



**ECKER HILL: A STORY WITHIN A STORY
INVOLVING THREE DEDICATIONS**

Alan K. Engen



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FORWARD

It is rapidly approaching a century since storied Ecker Hill, located in the picturesque Wasatch Mountains, first made its mark on Utah ski history. This article, “ECKER HILL: A Story Within a Story Involving Three Dedications,” provides highlights of how and why Ecker Hill came into being...including selected events that captured the attention of interested winter sports enthusiasts around the world.

Today this undisturbed hillside, while void of any significant remnants of its glory days, has a valued place in Utah history. Ecker Hill’s rich history might be best summarized in the February 1932 edition of the *Improvement Era* magazine, written by Louis W. Larsen. He wrote, “Ecker Hill is said to be the largest and finest skiing place in all the world...Topographically, it is about ideal! Nature herself laid down the lines...provided just the right declivity for the approach, a more precipitous slope for the landing, and finally, a leveling out space that brings the jumper to an easy stop. It remained only for man to smooth off the ground and construct the take-off platform. Besides affording all these practical advantages, the hill is one of the beauty spots of the Wasatch Range.” In addition, a *Salt Lake Telegram* article in the mid-1930s stated, “...until Ecker Hill was built here in the mountains, the greatest jumps on skis were made in Europe.

Now Utah’s ski riders are well on their way to usurping a big share of the glory that once belonged entirely to Norway and the Swiss Alps.”

One final thought regarding the Ecker Hill legacy! Back in October 2000, I was asked by Jay Hamburger of *The Park Record* to give my personal thoughts on the value Ecker Hill has on our community. My recorded statement said, “I believe Ecker Hill is an important spot for the state of Utah. It was probably one of the first places that focused worldwide attention on Utah skiing. My personal interest in the hill itself is that we have a way to properly identify it as a key factor that ultimately led us to host the 2002 Winter Olympics.”

With this as an introduction, I sincerely hope the information contained in this article will be of interest and historical relevance...and can be used to augment the wonderful ski history exhibits on display at the Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center/Alf Engen Ski Museum at Utah Olympic Park.



1986 Ecker Hill Historic Register plaque

INTRODUCTION

Storied Ecker Hill, a name that will be remembered in the annals of Utah's rich ski history. At the time of this writing, June 2022, the outline remnants of the old jumping hill judges' stand can just barely be seen...but it does have a well-deserved monument, honoring its place in skiing history, at the base of the large hillside. The Ecker Hill monument highlights being named, in June 1986, to the National Register of Historic Places and honors those who made daring flights during the hill's "glory years." The late ski jumping pioneer, Jack Walker, once commented to Alan Engen that Ecker Hill's glory days were, "when men were men, and most were crazy as hell."

After careful verification of accuracy...using old newspaper accounts, photos, and verbal authentication by recognized Utah ski jumping pioneers, over 300 names were inscribed on the back of the Ecker Hill monument. Many listed are now recognized as ski legends, but perhaps the ski jumper most remembered is the late Alf Engen, who broke world professional ski jumping records on Ecker Hill in the early 1930s.



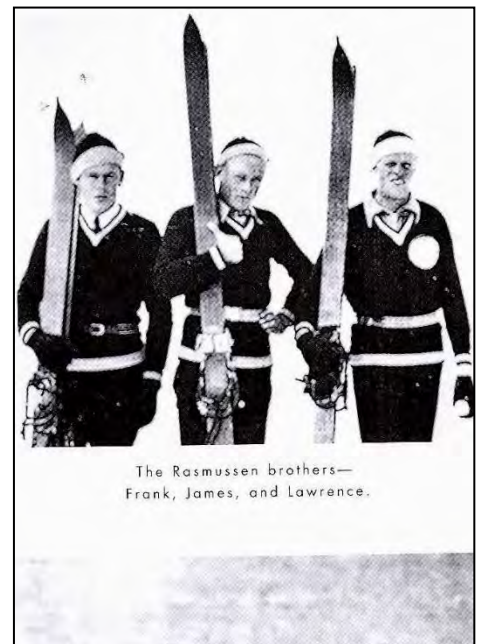
Alf Engen setting world ski jumping record on Ecker Hill 1933



This writing focuses on highlights of three Ecker Hill time periods which marked several special dedications held to honor its place in Utah sports history. Over the past nine decades plus, Ecker Hill, named after ski pioneer/promoter Peter S. Ecker, has had many stories written about the early jumping exploits at that location. At one time, Ecker Hill was advertised on a large billboard as being the “World’s Largest Ski Hill.” Thousands of spectators from the surrounding Salt Lake and Park City communities would travel to the Ecker Hill site to watch the daredevil jumpers perform.



However, it should be mentioned that Ecker Hill would not have become a reality without the Rasmussen family, specifically Frank, James, and Lawrence, who played a valuable role in helping other individuals with a Nordic background locate a prime spot, on their Rasmussen Ranch property, for holding large scale ski jumping tournaments. All three Rasmussens themselves were ski jumpers and participated both in the initial construction of Ecker Hill and were promoters of the sport. In later years, when they finished competing, they became officers in the Utah Ski Club organization and officials at jumping events held at Ecker Hill in the 1940s.



The Rasmussen brothers—
Frank, James, and Lawrence.

INITIAL ECKER HILL DEDICATION

The first dedication held at Ecker Hill was on March 2, 1930, following an exciting day watching professional, as well as non-professional, ski jumpers perform. Amateur local ski jumper, Calmar Andreasen, set a state jumping record on that day. This event was considered special because of the months of effort building the very large hill. It was initially created as a more favorable snow location to hold ski jumping events... and also potentially attract big-name jumpers to visit Utah...and be a showcase for the increased spectator interest in watching daredevil performances by professional flyers.



Ecker Hill c. 1930

The touring professional ski jumpers, initially formed in 1929, were established because of the growing interest in ski jumping exploits throughout America, east to west. These men were selected based on excellent demonstrated ski jumping talent, strength, aerodynamic capability, fierce competitive spirit...and a willingness to travel to pre-designated locations, take high risks, and receive financial compensation, amounts based on jumping results in competition.



Names of America's first professional ski jumping group included Anders Haugen, Alf Engen, Sverre Engen, Steffen Trøgstad, Sigurd Ulland, Lars Haugen, Halvar Hvalstad, Einar Fredbo, Alf Matisen, Olaf Thompson, Carl Hall, C.C. Torgersen, Halvor, Bjørngaard, Ted Rex, Oliver Kardal, Gustav Lindbo, and Burt Wilchock. Most all these individuals were Norwegians; however, a couple, Ted Rex and

Burt Wilchock, were American-born. As a sidebar addendum to this information, I have written a short piece titled, "Anders Haugen – The Man Who Received a Bronze Olympic Medal a Half-century Late but Still is Not Recognized by the IOC for Winning It."¹



America's first professional ski jumpers at Ecker Hill, January 1931



Sverre and Alf Engen with Einer Fredbo at Ecker Hill, 1930



Utah Ski Club

It should be mentioned that the organization which conducted most of the Ecker Hill events was the Utah Ski Club. The origins date back to 1915, when a group of Norwegian immigrants, headed by Marthinus "Mark" Strand, introduced the early development of ski jumping in Utah and called this small group of local ski jumpers the "Norwegian Young Folks Society," sometimes referred to as N.U.F. In 1920, the name was changed to the Norwegian American Athletic Club and

finally, in 1928, the ski jumping group again changed to "Utah Ski Club." This organization's name remained throughout the years in which competitive ski jumping events were held on Ecker Hill. Underlying sponsorship of all competitive ski jumping events held in Utah up until the early 1950s had to have authorization provided by the Utah Ski Club, including advertising and marketing efforts. Early officers heading the Utah Ski Club, besides Mark Strand, included Axel Andresen, Nord Nordquist, S. Joe Quinney, Ray Engebretsen, and Dick Sorenson.



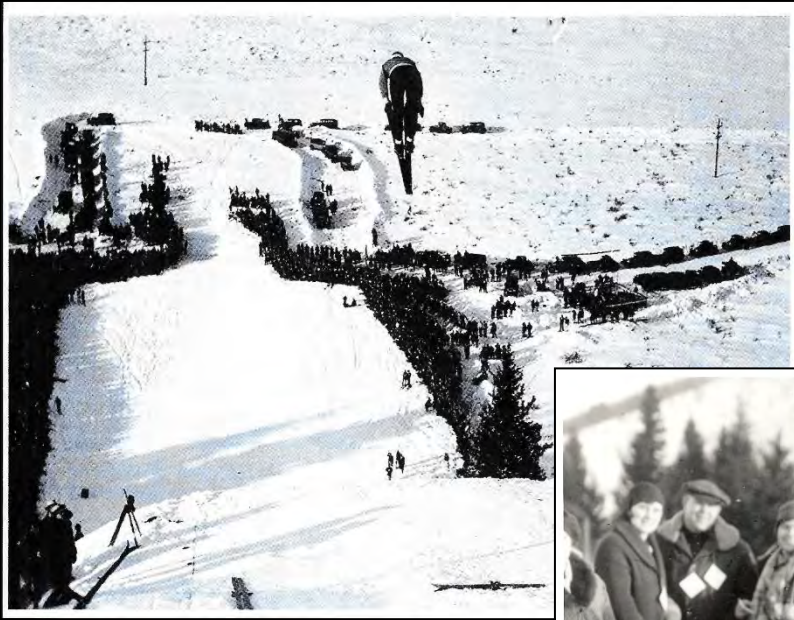
Watching all these jumpers perform in early March 1930, were 5,000 spectators, according to *Salt Lake Telegram* newspaper accounts, who showed up for the jumping events and hill dedication. The dedication ceremony also had a number of local invited dignitaries in attendance, including then Utah Governor George H. Dern, who delivered the dedication address. Prominent ski promoters, Marthinus (Mark) A. Strand and Pete Ecker, also attended. To top off the dedication ceremony, the Utah Ski Club gave public notification that the large hill officially would be named in recognition of Pete Ecker, then president of that organization. Overall, the day was considered very successful and recorded as a key event in Ecker Hill history.



