

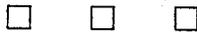
**The Development of Skiing in Gilford, New Hampshire**

**Oral Histories, 1994**

Corning Benton, Member of  
The Thompson-Ames Historical Society  
History of Gilford Book Committee

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## Introduction

Adair D. Mulligan's *The Gunstock Parish: A History of Gilford, New Hampshire*<sup>1</sup> became available on August 7, 1995, at the author's book signing in the Gilford Grange. As an information-gatherer for Adair, I interviewed in the summer of 1994 seven Gilford residents who either participated in the development of skiing in Gilford or were familiar with the stories of those who did. Adair wove much of the interviews' content into Chapter 21: *Skiing Comes To The Belknaps*.

These interviews — oral histories — are presented here because they show much about the character of these Gilford people and disclose many details of the time in which they live. It is fascinating to discover how profoundly skiing has influenced some of their lives, and it is heartwarming to sense their mutual regard for one another. Perhaps reading these reminiscences will help future readers feel akin to the citizens of today's Gilford.

Corning Benton

Gilford, New Hampshire  
August 20, 1995



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<sup>1</sup> Published by Phoenix Publishing, West Kennebunk, Maine

**Loran and Jane Percy**  
Route 11-A, Gilford, New Hampshire  
July 18, 1994

Loran Percy was born in Laconia in 1931, and Jane Roberts Percy was born in Laconia in 1934. They were married in 1954.

We bought a place in Gilford up near the ski area, remodeled it into a year-around home, and set up an art gallery. Our first home was beside Poor Farm Brook—right at the exit from Gunstock. Our home where we live now is our second place in Gilford.

I<sup>2</sup> worked for Aldrich Photo Service in Laconia in the early 1950's. When I went to the Area, Fritzie didn't have a photographer, and I took the pictures. And for the pictures, I got free skiing. So, I became the official unofficial photographer of Gunstock. And, from that, is how I got into Gunstock. Being full-time there, I was doing all the photography—motorcycles and everything. And then I just stepped into the ski school—so I had a lot of ties with the various people over there doing things. I did all the pictures for Egon<sup>3</sup>'s racing up here—he went into professional racing.

I was at the ski school from about 1962. Penny and Egon got there in 1961. I was there for about 19 years. I worked at the Area first for a year on the lifts as a lift attendant. Then, I joined the Ski School with Egon and Penny Pitou. They came here right after the Olympics, which were in 1960 in Squaw Valley, California. They were hired by the Area Commission and the manager to run the ski school. They actually ran the ski school as their own business—they were a separate business from the Area. The Area did pay Penny so much to come that first year—she was "Olympics" and it was a good name to have in there.

Up to that point, the school had been run by various people. Mike Hickey was one,

Roxy Rothefeld<sup>4</sup> was another. Mike ran it a couple years, Roxy ran it one or two years. They had a Swiss or an Austrian fellow in there at one time whom Fritzie had brought in. At that time, the school was pretty small—seven or eight guys—it wasn't a big deal.

When Penny and Egon came, it became much bigger—because they put on a lot of programs with the schools and with the various kids groups. They had a crew of probably eight full-timers during the week, and on a weekend, they would have probably 25 or 35 instructors working there—because your business is much bigger on weekends. My wife was an instructor with them—she taught the first year part-time, and then I went on with them full-time the next year. From there on, I worked with them every winter at the ski school as an instructor. Up until the last 5 years, I was the Assistant Director, because Egon wasn't able to be there that much. He had three or four other areas he also had schools in. They had a school at Blue Hills in Massachusetts, they had a school in Indian Head down in Nashua, and other ones Rhode Island and New York.

Egon was on the Austrian team during the 1960 Olympics. He did not win a medal, but he was one of the top 10 slalom racers in the world.

Penny and Egon had the school together until they got divorced. When they separated, Egon took on the school as the Egon Zimmermann Ski School. And he maintained it for another five or six years up until—the year Tapley came—that was the year that he got out and that's the same year I got out. What happened was: Egon was in the ski business as well, he was selling ski equipment for a distributor—that was his main business—this<sup>5</sup> became more of a side-line. He actually was on the road a

<sup>2</sup> "I" refers to Loran Percy.

<sup>3</sup> Egon Zimmermann.

<sup>4</sup> He used to be with radio station WLNH in Laconia.

lot—constantly between here and Pennsylvania selling in his territory. And, of course, the school still had to operate and so he had an assistant—a fellow working for him—and when that fellow left, I took over as Assistant Director, and that helped him out for running the school when he wasn't here. He was up here only on weekends, and I was doing it during the week. He was gone quite a bit, so this make it pretty hard. So, when it came to the point of the management changing, etc., he stopped doing the ski school—they had a lot of new ideas, they wanted to do this, they wanted to do that—Tapley did. The school just wasn't as successful as at first to operate any more.

Harold Finithey and Norman Paquette—he lives here in Gilford—were two of the certified instructors at the school. Egon had a lot of Austrian instructors come over.

The Area was called then the Belknap Recreation Area—it wasn't called Gunstock until later. The name was changed to Gunstock when Warren Warner came to manage the Area. Fritzie Baer was the manager when I was there.

The name was changed to the Gunstock Recreation Area to identify the area better for what it was (being off of Gunstock Mountain). All the trails are off the face of Gunstock Mountain. And the trail names, such as "Gunsmoke," "Ramrod," "Flintlock," and "Pistol," were tied into the Gunstock name.

All the new development at the area at that time coincided with the renaming of the area to "Gunstock." These new developments were the capability of making snow, the construction of the double chair lift to the top of the mountain, and the development of the Pistol area. Warren Warner was manager then.

Fritzie was asked to come to develop motorcycle racing at the Area. His background—he was with the Indian Motorcycle Company. He knew a lot of people—he knew the people and the companies that amounted to something and he could whip them around. He

was very friendly—always wanting to help you, always wanting to give you a hand if you needed it. They lived at two places at the Weirs—the first one was right down from where the golf place is right now, almost across from where the fire station is now. They put a gift shop in there for a while.

His knowledge was public relations and promotion. Whether it was the press or a society person, he knew just how to treat them to get the results. He was always ready to promote something, to start something, to get a program going. He was public-relations minded. As far as getting the press to give him the word—he was the sort of guy who didn't have to take an ad out for something—he would get free publicity, which is the way you want to do it if you can. As far as getting the right people to the area—he knew how to do it. He got things going—from a nothing to a successful place. He did bring in people—he brought the place up on its feet a little bit. Whether you like motorcycle races or not, he did bring in people, he got the place up on its feet a little bit. I think up until this day, it never cost the county a nickel to run the thing. Now, it's costing a little because they had to borrow money for the big development they did a few years ago. But up until that time, they were strictly self-supporting.

When he was there, the area was managed and run by the three Belknap County Commissioners. They oversaw all the operations of the Area. They hired the manager to run the place—because this was a WPA<sup>6</sup> project, and it was just a recreation area. And then skiing came into being a little bit and they developed all these things that skiers would want to buy. Fritzie was instrumental in getting the Belknap County Commissioners to develop a five-man Area Commission to run the Area under the County Commissioners. It now is the Belknap County Commissioners, a 24-member board, who vote in the five Area Commissioners. They put a new man in each year, and he goes for a

<sup>5</sup> The Egon Zimmermann Ski School at Gunstock.

<sup>6</sup> Works Progress Administration.

5-year period. And after Fritzie set this up, they got rid of him—they hired a new manager.

At the time Fritzie came, it was a very primitive place—all it had was a rope tow on Phelps Slope, the single chair lift on Try Me Trail, and a double rope tow on Tiger slope. You'd jump off one rope and hang on to the other—which was a killer! And then they put in a T-bar—that was the first T-bar around here. So they had the single-chair, the T-bar and the rope tow.

And then, a little later on, they added a short T-bar to the newly developed Smith Slope to the left of Phelps Slope.

Warren Warner was from Vermont. He was a nice guy. He was instrumental in developing the Area. He was knowledgeable in skiing, which Fritzie was not. The Commission wanted to develop the Area, and he was able to because he had helped develop Smuggler's Notch over in Vermont—I think that was the area he managed also.

When Warren Warner came, he got the idea of developing the whole mountain. He got the layout of the whole mountain worked out by professionals. He put in the two double-chair lifts to the top of the mountain, which are no longer here today. I think he had something to do with snow making, but I'm not sure. And they also developed the Pistol area, which is a small ski area on your far left as you look at the mountain. So you had two double chair lifts to the top, a small and a longer t-bar, the single-chair lift<sup>7</sup>, and the chair lift over in the Pistol Area.

Earnest Heig was a nice guy to work with. He was more of a business person. He was instrumental in developing the Area in a business way more than in a skiing way.

Hannes Schneider was the one who started skiing in New Hampshire. His style of

skiing was the original Austrian style, I guess—this was way before my time. He came from the Arlberg region in Austria. He came to North Conway. He started a ski school in North Conway. He developed this style<sup>8</sup>, called the Austrian technique, and brought it with him—with the ski school instructors, it is basically the way it's done today—except today the whole technique has changed. He brought the idea of a ski school with instructors to the United States. As far as having instructors do the instructing and get the people to come on the slopes and learn how to do this crazy business—I don't think anybody knew much about that—it was just hacking around, there was no real teaching.

Each country tried to start their own skiing technique. The United States started their own technique. Actually, they were teaching the Austrian technique, and then went to the modified Austrian technique, which wasn't quite as reverse-shouldered, not as tight a technique as the Austrians do. And then they gradually tried to change it and brought it to the American technique—which in really not so different from the Austrian, except that they just modified and loosened up on a lot of things.

The first main slope was Phelps. The original owner of the property was a Phelps—Elmon Phelps's father or grandfather owned the property. That's the main slope right in front of the building. Tiger Slope with the double rope tow was next to it to the right. The single-chair lift went to Try Me trail. There was Stonebar<sup>9</sup> trail. "Stonebar" comes from the removable bar of stone that closed a gateway between pastures. And then Fletcher Hale, which was the big racing slope on the back side of the mountain, over near the ski-jump side. Those were the first slopes and trails. Then, when they put the T-bar lift in, they made Smith Slope,

<sup>7</sup> On Mt. Rowe, to your right.

<sup>8</sup> The Arlberg style of Alpine skiing.

<sup>9</sup> Jane Percy recalls that Lena Roberts used to tell about going up through the Area and up over Stonebar Trail down into Gilford Village by horse and wagon. The Area itself was cow pasture at one time—the young stock that did not have to be milked were there. The Sawyers, Phelps, and Peters pastured their cows near there.

which was named for one of the Belknap County Commissioners, Joe Smith.

Penny Pitou had quite a bit of influence on skiing in New Hampshire. When she became world-famous—not only at the winter Olympics, but before the Olympics—she was already well-known in racing circles. When she got on the United States team, that spotlighted New Hampshire. New Hampshire was very much brought into the ski world because of her name, where she was trained, where she was brought up. Skiing itself developed a lot because of her school and what she did with it—she and Egon both—and the technique they brought with them.

Cobble Mountain is the mountain as you go in to the Ski Area—when you first go in on the road, you don't see it—it's all wooded now—it's a small mountain on the left as you go in the main road. At one time they did have a rope tow on it. This was before I started skiing. It didn't last as a ski area because it was the wrong exposure—faced the wrong way; it got the sun. I do not know if there was ever a bob sled run<sup>10</sup> on Cobble Mountain.

There was a toboggan chute right across the street from the Arlberg Inn that I can remember when I was a boy.

Keith Twitchel, John Veasey, and Ernie Goland were on the ski patrol. Ernie was the backbone of the patrol for a long time. Ernie and many other members of the ski patrol were telephone company employees.

A nice story I recall is about Tex and it happened in 1957 or 1958. Before then, they locked up the place and went home at night. Tex came for the motorcycle races and he didn't have any place to stay. Charlie Burdette was Police Chief at that time—he was friendly with Fritzie and he asked Fritzie if Tex could stay there during the motorcycle races and Tex would watch the building for him. And since then, he became the full-time watchman and worked at that job until Tapley came. He took care of the camping all by himself for quite a

few years. He was the Campground Ranger and he did all the work that six or seven people do now—of course, the campground was nowhere near the size that it is now.

The campground started as a picnic ground close to the pond where there was fishing. A little bit of camping came into that and it gradually got bigger. When Tex took over, there was a main building. And they had a little ranger station down by the ski jump and he worked out of there on weekends. At the ski jump there was the parking area, which all little slots of road. Now, that's all for camping. They made that into a camping area, which was ideal because the lanes were all set—all they had to do was to put water down to them.

The main building was heated by wood. They used to cut the wood off the slopes and trails and used the wood they cut to heat the building with. The Area was built from its own land—the rock and the timbers and everything else. All the stones were quarried there. An old stone quarry is still there where one of the cross-country trails goes. And they had more men to do the job than they knew what to do with. In the construction of the building, you can see that they had an abundance of wood to use. All the bridges that span the brooks are all faced with rock. Underneath the bankings along the brooks, the side of the brooks are all faced with rock—this is why they have not eroded and changed course. It had to be a show place when it was originally done.

□ □ □

<sup>10</sup> Jane believes that Elmon Phelps might know about this. He used to pasture his cows and cut wood on Cobble Mountain.

## Freddie Nachbaur

700 Route 11-A, Gilford, New Hampshire

July 20, 1994

I was born in New York City on November 7, 1916.<sup>11</sup>

In 1936, I came back from Austria. I'd been over there studying at a commercial academy and also was in the insurance business there for 4 years. Things had been getting a little tacky over there in Europe, Germany, and Austria with the Nazi movement. My family, which was my father, mother, sister, decided to leave the Old Country, Austria, and come back to the States again. My father was born in Austria and my mother was born in Switzerland.

We lived in a small town in Austria called Rankweil, which was only about 30 miles from the Arlberg. It was a lovely town—it had an old castle, which was right in the middle of town, rebuilt as a church. One of our ancestors was Sigmund Nachbaur, who was instrumental in driving the French out of Austria back during the revolutionary wars in Europe. There's a big statue in the town commemorating this Sigmund Nachbaur. In addition to that, as far as background is concerned, the clan, if you want to call it that, goes back to somewhere around 1475, when a Leonard Nachbaur was working for one of the Hapsburgs, and he was honored with a crest, which the family bears today. You can see it up there on the wall. The colors are the Hapsburg colors and the past achievements of the Nachbours are printed at the bottom of the crest.

"How did I get to Gilford?" was the question to begin with. In 1936, I left Europe and came back to the States. I was very strong in skiing and mountain climbing. I had just climbed my 17th 4,000 meter peak. I probably qualified as one of the best junior U.S. climbers

at that time. I had climbed Bernina Blanco, Palue North Pfeiler, Piz Roseg, Piz Badili Nord, Mönch, Nollen, Aletschhorn Nord, Finsteraar Horn, Weishorn—Nordwand up and Schalli down, Matterhorn-Zmut, Dent Heron, Dent Blanche, Zinal-Rot, Lyskamh, and many more.

We decided that, familywise, it might be a good idea to find a decent location to build a hotel or a small inn and take advantage of my father's abilities in the hotel business. So, I left Europe in September, 1936. I'd been living in Europe about seven and a half years. I scouted the territory—I went to Stowe, North Conway, Franconia—to see where we could find an acceptable location for what we had in mind. During these wanderings, I also came to Lacomia, where the WPA<sup>12</sup> was in its heyday. It impressed us that the Belknap Ski Area as it was known at that time seemed to have a great future. Although there was not much to begin with, we could see that progress was being made and that it might be an ideal situation. The program overall was such that in due time the operation of this ski area would benefit the community so that it seemed to me that the operation of the ski area would pay the taxes for the whole county—which, of course, we haven't seen yet today!

Who was it who conceived of the idea of the Belknap Recreation Area? It was the WPA program. The relief load<sup>13</sup> was the greatest and largest in the state. They proceeded to find the location where they could put the WPA forces to work. What happened at the Belknap area was that all the unemployed were working for the WPA and bringing the ski area into being.

When we first moved up here, the family and I, the only things that were already in the

<sup>11</sup> Freddie Nachbaur died November 11, 1994.

<sup>12</sup> Works Progress Administration

<sup>13</sup> People receiving financial assistance from towns.

area were the road<sup>14</sup>, the 60-meter jump, the Fletcher Hale slalom slope, and the Stonebar trail. There were no lifts, and the only open slope was the Fletcher Hale Slalom. We were impressed with the road system leading in here—and we enjoyed the community, what little we met with them. We were impressed with the people who were hoping that this WPA program would benefit the county and eventually we would have a real going thing as far as the ski area was concerned. This happened in April, 1937, and even at that time, there was a lot of snow around and the crowd on the Fletcher Hale was about as big as you'd normally find on Tuckerman Ravine.

As to how we got around to living in Gilford, there were a few properties up and down the road here which were available. One of them was the Felix Rattee farm, which is now owned by Ray Carey. That property had 345 acres, 10 or 15 head of cattle, and all the farm machinery that went with it. I recall the price was \$11,500. Another property we looked at was the Emmons Brown farm, which was located directly at the entrance to the Ski Area. It was at a much more reasonable price—it was \$5,250—and it had 80 acres of land. The road was paved only to here<sup>15</sup>, for the time being; there was no power line. My father decided that he liked the prospects of the Emmons Brown farm, which was owned by Clarence Sanborn, and he proceeded to buy it. For the next 5 months, from May until October, 1936, we had a crew of anywhere from 30 to 40 people working on farm to rebuild it. Laborers were paid 45-50 cents an hour, and finish carpenters were paid 75 cents an hour. Ozias Roux was the main contractor.

In October, 1937, we had a grand opening. We named it the Arlberg Inn because the place my father came from was Vor-Arlberg,

which means "Before the Arlberg." Of course, Arlberg was a big name in winter sports, and we thought it more than fitting to do the same thing.

We used two 500-kilowatt gasoline Kohler generators to power the Inn. One 500 kilowatt plant would operate, and then the second would kick in on demand. The setup did not work out well. The only way we were able to get the power lines in here was to commit ourselves to pay \$84 monthly as a minimum charge—a cover charge—which was quite a chunk in those days.

After the war, starting in 1948, we had a ski slope out in back here with a tow on it for two years. That was a big hill, but the trouble was that it didn't have the grade to it. The tow was powered by an old Studebaker engine with dual ignition—two spark plugs in every cylinder. It was a Rube Goldberg<sup>16</sup> affair, but it worked.

Ski development at that time, 1936, wasn't that awesome. It was slowly coming on and perhaps we were a little early in hoping that the concept of a small inn at the entrance to a ski area would do well. Well, it didn't. Snow was scarce. There was a struggle to stay ahead of the bill collectors and no matter what we did — we had the rooms of course in the inn and the dining room. I traveled for the Northland Ski Factory<sup>17</sup> as the representative for New York State. My sister, father, and mother continued to operate the Arlberg. And I spent more time with Northland on the road and also within the factory during the off-season months.

