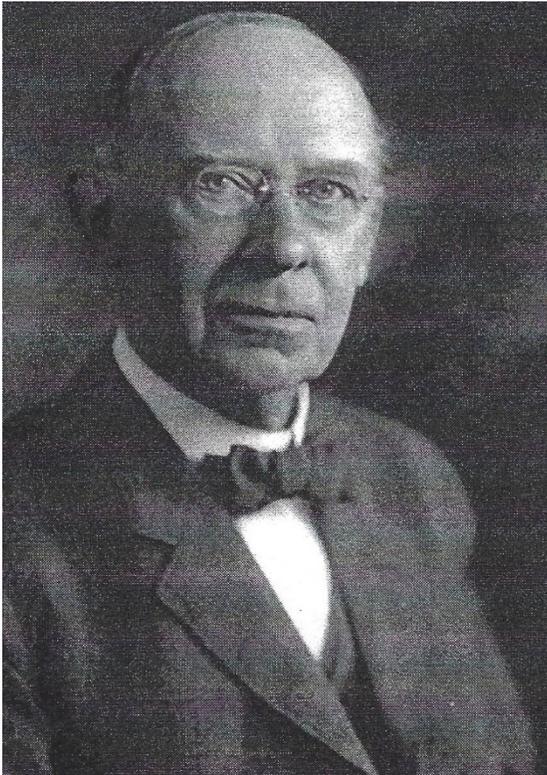


## Samuel L. Allen

The face of Winter Sports, mainly sledding or coasting as it was originally called, changed drastically in the late 1800s with the advent of the “Flexible Flyer”, the nation’s first steerable and most recognizable sled. The Flexible Flyer was invented by Samuel Leeds Allen, born May 5, 1841, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As a young man who moved to a family farm near Moorestown, New Jersey, where he settled into farm life. It was here he invented a device that could be rolled over the earth and had the means of fertilizing and planting seeds. He called the device “Planet Junior” after the ring the planet Saturn, which it resembled. It wasn’t long before farm and garden implements from S. L. Allen and Company were known world-wide. Because Allen’s business was seasonal, he turned his attention to



finding a product he could manufacture in the summer and sell in the winter. An avid outdoorsman, he committed himself to extensive research and before long he came up with the idea that would revolutionize the coasting industry- a flexible “T” shaped runner and a slatted seat, both new concepts at the time. He applied for a patent on February 14, 1889, and it was granted in six months later. The popularity of the sled was not instantaneous. It took many years to catch on. After convincing two great department stores, Wanamaker’s of Philadelphia and R. H. Macy’s of New York, a trademark was designed. The Wanamaker eagle and Macy’s red ribbon combined with the chevron, arrow and the words “Flexible Flyer”, were placed on all sled decks for the purpose of advertising. It truly paid off! By 1915, according to Samuel Allen’s daughter in her book “Intimate Recollections and Letters”, sleds were selling at the rate of 2000 per day/120,000 per season. Samuel Allen passed away at the age of 76 on March 28, 1918. His company flourished and in 1935

Flexible Flyer introduced skis. They were made of the best straight grained White Hickory, by craftsman who appreciated the importance of matched balance, flexibility, weight, and camber. In addition, Flexible Flyer acquired the US manufacturing rights for the world famous Norwegian Splitklein laminated skis, used exclusively by our troops during WW II. Most world records prior to 1955 in jumping, cross country, downhill and slalom were won on Splitkleins. Today, more than a century later, children as well as adults will continue to delight in experiencing the ultimate “Joy Ride” and the “Thrills and Spills” of Winter Sports all because of one man – Samuel Leeds Allen.