Crowd at base of Ecker Hill in the early 1930s



Mark Strand and Pete Ecker with Utah Governor George Dern for the first Ecker Hill dedication, March 2, 1930



Alf Engen in flight off Ecker Hill in early 1930s



Pete Ecker and Alf Engen at Ecker Hill, 1934



Ecker Hill, 1931

The following summer, 1930, Ecker Hill had substantial work done as an upgrade... primarily focused on filling in a huge gully that initially existed between the large "A" takeoff and the knoll of the hill. As a special note, Ecker hill had two recognized takeoffs. One, named "B" takeoff, was to support use by the local amateur jumpers. The "A" takeoff was reserved for nationally recognized jumpers, including those who jumped in a professional class. Several professional jumpers played a major role in the construction effort. One of those was Sverre Engen, Alf's brother. He told Alan Engen that a jumper coming off the "A" takeoff, "had to clear the ravine or face serious injury...or worse." This problem required immediate attention. Work effort was accomplished with a couple of horses loaned by the Rasmussen family and a tractor/grader, along with substantial hand shoveling. At the end of each day, according to Sverre, all the workers would gravitate down the steep hill and make their way to the nearby *Well Come Inn*, owned and operated by the Rasmussen family. There they would enjoy some libation and share ski jumping tall stories before leaving the area.



Gully between large takeoff and knoll of the underhill prior to regrading, early 1930



Sverre Engen (with bandana) working on filling Ecker Hill gully, 1930

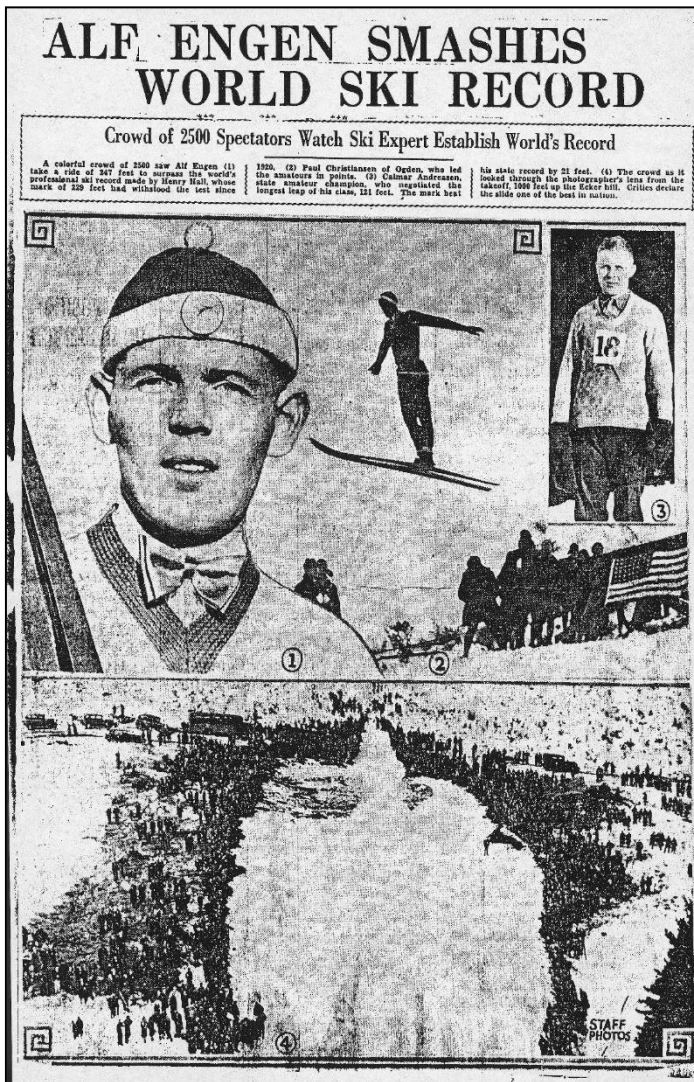


Grader filling in gully on Ecker Hill, 1930

The 1931 Utah ski jumping season started off in a big way at Ecker Hill. On New Year's Day, a crowd of 2,500 spectators watched Alf Engen break the professional ski jumping record not once...but twice. The existing record, held by Henry Hall, was 229 feet. Alf flew an officially verified 231 feet on his first jump attempt, and then on his second jump, flew an amazing 243 feet. In his own words, this is how Alf described the event: "A delegation of ski enthusiasts from Salt Lake invited us (professional skiers) to jump at the new Ecker Hill, which had been opened in 1930. I believe Pete Ecker, Mark Strand, Joe Quinney, and Dick Sorenson may have been in this group. There always was an agreement on the part of the sponsors that \$500 would go to the man breaking the world record, which was 229 feet set in British Columbia. I jumped 231 feet, which set a new record, and received \$500. R. Verne McCullough, promoter, announced over the public address that he would give an additional \$250 more if I could break my new record, so I went up the hill again and jumped 247 feet...which, overall, ended up being a good payday in those days."

payday in those days."

In order for any jumping records to be deemed official in those years, they had to be sanctioned by the Western America Winter Sports Association. Alf Engen and Ecker Hill, because of this skisport record event, were now placed directly in the center of the ski jumping world... and indirectly, Utah was put on the map as a promising new winter skiing mecca.



One month later, on February 1, 1931, Alf flew 247 feet at Big Pines, California. The *Los Angeles Times* ran an article highlighting the event as follows: “Alf Engen, Viking son of Norway and representing Salt Lake City, Utah, today smashed all official competitive world records in the ski jump to thrill a throng of 25,000 people gathered from all parts of Southern California for the final day of the fifth annual Winter Sports Carnival at Big Pines.”

Alf Engen in flight at Big Pine, CA, 1931. Note how high he is in the air!



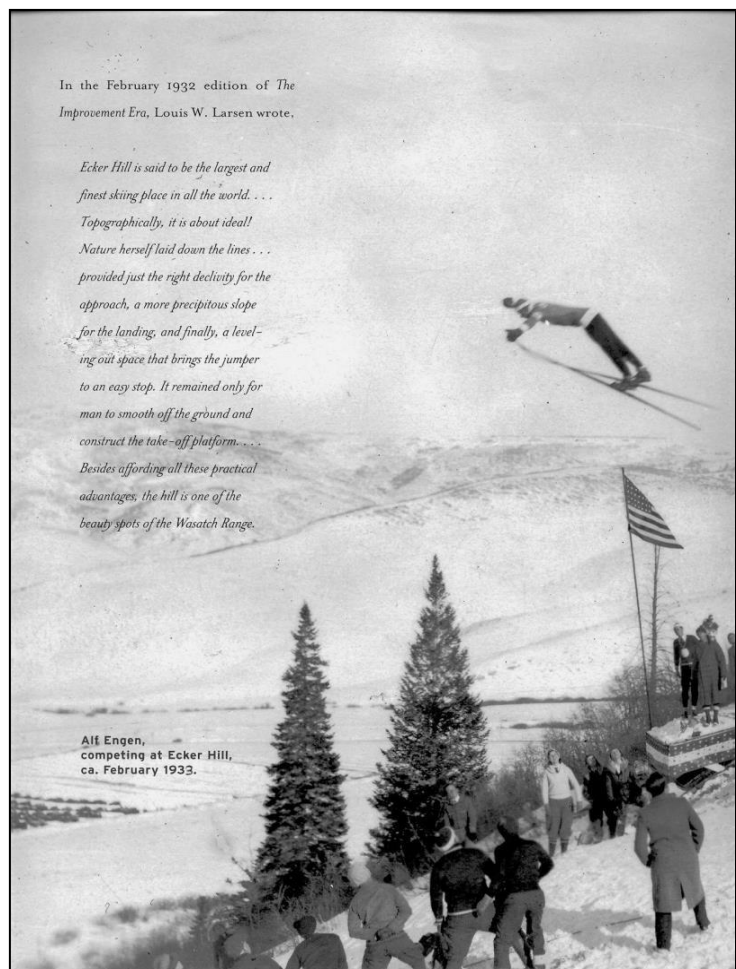
Alf Engen at Ecker Hill, 1931. Note crowd below.

Alf set another world professional ski jumping record at the end of the year 1931, on December 20th. The *Salt Lake Tribune* newspaper highlighted the event by saying, “Born with the heritage of his famed Norse forefathers, Alf Engen of Salt Lake City emblazoned his name across the modern pages of athletic endeavor with a 266 foot ski jump at Ecker Hill in Parleys Canyon that awakened memories of those courageous Norwegian pioneers of old.” Unfortunately, the jump by Alf, a new hill record, was not formally recognized in the world record books because the jumping tournament had not been formally sanctioned in advance.



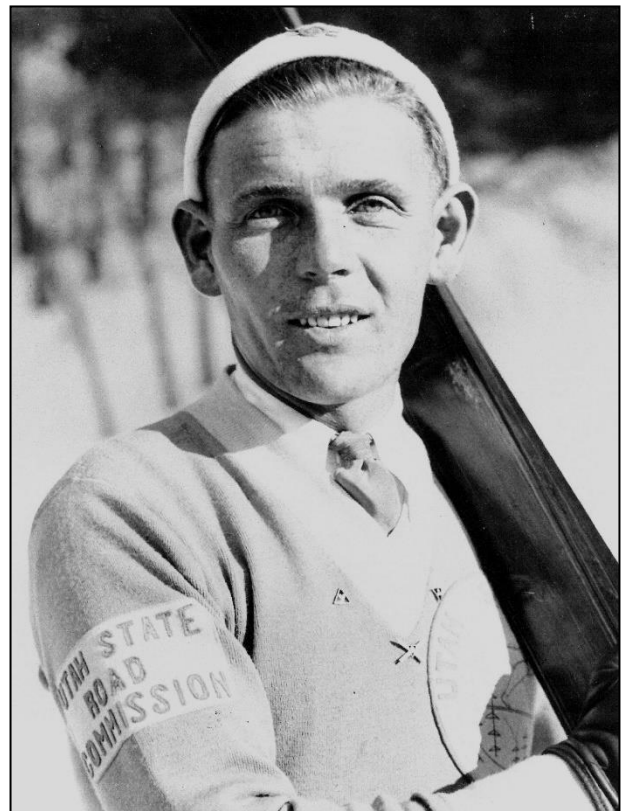
When the 1931 year had come to a close, Axel Andresen, Vice President of the Utah Ski Club, summed up the ski jumping season by writing, "Without one ounce of exaggeration, the skiing season at Ecker Hill during the past year was the greatest in the history of the Intermountain country and can rightfully be called one of the greatest in the world for two reasons. First, the breaking of three globe records, and second, the establishment of an unofficial all-time record. Engen's records have resulted in a flood of inquiries throughout the United States and Europe concerning the conditions of Ecker Hill and interest in Utah." In February 1932, an article was published in the *Improvement Era*, by Louis W. Larsen which was titled "Utah Leaps to Thrilling Leadership in Winter Sport." In his writings, he said the following about Ecker Hill: "Ecker Hill is said to be

the largest and finest skiing place in all the world. In the language of sportdom, it's a natural! Topographically, it is about ideal. Nature herself laid down the lines...provided just the right declivity for the approach, a more precipitous slope for the landing, and finally, a leveling out space that brings the jumper to an easy stop. It remained only for man to smooth off the ground and construct the take-off platform. But that has been a job requiring sweat and toil."