Skiing seemed to develop more slowly than we had anticipated. That's why we had a hell of a fight trying to keep our noses above the water when we had the Inn. I know that my parents used up all the funds that they had to

<sup>14</sup> Route 11-A.

<sup>15</sup> Route 11-A went from Gilford to Alton, but it had been paved only to the Emmons Brown farm.

<sup>16</sup> Rube Goldberg was a cartoonist in the '50's and '60's who designed elaborate contraptions to perform simple tasks.

<sup>17</sup> In Laconia, at the west end of Fair Street.

rebuild the farm house into the Inn after they bought it.

It was an awful struggle trying to have enough snow to ski on. You watched the weather forecast, you measured the snow, you watched the wind come up and blow it away, or there were the warm spells and thaws that we had. It wasn't easy—it was a pretty difficult time. We actually gave up the idea of running a ski inn and making a living at it. We changed our attitudes and our targets and, for some unknown reason<sup>18</sup>, ended up in the food business in the late 1940's. For the first year, I had a chef by the name of Freddy Warren, and then, after that, although I didn't know how to fry an egg, I took over the kitchen and started promoting food. We built that business up so that I can recall serving sometimes as many as 350 people in one day. We had some people waiting two and a half hours to get in there. We had a menu which was something to envy, and it was a remarkable operation. We named our lounge the Cuckoo Lounge and it had a wall full of cuckoo clocks. We put in a ski, clothing, and souvenir shop featuring "UNUSUAL WEAR AND WARES." We think back on it often, and we still run into people in town who say, "Do you remember when ... ?"

The Arlberg Inn was sold out of the family in 1973.

The hill up in back of the Arlberg Inn to the southeast has various names—the one I remember is Prospect Hill or Mountain.

There was a crown fire on Prospect Mountain during the fall foliage season in the 1940's. We're not sure how it started. We had been burning slash on an upper slope, and it is conceivable that some of the brush that we were burning up there continued to burn underneath even though the fire seemed to be out. The wind came up, and the next thing we knew—Albert Wheeler came running down the

mountain and said that fire is breaking out above there. The fire department got here, and there was no way to drive a truck up there, so they had to use Indian pumps<sup>19</sup>. The fire trucks would drive up to here<sup>20</sup> after lifting the water from the pond or the brook in the Area. The men fighting the fire would send down or carry down empty Indian pumps. Full pumps were waiting on the ground and were carried to the fire line. The wind came up and I was up there and I remember flitting through this dog-gone crown fire business where all of a sudden the wind gets up and the fire jumps from one tree to another up above—it isn't burning down below but just over the top of the trees. It burned that night and the following morning, at which time it reached the ridge and on the backside of the ridge there was more moisture and they finally got it under control. It was a hell of a fire.

In 1936 and 1937, I skied in the Boston Garden Winter Sport Show. We climbed to the rafters and, with a yodel loud and clear, raced down the short, steep man-made snow hill.

Before the war, I ran the ski school, which was the Winnepesaukee Ski School. I had two additional instructors besides myself. One was Sig Vogel, who came from Austria, and the other one, at a later date, was Herbert Bertram, who ended up being manager at Cannon Mountain. Then I had a few part-time instructors who came up from Massachusetts; two were John Anketell and Ray Pressey. I had a nice little school going there at the Area from 1937 to 1938. We paid the county a 10% fee for the use of the Area. We operated 7 days a week. Of course, we had the fellows from Massachusetts come over weekends, but, during the week, it only took two of us to handle it. It was an open<sup>21</sup> operation—two classes in the morning and two in the afternoon.

<sup>18</sup> A wry remark.

<sup>19</sup> Hand-operated pumps—the water was carried in a metal container inside a knapsack-like backpack.

<sup>20</sup> The Arlberg Inn.

<sup>21</sup> No appointments.

At that time, the ski schools didn't have any program for children. They do today, but they didn't at that time.

In 1938, I went to the first USEASA<sup>22</sup> Eastern Amateur Ski Examination for Ski Instructors—the first test was on February 13, 1938. Only seven of us—Sig Buchmayr, Arthur Schlatter, John Holden, Hans Thorner, Sedd Ruschp, Eddie Euler, and myself—passed the exam. The exam was both written and practical—on the hill. It was supposed to be held at Hanover, but snow conditions didn't warrant holding the test there, so we moved it over to Woodstock, Vermont, at Suicide Six.

I became one of the first 7 Certified Ski Instructors in the United States. About a year ago, at Killington, the Eastern Amateur Ski Association had a get together and awarded 50-year pins to all the instructors who passed the test at that time—the seven.

The following years, I lost out on the concession for the Ski Area, and we continued to operate for two years at a small slope at The Barracks, which was the name of the lodge at that time—it is now Gunstock Inn—down to road to Gilford on the right-hand side.

Earl Chandler had the concession at the Area after myself, and then after that there were various other instructors over a period of years. The most recent one was Klaus Buttinger (??-1990). Before that was Egon Zimmermann. Penny Pitou ran the school for a while.

Why was our ski school named the Winnepesaukee Ski School? The Belnap Mountain Ski Area also had another ski school director, Rudy Friedrich from Austria. He was Director from 1935 to 1938. He gave up and went back to Austria, because there wasn't enough business for two schools—and we seemed to have the in with the hotel<sup>23</sup>. He, as well as us, had a concession from the Area—both of us had concessions. So, there were two schools at that time, and we couldn't use the name "Belnap," and so, we figured it would be good to use "Winnepesaukee."

At first, in 1935-36, the Area was run by the Superintendent, who was Herman Olsen, the Chief of Police in Gilford. He operated through WPA—the Ski Area didn't need a manager. Herman Olsen was the guiding light, you might say. He was Superintendent for three years, so that would be 1936-1939. John Proctor came in later. Bobbie Baer, Fritzie's son, was a director of the Area for a while. Fritzie was known as "The Man with a Red Hat."

Herman Olsen was tough and knew his job very well—he did a good job on developing the Area at that time with the WPA program. I always got along fine with him. There was no need for a director to operate the Area—it was in its infancy with no lifts and no trails to speak of. He had a good right-hand man, who was Dick Willy, an engineer. He was hired by the WPA and had a lot to do with the layout of the trails and the lifts. He came from Maine and was not related to the Willy's who owned the trucking company.

John Proctor had a cabin colony down at the Weirs, Proctor's In The Pines. He is still there at the Weirs.

There is no history of the Area, just newspaper clippings.

Fritzie Baer was jovial, didn't know much about skiing, and was a promoter. He was an employee of the Indian Motorcycle Company in Springfield, Massachusetts, before he came here. We were getting into the war years—1941—and there wasn't too much skiing to be done at that time—everybody was heading off to the armed services or having defense jobs. There was a lack of gasoline for the trips up here. So there was a slow-down. The Area did very well there for a couple of years—the reason that I remembered it is because that at that time Fritzie was in the black with the operation of the Area and was interested in taking some of the funds and forming a slush fund so that if in some of the following years business wasn't so good, he would have money to take care of the obligations to run the Area. But

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association.

<sup>23</sup> The Barracks.

that request was turned down by the County Delegation and the County Commissioners.

During the war, the chair lift and rope tow were operated by electricity. The power came in by overhead wires installed in 1938 or 1939.

Warren Warner was the first superintendent who knew the ski business. He came from Stowe. He was able to convince the County Delegation to put in a new chair lift<sup>24</sup>, which went to the top of the mountain. The Area had the biggest development when he was in charge.

Prior to that, the first chair lift that was installed at Gunstock was the one that went up to the top of Rowe Mountain and serviced Fletcher Hale Slalom Slope, the Ridge Trail, and Stonebar Trail. That was completed in 1938, and it was purchased by the WPA from American Steel and Wire. The interesting thing about this lift is that it was first built and destined to be a banana conveyor down in the Caribbean somewhere and ended up being the major lift at Gunstock. Chairs replaced the banana hangers. The line of deflection was not too good on that lift. They had a few instances where the cable jumped the sheaves. There was an accident up near the top in which the cable derailed and someone was killed. It wasn't the ideal new type of conveyor that you have today. It fed Try Me Trail, which was a nice, easy trail—the exposure wasn't too good, but it had a drop of around 714' and was around 3000' long. It was a lovely trail. During the last phases of the WPA program, they were cutting a new trail, which came down on the left-hand side of the Rowe Mountain, but they never finished it.

Hannes Schneider was a fine man. I knew him very well, and also his son, Herbert. Hannes Schneider was the godfather of the Arlberg technique, and was instrumental in developing the downhill technique, the Arlberg technique, back in 1928 and 1929. There were several techniques at that time. The Arlberg, the Swiss, and Charlie Proctor (1938) had his American technique—actually, the techniques weren't that far apart.

I recall the day that Vinny Piche, who was one of my instructors—we were up in Canada at Mt. Tremblant and San Sauveur—Vinny and I skied like twins. Boy, we had everybody at a standstill watching us ski! We were using the ruade technique.

Hannes Schneider was so successful because he produced results. He turned out real fine skiers: Otto Lang, Richard Strolz, Luggi Foeger, and Friedl Pfeiffer. Plus, he had a good area to work with which was the Arlberg—St. Anton, Zuers, Lech—that area always seemed to have snow when other areas didn't have any. It's easier to operate a ski resort or a ski school if you have snow rather than if you don't have any. So, he had a good location and the technique caught on—people were able to learn to ski by using his method. Prior to that, there were the pioneers—Bilgeri and Zdaasky. In the case of Hannes Schneider, he had the area, the snow, and results.

One of the first bindings that came out on the market that was considered a binding was the Huitfeld. The Huitfeld binding consisted of a toe plate with a toe strap and a strap with a buckle, a "strammer," which went around the heel of the boot. The forward part of the Huitfeld binding was screwed to the sides of the ski in back of the toe plate, so that there was a downpull there that gave you more stability.

Next was the Bilgeri binding, which was actually a metal plate that had a coiled spring in the front. The heel was kept down by the action of the coiled spring in the front, and then a strap ran from the heel around the instep, and there was a toe strap in front where you went in underneath.

After that, your big guns came in: Marker, Attenhofer, Kandahre, which was a cable binding, Cubco, Solamo, Geze, Alpina, Tyrolia—they all were cable bindings that had a certain safety factor that when you lifted up too strongly in the rear, the lever up front would let go. Those bindings used to sell for around \$29. Bindings today are \$100-\$125.

<sup>24</sup>

A double-chair lift to the top of Gunstock Mountain.

At that time, there wasn't too much cross-country skiing—everybody seemed more interested in the downhill part of it. Cross-country is something that developed later on—partially due to the fact that the hills were so crowded.

The first ski-jump contest was held here in 1938 on the 60-meter hill. The group that instructed the jumpers was the Gilford Outing Club. They trained the youngsters, but there was no out-and-out effort training ski jumpers because of the location of their hill<sup>25</sup>. Only in later years, when they added a 40-meter and a 20 and a 10 did they have the nucleus to really take the kids by the hand and teach them jumping. Garry Allen, Gus Pitou, and Bill Trudgeon are names to recall.

Penny Pitou was an Olympic figure and learned to ski here at Gunstock. There was a group of 5 or 6 ski instructors that Egon and Penny brought in from Austria to work in the school. They were instrumental in developing the young skiers in the area.

I probably had as much to do with the promotion of the Belknap Ski area as anyone else. Newspaper advertising and whatnot.

The idea for a Belknap ski and recreation area probably came from the Belknap County Commissioners who were looking for a project to take care of the relief situation. The output of that WPA program was Fletcher Hale Slope, Stonebar Trail, the Rowe Mountain chair lift, the Phelps rope tow, and the recreation building. Let's not forget the grand ole' comfort station at the base of the 60 meter jump, ravished by freeze-ups, fires, and wrong location. And just to show you how important it was for the federal government to subsidize this WPA program—I remember that some of the oak beams<sup>26</sup>—which are in the big recreation area building to this day—the lumber for them was not bought from a private dealer. They

made an effort, even if it was costly, to haul these timbers out with double-teamed horses—rather than buy the lumber, the timbers were cut here to provide work for the people on relief. The building was made from field stone. They quarried all the granite for that out of the side of Cobble Mountain. All the wrought-iron hardware for the joist hangers and so forth—there was a little smithy<sup>27</sup> down near the 10-meter hill where they did all this iron work—they tried to find as much work for the relief workers as they could. Fred Cusimano was the foreman for the whole job.

There was no CCC<sup>28</sup> setup here—the nearest I can recall was in North Woodstock.

Elmon Phelps is still alive. He owned the property over by Route 11-A. Morris and Clarence Sawyer owned the area over where Fletcher Hale and the 60-meter hill is. Morris Sawyer was one of the Commissioners before Joe Smith and the others.

The Area has expanded since. At first it was 500 acres and now it's well over 1500 acres. The additional land that they bought was bought from George Kattar. He was the one who owned and developed Gunstock Acres. He is a nice guy. He sold the section which adjoins Elmon Phelp's to the Area—and I believe that was over a thousand acres. The sale took place before they put in all those lifts, so it would have been after the war—1948, 1949, about there.

It is interesting to list the survivors, who are on this road<sup>29</sup> now, who go back to when I first moved up here, 1936. Elmon Phelps, Albert Wheeler, and Leslie Curtis—who lives up on Curtis Road.

Milo Pike, who married Penny Pitou, owned the top of the ridge at Rowe Mountain. They bought Alpine Ridge<sup>30</sup> and since then the water slide that was there has been dismantled.

<sup>25</sup> At the west end of Potter Hill Road.

<sup>26</sup> Some are as large as 16 by 16 inches.

<sup>27</sup> A black smith's workplace.

<sup>28</sup> Civilian Conservation Corps.

<sup>29</sup> Route 11-A.

Stonebar and Fletcher Hale were the only ski slopes in 1936. Phelps and Smith Slopes—one or the other or both—were cut in 1937. Phelps and Try Me were in use by 1938, and Viking and Cobble Mountain were skied in 1939. Phelps<sup>31</sup> was the rope-tow slope. Fletcher Hale Slalom Slope was named after the senator<sup>32</sup> from New Hampshire—and he may have had something to do with getting that WPA program for this area. I love to recollect the area in the vein of what still exists today that was put in at the beginning. The record is very poor. Stonebar, which was one of the first trails, is still in existence and is serviced through Tiger area—which comes down from where Stonebar used to be. But some of it has been cut off into different segments and has different names now. Fletcher Hale is not being used any more—it's not being mowed or cared for. It was a good hill—it was steep and it was long enough. The only trouble was that you had to walk back to the chair lift. We had some slalom races there that were real good. It ended up at the bottom of the 60-meter hill, so you had to hike back up the road to the chair lift—so, for that reason, it didn't prove too popular. We didn't have the snow conditioning machinery that you have today, so to get the hill in condition was quite a job.

The Try Me Trail was put in in 1938 and went to the top of Rowe Mountain. In 1938-1939, we had Stonebar, the Phelps Slope was put in with the rope tow, and you had the single-chair lift which went to the top of Rowe—feeding Try Me and Fletcher Hale. And you could also utilize the Ridge Trail which went over to where Les Curtis lives—where the Frohock farm now is—there were a lot of Frohocks in this area. It was a long trail—it started at that Frohock farm and went up to the Rowe Mountain and then you skied down from Rowe Mountain down to the saddle at Stonebar, then you climbed up to Gunstock, then from

Gunstock you skied down into the saddle and you climbed back up to Belknap. From Belknap you went out to Piper Mountain. It was quite a trail!

The Winnepesaukee Ski Club made it a point to clear that trail every fall. The work crews went up there and cut out the slash and weeds. The backside of Gunstock Mountain featured the first rope tow in New England. It was 3200' long and serviced two alpine trails: Gunstock and Winnepesaukee. The base was near the beginning of the upper part of the Gunstock Mountain Road, with a northeast exposure. It was owned and operated by Ted Cook from Swampscott, Massachusetts. It was along tow—one used a special handle to hold onto the rope. It wasn't easy!

Next, they opened up Cobble Mountain. They cleared off the whole mountain, instead of putting individual trails in. That was on the northern exposure—this was unfortunate, because the prevailing wind, the strong wind, is the northwest wind. Besides being darn cold up on that hill, the wind was usually so strong that you had to pole down the hill to get to the bottom. That had a 1300' rope tow on it. It was abandoned because of the wind and the cold.

After that, the next thing that came along was Tiger, which was an extension of the Viking Slope—our original ski school slope. We had it set up that the ski school had its own hill, so that we wouldn't be threatened by other downhillers in that area. Viking, which was parallel to Phelps, was cut up to the promontory above—the Stonebar saddle, actually. Tiger was Fritzie Baer's big baby. Instead of running the Tiger rope-tow lift up onto the flat on the ridge, he stopped it about four fifths of the way up and, in the following year, he added an extension with a change-over. You came up at a certain angle and, where the grade changed, you had to switch ropes, just like you used to have to do over at Ted Cook's lift. You'd let go of

<sup>30</sup> On the Route 11-B side of the location of the first single-chair lift, which went straight up to the cellular telephone radio tower constructed in 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Named after Elmon Phelps—the slope was on his property.

<sup>32</sup> Or congressman, perhaps.

one rope and get hold of the other to the upper part. You rode both ropes on the same side. It was tricky!

This lift, the Tiger rope tow, also serviced the trail which was on the right-hand side, which was Red Hat, named after Fritzie. Fritzie wore a red hat and a cigar most of the time. I never saw him without a hat.

So, we ended up with Tiger, and we got Red Hat, and then came the Phelps Extension. The initial Phelps slope had a vertical drop of 150' and was 800' long. They added on another 600' which also became part of the Stonebar Trail coming down—this is now part of the Flintlock Trail. So you could ski Stonebar and Phelps down to the bottom.

What did we get after that? Don't Stop, Recoil, Hot Shot came along. They started naming the trails after gun parts and phenomena. Then Gunstock, Trigger, Gunsmoke. Those trails came into being when they put the double chair lift to the top of Gunstock. Then they were able to service more trails by having that lift to the top.

The double chair lifts were replaced by the triple-chair lifts two years ago. Before, there were two double-chair lifts that went to the top of Gunstock. When they took those out, they added only one—the quad lift going to the top. I'm not sure about that. By going to the top of Gunstock, you made it possible to put in more trails. If you had gone to the top of Phelps, it would have been too flat. The Pistol area with a double chair lift and added trails opened up a new part of the Area.

Our organized races were mostly junior races. We didn't have a trail long enough to make a good racing trail for older skiers. Junior racing trails are shorter.

The big races were held at Waterville Valley, Wildcat, Killington, and Stowe. We never had any big races here. You have to realize that Gunstock is not of the same caliber as Waterville, Wildcat, Loon, or Cannon. It doesn't have the vertical drop!! You can't make a mountain out of a mole hill !! You just haven't

the elevation to make a Waterville, a Franconia, a Stowe, or a Killington out of this area because you just haven't got the elevation.

