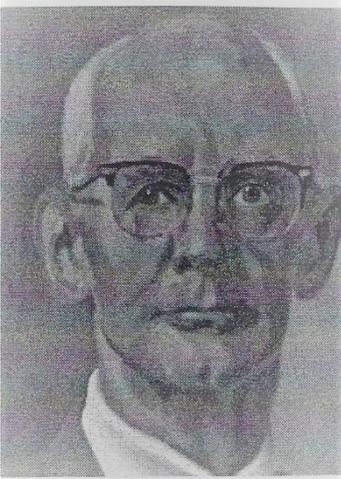


Martin Wilburger



Martin Wilburger truly was considered “Mr. Ski” by many in Pennsylvania and also the national level.

In 1935, he opened his first ski shop, a truly monumental task to try to introduce skiing as a sport for all and not just elite few in this country. He kept persevering, contacting sources in this country, and also calling on many in Austria, his birthplace, for products and ideas to make skiing possible for everyone.

Martin Wilburger started a legacy which is unmatched in the Delaware Valley. It was not only the first ski shop in the area, but also was instrumental in the formation of many of the ski clubs. He is known for having sponsored ski films, ski races for adults and juniors, and for holding events to benefit the U.S. Olympic Teams and local Junior Racing, especially through the Eastern Pennsylvania Ski Council. He is been honored by local as well as national and international organizations.

Skiing was introduced to many Americans through the formation of the famous Tenth Mountain Division. When the war was over, it was a good nucleus of new skiers to the sport.

Martin Wilburger with his friend, Howard Head, often journeyed up to Big Boulder to have Neal Robinson, Director of Skiing, test the model of the ski. There were a lot of skis tested before Howard Head finally got it right. Martin’s contribution to making skiing easy for so many was a true help in growing the sport of skiing.

Martin was instrumental in introducing the Kaestle Ski, Humanic Ski Boots (the first boot within a boot) into this country through his association with the factories in Austria.

He did many things to make skiing inexpensive for families junior ski boots leasing and then leasing complete sets for juniors and adults. Through his ski shops, he worked with ski areas to introduce “Customer Appreciation Days” at a much reduced rate. He also arranged to have manufacturers at the areas on those days to have skiers try the new products, the famous “Demo Days”.

He was very happy when he had the opportunity to purchase an interest in Elk Mountain in Pennsylvania in 1960 and was elected president of Elk Mountain Ski Center. His vision in the potential of Elk Mountain Ski Center which only had a T-bar was a great challenge. Now Elk Mountain is one of the premier mountains in Pennsylvania and is the closest thing in the state that we have to New England skiing. He loved the sport, the people involved with the industry and the recreational and racing part of skiing. Martin Wilburger passed away in 1968. His legacy, however, is evident in many ways. Many of the events that he introduced to skiing continue today.