In comparison to the previous year, 1932 was not as exciting and spectacular from an Ecker Hill news perspective. However, there were two events which are worth mentioning. First, because of the very large number of cars coming to Ecker Hill during jumping tournaments, the dirt road was becoming very difficult to navigate during winter months. Accordingly, it was considered important to do an upgrade. Ski club officials decided to open up more parking space closer to actual spectator section and to provide a number of heaters throughout the spectator section. The press mentioned this in an article, saying, "With a warming blaze nearby and straw under their feet, the ski fans who pull on an extra muffler and dig the overshoes out of the cellar can go to the tournaments fully assured of an invigorating and pleasant afternoon."

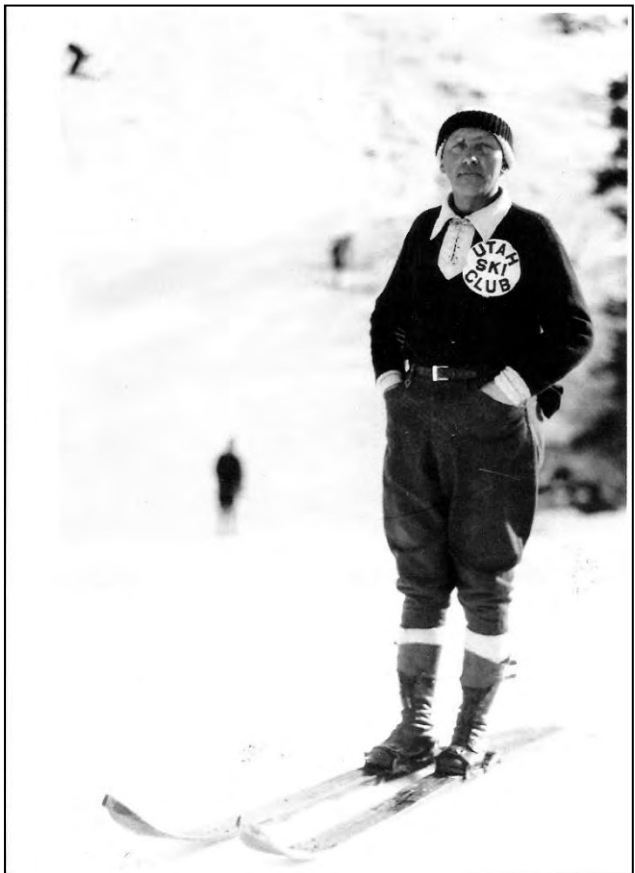
Interestingly, Alf Engen, as it turns out, was hired by the Utah State Road Commission to operate the large tractor/grader and did much of the widening and general road improvement, including expanding the parking area at the base of Ecker Hill. Alf was rather proud to tell others about that experience in later years. He also competed with a ski sweater that carried the Utah State Road Commission insignia around his arm.



The second event of special note concerned a highly publicized ski jumping tournament held on Ecker Hill which focused on a jumping duel between Canadian professional champion, Nels Nelson, who lived in Revelstoke, British Columbia, and current world professional ski jumping champion at that time, Alf Engen. Much “hoopla” surrounded the event because of the anticipated high-stakes competition between these two champions. However, when the tournament ended, neither Engen nor Nelson came out the winner, as predicted, but both gave high praise to all the jumpers and officials and said that the competition was of the highest caliber. The winner of that particular tournament, held February 21, 1932, was Halvar Hvalstad, followed by Alf, second, and Sverre Engen, Alf’s brother, finishing in third place. As a climax to the Utah Ski Association’s special “Ski Jumping Carnival” event, which included the publicized Engen/Nelson jumping duel, Alf Engen did set a new Ecker Hill record with a jump of 252 feet on February 23, 1932...and amateur ski jumper, Glenn Armstrong, flying 224 feet off the large hill established a new United States non-professional ski jumping record.

The year 1932 was, by all accounts, deemed to be highly successful, not only because of the jumping prowess displayed by the professional jumpers, but also because of how well the tournaments were conducted. Underlying it all was the bottom line that Ecker Hill had itself become a world-class ski jumping venue and this single feature was having a significant impact on recognition being directed toward Salt Lake City as a potential nationwide skiing center. Utah Ski Club officer, Mark A. Strand, was heavily involved with the promotion of Utah ski growth and, following the 1932 Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid, New York, he proposed an idea for Salt Lake to host a future Olympic competition because of the great snow conditions inherent along the Wasatch mountains and, for sure, to underscore the tremendous general agreement among national skiing figures, that Ecker Hill was an ideal location for holding an Olympic ski jumping competition.

Unfortunately, funding considerations presented the biggest drawback to the idea, and the idea faded. But, as history now bears witness, the concept was not lost, only delayed...and Strand is the person most responsible for initiating the “first proposal” for holding Olympic competition in Utah.



Marthinus (Mark) A. Strand, Ecker Hill, 1931

The only downside to the year 1932 was losing one of the professional ski jumpers. Halvor Bjorngaard, one of Utah's favorite professional skiers, was killed in an unfortunate motorcycle accident in June 1932. Not surprising, this loss had a significant emotional impact on all the members of the professional jumping group. Bjorngaard had been with the professional jumping group, as a top performer, from its beginning in 1930.

Early professional ski jumper Halvor Bjorngaard



1933, as it turned out, had but one significant Ecker Hill event. This involved the promotion and arrival of a nineteen-year-old woman ski jumper from Norway, Johanna Kolstad, who was recognized as world champion in the ladies' category. In January 1933, preparations and suitable financial arrangements were made to accommodate Miss Kolstad coming to Salt Lake City to perform at Ecker Hill. Through her agent, she agreed to come and arrived in time for the Utah Ski Club Winter Carnival extravaganza which was held February 22nd through 27th. Her big day of showing her ski jumping skills was on the last day...a day promoted by the press as a special attempt by Alf Engen to set a new world record on Ecker Hill. Before that attempt was made, Johanna Kolstad made several jumps off the takeoff used by the amateur jumpers (known as the B takeoff). Then, per a special pre-established agreement between Johanna and Alf, they performed two flights together, as a twin jump performance, resulting in an ovation from the crowd attending. Following this exhibition jumping performance, Alf re-set his focus on the main objective he had...namely, attempt to set a new professional world ski jumping mark.



Johanna Kolstad, women's world ski-jumping champion in the mid-1930s.



Johanna Kolstad and Alf Engen performing a double jump off the B takeoff on Ecker Hill, 1933

A *Salt Lake Telegram* sportswriter described the course of events this way: “It was Engen’s day. After opening the meet by a beautiful twin jump with Miss Johann [sic] Kolstad of Norway, feminine world’s champion, he took up the pursuit of a new record. With the giant takeoff moved back from its usual resting place, Engen jumped 245 feet for his first attempt, and flew 254 feet on his second jump. His third jump resulted in his flying 261 feet and the crowd roared at the announcement that Engen had just shattered his previous world mark of 257 feet.” Goodell continued by writing, “But this was not enough for Alf. Again, he trudged up the steep incline, and again he broke additional ground for the runway. On every leap, Engen had been going a little higher for his takeoff, and this was intended as his supreme effort. There was drama in this fourth jump of the great skier, and the crowd sensed it immediately. The announcer yelled “He’s Off!” From far up the hill, Engen came, speeding to the giant takeoff, and the excited spectators cheered while he was still in midair, for it was evident to anyone along the side that this leap was much farther than any preceding effort. With Alf’s perfect landing, it hardly needed the confirmation of Victor Johansen and Nord Nordquist, who measured the distance, to convince the assembled winter sports enthusiasts that they had seen the world’s greatest ski jump.”

Headlines were almost immediate in coming: "ALF ENGEN SOARS 281 FEET TO ECLIPSE ALL SKI RECORDS" was but one headline. Another read, "ENGEN BREAKS WORLD MARK...World's Premier Skiman." Interesting to note that even Johanna Kolstad's manager, Karl Thomblovid, stated to the press that the jump, "eclipses all marks ever heard of, fabled, or actually made." He then continued by stating the jump was the, "...most wonderful, grandest leap I have ever seen" and continued by saying that, "while Ecker Hill may not be as long as some of our hills in Norway, it is the fastest hill I have ever seen and undoubtedly someone, probably Alf Engen, will someday jump 300 feet on it." As it turns out those words were, in fact, prophetic. Alf, several years later, actually flew 311 feet on Ecker Hill, but it could not be counted as an official jump because it did not occur in sanctioned competition. Such were the official rules governing ski jumping records at that time. As an additional footnote, I did mention that particular flight my father took on Ecker Hill in an article that was published in the *UTAH HISTORICAL QUARTERLY*, Fall 2001, Volume 69, Number 4, titled "Alf Engen: A Son's Reminiscences."