Egon Zimmermann had a tremendous influence on skiing in this area. He was the finest skier there was then—a fabulous skier. He was on the Austrian Olympic team. Sometimes young skiers don't have to be taught how to ski—they mimic what they see and they learn from that. I'm sure that in the case of Egon and his Austrian boys that he had here—six Austrian boys as ski instructors—that it made a big difference in how our juniors developed. He was a good teacher.

Penny Pitou's record alone indicates what sort of a skier she was. She was powerful and smooth. She got a silver medal, more than one. She didn't make the gold—she missed out on that by a fraction of a second. She had a lot to do with the other skiers that came along and also were good competitive skiers. I think that you will find if you'll check out over a period of years that Gunstock had an enviable record as far as developing skiers. We had Penny Pitou, Dick Taylor—who was a good cross-country man, and Frank Hurt; among the gals, there was Heidi Preuss. We didn't do too much with the jumpers, though, in spite of the fact that they had the 10, 20, 40, and 60-meter hills. The presence and the example that Penny and other good skiers from this area had on the coming kids had a lot to do with it.

That's just the same as when I first skied over there, everybody was trying to ski the way I skied. Without coming in for lessons, they would stand there and watch. It was great to be a director of a ski school.

A toboggan chute was built right here beside the road<sup>33</sup>. It only went down about 150 feet and wasn't very big.

There was talk of making a bob sled run on Cobble Mountain, but nothing was done about it. These were all projects that were in the WPA package. If WPA had gone on, I'm sure that things like that would have been built, if there had still been a relief problem. Suddenly

things improved and funds were not forthcoming from the WPA to foster these new programs, and so we're without a bob sled run and skating rink.

The ski patrol was very good. It's fortunate that they had a good patrol because there's nothing worse than cracking up and lying up on the hill there without anybody to take care of you. A ski patrol did not become active at the Area until 1939 or 1940. With the establishment of the Phelps and the rope tows, that's when the patrol became essential and that's when it started. Pitt Keller was on the ski patrol. He was very able, very capable—a good man.

I was a member of the Gilford Outing Club. It was, early on, the Winnepesaukee Ski Club. It wasn't very active—we didn't have any racing programs, but we were responsible for putting on the National Jumps. The name of the Winnepesaukee Ski Club was changed to Gunstock Ski Club. Some of the old timers on the Winnepesaukee Ski Club—which is a jim-dandy club right now—they've got their own club house over in the Area, and they do a lot of junior programs which is a great thing.

The Winnepesaukee Ski Club started in 1937. Irving Buell and Gordon Langill were early members. Langill was a Gilford fireman and he had a shop in Gilford, and he built skis. He was a wood worker and cabinetmaker. Gordon and Muriel Langill lived right in the center of Gilford—right where the Community Church is, in the triangle there<sup>34</sup>.

Sid Shastney was the only one who knew how to put steel edges on skis. He owned a gas station near the old Quality Market on Union Avenue in Laconia.

Gus Pitou was an advertising executive—he worked for Tyler Advertising in Lakeport on Mechanic Street. He was busy with the junior skiing programs. Kip—who is now out in Utah as a ski rep for Kaestle—is Penny's brother.

Before the war, trails were packed by foot-tramping. The first real machinery for packing trails was the roller. We had a roller for our slope at the Arlberg Inn. That was in 1945, 1946, after the war. We hitched the roller onto the rope tow and hauled it up that way and then skied down with the roller in front of us—you made damned sure you didn't get caught beneath the roller. We took two carriage wheels and ran a pipe through the hubs, which was the handle-bar, and then we bolted old skis onto the carriage wheels. Slats attached to the wheels' rims made the cylindrical working surface of the roller.

At the Area, rollers were drawn by Sno-Cats<sup>35</sup>. The rollers were probably 3' in diameter. With the coming of additional trails and the lifts, you needed much more sophisticated equipment to take care of the packing.

The first motorcycle race was held at the Area in 1938. This was before Fritzie Baer came to manage the Area. I don't know who initiated that program.

In 1942 and 1943, I gave up my job at the Northland factory, where I was the foreman in the ski pole department, and volunteered for service in the 10th Mountain Division in Colorado. Minot Dole, who was in charge of the National Ski Patrol program, gathered together ski instructors from all over the country for this division. Herbie Schneider, Hannes' son, was one of the last group to join—there were four of us who signed up and volunteered for service. There was Herbie Schneider, Tony Matt, Otto Tschol, and myself. Tony, after his big run on Tuckerman Ravine, ended up being a golf course director in New York and has since passed away.

I served four years with the mountain troops—during which time I was part of detachments which went out to Mt. Ranier and we did a movie on how to take care of yourself in cold and snow for the Armed Services. I went as a battalion adviser to winter-train the

<sup>34</sup> At the start of Tannery Lane.

<sup>35</sup> Enclosed vehicles with two pairs of tractor treads. Power was applied to the rear treads, and the front pair was used for steering.

76th Division in Northern Wisconsin. And then a short spell in Camp Swift, Texas, and then, from Camp Swift, I was selected to go to the Officers' Training School in Ft. Benning, Georgia. From Ft. Benning, I went to South Carolina, where Major Horn, who used to be a local figure—he was in the dairy business, and he was a lieutenant colonel at the IRTC<sup>36</sup> setup in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Then, from there they hauled me out and put me into intelligence at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, because of my knowledge and ability to speak German. I was shipped out and spent 6 months in Berlin as an interpreter for the 1st Allied Airborne. At Christmas time in 1945, I was transferred from

there to Garmisch, where I became Assistant Winter Sports Director and where all my troubles started—I've had 5 broken legs since then. The first one happened on Garmisch on the Standard Run. I missed a bridge and, for a long time, the spot was named Nachbaur's Gulch. The same year, I broke my other leg in Davos in Switzerland on the Parsenn. And then I came back here, and I broke three more in the following years. So, I have some idea how important it is for the ski patrol to be there.

□ □ □

## Arthur Tilton

284 Old Lake Shore Road, Gilford, N.H.

August 2, 1994

I was born right there in the house at 284 Old Lake Shore Road on the 13th of January, 1917. My grandfather bought the farm in the year 1884. The farm was principally dairy and we kept some black sheep. We bred purebred Guernsey cattle for a great many years. My grandfather and Ansel Sawyer<sup>37</sup> owned the first purebred Gurnseys in the town of Gilford. He bought a number of fancy heifers from the Shakers in Canterbury. Elder Bruce, the Shaker who sold them the Gurnseys, came around to visit. (He visited each one of his customers whom he dealt with). My grandfather said, "I would like to get some good foundation stock to go with what we've got." Elder Bruce said, "I am going out to Ohio within a week or two, and I will pick up the best bull calf I can find and ship it on to you."

When I was in school, Eunice Hunt taught 31 pupils in 12 grades at the Number 1 District School. The school was where George Sawyer used to live in the intervale — it's the gray and white house on the east side of Route 11-B between Sawyer's Dairy Bar and Beans and Greens.

I've enjoyed meddling in town affairs — I've been at it over 40 years. I'm serving on four or five committees right now.

There was really not a large number of men on the relief roles of Belknap County during the Depression. For the most part, they were semi-supplied<sup>38</sup>, there were very few that were actually dependent. But there was a great many more that the taxes and insurance took advantage of.

One of the casualties of the Depression was the small, less-productive businesses, both

agriculture and commercial. For the most part, they were on the fringe. The farms were then starting to get large and fewer.

For a good many years, some of the farmers shipped their milk by rail from Lakeport or Laconia to Hood's<sup>39</sup> in Boston. The cans of raw milk were shipped to be pasteurized and bottled in Boston. This transportation for milk processing, separating the cream and such-like, started back in the early 1900's. The milk trains ran until the late 1930's. One such train, carrying just milk, left Laconia between 5:30 and 6:00 every morning. Another route that came down from the North Country came down from Woodsville and went on to Concord. It was part of the Concord and Montreal line.

Ice harvesting was a important part of the economy during the depression. The biggest plant was on Lake Paugus at Lakeport, near the spot where the Mt. Washington was launched — it was the Independent Plant and 90% of its ice went into Arlington in the Boston area. They used to bring up men from Boston, particularly the teamsters and their teams. But the greater part of the help they arranged with the natives here. The ice plants were the mainstay of many of the farmers, making their tax money and letting them have some extras during the winter months. The Metropolitan Ice Plant was on Lake Paugus nearer to the Weirs at the end of the Weirs Channel. Two big houses on Hilliard Road are survivors of the Metropolitan Ice Company, where their employees were boarded. The Metropolitan plant burned when it was full of ice. It was the most sickening and sad-looking mess — the mass of ice looked like a block of ink; it was way into the fall before it melted. Then there was a big one in Gilford, the

<sup>37</sup> Ansel Sawyer owned Sawyer's Meadow in the intervale.

<sup>38</sup> Partially supplied with the necessities of life.

<sup>39</sup> One of the largest, if not the largest, dairy wholesalers in New England.

Providence Ice Company, at Gilford Beach. The Providence Plant was located just in back of the new concession stand at the Public Beach. You can still see the cinders where the railroad siding came in — the ice was loaded there and went into Providence, Rhode Island. The ice cakes were taken out of the lake, right at the very edge of the beach, and pulled onto an incline by steam power. Occasionally you see cinders from the boiler room right there on the beach. Chain lag belts were used to place the ice on various floors called galleries — I think the galleries were 24' high. My father worked on the plant when they were building it, and he went down there for years in the winter-time. When they shut down the Providence, he worked out at Lakeport at the Independent. The Independent brought their delivery teams up from Boston. They had a big barn with 14 stalls for horses. The horses were used to help scrape the snow off the ice, before it was sawed. They hired a lot of local teams, too. The same was true at the Providence.

There were two ice plants at West Alton. There was one owned by the Rollins brothers in Mill<sup>40</sup> Cove. The other was the Gloucester<sup>41</sup> Ice Plant just below Woodlands — it was a big plant. The ice went into the fish markets in Gloucester.

For the most part, the idea of the WPA<sup>42</sup> helping with a recreation area started with the Belknap County Commissioners. Oliver Colby was one of the principal backers of the scheme. And then Charlie Carrol, a former Mayor of Laconia, was a County Commissioner at the time. Another who was very much into that was Ed Lydiard. He was a prominent business man in Laconia — he was involved in several different things — one of them was a meat market. He was a widely respected, small or medium-sized businessman. There was a group

of leading conservative business people in Laconia that recognized the fact that they were in a process of losing valuable assets, and they picked that idea up from developments in other sections<sup>43</sup> with recreation areas; and they were smart, broad-minded, and interested enough to put it together and make it go.

Fletcher Hale was a Congressman for the First District<sup>44</sup> for 18 years. He was a close friend of my father and mother. He originally came from Massachusetts, I think. He was a factor in getting the WPA money for the Recreation Area. He knew his way around in Washington. He knew how to pull strings to get things for this part of the state. There were a lot of things that Fletcher was directly responsible for and there were a lot of things that he let somebody else take the glory of it while he was behind the scenes pulling the strings. A very delightful person.

Knowledge that Sawyer and Phelps land might be available for the Area came afterwards. I don't remember now the circumstances that started it off — but there was money shuffling in the state and the word was out from our officials in Concord that Belknap County, if they were careful and made the right plans, could get some money for a recreation development. And a number of them got their heads together and started making the plans. As a result, the Area finally developed several years later.

This sort of development was going on at several places in New Hampshire. The big development at Cannon Mountain was different in that it was planned directly by the state, while the Area was planned at the local level.

Ollie Colby was also "Mayor"<sup>45</sup> of West Alton and a former selectman there. In later years, he was President of the Lakeport Bank. Ollie was into all sorts of things. He was one of the most delightful people. I would go into the

<sup>40</sup> Also called Rollins Cove.

<sup>41</sup> They harvested ice for the Gloucester Fish Company in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

<sup>42</sup> Works Progress Administration.

<sup>43</sup> Of the U.S.

<sup>44</sup> Gilford's district.

<sup>45</sup> The unofficial Mayor !

bank and I would lose an hour or more<sup>46</sup>.

Rob Smith was Mayor of Laconia at that time. Rob was always a Republican, and was Mayor four or five terms. He was a New Hampshire State Veterinarian. He was a big, red-faced character, and he used to come around testing the stock. We had a big English shepherd dog, and he was a little bit on the cross side. We kept him hitched, because he would go and round the stock up anytime of day he happened to think of it. Rob was scared stiff of dogs, and he would say, "Etta<sup>47</sup>, be sure the boys hold that dog so I can get in and out of the barn without losing the seat of my pants"<sup>48</sup> Well, I would, just to plague Rob (he was always plaguing me), wait until Rob was just about two steps from where the chain would let the dog end up, and then let the dog loose — he'd come to the end of the chain just at Rob's coat tails! Rob'd go right into the air and exclaim, "You almost got me, didn't you. Well, I won't plague you the next time I come!" His brother was Joe Smith<sup>48</sup>. He was called "Little Joe." His father, also Joe Smith was County Commissioner — a big man — many years before Joe. He was a Democrat. Little Joe was also a Democrat until he ran for county commissioner two or three times and got beat. So, he changed his politics and got elected the very next election.

My grandfather, John Milton Ames, always supported "Big" Joe and told everybody at election time, "Vote for Joe Smith — he will save the county a lot more than he will steal!"

The Ames who settled Gilford were James and David Ames. James represented the family that is now at Ames Farm. My grandfather was a descendant of David. James left Gilmanton and was the first settler in what is now Alton. And David left Gilmanton and was the first settler in what is now Campton.

Herman Olsen was Chief of Police in our town for many years. At the very first of

the WPA, he worked himself into the top echelon of the WPA environment here in Belknap County. Herman knew his way around and how to get about and took full advantage of it. He was a very delightful person and a very considerate individual. He was a Mason<sup>49</sup>.

Fritzie Baer. If you were discussing motorcycles or motorcycle racing, he was there 100 per cent. But if you got on to a tangent of skiing or something of that sort, his interest waned. I liked Fritzie very much. He was a general manager of the Area during the early days of the motorcyclists. The sparkle in his crown was creating and supervising the racing there. When he retired, he and his wife had a little store at the Weirs. It almost seems to me that he bought the Tarlson Store there at the Weirs — I'm not sure of that. He always wore a red hat.

Dick Tapley was a friend. He was a very conscientious and interesting person. I served with him on the Recreation Commission here in town.

The WPA kept their heads. They were willing to talk with and on a level with the local people. You weren't handed down an edict from Washington. A series of suggestions were made that the Washington people hoped you would do, but they didn't take note if you didn't. When they did start to take note, the whole damn thing blew up.

Maurice Sawyer, at that time, was dangling on the end of a string. He was developing some rather grandiose schemes politically — he had some big ideas but never quite got his courage up to try them. He was on the Board of Selectmen in Gilford for a good many years. And he was interested in county affairs. He wanted to sell. He had two pieces of land—he wanted to sell one or the other of them because he wanted to buy another piece. And Maurice was paid a very reasonable sum for the first Area land purchase—and it was worth what they paid for it. And then Maurice was in the position

<sup>46</sup> Talking to him.

<sup>47</sup> Etta Tilton, Arthur's mother.

<sup>48</sup> Smith Slope is named for him.

<sup>49</sup> The fraternal Order of Masons.

where he could pick up the smaller pieces that he wanted to put together.

Phelps — that took a lot of cajoling to get that piece of land away from Elmon. He very nearly reneged on it twice. In fact, he did the first time. I still don't think they offered him the first time in proportion to — it was a much smaller piece of land, but it was a better piece of land for what they wanted. Phelps's land was located where Phelps Slope now is. It ran up into the bog area up there. Elmon didn't want to sell it. They kept anteing the price up and finally he very reluctantly said, "Well, I'll think about it." He still lives on Route 11-A. He likes to meet people, but he's very hard of hearing. We went to school together.

I never knew Penny Pitou well. But, what little I did get acquainted with her, I liked her very much. She, in spite of all her world-acclaim, it didn't go to her head. She was still the same Penny. Everyone that she knew in town, she continued to know.

Lee Pitou, Penny's mother, was a very delightful person. I liked Lee very much. She could become very opinionated, but she was never unpleasant. She and I have, on a couple occasions, had a rather noisy disagreement. But when it was over with, the friendship was still there.

Mt. Rowe was named for Benjamin Rowe, Simon Rowe's father, who owned the whole side of that mountain. They lived in the small brick house in the village. Simon was the last of the Rowe's. He was Deacon of the Baptist church, and his daughter was John B. Morrill's wife, Mary Susan.

John B. Morrill was County Commissioner and also the Judge of Probate — he was "Mr. Gilford" as well as a big share of "Mr. Belknap County" for many years. He had the big place in Gilford Village, where Mrs. Pilliod lives now. He was the father confessor to just about half the people in Gilford. At one time or another, between him and John Pick Smith<sup>50</sup>, there was hardly a farmer that didn't become beholden to one or the other for financial help.

John B. kept three or four men on his working farm year 'round.

Simon Rowe was a medium sized man, deeply religious, and was very much interested in agriculture and improving agriculture. In fact, they set the mulberries in front of the house there. They started to develop the silk industry — silkworms. He was one of the most sincere persons that ever lived on this earth. He and his father operated the brickyard in the village — down in back of where the grammar school is — the flat area where the bank drops off. The Rowes were very influential in agriculture — beef and sheep. In that period, the early 1900's or before, sheep were a dominating factor in many of the small farms. My grandfather kept 75 to a 100 head of Southdown or Shropshire sheep every year. We kept a Hampshire buck, who often cross-bred the ewes, for the simple reason that the lambs were stronger and came earlier — the ewes would be lambing after it had begun to warm up in the last of March. My grandfather wanted the lambs early so that he could sell the dressed lambs — he got prime money for his lambs. The Shropshire lambs were very tender. All he had to do was just contact two or three markets in Laconia and say, "I'm going to be dressing lambs next week." And they'd say, "How many have you got to sell? I'll take all you can bring me."

The Ansel Sawyer on Sawyer's meadow in the intervale had Cheviot sheep. Almost every farm in this area had 50 to 100 sheep. The Sawyers, the Rands, the Harrises, the Whitcoms, the Parkers, the Potters, the Weeks — all of them had sheep — 75 to a couple of hundred.

There was a place in Harmony, Maine, that bought wool — there were buyers that would come around to buy wool. You would stomp it into bran sacks just as tight as you could and then tie up the end of the bag. You could send wool down there by railroad and they would process it and, if you wished, return it to you either as yarn all spun or as blankets.

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He owned Peter Sawyer's place in the Village triangle opposite the church.

A good share of the lamb and sheep pelts went to local people. People who did a lot of teaming — working in the woods in the summertime — would get a good sheepskin and tan it and then they would sew it onto the places in harnesses that were galling the horses. A lot of people used to use them for rugs by the bed.

