



*Toni Frissell
Marian McKean with Betty Woolsey and Friedl Pfeiffer.*

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Marian McKean Wigglesworth

Born: 1915 Died: 1989

Marian McKean Wigglesworth, a pioneer alpine skier in the United States, was one of a dozen women who were chosen to compete in Europe. The overseas experience gave her the confidence to enter the F.I.S. World Championships in 1936, 1937, and 1938..

Marian McKean Wigglesworth was born in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, and became one of the pioneer alpine skiers in the United States. When Roland Palmedo headed the National Ski Association Competitions Committee, Marian was chosen among a dozen other women to train in Europe against the world's best women skiers and to compete in the F.I.

S. World Championships.

Marian was selected as an alternate on the 1936 Women's Olympic Alpine team. Although she did not have the opportunity to compete in the games, the European experience gave her the confidence to compete as a member of the United States F.I.S. Women's Team in 1936, 1937, and 1938.

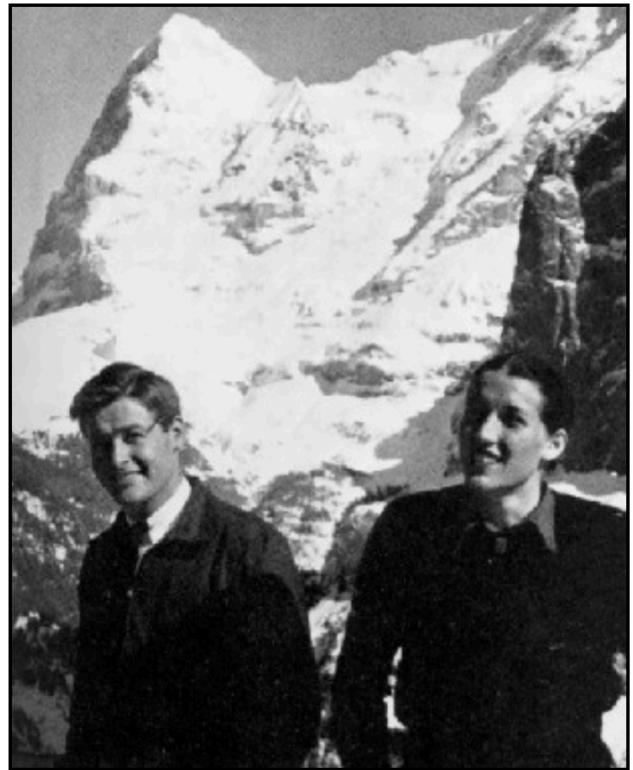
A newcomer to international racing, Marian performed admirably on the European circuit. The events leading up to the F.I.S. at Innsbruck, Austria, in 1936, posed an initial obstacle for this neophyte. A tune-up race at Garmisch was held on a particularly difficult course for the inexperienced American women. Dot Brewer took a bad fall on the downhill, crushing a vertebra. The course at Innsbruck was equally tough, with an additional handicap – lack of snow. When the men ran first on this “bone-breaker” downhill, racers one through five had to be carried off the course. Because of difficulties in moving the electronic timing system, the women were notified that they would have to run an abbreviated race on the same course. Over the coaches' protests, the race went on. Betty Woolsey came in seventh, but the real surprise was Marian's ninth-place finish in this arduous downhill.

Under the leadership of Clarita Heath and Marian McKean (Captain Betty Woolsey was sidelined with an injury), the American women beat the British team and performed well in slalom at the Swiss Championships. By the time the 1937 F.I.S. races at Chamonix, France, were over, they were a mild sensation.

In 1938, the American women –Marian, in particular –did an outstanding job. She took first place in a European slalom, second in a downhill, slalom, and alpine combined, and third place in another slalom. Thirteen times that winter she placed in the top ten, edging out the team captain, Betty Woolsey, whom she was beating quite consistently by this time.

Marian was named to the mythical 1940 U.S. Olympic team, which was selected but did not compete because of the outbreak of World War II. It is felt that the 1940 Games might have been her best year ever on the international scene – but we can merely speculate on Marian's potential against the cream of European athletes.

Marian McKean Wigglesworth was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1966.



Adams Carter and Marian McKean with the Eiger in the background.