Of all the Ecker Hill "barnstormer years," perhaps none had more significant impact on the state of Utah than 1934. Acknowledging it started off without much in the way of major news happenings, other than to bring attention to a couple of upcoming amateur ski jumpers. Their names included Kaare (Corey) Engen and a very young ski jumper named Dave Quinney. Dave, whose father, S. Joe Quinney, President of the Utah Ski Club, rose to Ecker Hill special attention by winning several class C jumping events...both on Ecker Hill and other locations.



Kaare Engen Favored

The amateurs will be riding for the classes, A, B and C. Kaare Engen, youngest of the Engen jumping triumvirate, and favorite to top hill division, will be pushed to the limit by several former class B jumpers who have been advanced to a higher position. Jack Walker, Eugene Beales, Ed Gorder, Fred Peller and Hap Kimball appear to be Kaare's most threatening competitors.

Ed Bering, winner of the Class C jumps in the New Year's meet and the Mt. Olympus tourney, has been advanced to the B division and will threaten the supremacy of Billy Boyle, who captured Class B laurels in the same tournaments.

The class C battle probably will be hotly contested, with Chet Dalglish, Tom Todd, David Quinney, Vern Nicol and Ed Critchlow striving for top spot.

The amateurs will also be gunning for the first leg on the "Quinney trophy," a cup being given for the first time this year to the outstanding rider in the class. The trophy is offered by S. J. Quinney, local attorney and member of the Utah Ski club.

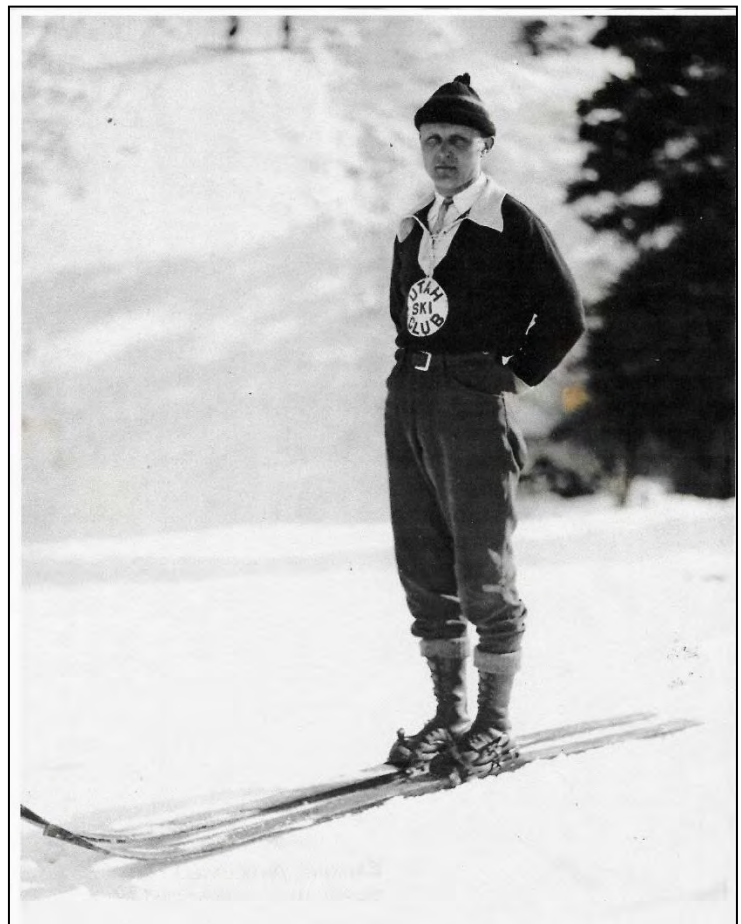
Kaare (Corey) Engen, mid-1930s

At a February 22, 1934, Ecker Hill tournament, a reported 2,000 spectators witnessed a ski jumping accident which became an unforgettable tragedy. Utah state amateur class B jumping champion in 1933, Calmar Andreasen, tried out Ecker Hill's large takeoff as a class A competitor for the first time that day. His first flight went well, but on his second jump, something went terribly wrong. As written in the *Salt Lake Tribune* news account, Andreasen on his approach to the takeoff, "skidded, lost his balance and went over the take-off on one foot, shooting through the air at a speed estimated at close to 75 miles per hour. The desperate efforts to right himself were futile and he was not able to leap high enough to take him to the downslope of the hill." The result was that he landed on the knoll of the large hill, upside down, with a resulting force that cost him his life. Ski writer, Frank K. Baker wrote, "Valhalla's portals have closed on another fallen warrior, but in his tragic death, Calmar Andreasen has left an unforgettable lesson to the Utah Ski Club." Calmar was only 24 years old when this tragedy occurred...and it left a genuine blemish on Ecker Hill's storied history.



Calmar Andreasen at the top of the Class A inrun moments before his fatal jump on February 22, 1934

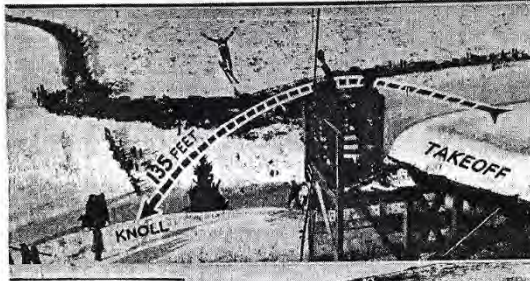
Calmar Andreasen, Utah Class B amateur ski jumping champion, early 1930s





Ecker Hill, 1934

Ski Meet Victim and Scene of Fatal Leap



Above, a view taken from the ski jump take-off at Ecker hill in Parley's canyon, where Calmar Andreasen (lower left), leaped to his death Thursday afternoon. The dotted line shows the distance from the take-off to the knoll, or beginning of the incline

on which the jumps are completed. Andreasen fell ten feet short and landed in the flat space, bouncing over the edge. This runway is 300 feet long, with 135 feet between the take-off and the knoll, and the incline is 340 long at an angle of 36 degrees.

ECKER HILL FALL KILLS SKI JUMPER

C. Andreasen Dies of Injuries Suffered in Attempt at Distance

Utah Amateur Champ

Tragic Mishap Occurs After One Successful Trip Over Takeoff

Death followed the "greatest thrill of his life" Thursday afternoon for Calmar Andreasen, 29, state amateur class B ski champion, who hurtled 125 feet through the air in his doom at 2:30 o'clock at the Ecker hill tournament of the Utah Ski club.

A few minutes before, Andreasen, one of the pioneer ski amateurs of the state, had jumped for the first time from the 300-foot runway built for professionals. He rocketed down the incline more than 40 miles an hour, soared gracefully into the air and made a perfect landing after a 161-foot leap.

"That was the greatest thrill of my life," Andreasen exclaimed, amid the cheers of two thousand spectators who acclaimed his feat. "I can't even describe my sensation."

The last jump was unofficial. Returning to the runway, Andreasen began his second and official attempt. Again traveling with bulletlike speed, he leaped from the takeoff, but fell ten feet short of the edge of the knoll. He lit on his left shoulder, bounced over the edge of the hill and tumbled more than 300 feet farther down the incline.

Dies Within Hour

His ribs, broken by the impact, punctured a lung and he died less than an hour later while he was being taken to a Salt Lake hospital.

Andreasen, who killed to the eyes of those he won with his daring, died with the cheers of the crowd sobbing temporarily by the accident, the sport fans did not know the young champion would never ski again, and the tournament resumed as soon as he had been taken from the field.

Andreasen won his first placid last year when he made a 147-foot jump from the small takeoff built for class B skiers. His success qualified him this year for the more hazardous class A jump, which requires a minimum leap of 125 feet from a 300-foot runway to clear the flat space between runway and incline.

Undaunted by the fact that he never before had jumped from the big takeoff, Andreasen confidently began the trial attempt. His success was more noteworthy because all the skiers were handicapped by sticky snow, hard-packed, and a high wind, which made the jumping more than ordinarily risky.

Returns Smiling

Smiling at his coquet, Andreasen then returned to the runway to make his official leap. He started about 100 feet from the top and sped down the incline, gaining momentum with every second. But when he reached the end he apparently misjudged the distance and jumped just a second too late.

That second was just enough to throw him off balance, and he fell short of the incline, which the skiers usually reach without difficulty.

Asel J. Andreasen, publicly director of the club, saw the accident from the broadcasting room, and sent Dr. L. N. Coaman, club physician, to aid the fallen skier. Andreasen was taken to the club cabin for examination by the doctor, who ordered him rushed to the hospital. He died as the trip down the canyon was just begun.

Andreasen was regarded by sports fans as an unusually daring and successful skier. He had the honor love of all Noridors for the hazardous sport.

ENGEN HAS THRILL IN 296-FOOT JUMP

"I never was so thrilled in my life," said Alf Engen after a Christmas day practice ski jump at Ecker hill measured at 296 feet.

The snow was unexpectedly fast and the great professional ski rider soared off into space at unusual speed, although he hadn't made any great effort for speed.

"I was momentarily frightened as I hurtled far out over the knoll of the hill. I had to fight to keep my balance, and I was mighty glad I hadn't gone clear to the top of the runway," he said afterwards.

Lawrence and Jim Rasmussen made the unofficial measurement, which eclipsed his previous best practice leap of 281 feet, made in an exhibition here in 1932.

Only one jump has ever been recorded greater than Alf's Christmas day performance. That is a mark of 303 feet, credited to Sigmund Raud of Norway on the Garmisch-Parten-Kirchens slide in south Germany.

For a long time Raud has also held the recognized world's record of 257.4 feet, made at Davos, Switzerland.

Alf's best performance made in competition is a mark of 237 feet, which he also made at Ecker hill in 1932 to return the national record to Utah after his 252-foot leap at Big Pine, Cal., a short while before had taken the recognition away from this state.

Engen's newest leap was made off the takeoff known as the giant for the past two years, but one which has been dwarfed into middle size now by a new "big, big" takeoff, which so far has not been used.

Sails Afar



ALF ENGEN

The new giant—built at Alf's insistence, apparently with the aim of smashing Raud's 303-foot record—demands the most ideal conditions from snow and weather before it may be used. Few are expected to risk the daring ride over it.

Tricky tournament day weather has hampered the record hopes of the intrepid riders during the past two seasons. Adverse winds and sickly snow have kept Alf from realizing some of his dreams, which he hopes may come true this weekend during the New Year's performances.