Oscar Rand, over where Beans and Greens on Route 11-B is now, was a Hereford cattle breeder. He had some of the fanciest Hereford breeding stock around. You'll see Oscar's name on some of the town reports as Oscar Rand, either Treasurer or Selectman.

Gunstock Mountain. The story goes that, up there during the very earliest days of settlement here, a hunter was overtaken by a bobcat. He took a swing at the cat and broke his gunstock. He sat right down and, with a hatchet and a jackknife, whittled out a gunstock.

Cobble Mountain was so named because of its loose rocks. The top terrain was very stony.

Up in Potter's pasture there was a stone quarry. It was just beyond the big house where Garry Allen lives now on Potter Hill Road.

Charlie Gove was a big, stout, red-faced, blustering man. You would think he was going to blow up and burst. He was very excitable — but he would calm right back down again. He was very determined to the point of being just plain damn stubborn.

His blacksmith shop was a unique business, and he did a lot of fancy, fine smithing. There were two or three people around who built wagons and sleighs — and Charlie Gove and his two helpers used to do the iron work. He was a good man fitting shoes for horses. And one of the men who worked for him was an excellent man for shoeing. The most impressive of Charlie Gove's enterprises was building horse-drawn sidewalk plows. He made up the pattern for the plows — I'm not certain whether

the design was all his, or whether he just improved on it. But he made the foolish things and shipped them all over the United States as far west as Chicago. There was a V-plow on the front end, and on the left-hand side the V was straight — it came straight back. On the right-hand side it was pivoted so that it would open or close the plowed area. It was operated by a big hardwood horn beam<sup>51</sup> lever to ratchet the plow — to open the plow, and then you pinned it.

He was the first what would be called the Town Fire Engineer. He was Fire Warden. He kept a fire truck owned by the Village, a Model T Ford, not a Studebaker. He stored the Model T in his barn. In the fall of the year, just before it would freeze, he'd jack the fire truck up, let the water out of it, let the air out of the tires, and it sat there until it warmed up the next spring. So, don't plan on having a fire after the first hard freeze!

The town fire wagon that preceded the fire truck was a chemical wagon. It was a horse-drawn rig at first. Later, Charles put a tongue on it and hitched it behind the Model T Ford. It had two cylinders 16 or 18 inches in diameter — they were pointed on one end and concave on the other. I don't remember how much water they held. They were soda-acid extinguishers — that was one of the reasons they blocked up the fire truck<sup>52</sup>, so that they wouldn't freeze. That was the sole means of fire protection. It was good for chimney fires in the village and for a mile or so around the village. They had 50 or 100 feet of 1 inch black hose. Two short roof ladders were fitted in on top of the cylinders and there were some buckets. It was painted red with a smidgen of gold leafing. It seems to me that they bought it up in Meredith. The overall length of the cylinders was about 10 feet, and the wheelbase about 8 feet. It had

<sup>51</sup> A very tight-grained wood sometimes called iron wood. It is scarce, but can be found on the back of Mt. Rowe down to the Hatch pasture. Its bark is about the same color as white ash. A lot of farmers would use it for stakes or for pry-bars. It was used for pick handles and peavies. The hired man would wear out before the horn beam handle would !

<sup>52</sup> The fire truck also had a soda-acid water tank.

wood wheels with steel rims like a Concord wagon.

How did you get hold of Charlie Gove when there was a fire? Ring the Baptist Church bell! The town paid to maintain the bell rope—they were supposed to change the rope every year.

Roy Page was a very likable and highly respected individual. He was slow and deliber-

ate. He was a good road agent and he was an excellent man with the Fire Department. I liked Roy very much. He came from Gilmanton and died in Gilford. He and my father were cousins.

□ □ □

## Gary Allen

147 Potter Hill Road, Gilford, NH

August 15, 1994

I was born in Montclair, northern New Jersey, on 4/1/1917. My mother died in 1921; so my older brother and I were raised largely by kindly and faithful black housekeepers, Mary and Lettie. Montclair had very fine public schools which provided all my elementary, junior and senior high schooling and also prepared me for Dartmouth College. I had a close relationship with my Dad whom I greatly admired.

My Dad was very athletic and had been an ice hockey player, gymnast and track star at the University of Pennsylvania. He played a lot of ice hockey with me and took my brother and me skiing in the Adirondacks. We spent Christmas vacations at Lake Placid as early as 1928. My interest in skiing was nurtured at Dartmouth, but was interrupted by World War II. After graduation in 1940 I joined the Naval Air Corps.

I flew just about everything the Navy owned during World War II. I flew carrier planes at first. F6F's, F4F's — fighter planes. SBD's, TBF's — which are dive bombers and torpedo bombers. And then I flew the multi-engine planes — first, the old PBY, a two-engine flying boat. And then I went into four-engine aircraft, which were flown out of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The patrol bomber in which I flew my last mission was a Consolidated Privateer. As a matter of fact, in two days, we're going out to San Diego to have a reunion with my 1945 flight crew. Out of ten of us, there are still eight alive. So, we're having our 50th reunion — we formed in August of 1944 and here it is August of 1994.

When I was overseas during World War II, my wife and I always wanted to live in northern New England. In 1945, she made a tour around the country when I was in the Pacific flying. She looked at four or five places and she

found this house in Gilford. She bought our house, even before I saw it. We moved here in 1946, and this house has been our home for about 49 years.

We have a son who was a tremendous outdoorsman. He had his Junior Maine Guide's badge and canoed with Zeke Dwelly on the Allagash River. He wanted to go some place that was more primitive than here in the East. We had three children who had left home and were on their own, and our two youngest were still with us. Our boy, Chris, was 17 and our girl, Barbara, was 9. So, we picked Juneau, Alaska, and we lived and I taught school there two years. I was ski coach up there. That was 1967 to 1969.

I was flying for Pan American from 1946 to 1952. [During the Berlin Airlift in the late 40's, I flew mostly Douglas DC-4's. (It is a four-engine cargo and passenger plane.) I flew Lockheed Constellations and Boeing 377's in the Korean Airlift after the Berlin Airlift.] I stopped flying because I was away from home so much. We had four kids — three boys — and it was a little too much of a handful for my wife. I figured I should be living at home, so I stopped flying for the airlines and came back to Gilford. I was really more interested in what was going on here: the junior programs and what I could do with school kids. I worked for the Northland Ski Company in Laconia during the early 50's because I was interested in sports and sporting goods equipment. I sold skis for them throughout New England. Northland had a nordic line of skis as well as an alpine line. They were famous for their jumping skis. Their jumping skis were used by people all over the world.

In the mid 50's, I worked for Bill Saunders at Saunders Engineering for a couple of years and then, after that in the late 50's, went into teaching at the public school level. Primarily in Laconia and Gilford, and then I taught in

Juneau, Alaska. The Gilford Public Schools were the last area where I taught. I ski-coached in the 1960's and 1970's — both alpine and nordic. I was mostly interested in nordic skiing, and I left teaching to pursue that interest. My total teaching time was about 17 years.

Skiing has been in existence for a thousand years. The Scandinavians used skis mostly for transportation. About the same time the North American Indians were using snow shoes. It's interesting that Indians in North America used snow shoes but never skis, and the Europeans used skis but never snow shoes.

Norwegians immigrated to the United States. They went to the Midwest, to New Hampshire, to Colorado and other mountain states. They got skiing started about 1880 or 1890. The first skiing in New Hampshire was at the Nansen Ski Club in Berlin about 1900.

Locally, the first skiing was really ski jumping. It was a great spectator sport — a great many more people, percentage-wise, watched ski jumping than now. In 1920-1922, there was a 15-meter jump at Mile Hill, which is just off Academy Street in Laconia. In 1924-1929, there was a 20-meter hill at Mechanic Street in Lakeport. And in 1929-1936, there was a 40-meter jump on Cotton Hill. Nordic was a casual mix of cross-country skiing and jumping. Just to give you an idea: my first pair of skis I used for cross-country, slalom, giant slalom, and jumping — I used them for everything. That's pretty much the way we did it in the old days going back to the Twenties and the Thirties.

The Winnepesaukee Ski Club (W.S.C.), now called the Gunstock Ski Club (G.S.C.), got started in 1918. They were active very early in the history of skiing in this area. Club members skied the ridge from Les Curtis' field<sup>53</sup> up over Rowe Mountain to the top of Belknap Mountain. They cut the original Fire Tower Trail and several others on slopes above Gilford. Up until about 15 or 20 years ago, those trails were still visible. In 1934, the W.S.C. set up the second-oldest and the longest rope tow in the U.S. (the

oldest was run by Bunny Bertram over in Woodstock, Vermont). Our tow was 3100' long and 900' high. It was a real toughie to handle: the average man could ride it only six or seven times in a day; and a good woman skier was doing very well if she made two or three trips up the hill holding on to that rope tow. They had very primitive safety devices. They had what they called a "bang board." At the top of the lift was a big board with a hole drilled in it for the rope to go through. So, if you didn't let go of the rope or if you got caught, you banged into the board and dropped lifeless to the ground, but, at least, you didn't go around in the wheel. The rope tow started not more than 100 yards from the John Muehlke house on the Belknap Mountain Road. John is dead now, but his sons and daughters still own the house. It was called Batch's Barn — it's right at the base of the mountain over on the Village side. The tow went right up to within 50 yards of the top of Gunstock Mountain.

Ken Boothroyd was an early member of the W.S.C. as was Gordon Langill. Gordon also made skis in his shop opposite the Gilford Community Church. He made solid skis and had an ingenious way of bending the tips. He soaked them in hot water and then put them in a jig to bend the tips. He made a lot of skis that the kids used around Gilford. He was quite an unusual guy.

With the help of the Federal Government during the Great Depression, Belknap County gave work to the unemployed building roads, the lodge, and ski lifts on the northeast side of the mountains and named it the Belknap Recreation Area. In 1937-1938, they had 100 men building the 60-meter ski jump at the Area. At that time in the development of ski jumps, it was a very modern hill. In the early 70's we reconstructed the 60-meter into a 70-meter, which is a standard Olympic-size hill.

Over a period of 45 years, I have put a lot of my own money into making and repairing the ski jumps at the Area. Wealthy people around Laconia also helped out. For example,

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South of Curtis Road, which comes off Route 11-A.

J.P. Rogers, President of Allen-Rogers Corporation, gave money. If they gave \$500 or \$1000, that was the equivalent of \$7000 or \$8000 today. One of our greatest accomplishments was to have the Gunstock 70-meter hill F.I.S. (International Federation of Skiing) certified.

I had a lot of trouble with Fritzie Baer, Area manager from about 1950 to 1959. He was primarily a motorcycle man and not a ski man. Years ago, he was the first to use the big hill for a motorcycle hill-climb. It really bothers me to see a ski-jump hill used for a motorcycle hill-climb. Cyclers spin their wheels and gouge great ruts when they run their motorcycles up the hill. Few people realize that a ski jumping hill has to have a perfect profile. It's a parabolic curve. After the motorcycle crowd raced up the hill, there were 3' to 3½' deep ruts which had to be filled by hand. Fortunately I was able to get the University of N.H. ski team — 35 young, healthy 19-to-20 year-olds. They came to the hill in the fall, and we got 55-gallon drums. I had dirt dumped on the knoll<sup>54</sup>, and then the boys would fill those drums with dirt and slide them down by hand and dump them into the holes. And that's how we filled those ruts that Fritzie Baer was responsible for. Under no circumstances should anyone use an F.I.S. certified jumping hill for a motorcycle hill climb. The hill profile is too delicate and too hard to repair.

Warren Warner, Area Manager 1960 to 1975, was a tough nut to crack. I was always trying to get him to spend a little money on the nordic — and he's the first one that gave us any money. I think he gave us \$50! Which I guess would be the equivalent of \$600 or \$700 today. And so, I had a good feeling towards Warren. He came from Stowe, Vermont, and I think he went back there. He didn't help us very much, but at least he tolerated us.

Ernie Hegi, Area Manager from 1976 to 1981, was the best manager as far as I was con-

cerned because he was the most sympathetic. We accomplished a lot under Ernie Hegi.

Dick Tapley, Area Manager from 1981 to 1992, was so-so. He was helpful at times. He supplied us with personnel. By that time, we had a snow-making system going and he would supply us with some of the snow-makers from the alpine<sup>55</sup> slopes now and then. In '85, we had a few disappointments with him. I felt that maybe he could have done more to help the nordic. My impression is that they borrowed \$10,000,000 for capital improvements, and most of it went into alpine. I don't think they spend \$5,000 on nordic, even for their touring center. In fact, I think they spent a lot less than that. I don't blame Dick 100% for that because the Gunstock Area Commissioners were involved. While he helped us a great deal, he was a bit of a disappointment, too. One thing I find, which has always bothered me, is that our Area tends to invest only in alpine. It's like pulling hens' teeth to get them to spend anything on nordic. Whereas, if you go up to Waterville Valley — my friend Tom Corcoran never put on a pair of cross-country skis, but he has snow-making for his cross-country course and he hires people who know cross-country skiing. Tom says, "Go ahead, you develop what you need for cross-country." Tom really understands the whole picture of skiing and ski marketing, whereas the people at Gunstock are basically alpine-oriented — they have a hard time spending any money on their cross-country. And, of course their answer is, "Well, all the money comes out of the alpine skiers." Well, it isn't quite true, because it takes a lot of money to fund alpine skiing where the snow-making is so expensive. It's a very capital-intensive kind of business. While they charge \$35 or \$40 for a day's pass — I know that \$10 or more of that goes for insurance, snow-making, and all the rest. Whereas, with cross-country skiing, there is a much lower gross, but also, there is generally a profit. It's a small profit, but, at least, it is quite consistent.

<sup>54</sup> The top of the hill, just below the trestle take-off point.

<sup>55</sup> Downhill.

Another thing, I feel that a family comes up to Gunstock and, say, the parents are in their 40's and the kids are in their 'teens. And the kids want to go alpine skiing, and so they go alpine skiing. But the parents, who don't alpine ski, might like to try cross-country skiing. I don't know whether the Area really takes care of those people. There are always some people who want to cross-country ski. Some of the other areas up in the mountains like Wildcat, Bretton Woods, and Waterville have nice touring centers, at which people get the same good service they get at alpine facilities. People pay \$5 for a pass at a touring center.

The Nordic fraternity tries to get youngsters to start jumping when they are in elementary school. We let 5 and 6 year-olds ski off a 10-meter jump and continue until age 10 years. On the 20-meter, they start at around 8 years and go, sometimes, up to high-school age. When they get up to around 10 or 11 years, if they are really good, they move over to the 40-meter. You have a lot of high-school jumpers on the 40-meter. In the past, if I didn't have enough ski jumpers, I'd take my alpine skiers and have them ski jump. We'd have them first ski-jumping with alpine skis on and, as they got better, we'd change over to jumping skis. A good alpine racer is used to being in the air and going over bumps with speed. So, you can convert him to a pretty reasonable ski jumper in a short time.

In New Hampshire, which is the only state that still has high-school ski-jumping, their meets are held on 25- and 30-meter hills. The 40-meter is a little bit too big. There are a couple of jumps up at North Conway. There's one at Plymouth, at Lebanon, and at Wolfeboro.

There are girl jumpers in the U.S.A. as well as the Scandinavian countries. Cynthia Kling, one of our fine jumping coaches and judges, had girls' ski-jumping meets off the 20-meter hill in the past. Five years ago, we had

six girls going off the 70-meter hill, and they competed against the boys.

If you want to build a ski jump, the profile of the ski jump and trestle starts with a curve that's drawn on a profile sheet. Then you go out and survey a natural hill, which you hope is as close to the design profile as you can get. Then, you superimpose the design profile onto the actual profile on graph paper, using horizontal stations every 10' with elevations. Then, using a bulldozer, you cut and fill the natural hill until it matches the design profile.

A good, average jumper lands at 70 meters on a 70-meter hill. That's about 230'. The distance jumped is the flight path — a parabolic curve starting at the take-off point. But, the hill goes on beyond 70 meters another 25%. 25% of 70 meters would be about 17½ meters. The P-point would be at 70 meters, and then the K-point, which is the danger point, is 17½ plus 70 meters or 87½ meters. In a big tournament, there are hill-distance markers, who are people, on the side of the slope every meter. On a 70-meter jump, you'll have as many as 35 markers. The jumper lands in a telemark position — the landing point is half-way between the front foot and back foot. The marker at the landing point and the markers one meter above and one meter below determine where the jumper has landed. The ski jumper with the longest jump gets 60 points. Another possible 60 points is awarded for style. 120 points would be a perfect jump. In international competition, 240 would be two perfect jumps. Jumpers usually win with around 220 to 230 points.

Billy Koch<sup>56</sup> was the most successful North American cross-country skier in recent times. He got a second in the 1976<sup>57</sup> Olympics in the 30-kilometer race at Innsbruck, Austria. In 1982, he won the World Cup, which means a series of 15 or 20 races over a period of a year. So, that made him the number one cross-country skier in the world that year. He came from Putney, Vermont. He skied at Gunstock

<sup>56</sup> Rhymes with "coke."

<sup>57</sup> Linda Gray, Executive Director of the New England Ski Museum in Franconia, N.H., looked up Billy's Olympic year, event, and place.

as a Junior when I was running meets here. He also was a very good jumper — he's been off the 70-meter hill, and he used to be a nordic combined skier. A nordic combined skier is one who does both jumping and running. The results are then combined in a very intricate manner of scoring. The classes are Special Jumper, Special Runner, and Combined Jumper-Runner.

In the late 50's I was instrumental in establishing the Torger Tokle League, which later became the Billy Koch League in New Hampshire. I was interested in all phases of skiing. I not only worked with nordic, but, in the early days, I worked with alpine. In fact, I was the U.S. Ski Association's Junior Alpine Chairman. Later, I was Chairman of the Jumping Committee. I coached Penny Pitou up until 1955 when she made the U.S. Olympic team — then I began to get more interested in nordic, and in my last 15 years, I was almost exclusively in nordic.

Penny Pitou had a tremendous influence on skiing in New Hampshire — far more than any other skier I've known. When she went to the Olympics, everybody was talking about her. After she came back from the Olympics in 1960, she was invited to speak before the State Legislature down in Concord. They just packed the place — Senators and Representatives were all there. She was not only a great skier but a terrific speaker. She was really impressive — she brought down the house. Since then, she's gone all over the state — I don't think she does as much of it now, but she would give talks mostly to young people. Of course, she has her own ski race for juniors at Gunstock, the Gus Pitou Memorial Giant Slalom, named after her father.

