downhill Championship in the U.S., in March 1933.

The Newport Ski Club, which McCrillis helped found in 1931, was one of the most active and competitive clubs in the East. Not only did this group compile an enviable racing record, but it also cut a two-mile racing trail, with the help of the Civilian Conservation Corps, on nearby Mount Sunapee. The trail was maintained, raced, and enjoyed until Mount Sunapee State Park was developed for skiing, in 1947.

After returning to Newport, McCrillis and his wife became active life members of the Appalachian Mountain Club. As leader of an AMC ski excursion, McCrillis and other club members obtained the services of Otto Schniebs as their ski instructor. McCrillis was also one of the Dartmouth alumni who urged Otto's appointment as ski coach, a position he held from 1930-36.

While Otto Schniebs was still at Dartmouth, he and McCrillis collaborated on one of the first technical books on skiing ever published in this country, *Modern Ski Technique* (1932). Illustrated with McCrillis's photos of Schniebs displaying skiing moves intended for the novice as well as the veteran, the book went through eight editions and eleven printings between 1932 and 1940.

Among many of McCrillis' contributions was his chairmanship of the first committee of the U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association on downhill and slalom racing, which made its report in 1933. This committee provided the framework for Eastern alpine competition rules and regulations.

McCrillis and Schniebs stimulated competitive skiing by donating a perpetual trophy to the Dartmouth Outing Club to be awarded annually to the best all-around non varsity skier. The Schniebs-McCrillis trophy was established in 1933.

John W. McCrillis was elected into the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1966.