The riders have had better practicing conditions this winter than last with the earlier snow, and they hope to set up some new marks in the forthcoming tournaments. The first competition of the season is slated Sunday, December 30, and Tuesday, January 1, with both amateur and professional skiers competing in their divisions.

Sig Diland of the Mt. Shaasta club will be one of the visiting professional skiers, and Halvor Halstad, the grizzled veteran from Big Pine, is also expected to compete against the Engens and Steffen Trosgaard.

Amateur competition will be spiced with the return of Einar Fredbo, the most graceful of the whole ski jumping family, to the Simon pure ranks under a special dispensation by the national ski governing body.

During April 1934, a decision was made by the Utah Ski Club to remodel Ecker Hill. Its purpose was basically to make it possible to make jumps exceeding 300 feet...hopefully, to be achieved by Alf Engen, who up to that time, had not gone that far in overall distance. Changes were accommodated that summer which included increasing the inrun length; moving the take-off back 50 feet; and reshaping the underhill from 36 degrees to 40 degrees, which added steepness, but made a sharper transition at the base of the hill.

By the fall of 1934, the hill modifications had been completed and Mark A. Strand, then the new President of the Salt Lake Ski Club, told the press, "Alf sees no reason why he or others of the professional group cannot go 300 feet or over with the improvements and that he (Alf) was willing to make the try for a new world record on this remodeled hill." That attempt became reality at Ecker Hill on Christmas Day, 1934. Did Alf make a 300-foot jump? Well, not quite...but he flew 296 feet in a practice jump but since it had not been achieved in sanctioned competition, it could not be formally considered American record-breaking. It is interesting to note that up to that time, according to news accounts, "only one jump was ever recorded greater than Alf's Christmas Day performance. That is a mark of 303 feet, credited to Sigmund Ruud of Norway at Garmisch, Germany." It was clearly destiny that Sigmund and Alf would meet several years later in national competition at Ecker Hill... a showdown for one of



the greatest tournaments ever held at that location. As one additional footnote, Alf actually did exceed the 300-foot mark in an unofficial flight as is highlighted in the article.

Also of significance in 1934, because of the growing interest in winter sports activities, a commitment was made by the Utah Ski Club to be a principal developer of winter sports promotion with the goal of becoming "the Winter Sports Center of America." To underscore that point, it was announced by Mark Strand that, "the United States Olympic Ski Jumping Trials would be held on Ecker Hill in March 1935, and this was formally approved by the National Ski Association."

It was obvious skisport was rapidly evolving into an active participant, rather than a spectator, sport in the Intermountain region. The professional ski jumpers realized these changes were occurring and decided, after careful consideration, that it might be an appropriate time to disband. According to professional ski jumper, the late Sverre Engen, "There was also another factor which entered into this decision...namely that many of the professional ski jumping group had sustained significant injuries which prevented them from participating. This made it very difficult for the few uninjured jumpers to put on a good tournament, and exhibition, for the paying spectators." The consequence of disbanding at the end of 1934, resulted in those who wished to continue active competitive jumping had to participate as amateurs and not take any type of compensation. A minimum of one year of non-jumping activity was required by U.S. national ski jumping regulations before a former professional ski jumper could apply for amateur status consideration. A few jumpers did this, including brothers, Alf and Sverre Engen, and Einar Fredbo.

In early 1935, the Utah Ski Club published an article which stated that over the past five years, "the tireless efforts and strong determination of the Club has created one of the finest jumping hills in the world...one that was selected as the best site for the Olympic tryouts to provide a real test for American skiers who hope to represent the United States in the Fourth Winter Olympiad to be held in Germany in 1936. Public interest in this thrilling outdoor activity has reached its highest degree. The season of 1935 will perhaps go down in history as the most eventful of all in this activity."

While the 1935 Olympic Trials event on Ecker Hill was deemed successful and literally put Utah in the national spotlight, it also hosted another amateur ski jumping event put on by the Mount Olympus Ski Club, sanctioned under the auspices of both the Utah Ski Club and the U.S. Western Amateur Ski Association. This was the first time a local ski organization, other than the Salt Lake Ski Club, had sponsored a successful tournament of this caliber. Respected judging officials for the tournament were Mark Strand, Lawrence Rasmussen and S. Joe Quinney. All three made significant contributions as nationally respected judges for events held on Ecker Hill throughout the 1930s. To add a "cherry" to the event, Joe



Quinney offered a first-time special “Quinney Trophy” for the top jumper in each amateur class (A, B, and C). The winners receiving this award were Einar Fredbo, Kaare Engen, Eugene Beadles, and Ed Bering.

The late Jack Walker was the founder and “spearhead” of the Mount Olympus Ski Club. He definitely played an important role in promoting amateur ski jumping in most all early Ecker Hill tournaments. Jack mentioned to me in early 2001 that he held most of his Mount Olympus Ski Club meetings in an old run-down log cabin in the back of his property. He named the building “Leaky Lodge” and said it was given that name for very good reason.



Jack Walker, mid-1930s, wearing the Mt. Olympus Ski Club logo on his sweater



Leaky Lodge, Mt. Olympus Ski Club meeting place, mid-1930s. Located on Jack Walker's property in Holladay, UT

PROFESSIONAL/AMATEUR STATUS CONTROVERSY

One downside should be mentioned which occurred the latter part of 1935. Most ski historians are familiar with the story about Alf being eliminated from 1936 U.S. Olympic Ski Jumping team consideration because of having his image appear on Wheaties cereal boxes, highlighting the words “Breakfast of Champions.” An article by noted ski historian John Lundin in *SKI HISTORY* Magazine, July-August 2022 issue, highlighted the Alf Engen 1936 Olympic team disqualification issue over amateur status issues. Admitting strong bias about the issue, I have long felt the elimination of my father from the 1936 U.S. Olympic team cost the United States a genuine opportunity to win an Olympic gold medal in the ski jumping competition held at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Alf was in his “prime” in the mid -1930s!

Many years later, in the late 1980s, Alf was asked about the Wheaties issue on NBC Nightly News with Tom Browkaw. Alf’s reply was, “I made a mistake...I did not know any better. However, I did not ever get any money for my picture on the Wheaties boxes, but I sure got a lot of Wheaties...Everyone in my family had plenty of Wheaties!”



However, what is not so well known is that another great Utah ski jumper, the late Einar Fredbo, had the same thing happen to him. According to *Salt Lake Tribune* sportswriter, Jimmy Hodgson, in a January 24, 1937 article, “Einar Fredbo qualified as a member of the 1936 Olympic Team but was not given a berth because of some kind of a dispute or protest over his alleged former pro activities.” This is particularly interesting, given the fact that Einar was provided with prior approval to participate as an amateur jumper prior to competing for a spot on the U.S.

Einer Fredbo, early professional ski jumper, c. 1931

Olympic team...held on Ecker Hill in the 1935 U.S. Ski Jumping Trials. The actual reasoning for the U.S. Ski Association eliminating Einar from 1936 Olympic participation is not known, but it is assumed it might have had something to do with sponsorship infractions which were against amateur rules in those years...unlike today!

Throughout the latter part of the 1930s, Ecker Hill continued to hold periodic sanctioned tournaments which attracted top ski flyers from around the country...and beyond. One of the most highly remembered tournaments was the 1937 United States National Ski Jumping Championship, held in February 1937. It was highlighted as a "World Class" competition because it featured two champion ski jumpers of international stature. At the top was Sigmund Ruud who had set a current world ski jumping record and was an Olympic ski jumping star... as was his brother, Birger, who won the Olympic jumping title in 1932 and 1936. The other ski jumping champion, from Salt Lake City, was Alf Engen, who also set world professional ski jumping records in the early 1930s. It should also be mentioned that in the 1920s, the Ruud brothers lived in Kongsberg and Alf in Mjondalen. Both Norwegian towns were in close proximity to each other. Before emigrating to America in 1929, Alf had jumped in competition with both Birger and Sigmund at Norway's famous hills, Holmenkollen and Vikersund, but that was long before they established themselves as ski flyers with international reputations.

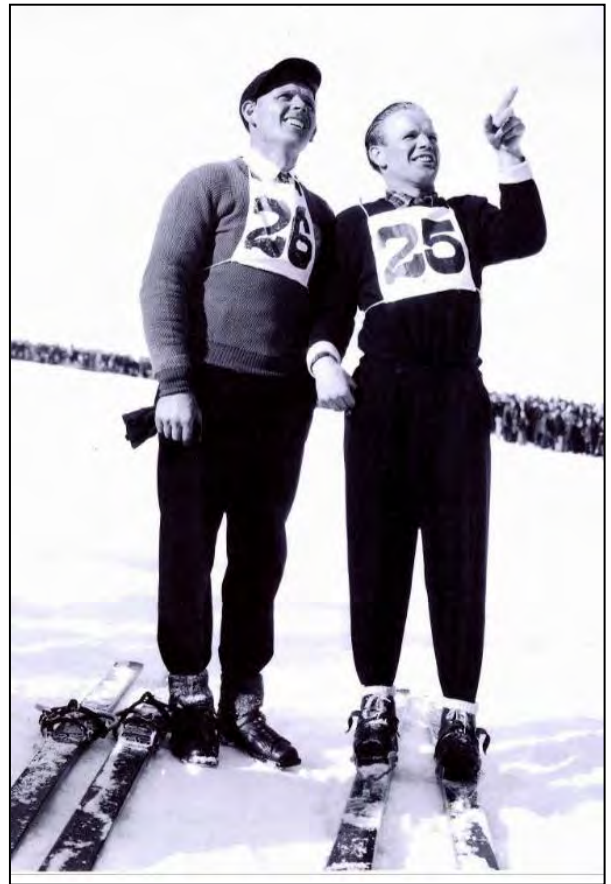
The tournament lived up to its heightened expectation and over 5,000 spectators were on hand to witness the contest between these two ski titans and the other outstanding jumpers which included Einar Fredbo, Casper Oimon, Sverre Engen, John Elvrum, Roy Mikkelsen, and Sigurd Ulland among the very talented field. The performances of both Engen and Ruud were masterful. Ski writer, Ken Binns, described Ruud's jumps as, "birdlike and immaculate...Alf's jumps, a masterpiece of symmetrical power." Distance-wise, Alf flew farther on his second jump than Sigmund and set a new American competitive record... with a leap of 245 feet. Initially, when the day's competition had ended, Alf Engen was declared the winner and new national champion. Sigmund told the crowd, "I have never jumped against such competition. I have never seen anything like it. It was the most real, fighting competition I have ever known. Alf Engen is the most powerful jumper I have ever seen. He is a greater competitor even than what they say. I was also delighted and thrilled by Einar Fredbo's jumping too." Fredbo placed third in the competition that day. Ruud also paid a significant complement to Ecker Hill. He said, "It is one of the three biggest hills in the world. These are Planica, Yugoslavia; Garmisch-Partenkirchen; and Ecker Hill. Jumps of 325 feet will be possible on this hill in the future." Alf, when questioned what the greatest highlight of the day was for him, commented, "To have been able to watch Sigmund Ruud ski." At a special evening banquet in Salt Lake City, S. Joe Quinney, then President of the Salt Lake Ski Club and one of the tournament judges, served as master of ceremonies and thanked both champions for their outstanding performances. He then presented awards to Alf, Sigmund, and other winners...thus ending a memorable Ecker Hill event.