Penny probably was the most enthusiastic skier with the most guts of any skier I have ever known. She had tremendous strength. I remember, when she came back from the '56 Olympics, she said to me, "Gary, I was stronger than any of the other women there, including the Russians." For instance, her Dad, for a birthday present, gave her a two-bladed ax, so she could go out and chop wood in the back yard. She lived right in the next house to

us — I remember going over there and seeing Gus on one end of a big rip saw and she was on the other. She was one rugged, strong individual — male or female — and probably as strong a female skier and as competitive as you could find.

It was always fun to ski with Penny and to coach her, because she had such tremendous enthusiasm — enjoyed everything, all facets of skiing. For instance, she not only skied alpine, she was great on cross-country, and we even had her jumping up to 30-meter hills. One story we tell about is how the kids said, "Let's see if we can fool the other team." They made her put her long hair up under her hat and told her not to talk. She went through a three-event meet. She was a junior high-school kid at the time. We were skiing against New Hampton prep school. All went well — everybody thought she was just another boy until, at the last event, she fell on her second jump. When she crashed, her hat came off and all those beautiful blond curls fell out. It just electrified the crowd which was standing there watching. A coach standing next to me, sounding like a new father, yelled, "It's a girl! It's a girl!" She has been a gung ho skier ever since — really a great ambassador for skiing.

Penny's influence in the community was tremendous. For instance, she's been on various boards here and at the hospital. She and Milo Pike set up a charity fund which kids can request donations from. They both have been extremely generous — I don't think you can match them.

I can see why Penny was so rugged because Gus Pitou, Penny's father, was a real tough nut too. He was a traveling salesman and he had a great sense of humor. He was one of these very successful salesmen who had a battery of jokes that he could use anytime. He'd keep you entertained for two and three hours at a time telling jokes. He was a big fellow — he had played professional football. I don't know what position he played — probably in the line; he looked like a running guard. He was not too tall, probably 5'9" and weighed about 230 or

240. He was a big man but very graceful — he was a good skier.

Penny's brother, Kippy, was an enormous fellow. He was about 6'2" or 6'3". When he played football on the Laconia High School team, he weighed 340. He was scouted by some of the pro teams — mostly for his size, but also he was very fast. When the high school team needed a touchdown and it was close to the goal line, the coach would pull Kippy back from tackle, and make Kippy a fullback. I can remember seeing him run across the opposing goal line with four or five little kids hanging onto his back.

Gus and I were great friends. We used to do a lot of fly fishing together. Gus was a very faithful member of the Gilford Outing Club (G.O.C.). He never missed a single weekend in four years instructing down on our little Outing Club slope. While I was driving around taking the older kids to ski meets and competitions, he was always down there every Sunday and Saturday instructing the beginners. Gus and Marty Hall were original founders of the G.O.C. Marty's son, Marty Hall, Jr., was famous: he was National Cross-Country Coach for the United States Ski Association and also, for many years, the Director of Cross-Country Skiing — national skiing — in Canada. He just retired a year ago and is still living in Canada — so we've had some pretty famous guys here. And Dick Taylor of Gilford was in two Olympics — he was a little after Penny — in '60 and '64.

I knew Freddie Nachbaur in the 50's and 60's. He was one of the early ski instructors at the Area. We skied a lot together. He coached until he got crippled up. He hurt his knee — he is still going strong but he has a bad leg. Also, another old-time ski instructor at the Area was Maynard Libby who was a dynamic character on the slopes.

Claude Richer came a little later — he was well known. He was on the Canadian Olympic cross-country team. I recall Claude at a later date, and he was very active. I guess he's about 55 or 60 years old now. He did a lot of senior racing, and he also used to take the kids

skiing. Claude was in the picture in the 70's and 80's.

In 1946, Gus Pitou, Marty Hall, Sr., and I formed the Gilford Outing Club (G.O.C.) because we were so interested in skiing that we thought we had better form a ski club. One nice thing about the old days is that most of us were volunteers. In those days, you could get any number of fathers out to teach the kids, run the ski tow, and pack the slopes. I guess I'm the last of the old volunteers. In recent times, volunteering has not been popular. Mostly, people pay now. For instance, if a parent has a youngster who is very good in skiing, he'll take the child over to the Area and pay \$25, \$50, \$100, and have a professional coach the kid. Whereas, in our day, when we started at G.O.C., it was strictly the fathers and the mothers who did the work. I don't know quite when that change took place, but it definitely happened — certainly by the Seventies and into the Eighties.

Egon Zimmermann had quite a bit of influence on skiing in New Hampshire. After the 1960 Olympics, he and Penny were married and they settled in Gilford. They established a ski school. The first one was here at Gunstock. They had another one down at Blue Hills in Massachusetts. It was about '62 or '63, and I was coach of the Laconia High School (L.H.S.) Ski Team. I had to run all four events, and I realized that it was too much for one person. In fact, that's one of the problems being a high-school ski coach — it's just too much to handle. So I asked Egon — I probably was the first high school ski coach who went to a professional — to take care of the alpine skiing for the L.H.S. team. So, Egon was the first professional ski instructor who coached a New Hampshire high school ski team. Then I took care of the nordic — cross-country and jumping. On all the away trips, I handled everything. Egon did not travel with us; he only coached during the week. At the ski meets there was no end to what you had to do — you had to drive the bus, take care of the kids, wax their skis, coach four events, and get them back home — it was too much for one man. After that, I arranged for an assistant. Other high school coaches soon followed suit.

Egon and I have always been the very closest of friends. We skied a lot together. I skied with him here in New England in Tuckerman's Ravine and also in Europe. When he first came to Gilford, he was fresh out of the Olympics. In '58 and '59, he was the number one alpine skier in the world. In 1960, at Squaw Valley, he didn't do too well — I don't know why — but, when he came to New Hampshire, he was just the most fabulous skier anybody had ever seen. He could do things that nobody had ever dreamed of. I remember taking him up to Tuckerman's Ravine and, one time, he came down the headwall and he jumped up in the air and did a 360° spin, landed, and kept right on going. Another time he was on Hillman's Highway in Tuckerman's; he was skiing across the Highway — on the side was a barrier of trees and stumps and on the other side of that was another ski slope. Instead of stopping and going on down Hillman's, he jumped up in the air and he hit the trunk of a tree with his skis and bounced right off that and landed in the snow beyond and kept on going. He was fantastic! I skied with him in '89 — he was 60 years old — over in Austria — and, except for the National Team, he was the best man on the slope.

My wife and I own the Gilford Outing Club slope at the foot of Potter Hill Road. We bought it from Clarence Sawyer's daughter. Her father and uncle were prosperous farmers on Sawyer Meadow. Clarence Sawyer bought the entire Fred Potter farm on speculation and for summer pasture for his cows. We bought the house and barn and 13+ acres from him in 1945. He let me set up the Outing Club down on his land. He used to love to come on Sunday and watch the kids ski. He died and his daughter, Helen Sawyer Dockham, inherited the slope, and then we bought the land from her.

Helen's husband is Don Dockham, the tree expert, down at the foot of Potter Hill<sup>58</sup>.

Fletcher Hale Slope is where Penny Pitou trained with all the early alpine racers. That was a benefit, because it was so steep that the kids got tremendous practice and became very good at skiing steep slopes. They really didn't ski much on the intermediate slopes at the Ski Area — Phelps Slope, etc. — and I remember that Fritzie Baer said that "Penny Pitou was spawned on the slopes of Phelps" — a beginner's slope. That annoyed me because she did most of her skiing on Fletcher Hale. She might have skied on Phelps when she was very little.

Alpine Ridge was a smaller ski area next to Gunstock Ski Area. Russ Dumais, who is now a selectman, was involved there — I think he was the manager. Attatash<sup>59</sup> was the area that owned Alpine Ridge originally. I don't know from whom they bought the land. Attatash had an alpine slide<sup>60</sup> up in Bartlett which was the first in the state — and then Attatash built a slide down in Gilford. It was popular for a while, then people lost interest. The Gunstock Ski Area and Alpine Ridge fought and squabbled a bit. Russ Dumais was trying to get the Area to buy Alpine Ridge for expansion — Alpine Ridge had good access off their lift to Fletcher Hale Slope. It would have been a much better advanced ski slope. The Area didn't want to buy it or didn't have the money. But the Area still got permission to park its overflow traffic there at Alpine Ridge. Finally, Alpine Ridge collapsed and Russ Dumais went on to something else. The land, I guess, was bought by Milo and Penny.

The "Try Me" lift at Gunstock was the second chair lift in the nation. Piche's Ski Shop has a couple of chairs from the old lift. The first such lift was at Sun Valley — I think they beat us out by six months in '37.

<sup>58</sup> In September of 1994, the Allens sold their Potter Hill home and property. However, the Outing Club land was deeded to the Town of Gilford as a gift with a conservation easement to the Society for the Protection of N.H. Forests.

<sup>59</sup> In Bartlett, New Hampshire.

<sup>60</sup> A smooth trough laid in curves on a hillside. One sat down on a small wagon at the top and rolled down to the bottom.

The Model 1200 Thiokol was an early model of one of Thiokol's fine packing machines. The Area had them, and Lake Placid had the 1200 also, one of which I rigged up for mechanical packing equipment for the 1980 Olympics. I was the first man ever to do mechanical packing on a big jumping hill. Now Lake Placid has a Piston Bully, which is amazing because it can grade going uphill as well as going down. In my day, we had to bring the Thiokol up the slope and then grade the snow going down only. In the present Piston Bullies, the cable is hooked underneath the take-off and there is a tremendous winch in the back which is synchronized with the motor so that when the Piston Bully is on the level, the tracks handle 100% of the traction. At the steepest part of the landing hill 50% of the traction comes from the tracks and 50% from the pull on the winch. The Piston Bully at Lake Placid can grade up, down, and sideways. There is also a similar Piston Bully at the big hill at Thunder Bay, Canada.

When I first went to Lake Placid, the Olympic Committee wanted 150 men to pack the 70- and 90-meter hills. I said, "I don't need that many, if you'll let me put my system into operation." After a lot of argument, they let me do it. The Committee cut down from 150 to 100 men, who mostly just stood around — we still did 90% of the work with the Thiokol. Just to prove how successful it was, after that — the next year and the year after — Lake Placid did the same work with 10 guys. In Europe, nordic countries brought out the army to pack the big hills, and there were always 100 soldiers to do the job. Now, these countries are also packing mechanically. I guess that's the number one contribution I made to the sport of ski jumping.

In about 1968, snow-making was first started on alpine slopes. My first snow-making venture on a big ski jump was at Gunstock in 1976. I got the snow guns from the alpine slopes at Gunstock, the fire hose from the fire department, and I rented a compressor from Milo Pike. I set it all up, and we put a suction pump into the reservoir up above Gunstock's 70-meter hill. It was just a Rube Goldberg set-up which we rigged. Each year we hope for

snow-making on all four ski jumps. In 1986, we installed fixed pipes running over to the big snow-making building at the Area, where the compressors, pumps, and water are located. At last, we thought we had permanent snow-making, but snowing the jumps is still at the whim of the Area management.

In the early days, skiing was mostly nordic — cross-country and jumping. Then downhill trails and ski lifts were developed and alpine skiing became far more popular. The Winnepesaukee Ski Club (W.S.C.) was an active nordic club until about 1958 when they lost interest in nordic and concentrated on alpine. At the same time, the Gilford Outing Club (G.O.C.), which had been both alpine and nordic, split into two clubs — the alpine under the G.O.C. and the nordic under the Gunstock Nordic Association (G.N.A.). About 1970, the Belknap Recreation Area became the Gunstock Ski Area and the W.S.C. changed its name to the Gunstock Ski Club which today is a very strong club, active in alpine skiing and racing.

Gwen Cerveny and Phil Cerveny contributed a great deal to the Gunstock Nordic Association (G.N.A.) in the 70's and 80's. Phil is a dentist in Laconia. They were tremendous workers in the G.N.A. — Gwen particularly. She was the Secretary of the G.N.A., and she was probably the hardest-working woman that we ever had. She and Cynthia Kling were just magnificent. They traveled all over the East to the meets. They became very adept at scoring the meets. Gwen was able to score the meets, take care of all the paper work, handle the money, schedule the kids — she did everything. She also had a family of one girl and three boys — they were all great cross-country skiers. Her daughter went to Dartmouth and was on the girls cross-country team. One of the boys went to Dartmouth and was on the cross-country ski team. They were very active from about '65 to '85. Phil and Gwen finally dropped out after all their kids grew up and left the program. I'm probably the only one who saw my grandchildren get too old for the program. Usually, parents will stick it out as long as their kids are in the program. I stayed on through my own kids

and my grandkids, and even after that. I guess I was crazy.

Dick Tapley, long before he became manager of the Area, was a good President of the Gunstock Nordic Association in the early 70's. His regular job was youth programs in Lacomia in the community services brick building opposite the high school.

Dave Scott was a very good President of the G.N.A. in the mid 70's. He has worked for the state through the years — city planning or something like that. He's down in Concord most of the time. Derek Lewis was a chap from South Africa. He was President of the G.N.A. for a short time in the mid-to-late 70's. John Stefan was also President of the G.N.A. after Lewis in the late 70's. Both were well-meaning, big-hearted gents.

Bill Trudgeon was a great guy — strictly nordic. He skied back in the days of Torger Tokle. He's about five years younger than I. He was with Messy Barber of Brattleboro, Art Devlin of Lake Placid — they all came to Gunstock in '39. Ryder Anderson and Torger Tokle came in '40. After '41, Torger's hill record stood for 35 years — 76½ meters. Bill Trudgeon was in that group. He and I were the ones who got the nordic program started dating way back to the late '50's. He and I used to teach the kids jumping on the 10- and the 20-meter hills. At that time, there was no 40-meter, and the 70-meter was inoperable. We just had two jumps, that was all. We had a lot of kids. I guess, at times, we had as many as 45-50 jumpers and 80-85 cross-country skiers. Today, we don't have that many. Bill worked with me up until about 1970. He helped on the rejuvenation of the 70-meter. Bill was extremely important — strictly a ski jumper and a very good one at that. He was a class A skier.

In 1970, Pete Kling, my son Phil, and I were the ones that really got started on rebuilding the 70-meter hill and also the 40-meter. Within two years, we had four jumps: 10-, 20-, 40-, and 70-meters. Then our program really took off. We had lots of kids that went on to the Junior Nationals and some to the Olympics.

When I first worked with the Gilford Outing Club, liability insurance was \$100 or so. We mostly insured the ski lift for injury. When I left the club, I think it was \$300. The last price I heard, two years ago, was \$6,000 — and that's pretty much what killed the G.O.C. in 1992.

Gus Raaum was Chief of Competition for the 1980 Olympic Ski Jumps. I was Assistant Chief of Competition. Gus Raaum was a Norwegian who came over shortly after Torger Tokle and settled in this country. He was very instrumental in promoting jumping out West. We were a perfect pair because Gus was living in Seattle and I was living here in the East. So, as Assistant Chief of Competition, I handled all the technical part of it. In fact, I was over at Lake Placid on the payroll of the Lake Placid Olympic Committee for three years — 1977 to 1980 — just coming home for weekends. Gus and I would talk over the telephone. Gus handled the judges, coaches, and the foreign diplomats. He spoke Norwegian and German. He was pretty much the main liaison between ski jumping and the top Olympic Committee. In that capacity, he was outstanding — nobody could have done a better job. My job was strictly on the hill — that is designing equipment, preparing the hill, handling communications and training, and crowd control. When we actually had the Olympics, Gus came on East and he ran the show as far as the top man was concerned, and I took care of the hill.

What prompted me to make my life a career of service in skiing? I was always interested in the little kids and the juniors. I used to get a little bit annoyed at some of my contemporaries because, after the Olympics at Placid in '80, I noticed that they would show up at the big hill, stand around drinking coffee, and have fun watching the senior jumpers fly. I kept asking them, "Well, what are you doing at home? Have you got any kids jumping off your little hills?" They never had a good answer.

After 1980, I came back to my home hill at Gunstock. I was an honorary member of the National Ski Jump Committee, but I turned over all offices to younger men and let them handle the national picture. I concentrated on

the little kids: the Torger Tokle League (13 year-olds and down) in jumping and the Bill Koch League (13 year-olds and down) in cross-country. I felt that the grass roots were not getting enough attention. I had always been interested in the juniors, even back in the '60's with Bill Trudgeon — we always had lots of little kids in our program. They were in various classes. Class V is 8 and 9, Class IV is 10 and 11, and Class III was 12 and 13 years old. We kept all those classes going, and all the kids in the classes were out having fun. To me, that is what is important. If you don't have little kids coming along, then pretty soon you don't have any program at all. That's why the Nansen Ski Club in Berlin died out. I used to get after those fellows up there — Leo Guerrin and a couple of the other men. Berlin would always put on a big ski jump for the senior jumpers, and they never developed their junior program. After a while, there was nothing left. They didn't have any juniors, they didn't have any seniors either.

After '80, I spent a lot of time trying to keep high school jumping going. The schools tried to drop jumping and I fought hard to keep it. I felt that, even though some of those high school jumpers were not going to turn into national skiers, at least they would turn into spectators who were interested in the sport. They would be the ones who, as adults, would make donations, would come out and do distance marking and so forth. I was trying to build a base. So, that's been my interest — from the beginning to the end — developing the juniors. The seniors will take care of themselves. If you have a lot of juniors, you're going to have seniors.

I was up in Juneau, Alaska, from 1967 to 1969 for two years — there was no ski jumping there, but there was tremendous cross-country skiing — in fact, Alaska is now one of the strongest cross-country states in the U.S.A. I had a lot of fun up there. The kids were quite different, and the ski setup was different. You used to start skiing in the middle of September on the glacier. After school started, my Juneau High School ski team would climb up on the glacier to ski. I can remember skiing back down

and having to dodge moose on the trail. It was fascinating. We would ski from September — well, you could ski all year around, as far as that goes. It was a matter of how high you wanted to go. In winter time, you could ski right down to sea level. In summer, you'd have to go up to 4,000'. We used to watch the snow line. For instance, in September, somebody would say, "The snow line's down to 2,000'." That means you'd have to go to 2,000' to ski. By October, it would be down to 1,500'. And then, "Oh, my gosh, it's down to 1,000'." By then, of course, winter had set in — which was usually the end of October. It was a different type of skiing, but kids are kids the country over, and I enjoyed coaching them just as much as New Hampshire kids.

Sigmund Ruud was called the Father of Modern Ski Jumping in Norway and in Europe. He was instrumental in developing some of the new styles of ski jumping — how jumpers held their body and their arms. At first, they used to rotate their arms constantly in flight, then they had their arms out front, and finally, today they hold their hands behind — which is much more aerodynamic. When I was flying into Norway with Pan American in the late 1940's, I spent a lot of time with Sigmund, and he helped me a great deal. In fact, when I got ski jumping going at Gunstock, I asked Ruud to buy some skis for me. He bought 20 pairs of junior jumping skis and 20 pairs of bindings and 20 pairs of boots. That was more or less the nucleus of equipment that Bill Trudgeon and I used for our junior jumpers in the '50's and early '60's. I didn't get cross-country skis because I could get them in the States. Small jumping skis were hard to find in this country — there were only adult-sized skis.

