

Betty skiing Alta, Utah, C. 1940

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pioneer **betty woolsey**

Betty Woolsey's pioneer ski career started with a love of mountaineering. When she was 23, she was inspired to learn how to ski after being caught in a spring avalanche while climbing Obergabelhorn in Zermatt, Switzerland. Five years later, in 1936, she went with the first American Women's Ski Team to the Winter Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, where she placed seventh in slalom and fourteenth in downhill. She was the team's captain from 1937 until 1940, regularly making it in the top 10 of her sport.

In 1940 Betty bought the Trail Creek Ranch at the base of Teton Pass, Wyoming. From there she pursued a journalism career, writing for *American Ski Annual* and editing for *Ski Illustrated* (now *SKI*) from 1942 to 1948. She also acted as a guide for friends and guests, named several Teton runs, and pioneered backcountry skiing. Her ranch became a base for Olympic biathlon tryouts, Jackson Hole's Ski Club's Nordic program, and the Junior Nordic National Championships. Betty was elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in 1969. She died in January 1997 at the age of 88.

BY CASSI LEITH

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