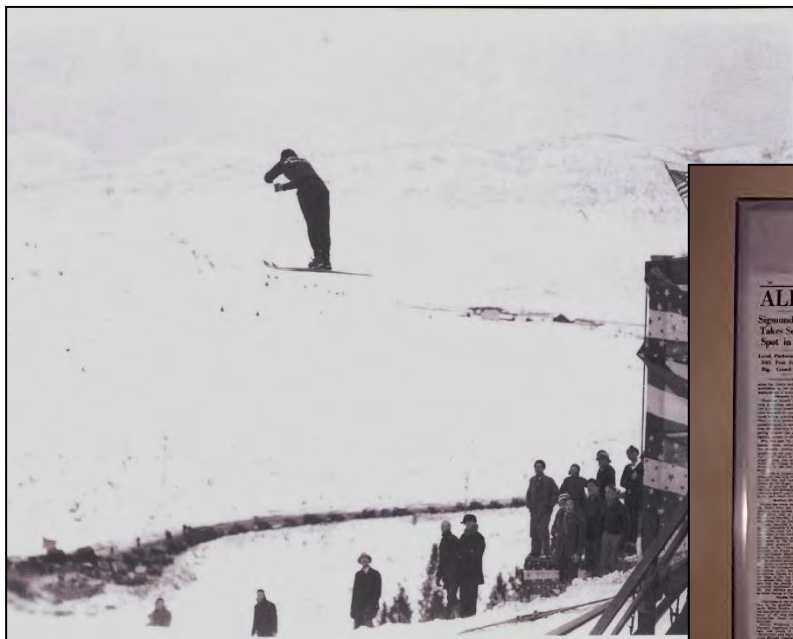
Crowd at Ecker Hill on February 22, 1937



Ecker Hill, February 22, 1937



Champions Alf Engen and Sigmund Ruud watching other jumpers perform, February 22, 1937



Sverre Engen leaving the Class A takeoff at the US National Championship at Ecker Hill, February 22, 1937



Display plaque highlighting Ecker Hill February 22, 1937, event

But that is not the end of the story. It was found out a couple of months later that the tables used to compute the jumpers' point totals (considering both form and distance) were outdated, which made them invalid. When the new approved tables were used, the overall point total favored Sigmund Ruud by seven-tenths of one point (228.8 for Ruud, 228.1 for Alf). In a letter dated July 31, 1937, Roger Langley, then President of the National Ski Association of America sent a letter to Alf advising him of the calculation mistake. In the letter Langley stated, "I certainly regret that this displaces you as National Champion, but I feel that you will accept this decision in the right spirit." Alf, of course, did gracefully accept the new ruling and in a follow-up letter from Langley to Alf, he said, "I wish to complement you highly on your excellent sportsmanship. Your good word has helped tremendously in the friendly relations in the National Ski Association. Your friends in every section cannot but feel very proud of you for

your splendid example of sportsmanship, one of the best I have I known in my experience with sport.”

Over the years, most ski historians agree that, based on the jumping performance of both Sigmund Ruud and Alf Engen on that day at Ecker Hill, and the extremely close overall jumping totals, a good case could be made that both jumpers were, in fact, “winners,” both in athletic prowess and in demonstrated excellent sportsmanship displayed. For those who might be interested in the details of exactly what, when, and how this mistake in calculation occurred, I have written a separate article titled, “The Great 1937 National Ski Jumping Championship Debacle” which is included as addendum² to this article.

1938 proved to be a low snow year and, as a result, only one ski jumping tournament was held on Ecker Hill. The meet, conducted on February 26, 1938, was titled the Utah State Ski Jumping Championship. The class A division winner was Einar Fredbo who beat his long-time friend, Alf Engen. A newspaper account said, “The victory of Fredbo over Engen came as a mild surprise to many fans, but those who had been following the careers of both these Norwegians felt Einar was long overdue to outmaneuver Engen in the tournament.” Some 1,700 spectators came to watch this first and only meet of the 1938 season.

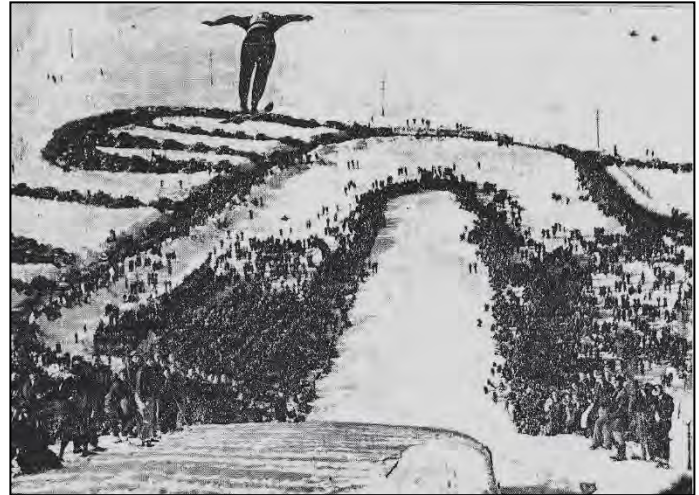
As a brief addendum to this jumping event held in early 1938 on Ecker Hill, it should be mentioned that while the tournament was being held, a Denver & Rio Grande railroad “Snow Train” was bringing 400 skiers up Parley’s Canyon, past the Well Come Inn, and terminating at Deer Valley for a day of fun on the slopes. This is significant, because it is another example showing interest of the general public in skiing was growing, not just as a spectator activity, but also as a participation sport. Ski writer, Ray T. Forsberg, wrote in a 1938 article, “Three years ago, there were less than 200 regular skiers and objectives and skills of modern, controlled skiing only were vaguely in evidence. In contrast, January 9, 1938, was the largest day on record in our short book on ski history. There were



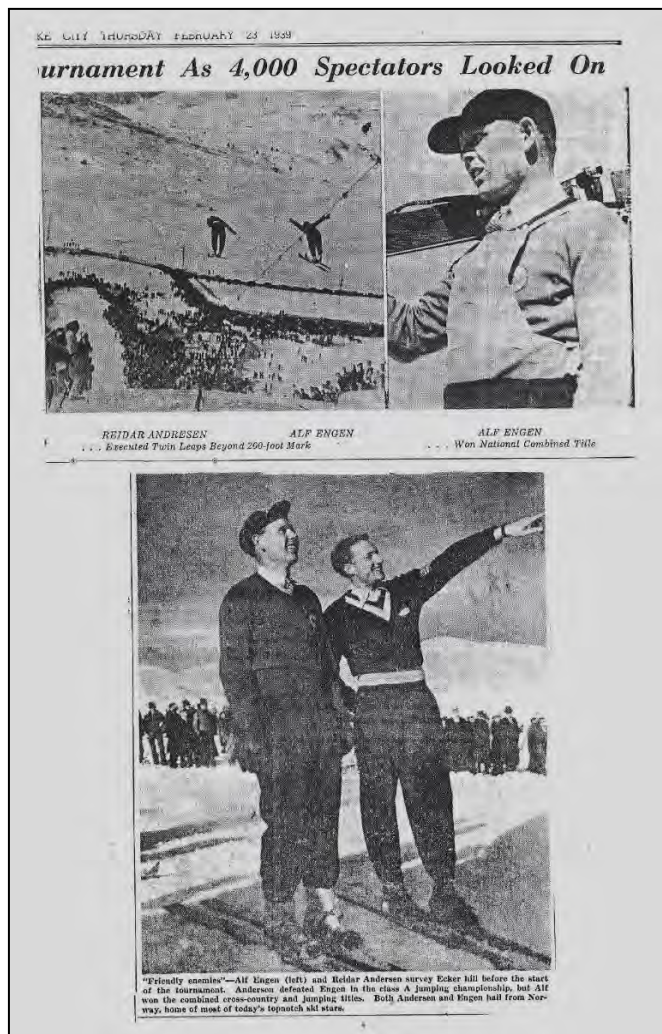
Ski train, Salt Lake City to Deer Valley. In the late 1930s, the train was initially planned to stop at Ecker Hill, but those plans were canceled.

approximately 2500 enthusiasts in the various snow-covered canyons east of Salt Lake.”

During December, 1938, Mark A. Strand, Utah ski official and promoter of winter sports, announced that Utah had been selected by the United States Ski Association to host the 1939 Federation of International Skiing (FIS) and Olympic team tryouts at Ecker Hill. This was a direct reflection on the national attention being given to Utah as a “center of skiing interest.”