The Gunstock Nordic Association was probably the first ski club that set up a rental program. The idea was to accommodate the growth of juniors; for example, an eight year-old comes in and he's so tall this year — so we give him the jumping skis that match his size. Next year, he comes back, and he's too tall for those skis. So, he turns in those skis and rents a longer pair. Initially, nobody owned any

jumping skis. Juniors just rented from the ski club. We took care of all ages and all sizes until jumpers got up to 15 or 16 years of age and their growth had stopped and they were getting good enough so that they wanted their own skis — and then they would buy their own.

The Gunstock Nordic Association is still going strong as of 8/15/94. The club has an outstanding coach from St. Petersburg, Russia, by the name of Alexei Sotskov, who trains young skiers in jumping and cross-country

skiing — both boys and girls from elementary school age through high school. The club also holds clinics and ski meets for junior and senior competitors. The latest big meet was in 1992, lasting a full week, and was called the Junior Olympics (Junior National Championships) in special jumping and nordic combined (jumping and cross-country).

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## The History of Nordic Skiing at Gunstock and the Gunstock Nordic Association (GNA)

### A. Early History of Nordic

Nordic skiing started at Gunstock with ski jumping. The big hill, then a 60 meter, was built at the end of the Great Depression by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. At the time 100 men worked on the big hill which was completed in 1937 along with other WPA crews constructing the Gunstock Ski Area (then known as The Belknap Recreation Area).

A Boston Herald article dated 10/26/36, referring to our hill, stated that the grandstand for the big hill would seat 5000 people and the parking lanes would accommodate 4000 autos. In the East at the time there were other big hills at Berlin, NH; Brattleboro, VT; and Lake Placid, NY - all 60 meters.

The first man to jump the Gunstock hill was Emile Levasseur, a local man, who ran Lavasseur's Clothing store on Main Street in Laconia for many years. By 1939 Gunstock hill was the scene of numerous Eastern and National jumping meets. Old timers like Messy Barber of Brattleboro and Art Devlin of Lake Placid sailed off our hill many times.

By 1940 European jumpers were competing at Gunstock. In 1941 the famous Norwegian ski flyer, Torger Tokle, set a hill record of 76 1/2 meters (251') which would stand for 35 years. Approximately 9,000 spectators watched Torger Tokle in a light snowstorm. Ski jumping was extremely popular in the USA during the 1940s. Gunstock had 3 jumps (10M, 20M, 60M) which were constantly busy.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s Alpine skiing began to take over. The Winnepesaukee Ski Club (W.S.C.) continued to hold meets on Gunstock's big hill until 1958. But then the big hill lay dormant until 1970. However, Gary Allen and Bill Trudgeon of Laconia kept the smaller jumps active by teaching and coaching the area kids in jumping.

It should be noted that the W.S.C. was established about 1918. The club was active with a 15-meter jump at Mile Hill in the south part of Laconia in the early 20's, active with a 20-meter jump on Mechanic Street, Lakeport, in the mid 20's; and also active with a 40-meter jump on Cotton Hill in the early 30's. The club built trails on the Gilford Village side of Gunstock Mountain and ran jumping meets on the 60-meter jump at the Belknap Area in the early 40's. B. The History of the Gunstock Nordic Association

## B. The History of the Gunstock Nordic Association.

The history of the GNA can best be demonstrated by mentioning the following dates:

1947 The Gilford Outing Club (GOC) was founded by Marty Hall Sr., Gus Pitou and Gary Allen. The GOC was the forerunner of the GNF (Gunstock Nordic Federation) which became the GNA.

1951 Gary Allen, Pan American pilot at the time, flew into Oslo, Norway, and bought 20 pairs of junior jumping skis, boots and bindings from Sigmund Ruud. This started a Nordic rental program for local juniors. Jumping skis rented for \$4 per pair for the season; x-c skis for \$3 per pair; and boots for \$1 per pair in 1951.

In the 1950s Allen ran numerous Nordic meets at Gunstock for such Junior competitors as the Dions, the Robes, the Klings, Teyck Weed etc.

1953 Allen talked the Gunstock Area Commission into developing a x-c ski system.

1955-59 Allen active in organizing USSA (U S Ski Assoc) junior Nordics in N.H. at III, IV, V level which later became the Torger Tokle League and then the Billy Koch League (BKL).

1957 Allen convinced Piche's Ski shop to carry Nordic line of skis.

1950-65 Allen laid out more than half the present x-c trails at Gunstock.

1969 The Gunstock Nordic Federation (GNF) was founded by Gary Allen, Bill Trudgeon, and Phil Cerveny for the local junior competitors.

1971 The Gunstock Nordic Association (GNA) was founded for servicing older Juniors and senior Nordic competitors.

1972 The GNF and GNA merged into one organization in the early 1970s. Under the leadership of Gary Allen the GNA reconstructed all 4 hills at Gunstock. Modern ski jump profiles were obtained from Europe; and extensive hill grading, trestle steel work, and carpentry were done. Lights were installed on the 10, 20, and 40 meter hills for night jumping.

At this time the GNA under the supervision of Allen rebuilt the old 60 meter into a modern 70 meter obtaining one of the earliest FIS (International Federation of Skiing) hill certifications in the USA. This work involved extensive earth moving, setting the take off back 24', raising the top of the trestle 15' with new starts (steel work done); and building a 4-story judges' stand.

1975 Peak activity for GNA. We had 45 junior jumpers and 82 x-c skiers.

GNA big hill meets on the 70 meter:-

1974 USSA Nordic Combined Championships.

1975 USSA Nordic Combined Championships.

1976 Eastern Nordic Combined Championships

1977 National Jumping Championships.

1978 Gunstock International FIS.

1979 Gunstock International FIS.

1980 Gunstock International FIS.

1981 USSA Nordic Combined Championships.

1982 USSA Nordic Combined Championships

1984 North East Jumping Championships  
National Nordic Combined Championships

1985 National Jumping Championships  
Nordic Combined Championships

1987 Gunstock Invitational Jump

1988 Gunstock Invitational Jump.

1992 National Junior Championships (Junior Nationals) nordic

Note a) 6 National Nordic Combined Championships.  
2 National Jumping Championships.  
3 FIS Jumping Meets.

Note b) The most successful meet on the Gunstock's 70 meter was the 1980 FIS International. Most of the top jumpers in the world competed prior to going over to Lake Placid for the 1980 Olympics. Over 6000 spectators, along with the NH governor and other celebrities, watched the World Class ski jumpers at Gunstock.

### C. GNA X-C

1. Through the years the GNA has been heavily involved in x-c. Dating back to the late 1950s the GNA through its predecessors (the GOC and GNF) ran numerous junior meets and qualifiers for the USSA, also senior meets for men and women. Course lengths varied from 3 K's for juniors up to 15 K's for men competitors. The GNA held 6 National Nordic Combined Championships each of which required a 15K x-c race.

2. Former GNA members who reached a high level of performance in x-c were:

Marty Hall, special x-c National level late 1950's

Dick Taylor, special x-c 1960 and 1964 Olympics

Teyck Weed, Nordic combined (x-c) 1972 Olympics

Glenn Joyce, Nordic combined (x-c) National team late 1970'S

Jim and Chris Leggett, special x-c Junior Nationals and National level in the 1980's

Note: Penny Piton who was a double Silver Medalist in Alpine at the 1960 Olympics was also in our Nordic program. As a junior she ran x-c and jumped up to 30 meter hills.

### D. Gunstock Big Hill Records

#### 1. 70 M Hill

1941 Torger Tokle, Norway - 76 1/2 meters (251')

1976 Roger Holden, Norway - 77 meters (253')

1977 Jim Denny, USA - 83 meters (272')

1977 Jeff Denny, USA - 84 meters (275 1/2')

1978 Didrik Ellefsen, Norway - 85 meters (279')

1980 Hiroshi Yagi, Japan - 85 1/2 meters (280')

1985 Mark Konopache, USA - 88 meters (289')

1985 Zane Palmer, USA - 88 meters (289')

1985 Mike Holland, USA - 92 meters (302') unofficial

1994 Taylor Hoffman, USA - 89 meters (292')

#### 2. 40 M Hill

1974 Bill Cunningham, USA - 52 meters (170 1/2')

### E. Gunstock Hill Statistics

- 10 meter - p point 10 meters (30'), K point 12 meters (38')
- 20 meter - p point 20 meters (66'), K point 26 1/2 meters (88')
- 40 meter - p point 40 meters (131'), k point 52 meters (170')
- 70 meter - p point 70 meters (230'), K point 87 1/2 meters (278')

Note: On the 70 meter; the tower is 71' high, the in-run is 128' high, the landing hill is 199' high, and total vertical is 327' top to bottom.

### F. GNA Junior Competitors

Many GNA Juniors went on to top performance in their events as follows:

#### 1. US Olympic Team

- Dick Taylor (x-c) 1960 and 1964 Olympics.
- Marty Hall US Olympic (x-c) Coach in 1972.
- Teyck Weed (x-c, jumping) Nordic Combined Olympics 1972.

#### 2. US National Team

- Glenn Joyce (x-c, Jumping) Nordic Combined 1977-1980.

#### 3. Junior National Championships

- Kurt Kling (x-c, jumping) early 1970's.
- Chase Kling (x-c, jumping) early 1970's.

#### 4. Junior Olympics During The 1980's

- Dean Hancock (jumping), Belmont
- Rick Bragg (jumping), Concord
- Paul Kling (jumping), Concord
- Greg Cerveny (jumping, x-c), Gilford
- Ned Cerveny (jumping, x-c), Gilford
- Jim Leggett (jumping, x-c), Gilford
- Chris Leggett (jumping, x-c), Gilford
- Kevin Lewis (jumping), Gilford
- Brent Worthley (jumping), Gilford
- Chuck Fletcher (jumping), Laconia
- Mike Lynch (jumping), Laconia
- Doug Maxwell (jumping), Laconia
- Scott Stefan (jumping), Laconia

Note: Jim and Chris Leggett have been outstanding in Nordic Combined at the National Sr. level as well as the junior level Chris was number # 1 Nordic high school competitor in New England in 1988 and 1989.

### G. GNA Promotes N.H. High School Nordic Skiing

Currently, N.H. is the only state in the US which has schoolboy competition in ski jumping. The GNA has greatly assisted this program by preparing as well as maintaining Gunstock's 10M, 20M, 40M hills for high school competition as well as supplying coaches

As a result, the N.H. high schools were given the Russell Wilder Award by the USSA for the year 1987-1988. This award is granted annually by the USSA in recognition of the year's most outstanding activity in focusing the interests of America's youth in the sport of skiing including all events.

### H. Major Contributions to Jumping by the GNA

1976- Under the guidance of Gary Allen the first attempt at using man-made snow on a large jumping hill (Gunstock's).

1977- Developed 2 ton roller activated by a winch and cable system for packing landing hill and out-run.

1978- Completely successful snow making on entire 70 meter at Gunstock via portable system from alpine slopes.

1986- The GNA with the help of the older juniors (especially Jim and Chris Leggett) installed a permanent snow-making system on all 4 hills at Gunstock which is one of the most complete jumping hill systems in the U.S.

### I. GNF, GNA Past Presidents and Officers

The following have contributed much time and effort to the program:

Presidents- Phil Cerveney, Gary Allen, Bill Trudgeon, Dick Tapply, Dave Scott, Derek Lewis, and John Stefan.

Secretary, Treasurer, Race Chairman of many events- Gwen Cerveney, possibly the hardest working, most effective member of the GNF, GNA through the years.

### J. GNF, GNA Coaches

Our club has been blessed with some outstanding coaches. Some of the best known are:  
Cynthia Kling- mother of 4 Nordic Competitors, meet organizer, jumping coach, National jumping judge, and only lady FIS jumping judge in the world, 1975-1980.

Kurt Kling- GNA Nordic director, x-c and jumping coach, Eastern Junior National and Junior Olympic Coach, 1975-1980.

Steve Young- GNA Coach, Junior Olympic Coach, snowmaker, electrician, steeple jack, engineer, carpenter, 1980-1985.

Bill Trudgeon- Old-time jumping coach 1947-1973.

Gary Allen- Early Nordic Combined coach 1946-1975.

### K. Laconia Civic Organizations Promoting Nordic

The following local organizations have done much to assist GNA at Gunstock and to sponsor ski meets: Laconia Chamber of Commerce, Laconia Rotary, Laconia Kiwanis, Laconia Altrusa, Laconia Lions, Laconia Elks, and Gilford Rotary.

### L. Contributions Granted to the GNA

In the 1970's and 1989's the GNA has received financial contributions from various organizations to promote the Nordic program, and to help finance some of the big tournaments. They are as follows:

- Fleischmann's Margarine (National)
- Sprague Oil (N.H.)
- Pike Industries (N.H.)
- Symplex Wire and Cable (N.H.)
- Subaru (National)

Individual contributions have been made by Penny Pitou and Milo Pike who gave a very generous amount. Also, Gary Allen, who made financial donations.

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## Gary Allen - A Career of Service to Skiing 1988

### Vital Statistics

Age 71 years on April 1st, born 1917. Married 46 years, 5 children, 7 grandchildren (They all ski).

Education - A.B. Dartmouth 1940, Masters Education Plymouth State 1963, and Masters Math University of N.H. 1966.

1941-46 World War II Naval Aviator. Active duty European and Pacific theaters. Distinguished Flying Cross and 3 Air Medals.

1946-52 Airline pilot for Pan American. Extensive flying to Europe. Flew Berlin and Korean Airlifts in commercial crew.

1952-59 Sales for Northland ski Co. and Saunders Engineering.

1959-76 Public school teaching, math and science.

1967-69 Lived and taught in Juneau, Alaska.

1977-80 Employed by Lake Placid Olympic Organizing Committee to supervise final equipment installation and construction at jumps.

Hobbies, past and present - photography, hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing, hiking, besides skiing.

### Early Days

Age 7 years, started skiing in northern New Jersey and southern New York states. One pair of pine skis with leather bindings for x-c, downhill and jumping.

1926-36 spent a number of Christmas holidays at Lake Placid with family.

1932-36 skied informal high school ski club racing and varsity ice hockey

## Competition

1936-40 Dartmouth College. Strictly junior varsity caliber behind former Dartmouth Greats such as the Durrances, Bradleys, Chivers, etc.

1946-52 during airline days skied extensively in Rocky Mts., Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden. Participated in citizen level alpine racing in the Alps and nordic in Scandinavia. Got to know Sigmund and Birger Ruud in Oslo, Norway and jumped with their younger juniors on about an equal basis.

## Coaching

1946-55 coached juniors in all events at the USEASA club level.

Coached Penny Pitou (alpine), who later competed in 1956 and '60 Olympics (2 silver medals).

Coached Dick Taylor (x-c), who later skied in 1960 and '64 Olympics. Recent National X-C Coach.

Coached Marty Hall (nordic), who became US Olympic coach in 1972. And others.

1956-65 coached Teyck Weed (x-c, jump) NC 1972 Olympics. Current FIS TD for x-c, Nat'l TD for Jpg, NC.

Coached numerous other juniors who attained Junior Nat'l and Nat'l proficiency.

Coaching for Laconia (NH) High School ski team - 4 events.

1967-69 ski coach for Juneau (Alaska) High School ski team. x-c the only event at the time. State champs one year.

## Jumping Hill Design and X-C Course Survey

1950-65 laid out two thirds of present x-c trails at Gunstock Ski Area, Laconia, N.H. Personally did much of trail clearing.

1980-85 - laid out trails for Piche's Ski Shop other small touring centers.

1969-78 - responsible for the reconstruction of all 4 hills at Gunstock. Landing hill grading, trestle carpentry and light installation on the 10, 20, 40M.

Supervised the rebuilding of the old 60M into a modern 70M with one of the earliest FIS hill certifications (1975) in U.S. Work included extensive earth moving, setting take-off back 24 ft., raising top of trestle 15 ft. with new starts (steel work involved), and building a 4-story judges' stand. Designs by Dave Bradley, Stan DuRose and Petter Kongsli.

1977-79 -USSA Eastern Hill Engineer.

### Officiating

1947 founded Gilford Outing Club (GOC) with Marty Hall, Sr. and Gus Pitou. GOC produced 4 Olympians. Our club collected nordic skis and boots, then set up rental program for our juniors. Pair of jumping skis rented for \$4 per season and boots for \$1.

1950's ran numerous nordic meets at Gunstock for such junior competitors as the Dions, Robes, Teyck Weed, etc.

1953 talked Gunstock Ski Area into the development of a x-c trail system.

1955-59 active in organizing USEASA junior nordic in N.H. at the III, IV, V level, which later became the Torger Tokle League and then the Billy Koch League (BKL).

1957 talked Francis Piche into carrying nordic line in his ski shop.

1956-58 after 10 years of junior alpine activity, established with Fred Giddings the NH Junior Ski Federation which became the NH Buddy Werner League.

1964-67 member USEASA Junior Alpine Committee. Committee Chairman '67.

1967 race chairman for USEASA Junior Alpine Championships at Gunstock.

1969 Member of Alaska High School Ski Committee.

1969 Charter member Gunstock Nordic Association (GNA)

1971 Chief of Competition USEASA Junior Nordic Championships at Gunstock.

1972 Chief of Competition for first meet on Gunstock's new 70M jump.

1973 Race Chairman GOC-Volkswagon Special Slalom, USEASA sanctioned.

1975 peak activity for GNA. We had 45 junior jumpers and 82 x-c skiers.

1976 and '84 Chief of Competition for Eastern Nordic Combined Championships at Gunstock.

1974, '75, '81, '82, '85 Chief of Competition for National Nordic Combined Championships at Gunstock.

1977, '85 Chief of Competition for USSA National Jumping Championships at Gunstock.

1978, '79, '80 Chief of Competition for Gunstock International (FIS) Jump Tourneys.

1979, 80 Chief of Competition for Olympic Jumping Try-Outs at Lake Placid.

1980 Asst Chief of Competition under Gus Raaum for Olympic Jumps at Lake Placid.

1976-8 member of Eastern Jumping Committee. Committee Chairman 1978-82.

1977-84 Member of National Jumping Committee.

1982 Official Distance Marker at World Championships in Oslo on Holmenkol Hill.

### **Major Contribution to Jumping**

1976 first attempt at using man-made snow on a large jumping hill (Gunstock).

1978 completely successful snowmaking on entire 70M hill at Gunstock via portable system from alpine slopes.

1979 responsible for permanent installation of snow making system on Lake Placid's 70M and 90M hills.

1979 responsible for mechanized system of snow grooming on Placid's 70M and 90M hills which was a 1200 model Thiokol with winch mounted in rear and cable hook up under take off for self-winchng on the steeps of landing hills. Does the work of 100 men.