Reidar Andersen in flight at Ecker Hill, February 1939



In 1939, the esteemed and widely promoted national event was held the latter part of February at Ecker Hill. Most of the nationally ranked jumpers from around the country were on hand, including current Norwegian ski jumping champion, Reidar Andersen, who was visiting the U.S. to compete against America’s best. According to newspaper accounts, a crowd estimated of between 4,000 and 5,000 spectators were in attendance. Officials for the international event included Roger Langley, President of the National Ski Association, M.A. Strand, and S.J. Quinney. Top honors went to Reidar Anderson, who won the special A class jumping and Alf Engen, who won the national combined title. Alf placed second in the cross-country event and third in the jumping competition behind Anderson and Olav Ulland. As a special note, Salt Lake jumper Dave Quinney came in fifth in the combined which was an excellent result considering the very high caliber of individuals competing.

News article showing Alf Engen and Reidar Andersen, 1939

Quinney Family Contributions at Ecker Hill

As a parting comment concerning competitions held at Ecker Hill during the 1930s, special accolades must be given to both S. Joe Quinney and his son, Dave Quinney. Joe Quinney, a prominent Salt Lake Attorney, played a quiet, yet powerful, role not only in the competitions held on Ecker Hill, but also in helping to establish the beginnings of skiing being recognized as a participation sport throughout the Intermountain region. He served as President of the Utah Ski Club from 1935 to 1938 and, according to Alf Engen, "There were more accomplishments during Joe Quinney's period as president than at any other time. The U.S. National Ski Jumping Championship held at Ecker Hill in 1937, under Joe Quinney's direction, was the biggest and best sporting event ever held in Utah up to that time." S. Joe Quinney also served in the formation and operation of the Salt Lake Winter Sports Association which played a significant ski area development role beginning in the latter 1930s.

His son, Dave, was also a contributing part of the Quinney legacy, beginning as a young ski jumping competitor...winning most of his class C tournaments, and gradually, over the years, finishing in the latter 1930s as one of Utah's amateur stars in both ski jumping and alpine competitions. *Utah's Ski Review for 1938* said, "In some sports, youth becomes interested, in others enthused; but in skiing they skim thru these stages lightly and quickly become addicts. Bronzed Dave Quinney, president of the University of Utah ski club and 1938 Utah State downhill champion, typifies the type of junior skiers who are rapidly forging to the front in gaining a national reputation."



S. Joseph Quinney, mid-1930s

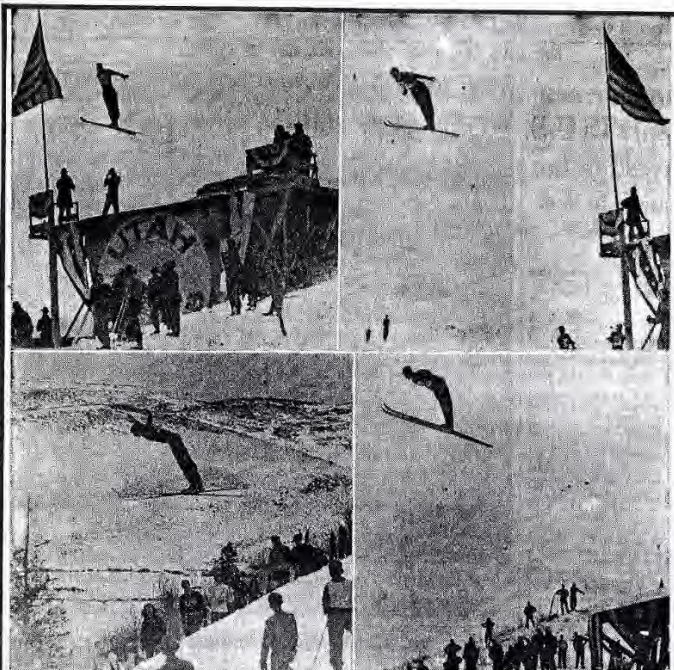
ECKER HILL IN THE 1940s

No time period in Ecker Hill history can compare to the decade referred to as the 1930s “Glory Years.” However, during the 1940s, some key factors had considerable impact on the events held at Ecker Hill and their participants during those years. First, the early 40s were impacted by World War II. Many noted skiers were called to active duty and unable to compete. Some were assigned duties with the famed 10th Mountain Division. In addition, because of the war, the 1940 and 1944 Winter Olympic Games were canceled and thus offered little opportunity for top-level ski jumpers to perform at an international world-class level.

Secondly, as it pertained to the skiing activities along the Wasatch Front, interest in the sport as a recreational pastime was growing. As a result, fewer spectators came to view the ski jumping tournaments and instead were involved in the pursuit of learning new alpine and cross-country skiing skills throughout the nearby canyons. J.C. Derks, prominent sports writer at the *Salt Lake Tribune*, wrote in early 1940, “Fifteen years ago here in Utah there were a few ardent souls who each winter came to tell us about the wonders of the out-of-doors. Now we number our winter sports participants by the thousands.” Much of that growth can be credited to ski promoters such as Mark A. Strand. In an article he wrote, titled “Winter Sports,” he said, “When I think of all the hard work we have done in promoting the skiing, I readily understand why it is that so many have given up the work. If it was not for the love of the sport with the wonderful cooperation of the state and city officials, we would have quit long ago. We have brought it to a point where others can take it up and carry on so that in due time our people will say let us go to Salt Lake City instead of Switzerland.”

Special Note Regarding Ecker Hill Competition After the 1930s

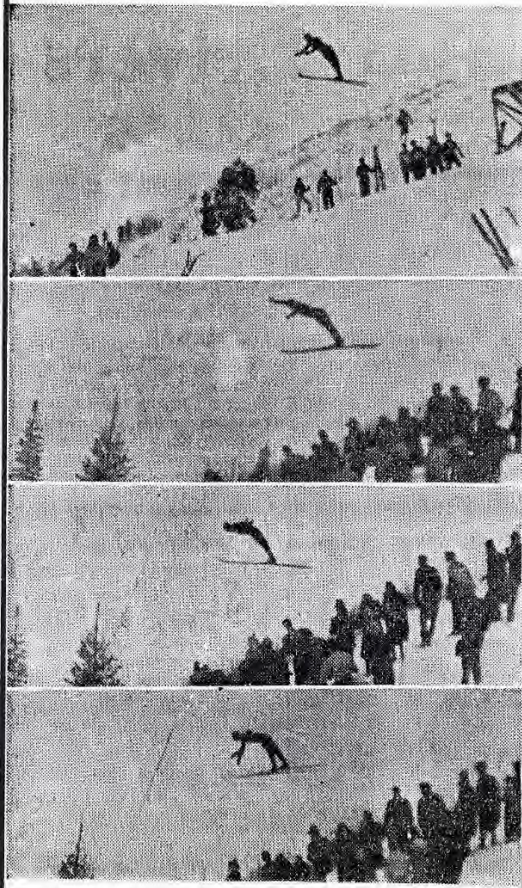
During the early 1940s, other Ecker Hill competitions were held when conditions, primarily based on the availability of local and out-of-state competitors who could participate. It should be underscored that to conduct a competition on this large hill took an enormous amount of work...primarily by the competitors, prior to the tournament. Not having sufficient jumper support was a contributing factor in the decline of tournaments held after the 1930s. A couple of tournaments held are shown in the newspaper clippings below.



How The Leaders Looked In Mid-Air Yesterday At Ecker Hill 1940

EINAR FREDBO (top left) displays the form that brought him the Intercontinental Ski Jumping title yesterday at Ecker Hill despite being out-jumped a total of 20 feet by Alf Engen. **TOP RIGHT**—Alf Engen displays the form that "cost" him the title, seemingly perfect though it is to the "layman's" eye. He spanned 215 feet on this

ride. **BOTTOM LEFT**—Ivan Hall soars 150 feet from the B takeoff to win that division. **BOTTOM RIGHT**—Gordon Wren, sensational Colorado youngster, high in the air on a 220-foot ride. Fredbo jumped 222 and 220. Dick Bonass's telephoto lens helped the News Camera make the photos.



They Fly Through The Air

VARYING STYLES in the art of ski jumping are pictured above as caught yesterday at Ecker Hill in a driving snowstorm with the News Camera. **TOP TO BOTTOM**—(1) Alf Engen, showing characteristic dip in one ski just after takeoff due to his powerful spring. (2) Alf again, after clearing knoll, skis straightened and flawlessly aligned with hill. (3) Gordon Wren of Steamboat Springs, Colo., showing why he's America's coming jumper. (4) Dick Durrance of Sun Valley.

Soared to Victory in Ecker Hill Ski Jumping Event

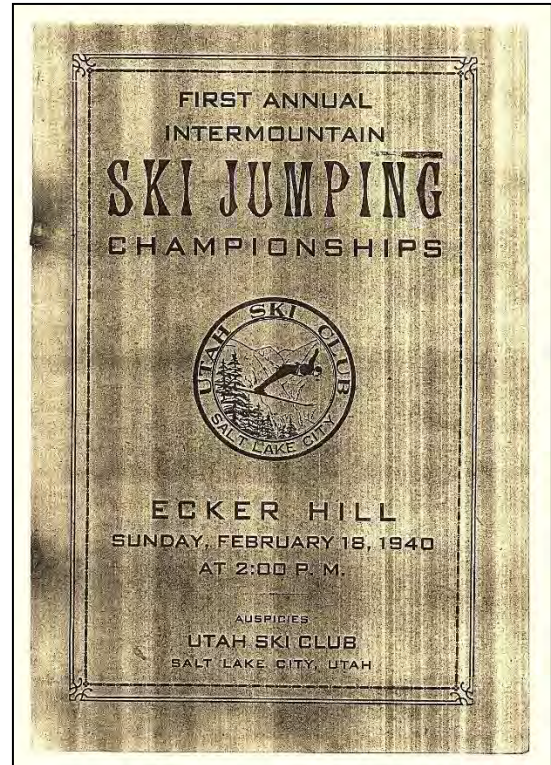


Placed first in respective classes . . . Alf Engen takes off on one of the jumps that won him the national classic combined title Saturday at Ecker hill. Inset, left, Marvin Elkins, Steamboat Springs, Colo., class B winner, and Maurice Berkett, right, class C victor.