### **Publications and Awards**

1977 received USSA's Paul Bacon Award presented to the most outstanding race organizer in nation.

1975, '78, '79 other minor USSA awards for distinguished service.

1977-80 wrote "Manual on Running a National Ski Jumping Tournament," published and sold by USSA.

**Later Years**

1987 consultant for Gunstock 70M Invitational Tourney.

1987, '88 initiated drive to preserve jumping as a N.H. high school ski team event.

1988 instructing beginners in x-c.

1989 USSA granted NHIAA and New Hampshire High Schools the Russell Wilder National Award as recommended by Gary Allen.

**Main Objective through the years has been to promote and to serve junior skiing.**

□ □ □

## Don Chesebrough

341 Belknap Mountain Road, Gilford, N.H.

August 15, 1994

I was born in January, 1930, in Westerly, Rhode Island, which was the location of the nearest hospital to Stonington, Connecticut, where I was brought up.

Until I was in high school, we skied New Hampshire during the winter on weekends or school vacations — originally on rope tows down in the Francestown area. This was when you skied on big converted-strap skis. A lot of skiing was cross-country — you'd hike up a hill and slide down. My mother was a skier and my father started out skiing but then quit. We didn't know for many years that the reason he quit was that he developed a hernia. He kept the secret from the family until he changed jobs about 20 years later and had to have the operation at that time. The only one who knew about it was his doctor.

When I was in college, I started skiing upper New Hampshire in the Mt. Washington Valley. I was in the Army for 20 years. Later, when our kids were young, the Army moved us to Ft. Devens; and we started going back to Mt. Washington Valley. We decided, when I retired from the service, that I didn't have anything to go back to Connecticut for. It was easier to drive to the ocean in the summer than it was to drive to the mountains in the winter. So, we looked around and decided we'd go to New Hampshire and see if we could get something to do up here.

We moved into Derry, New Hampshire, directly from Ft. Devens. We knew it was temporary, but we bought a house there and I got a job. We looked around and thought of the things we'd like to be doing, and every time I looked at the map of New Hampshire, there was Laconia right in the middle, with the roads and the lakes and the mountains. But I don't

like cities. One of the guys I worked with said, "You ought to look into Gilford." We came up here looking for Gilford Village — we turned and headed for Gilford Village, and I suddenly realized that we had just driven through it! I liked the town. I had a chance to pick up the house lot here, and we built on it and moved in the fall of 1973. We have never regretted it. We love Gilford — you can say that the taxes are high, but you still get your money's worth.

When we came here to look for a house, the real estate agent mentioned that the Gilford Outing Club (G.O.C.) was an asset of the region. The club had handed out information flyers to the real estate agents in the area so that they knew the G.O.C. existed.

A group of interested parents — Gary Allen, Gus Pitou, and several other people — had formed the G.O.C. They felt it was nice to get together and work with the kids' skiing. The goal of the G.O.C. was to teach outdoor activities to people. It was not limited to skiing; there was hiking. I don't think they did much summer activity. Early in the fall they would start weekly hikes, partly for enjoyment and partly as conditioning for skiing. The early hikes were well attended and very nice events. Interest in the hikes began to decline — I don't know why. We did have an annual trip to one of the A.M.C. huts — in later days we went to the one in Crawford Notch, the Crawford Hostel, because that was a drive-up facility. We had a lot of younger kids, and you could go in there, unload everything, and take day hikes. It was close to the railroad station at Crawford Notch.

I have been told that the first G.O.C. ski slope was the big pasture<sup>61</sup> below Mendon McDonald's house on Schoolhouse Hill Road.

The rope tow for the ski slope on Cherry Valley Road<sup>62</sup> at the foot of Potter Hill Road was 700' long. As I understand it, Francis

<sup>61</sup> As one goes up the hill, it is half-way up on the right.

<sup>62</sup> Route 11-A from the Fire House to the Gunstock Area.

Piche first installed it at its present location between Potter Hill Road and Cherry Valley Road. It was a commercial operation. Somehow, he gave it up because he couldn't make money with it. Then, the Outing Club got hold of it. The property was owned by Mrs. Dockham's father, and she inherited it when he died. Shortly thereafter, the Dockhams built their house on the property. That included the slopes on both sides of the tow. They gave permission for the club to stay right there. The town was giving them a tax abatement because the club was on their land.

One night about 10 years ago, we were having a meeting and Gary Allen walked in. He said, "I have some information for you that you probably would be interested in. Do you intend to keep the club going?" At that time, we did have full intentions of keeping it going. He said that he was going to buy half of the land — everything to the right<sup>63</sup> of the rope tow and the rope-tow path — from the Dockhams because it abuts his property uphill. He was going to buy it so that the club could stay there, and he did. We drew the line two cat<sup>64</sup>-widths away from the rope so that we had the path plus an extra cat-width.

Standing at the base of the G.O.C. ski slope and looking up, the trails were Bone-Crusher, then the rope-tow line, and then on the right: Jumping Jack, Narrows, and the wide Flip Flop. Bone-Crusher was the most difficult slope. There had been a trail called Cross-Country on the far right — we had problems because the kids were swerving in and out of the trees, a couple of kids broke skis, and nobody knew where they were. We couldn't groom it because there were stumps — and that caused it to be more of a hazard. We began to get leery of the trail, so we blocked that off and gave it up as a trail.

At first Gus Pitou and Gary Allen and others got together to teach the kids to ski. Any of the kids that came got lessons. Many of the

members, including my wife, Mary Chesebrough, taught the kids. For quite a few years, they hired professional instructors from Gunstock to come over and give lessons to the members. After that, we went to hiring non-professional instructors to teach the kids — members like John Muehlke came down to teach the adults. He's passed away, but his family's still on Belknap Mountain Road.

There was no jumping allowed until freestyle skiing came in. Then, we amended the rules so that the kids could jump on a built-up lip under the supervision of an adult, but no inverteds were allowed.

After people like John Muehlke left, I became Head of Maintenance at the G.O.C. I enjoyed it. I was there as Head of Maintenance almost every weekend—Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

The club purchased a used Thiokol "Imp" snow-cat<sup>65</sup> in 1971 from Gunstock, and we used it either with a big roller to pack new snow or a chain-mat scratcher to loosen and smooth packed or frozen snow on the G.O.C. slopes.

When I came in, John Muehlke and John McGonagle were the two designated people who operated the snow-cat. Bob Hutchinson, Service Manager for Manter Oldsmobile in Laconia, did a lot of maintenance work on that cat — he did all kinds of major repairs. One time, about a year before I got here, they repaired it and John McGonagle was driving it and the whole transmission just fell out of the back end. They had forgotten to do up a couple bolts! I became the third designated driver.

The season-starting annual event of the G.O.C., which was very popular, was a lobster cook-out. It was at the Gilford Beach in the first or second week-end of September. It was a combination kick-off, membership drive, and a social event. They also would sponsor an Over-The-Mountain Hike a week or two after Labor Day. It was to introduce school children to

<sup>63</sup> To the right as one looks up the hill.

<sup>64</sup> The width of a snow-cat.

<sup>65</sup> It was one of the early snow-cats with a small V-4 engine.

hiking on Belknap and Gunstock Mountains and to the G.O.C. It would end with hot dogs and ice cream.

The spring carnival was a costume event. There was an obstacle-course race, where you might have to jump over tires or climb over hay bales. There was a big family picnic and a barbecue and we had a good time.

The G.O.C. began to decline. There was less interest. Gunstock improved their kids programs to the point that people could afford to send their kids over there. People in this generation, the new generation, have a tendency to go to work and earn money so that they can buy things for their kids. Whereas Gary Allen, Gus Pitou, and those people did things for their kids with their kids. The G.O.C. was an organization in which we relied upon volunteers. Everybody had to do their share, had to pitch in, cook hamburgers, and run the tow. It became more and more of a problem to get people to work for the club, because they were busy with their own work. Sometimes, the volunteer staff would outnumber the kids who were skiing. The active skiers just weren't there. And rope tows were passé. It took a minimum of three people to run the area: one in the base lodge, one at the top in the tow-house, and one on the slope. The latter two were a requirement of the state. We had four no-snow years. One year, we didn't open at all. One year, we were open for a week. The final blow was when the insurance company reconsidered again. We had got the insurance down to a reasonable rate — they were talking \$1,500-plus liability insurance. We had a fair number of contributing members; we had people who kicked in every year because they believed in it. But, we began to say, "Is it worth putting that money into the club vs. supporting some other thing, such as the Gunstock Ski Club?" So, we disbanded in 1992, but we did not give up the name of Gilford Outing Club. They took the money that was in the Gus Pitou Fund, a scholarship or activities fund to

support alpine skiers, and that fund was turned over the Gunstock Ski Club. The minimal amount of money that was in the Marty Hall Fund went to the Gunstock Nordic Association. The Thiokol "Imp" snow-cat was given to the Gilford Nordic Association (G.N.A.) with the understanding that they could give it back to the Gunstock Recreation Area to maintain and use when the G.N.A. did not need to use it.<sup>66</sup>

Gary Allen skis at least once a week<sup>67</sup> in the Monday afternoon businessmen's race at Gunstock for Piche's Ski Shop. And I think he skies on another of Piche's teams. I've been a starter for that race over at Gunstock, so I know that Gary's been there quite a few times. Gary has been a real pusher for nordic skiing. He had been alpine also — he was a coach for Penny Pitou — but, when we got here, Gary was primarily nordic. Through the G.O.C., we found out that you could go up to Gary's barn and rent cross-country skis and boots for the whole family. You were supposed to be in the nordic program, but you didn't have to be. We did that for a couple years. He was very active in nordic — cross-country and the jumps. He's nationally known for his knowledge about jumping and cross-country, training, the design of jumps, and judging. He had a lot to do with the school program, the training program, getting organized to get the kids to compete. Gary is pretty quiet. Gary and his wife, Lucile, are both very active in the church.

Cynthia Kling, former member of the G.O.C., was the first woman judge of jumping events.

Since her ski-school days, Penny has gotten into the travel business. Several years ago, after being told that we ought to go on one of her ski trips, because they were fun, we went and we've now been with her on two trips and we just had an absolute ball. We went to Whistler-Blackcomb in Vancouver, a two-mountain complex. Marvelous trip — she's a lot of fun to ski with. We skied with her — she

<sup>66</sup> This donation did occur.

<sup>67</sup> Gary Allen went skiing 77 times during the winter of 1993-94. Personal communication from G.A. to Corning Benton.

splits her people into two groups — we were able to stay with her most of the time — she waited for us to catch up! Only once or twice during the whole week did she say, “You people go down this way and I’ll go down that way and meet you at the bottom.” Woohoo does she ski — a very good skier!

Phil Cerveny is my dentist, and he has been ever since we got here. We met him through the G.O.C. His wife, Gwen, was into nordic. She was a pusher, a hard-worker in the nordic, and their kids were nordic. She was a very active supporter of the nordic — a parent-volunteer.

Alpine Ridge was Mt. Rowe when we got here. A Mr. Avidore, I believe, was the owner — he had a son or grandson who went to school with my son. He sold the mountain, and it was bought by Attitash<sup>68</sup>; their franchise for the alpine slide required that, if they had waiting lines for X number of years, they had to expand their slide capability. By buying Mt. Rowe, and by putting the alpine slide on Mt. Rowe, they met the requirement to expand their facilities, they expanded their franchise coverage to a greater part of the state, and prevented some other mountains from competing with them. Furthermore, they had the know-how; they were the first mountain to propose the al-

pine slide; and they were the ones that brought the alpine slide to New Hampshire. They had the committee that went over to view the alpine slide in Germany. The first slide went to Bromley in Vermont. Attitash got the second one. One of the reasons they bought Rowe was to preclude someone setting up an alpine slide in the southern part of the state, not running it properly, and giving the whole thing a bad name. They renamed it Alpine Ridge because “A” comes first in the phone book. The chair lift<sup>69</sup> was already there. They put in a water slide and an alpine slide. Winter skiing there went well for a while, then there were several winters without enough snow. They had very poor snow-making capability and limited water, and it got to a point where they weren’t able to make a go of their snow operation. They ceased winter operation and their slide operation was down enough that they started looking for a buyer — they wanted out. They sold it to Milo and Penny. The alpine slide is stacked beside the road now. The chair lift is gone. The abandoned and vandalized Alpine Ridge lodge was burned for practice by the Fire Department.



<sup>68</sup> Attitash Ski Area in Bartlett, N.H.

<sup>69</sup> This lift was left over from the defunct Mt. Rowe Ski Area. As one looks up, it is to the right of the Try Me chair lift, which was installed by the WPA.

## Penny Pitou

169 Potter Hill Road, Gilford, N.H.

August 25, 1994

I was born October 8, 1938, at Flushing Hospital near Bayside, Long Island, New York. We lived there for the first three years of my life. My mother and father fell in love with New Hampshire, however, and, in 1941, we moved to Center Harbor. They bought some land just off the Winona Road near the present Waukegan Golf Course. (It was a horse farm when I was young.) My parents<sup>70</sup> built a house and a couple of cabins. My father wanted to farm, and they thought they would take in some guests during the summers to augment their income. That lasted until 1946, when they realized they couldn't make a living on the farm. And so they bought a house on Potter Hill Road in Gilford — the same year that Gary and Lucile Allen bought their home. Potter Hill Road had until then never been plowed in the winter-time as no one had ever lived there year-round. I think my parents paid \$4,800 for that house with the big front stairs. We moved in during the spring of 1946.

When we moved to Gilford, there were very few kids in town — very few people, actually. Fifteen of the town fathers decided that it would be a good idea to gather together in some way to enjoy sports with the children. In those years, all we did was skate or ski in the winter — there was no television. We were outside a lot in wintertime. My father, Gary Allen, Don Simonds, Marty Hall, Sr., Seth Keller, and others got together, and each of them had a special talent. Marty Hall could fix anything, and he got the Ford rope tow motor running; my parents donated our outhouse as the warming shack; and Gilford Outing Club was formed. It was up on Cochran Hill off Schoolhouse Hill Road, located in the field just behind the house that's painted turquoise. Believe it or not, there was a

bit of a hill — it doesn't look like much now. It was a pasture and the cows kept it well chewed down in the summertime, and so in the winter we didn't need much snow for it to be skiable. They used a four-cylinder Ford engine to power the rope tow. I don't know where they got the rope — boy, it was heavy and always soaking wet. We went through lots of mittens in those days. Skiing down, everybody could make a hell of a good turn to the left — we'd shuss straight down the hill, throw our skis sideways to the left, grab the rope tow, and ride up again. That's why my turn to the right has never been particularly good. We had a wonderful time for many years. In those days, we got out of school early one or two afternoons a week so that we could go ski.

My father had been a semi-pro football player. He played guard and tackle. He had never skied before coming to New Hampshire. When we lived on the farm, there was truly nothing to do in the winter. My father made some skis out of barrel staves, just like you read about. He had to use my mother's canning-jar rubbers in order to hold my heel down in the back. The bindings were very makeshift. When I fell down, I'd come out of my skis — there was absolutely no support because we wore galoshes<sup>71</sup>. It was a lot of fun. I grew up semi-wild, I think, and loved being outside and was pretty strong — just genetically strong — and I found that skiing was the perfect sport for me.

My mother was not a particularly good skier. She used to go straight down the hill. I'd say, "Ma, you gotta slow down!", and she'd say, "What for?" We still have some old skis of hers. She was a special lady. She cross-country skied until she got Alzheimer's disease.

My father was not a particularly good skier either. But I can remember him floating down the hillsides like a bird. He always had a

<sup>70</sup> Gus and Lee Pitou.

<sup>71</sup> A high rubber overshoe with buckles worn in snow and slush.

cigarette dangling from his lips when he skied. But he loved being outside, and he loved being with the kids and working with the Gilford Outing Club.

Gordon Langill owned the big white house in the center of Gilford Village just across from the church. He used to make skis in the attached barn. I remember the building very well because my father, for a brief time just after moving to Gilford, was in business with Gary Allen and Walker Weed, and they built furniture in that same barn. There is still a faint sign over the door "THE GILFORD WORKSHOP." Walker was the carpenter, and Gary helped Walker. My father did the staining — boy, did it smell in his staining room. But he felt staining was creative. When I came home from school, my brother and I would sled or ski on the hill across the street from the workshop just behind the church and the parsonage until my father was ready to go home. Walker Weed lived on Weeks Road where Rolly Keith lives now. They raised two kids in Gilford, Teyke and Joanie. Walker was a wonderful guy. He loved building furniture. He cut a cross-country trail from his house to our house. They used to ski over, dogs and all, have a few drinks, and ski back home again. Sundays after church were great times for visiting. He eventually left Gilford and went to Dartmouth College and ran their wood-working department.

My father was in sales and he traveled a lot. He sold space in newspapers and he sold time on radio. He worked for WLNH<sup>72</sup> and then for Tyler Advertising toward the end of his life. He was working for Tyler when he died.

The Gilford Outing Club moved to Cherry Valley Road<sup>73</sup> in 1951. The top lift shack was on Potter Hill Road right near our house. All we had to do was walk on over and jump on our skis, starting at the top of the hill. There were trails like Bone Crusher — I remember that one in particular; it begins next to the Dockham's house. As a matter of fact, the

Dockham's house sits on part of Bone Crusher. There weren't very many trees in those days, and we could go all over the place — it was wonderful. Bone Crusher is where we ran slalom. We always made a jump on one of the other trails. Gary Allen would set a slalom course so we could practice. I remember my father running the tow almost every day and my mother down cooking with the other women, making hamburgers and hot dogs in that little shed. When my kids were growing up, I lived directly across the street from the top lift shack. My kids also learned to ski on that hill. They ran slalom and loved to ride that awful rope tow until they ruined every mitten they owned.

The Gilford Outing Club had a carnival every year until fairly recently. They would have a gathering in the spring. We always relied on real snow, there was no man-made snow. So, sometimes, the carnival would be earlier rather than later. The families in Gilford would get together and all of us kids learned to ski at the Gilford Outing Club. As time went on, insurance costs went ski-high and the Gunstock Ski Club began to offer programs that were more cost-effective. Kids just didn't want to ride the Gilford Outing Club rope tow any more. As I look back, I don't know how we did it; but we rode the rope tow when we were six and seven years old. The kids nowadays wouldn't put up with the discomfort and inconvenience of riding a rope tow. I think it was the insurance that finally did the Outing Club in<sup>74</sup>, though. They realized they would have to upgrade the lift, rebuild the food shack, and install snow guns. Without man-made snow, they would always have been at a disadvantage.

When my father died in '65, it was a big shock — he was only 53 years old. He'd been very very involved in early skiing here in Gilford — along with Gary Allen. Without his drive and his enthusiasm, skiing perhaps wouldn't have gone as far as it did. The people in Gilford wanted to show their appreciation for is

<sup>72</sup> A Laconia radio station.

<sup>73</sup> Also called Route 11-A.

<sup>74</sup> The Gilford Outing Club disbanded in 1992.

contributions to the sport of skiing, so they decided in 1966 to memorialize him with an annual Gus Pitou Memorial Giant Slalom. Gary Allen, I'm sure, was one of the leaders in this effort. What better way was there to do it than by a Gus Pitou Memorial Race? At that point, I was running the Ski School at Gunstock with my first husband, Egon Zimmerman, and the idea of the race seemed a perfect match. It's now one of the biggest races for III's and IV's in New Hampshire, and it is held on the first weekend in February. I have gone over there and awarded the trophies. It takes a lot of Gunstock Ski Club volunteers to run that race.

Most local kids now ski with the Gunstock Ski Club. They get to ski with their own age groups. It's more fun for them. I was in the ski school business when my kids, Christian and Kim Zimmerman, were growing up, so they had no choice but to ski. Both of my kids, from the age of three, were skiing from the top of Gunstock. Both of them, by that time, could make snowplow turns. My grandson — he was two this past winter (1993) — was still too young to be very interested in the sport. His balance is extraordinary, though; I think next year he'll be ready for snowplow turns. It'll happen overnight. My older son, Christian, refused to turn — he went straight down the mountain in a snowplow, gathering speed as he went. He used to scare everybody. Until one day, he looked up at an airplane and put all his weight on his right ski and made a turn. Then I said, "Christian, now look up again!" And the airplane happened to be going to the right of him, and he put all his weight on his left ski and made a turn to the right. So he then understood how to turn. He was three years old.

Shirley Snow was one of the earliest and best female jumpers at the Area. She is a little older than I am. I know that she was jumping before I was. She jumped on the 20 meter and she was my role model.

Bill Trugeon was a fixture in local jumping events at that time too. He was well known throughout the area as a jumper and a jumping judge. Armand Truchon was another local jumping standout. Armand and I were

good friends. We hiked and went canoeing together and spent a lot of time on the jumping hill. I remember him every time I go jogging as he taught me how to hold my hands to get the most power from my arms.

In those days, I don't remember any parent saying, "Because you are a girl, you do this thing, or, because you're a boy, you do something else." We all grew up just as kids. And that was why it was such a shock when they kicked me off the boy's ski team at Laco-nia High School when I was 13. There was no girls' ski team, so I just tried out for the boys' team and, of course, made it. One day Mr. Piper, the Principal, called me in and, I'll never forget it, said "Penny, I'm going to have to ask you to leave the team." And I said, "But why?", because I was doing very well — I was helping to win the races. And he said, "Because there is no chaperone on the bus for you." My hormones hadn't kicked in and I had no idea what he was talking about. I tell you what, it made me so angry, I decided that, if I couldn't beat the boys, I was going to beat every other woman that ever got into a starting gate. I have since calmed down that way, but it hurt me and made me very very angry. It was unfair. Obviously the parents knew that I was on the bus with their sons. I don't know whether it was the mothers who complained or the fathers. But I know there were enough phone calls to poor Mr. Piper, who had to bring me in and tell me that I was no longer on the team.

Before I was kicked off the team, I was racing in a meet at New Hampton School. I was doing pretty well, especially in the downhill and the jumping; I just did three events — I didn't run cross-country. I had long blond hair which I hid under a hat, and I asked my teammates to call me "Tommy". I crashed in the downhill and my hat came off. The gate-keeper was shocked and said, "Oh, my god, it's a girl!" It was after that race that Mr. Piper told me I was off the team.

I was 13, and, in those days, there were no "junior" races ... I could race in "C" races or "D" races, which I did. Each race finish gave you points — I just entered as many races as

possible and had a good time — there seemed to be a lot of girls racing. There was no pressure from my parents whatsoever, which was wonderful. The pressure I put on myself. When I won, I was really happy; and, when I lost, I didn't get angry at anyone, even myself, I just wondered what I had done wrong — how I could make it better. I still believe that 80% of winning is from your neck up. I think I learned then that I had to be strong, and fortunately, I was born with a strong body. All I had to do was train a little bit in those days; now, I have to do a lot more work to stay in shape.

Heidi Pruess was a young woman who grew up in town. Remo and Elsie are her parents. She had a lot of talent. She was their only child. Especially Remo, I think, was a tough taskmaster and had her out on that hill as much as possible. I remember, when the lifts stopped, he had her walking up and down Phelps and training and training and training. I would often be up on the mountain walking with the dogs, and there would be Remo running past me on a training run. Remo was hard on himself, too. Heidi was on the U.S. Team in the '80's and competed in the Olympics. I think she was fourth in the downhill. She was a very fine skier, especially a very fine downhiller. She stopped competing when her knees gave out.

The Winnepesaukee Ski Club was primarily for Laconia kids and the Gilford Outing Club was for Gilford kids. We would sometimes have races against each other. Now that the Gilford Outing Club is defunct, as is the Winnepesaukee Ski Club, it is the Gunstock Ski Club that represents the Lakes Region.

I had one ski lesson in my life and it was from Maynard Libby. He had had a terrible accident skiing, so that, when he got off his skis, one leg was about two inches shorter than the other. He always walked with this huge limp. But, when he got on skis, he was just beautiful, like a bird. Taking a lesson from him was very exciting, and everybody in the Gilford Outing Club was waiting for me to come back and tell them all about it. That was a big deal in those

days — nobody could afford to take ski lessons. I came back and showed them what I could do — it still was just the turn to the left — but with more "panache."

Gary Allen was my trainer, my coach, my mentor — he was everything for me. Without Gary Allen, I could never have afforded to go to the races and my parents didn't have the money or the time to drive me. If it hadn't been for Gary, I wouldn't be where I am today. Gary was supportive of my jumping, too. He said it was important for me "to feel comfortable in the air". My parents had only one car, so my mother would drive me to the jumps at Belknap on Tuesday nights. It was always dark and cold. She'd dump me off and come back an hour and a half later. She could never understand why I'd want to do that. She didn't even want to get out of that Jeep — oh boy, it was cold! We'd put 25¢ in the machine that turned on the lights. They would stay on for a certain length of time and would invariably go off when I was in the air. Somebody would jam another quarter in so that I would know where to land and where to turn at the bottom before I ran out of snow and hit the road. I loved jumping. I think one of the great things about growing up in Gilford then was that there were no limits. Nobody said, "You can't do this," or, "You shouldn't do that," "You're a girl," or, "You're a boy." It was just "Let's go out and have a good time!" Families worked together, played together, and skied together. We all had to cooperate; nobody had any money. As we grew older, our parents would drive us to Gunstock in the morning — or at Belknap then — and we'd ski all day. We had to make the last single-chairlift ride to the top of the mountain<sup>75</sup> in order to ski home down the backside of Rowe and back to Gilford.

I skied in all three events in the 1956 Olympics — downhill, slalom, and giant slalom. Since I have stopped racing, they've added the Super-G. The Olympics were held in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, that year. I also competed in the 1958 F.I.S. World Championships in

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Mt. Rowe.

Badgastein, Austria. I competed in all the major European races, which are now called "World Cup Races", during the years 1955-60, winning most of them.

I won silver medals in the 1960 Olympics at Squaw Valley, California, in downhill and giant slalom. I fell in the slalom.

New Hampshire's Governor Peterson gave me the automobile license plates with Olympic rings. I was flattered but embarrassed to have them on my car. I did put them on, because I felt that, as a gift, I should use them. Then, Klaus Buttinger told me they were upside down — there were two rings on top and three on the bottom, and that it was supposed to be the other way around. So, I called Governor Peterson and he had the people in jail make me another set. The police used to stop me all the time and say, "That's not a valid license plate." That was always embarrassing. It's just like wearing your medal around your neck as you walk through town. I'm keeping them; if somebody wins an Olympic medal here in New Hampshire, I could give them to her or to him.

Egon Zimmermann and I ran the Penny Pitou Ski School at the Belknap Mountain Recreation Area. We started the school in 1961, and we opened a second school at Blue Hills in Massachusetts in 1965. We had a couple of others, but for only a year. One was at Lock Ledge in New York, and one at Diamond Hill in Rhode Island. Neither one got off the ground as there were no snow-making machines in those days. The Penny Pitou Ski School became the Egon Zimmermann Ski School in 1970 a couple years after we divorced. Egon stopped running the schools maybe eight or ten years ago. He's married now to an Austrian woman and is living in his home town of Kirchbichl/Tirol, Austria. The ski school at Blue Hills is still being run by Hans Seisl — an Austrian instructor we brought over 30 years ago.

My mother asked me, when I came home from the Olympics, "Why are you going to run a ski school at Belknap? Why not at a bigger, more prestigious ski area?" Egon and I

were asked to run the ski school at Alpine Meadows in California. They flew us over it in a helicopter right after the Olympics. Egon would have gone anywhere, he didn't care. It probably would have been a more suitable mountain for someone of Egon's ability and maybe mine too. But the Lakes Region is home for me. I wanted to come back to Gilford. I think I have the best of both worlds. I'm at home here; I've been living on Potter Hill Road since 1946 — in three different houses. Now it's '94 — that makes 48 years, almost 49. I travel on business to Europe four or five times a year with skiing and hiking groups. I own two travel agencies, so I can, and do, go anywhere I want. But I always come back to Gilford. I feel pretty lucky.

Ann Stamps is a woman who lived in Gilford for many years. She had three kids: Jeff, Susie, and David. David and Judy Simonds are getting married — and I grew up with Judy too. She was my age and David was a few years younger. They are going to be married after 40 years of knowing each other and a couple of marriages in between for both of them. Don and Dot Simonds are her mother and father. Ann Stamps was married to Jim Stamps — he was one of the founding fathers of the Gilford Outing Club. Ann recently married Jim Farnsworth. Ann's father, Jim Rogers, was the man who owned Allen Rogers wood-working factory in Laconia. Danny Rogers was her brother. The Jim Rogers family has done a lot of philanthropic work in the Lakes Region.

Norm Paquette was the first ski instructor we hired for the Penny Pitou Ski School at Belknap. Before us, Art "Roxy" Rotheheld ran the ski school; Art passed away on November 26, 1994. We took over from him. Norm worked for Pike<sup>76</sup> in the summer and us in the winter. We paid him \$90 a week which, to me, was an astronomical amount of money. Our second ski instructor, who was very important to us, was Willi Klein. We brought him over from Austria in 1961 or '62. Willi skied for us for a number of years and then went on to

marry a woman from a large Italian family in Massachusetts, Linda; and now, he owns three ski shops in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and he's a millionaire.

Freddie Nachbaur and Maynard Libby were two of the early instructors. The first Area Manager I knew was Fritzie Baer. He was a terrific PR<sup>77</sup> guy. Fritzie always had a cigar in his mouth and that red hat on. He got thinner as he got older. He was very kind — he gave me a lifetime ski pass to Belknap. He loved to say that I was “spawned on the slopes of Belknap”. And now, the wonderful thing is that I own the whole backside of Rowe Mountain where I used to ski home 40 years ago. I go up there every morning and run with my dogs. We brought Klaus Buttinger over here to teach skiing for us. He took over the ski school after Egon left. We brought Pepi Hermann over here too to be an instructor. He started a crystal cutting business 20 years ago called Pepi Hermann Crystal which has become very famous and is quite successful.

The development of junior skiing in New Hampshire was a grass roots movement. The communities didn't have to have a lot of money to throw up a rope tow. They had a rope tow in Franklin. They had one at Red Hill in Moultonboro. As a matter of fact, I'm speaking at the Moultonboro Historical Society in November about the Red Hill Outing Club. Their hill was much steeper than the Gilford Outing Club Hill. As part of our program at the Penny Pitou Ski School, we would send instructors to these different areas on the weekends. I personally liked going to Red Hill — as it was a change from skiing at Belknap. It was great — the kids loved it and one of the club members would usually invite us to stay for dinner afterwards. All they had to do was to hire our services at a nominal rate, and they had professional ski instruction for their kids.

The Penny Pitou Ski School taught at the Red Hill Outing Club, Tilton Prep School, New Hampton Prep School, as well as many

other prep schools and ski clubs. We ran a very successful night skiing program for the Winnipesaukee Ski Club for several years. I can't tell you how many people come up to me now and say, “You taught me how to ski on Mail Box Hill<sup>78</sup> or at Tilton Prep School”. In Tilton, we had no lift at all — it was just on the front lawn of the school. We made them walk up and ski down. We worked in Massachusetts with the Dana Hall School and some of the other schools around Blue Hills. We were also on Page Hill in Tamworth. We skied with the residents at the State School in Laconia. Someone in the administration asked us to organize a program for some of the more advanced kids and I said, “That's crazy — these kids won't be able to catch on to this sport.” The State School outfitted them with skis and boots. We didn't have to do any real instructing, as it turned out. All we did was ski down and they copied us. I bet we were the first people who taught skiing to the mentally handicapped. Now, of course, they have a Special Olympics for these athletes.

I hope I influenced a few of the young people to pursue the sport of skiing which I think is very healthy and family-oriented. I've heard there are a few girls named Penny around. I'll tell you a quick story. I run ski trips to Europe every winter. This March I'm going to be orchestrating an 80th birthday party for a gentleman who's been with me on four or five trips to the Alps. He wanted to celebrate his 80th birthday with his children, his grandchildren, and his great grandchildren. So, 57 of them are going to spend a week in Courchevel, France, celebrating that momentous event. For him, skiing is a family experience. The great granddad and the four year-old great granddaughter will be skiing together and enjoying themselves. As a matter of fact, he says he will probably be skiing with his great grandchildren this March because he can't keep up with his grandchildren.

Egon Zimmermann, my first husband, is a perfectionist. He expected his instructors to be

<sup>77</sup> Public relations.

<sup>78</sup> In New Hampton.

top-notch skiers, to be technically very proficient, and willing to work long hours — he expected a lot from them. There isn't anyone who taught for us who doesn't respect Egon and remember him as a tough taskmaster but very fair, and they never skied better in their lives.

Gary Allen had tremendous influence on skiing in New Hampshire. When he stopped being my coach, he became involved in nordic skiing. It was just the other day that someone said how wonderful it was to be able to come up to Gary's barn and buy or trade, for very little money, cross-country skis and boots and jumping skis and boots — and get a new pair for the kids the following year. Gary made that program available to everyone in the area. Gary has become a very well known and much respected ski-jumping judge. He was invited to judge at the '80 Olympics. He has been a marvelous role model for all of us. He's kind, he's gentle, he's full of energy. He's come skiing with my groups twice. Once to Europe and once out West. I think one of the highlights of his skiing life was when Egon took us all down the famous Hahnenkamm downhill course, the "Streif", in Kitzbühel, Austria, explaining every bump and turn. He's still, at 77, in great shape. His mind is as sharp as a tack. He's been my mentor for years, like my second father. The past few summers we would both be on our brush hogs<sup>79</sup> mowing our fields on Potter Hill, waving to each other as we passed. Gary and Lucile have sold their home on Potter Hill and are moving in September across the valley to Gunstock Hill. I'll miss them very much.

When we had the ski school, the Manager was Warren Warner — Warren was a real Vermonter. He stayed for a long time. He had a daughter named Hillary. I liked Warren a lot. We worked together very well. He had a lot of respect for Egon and for me. I was sorry when he left.

I didn't know Ernst Hegi particularly well. He was a very quiet guy. I knew his wife, Ursula, better — she used to come hiking with

me. Ursula, a German woman, was studying creative writing at U.N.H. at the time. She's written a couple of books, *Intrusions*, *Floating in My Mother's Palm*, and she's on the best-seller list now with her recent book, *Stones from the River*. I've got it at home now, and it reads beautifully. I think she and Ernie are divorced.

Dick Tapley's a good friend of mine. Dick's expertise lies in recreation development. He's a very bright guy. I think the \$10,000,000 expansion program at Gunstock put tremendous pressure on him. He got a lot of flack from many people about the project. He didn't make the decisions totally — obviously. The five commissioners were his bosses, and they had to answer to the county delegation. It was a lot of money to spend at Gunstock, but enhancing the Area and bringing it into the 20th Century was the goal of the expansion program. I know they built a lot of buildings. I'm not sure they enhanced the lifts as much as could have been done. I think Dick's happier now that he's out of there and working for Sno-Engineering in Littleton.

John Vorel's doing a great job, but it's not easy. You've got to be very diplomatic and have the patience of Job to be the Gunstock Area Manager.

Milo<sup>80</sup> bought Alpine Ridge in 1989. Unfortunately, the lift was very archaic, and the buildings needed extensive repair. We took down the chair lift and cleaned up the area in 1992 or '93. Right now, we've leased Alpine Ridge to Gunstock, so they have more space for parking. It's a lease with an option to purchase at the end of five years. The price is reasonable, and Gunstock needs that land for parking and future expansion. I think Alpine Ridge will enhance Gunstock tremendously and keep it competitive with other ski areas of its size. I donated the alpine slide at Alpine Ridge and many of the buildings to Gunstock.

I was around in the days of the Winnipiesaukee Racing Trail on the backside of

<sup>79</sup> A mowing machine with a large, horizontally-spinning cutting blade.

<sup>80</sup> Milo Pike.

Gunstock Mountain. We used to "brush" it out when we were kids. We'd bring up axes and bucksaws for the job. I never rode the rope tow, but I remember for years seeing where it had been cut out. There was the Corkscrew Trail and the Winnepesaukee Racing Trail. I never actually raced on those trails but skied the Winnepesaukee Trail for many winters.

There was and is a trail, called the Ridge Trail, that goes over all four peaks of the Belknap Range, Rowe, Gunstock, Belknap, and Piper. People still walk it. It goes all the way from my house to Piper, and then on to Major. One of the projects in the near-future is clearing out the existing trail from Belknap to Major and marking it properly.

The single chair lift to Rowe Ridge was one of the oldest chair lifts in the United States. They say the chair lift at Sun Valley, Idaho, was a year older. The chair lift at Gunstock was

built in 1938, the year I was born. It took 20 minutes to get up to the top of Rowe — you could almost run up faster than that. I remember, during heavy snows, our skis would drag on the ground because the cable was so lax. It was taken down in 1977<sup>81</sup>. The very famous trail on the right was Try Me, where we raced a lot. On the left-hand side, I was told, they tried to ski on those cliffs, that very steep area<sup>82</sup> — but the snow never stayed and they let it grow up again.

They used to have a flat-bed truck to transport skiers from the bottom of Fletcher Hale back to the main ski area. We always hoped they would build a lift up Fletcher Hale, which everyone felt was the best skiing at Belknap. Maybe, when they buy Alpine Ridge, a connector lift will finally be built.

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<sup>81</sup>

Mr. Dave Buckman at Gunstock provided the 1977 date.