How Skiers Finished Saturday

NATIONAL COMBINED CLASSIC			Points
1. Alf Engen, Sun Valley ski club	447.6		
2. Hasso Engen, Fayette Lakes ski club	387.9		
3. The Utah, Utah ski club	371.5		
4. Walter Quinsey, Utah ski club	371.5		
5. Dave Quinsey, Utah ski club	355.1		
(Computed on cross-country and jumping results.)			
NATIONAL COMBINED JUMPING			Points
1. Alf Engen, Sun Valley ski club	226	226	452
2. Hasso Engen, Fayette Lakes ski club	210	224	434
3. The Utah, Utah ski club	186	206	392
4. Lee Hall, Utah ski club	180	200	380
5. Walter Quinsey, Utah ski club	180	190	370
6. Dave Quinsey, Utah ski club	168	191	359
7. Tom Larson, Little Kanabah	147	161	308
8. Edgar Torrey, Steamboat Springs	148	158	306
9. Lester Wren, Steamboat Springs	133	151	284
(Bob Becker scratched, injured on trial jump.)			
CLASS B JUMPING			Points
1. Marvin Elkins, Steamboat Springs	121	137	258
2. Jack McPherson, Utah ski club	111	126	237
3. Jimmy Hewitt, Utah ski club	111	126	237
4. Benjie Anderson, Steamboat Springs	107	120	227
5. Don Williams, unattached	105	117	222
6. Hal Chase, Utah ski club	100	108	208
7. John Spedden, Park City ski club	105	103	208
8. Dick Kesteven, Little Kanabah	106	102	208
9. John Erickson, Utah ski club	106	102	208
10. Jack Miller, Utah ski club	100	108	208
11. Wallace Ramsey, unattached	90	118	208
12. Chuck Lund, Utah ski club	77	104	181
13. Jack Sargent, Little Kanabah	71	84	155
(Barney Fair, Utah ski club; Dale Jamison, Utah ski club; Curtis Stevens, Little Kanabah; Bob Crabb, Utah ski club, disqualified for falls.)			
CLASS C JUMPING			Points
1. Maurice Berkett, Steamboat Springs	123	133	256
2. Willard Winward, Ogden ski club	101	124	225
3. Doug Morrison, Utah ski club	101	124	225
4. Jack Redfish, Utah ski club	85	140	225
5. Correll Diamond, Park City ski club	85	140	225
6. Jay Johnson, Little Kanabah	83	142	225
7. Bill Murray, Utah ski club	83	142	225
8. Bob Fair, Utah ski club	82	87	169
(Bill Bailey and Iona Young, Park City ski club, disqualified for falls.)			

With those factors in mind, there were highly publicized tournaments held on Ecker Hill during the early to mid-1940s. One of the most noteworthy competitions was held February 18, 1940, which was heralded as the *FIRST ANNUAL INTERMOUNTAIN SKI JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIP*. What was special about this Ecker Hill tournament was that, in addition to a very talented group of ski jumpers from around the country, it brought together three of the nation's most highly regarded flyers: Torger Tokle, Arthur Devlin, and Alf Engen. Engen at that time was in his early 30s and approximately ten years senior in age to both Tokle and Devlin. Both Tokle and Engen had been competing heavily over the past couple of years where they traded places as to who held the longest sanctioned jump in the United States. Neither flyer had reached the 300-foot mark in a nationally approved competition. Both Torger and Alf, being Norwegian born, had the greatest respect for each other. The press heralded the upcoming jumping tournament as possibly resulting in a new record being set on Ecker Hill, given the world-class talent competing.



Seven honored members of the National Ski Hall of Fame at the base of Ecker Hill, February 18, 1940. Left to right, Corey Engen, Barney MacLean, Sverre Engen, Gordon Wren, Alf Engen, Torger Tokle and Art Devlin.



Torger Tokle, Alf Engen and Art Devlin, 1940

As it turned out, according to historical records maintained, this event was one of the few times Tokle jumped on Ecker Hill. Tokle was recruited into military service in the 1942 timeframe and assigned to Camp Hale, 10th Mountain Division, then headquartered in Colorado Springs. He was subsequently redeployed overseas with his unit to Italy where, in a combat mission, he unfortunately lost his life. This was a great loss, especially to the ski world. Devlin also shortly after the Ecker Hill tournament entered military service and, as a bombardier, flew on a number of dangerous missions in which he sustained injuries from flack to his leg and thigh. He did recover following the war, was decorate

with honors... and went on to represent the United States in several Winter Olympic competitions and as a well-known commentator for *ABC's Wide World of Sports*.

The competition that day resulted in no new world records being set. Torger Tokle beat his good friend, Alf Engen, by only a half point, with Devlin receiving third place honors in the class A division. Young Jack Reddish, who later became a Utah skiing legend in his own right, on that day, became the youngest jumper ever to fly off the large class A Ecker Hill takeoff, winning his class by a wide margin.



Jack Reddish jumping on Ecker Hill early 1940s

Young Jack Reddish with Alf Engen, c. 1940



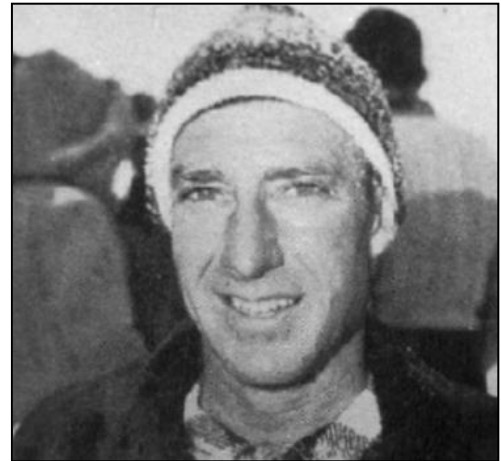
When the tournament was over, Alf Engen publicly congratulated Torger Tokle for his victory. In addition, he acknowledged he had decided to retire from trying to establish new record - breaking jumps...a decision primarily based on age, new career endeavors involving work with the Forest Service, and being called to serve as a civilian technical advisor to the War Department on winter clothing and equipment. In his opinion, the combination of all these factors would not work in his favor if he continued competing at the same exceedingly high level as in the past decade. However, he did point out that participation in future tournaments, both in Nordic and Alpine skiing, was not out of the question, since he was currently representing Sun Valley in competitive events.



Torger Tokle and Alf Engen reviewing jumping results, early 1940s

As has been mentioned, there were a number of noteworthy ski jumping tournaments held on Ecker Hill during the 1940s; however, the ones that had the most significance were the annual Intermountain Ski Jumping Championships. Einar Fredbo was the 1940 winner, and in 1941, the tournament included a number of excellent local jumpers and was won by Alf Engen, the only jumper in the class A field to fly over 200 feet that day. Alf's long time ski jumping friend, Einar Fredbo, finished second, and third place was captured by Ivan "Ike" Hall. The top local class B and Class C winners included Jack Reddish, Jimmy Howell, Chet Dalglish and Dave Quinney.

An interesting footnote to the day's Ecker Hill event was that of Gordon Wren, who was at that time instructing in the Dick Durrance Ski School at Alta. Gordon showed up late to the tournament to compete and was disqualified from participating. He was, however, allowed to make unofficial jumps and would have displaced Fredbo for second place had he participated as a qualified ski jumping competitor.



Gordon Wren, early 1940s

Again in 1942, another Intermountain championship ski jumping tournament did take place but was discontinued during years 1943 through 1946 because of World War II.

In 1947, ski jumping on Ecker Hill began again after a several-year respite. For the State of Utah, 1947 was considered special in that it marked 100 years since Mormon pioneers first entered the Salt Lake Valley. To help support the State Centennial observation, a special ski jumping tournament was held at Ecker Hill on March 9th of that year. Hundreds gathered at the bottom of the large hill and watched over a dozen top jumpers from around the country... and even a few from Norway and Sweden...display their outstanding flying skills. Top jumping honors went to a member of the Norwegian ski jumping team, Arnhold Kongsgaard, who recorded the longest sanctioned competitive jump of the day...267 feet.


One other tournament was held on Ecker Hill in 1947 and that was the Intermountain Ski Jumping Championship which had not been held since 1942 when the late Torger Tokle won the title. In 1947, Don Johnson was victorious and the following year, 1948, the championship event was won by the late Torger Tokle's brother, Arthur (Art).

The last major ski jumping event held at Ecker Hill was in 1949 when two significant tournaments were conducted February 19 - 22. The Intermountain Jumping Championship was held on February 20th and was won by Art Devlin, with George Thrane, a Washington State College Norwegian exchange student, finishing second, and Alf Engen, third. The second tournament, the United States Ski Jumping Championship was held February 22nd and was won

by the Norwegian, Peter Hugstad, reigning Winter Olympic jumping champion. Art Devlin finished in second place and subsequently filed a complaint in protest that Hugstad arrived late to the tournament and should have been disqualified from competing. But because of his international standing, the existing restriction was waived allowing him to compete and an official subsequent ruling made that he was, in fact, the 1949 U.S. National Ski Jumping Champion.

The 1949 Ecker Hill championship event, by all accounts, was perhaps a benchmark turning point in terms of Ecker Hill being a primary winter sport center that gained national attention benefitting the state of Utah. Without question, Ecker Hill ski jumping events were a significant driver behind the growth of skiing in the Intermountain region. True, skiing growth was occurring in the surrounding canyons, but nothing compared to the world-wide focus on Utah as a ski center more than the mega attention given to storied Ecker Hill. However, those glory days were coming to a close. The reasons for the decline can probably be attributed, in part, to a country rebounding from the effects of a world war occurring in the early to mid-1940s; interest in ski jumping, as a major ski sport, becoming less important in comparison to alpine skiing; work effort in preparing a giant-size jumping facility like Ecker Hill, so tournaments could be held, becoming harder to accomplish due to fewer jumpers and officials...plus one other factor which indirectly might have had an effect on the entire ski jumping community. This was the untimely death of one of Utah's premier ski jumpers, Einar Fredbo, in March 1947, when he accidentally came in contact with a live high-tension wire. His loss was felt throughout the country and some jumpers felt that not having Fredbo's physical presence at the tournaments had a dampening effect on the stimulating atmosphere normally in evidence at Ecker Hill. The accompanying article highlighting Fredbo's ski contributions was published shortly after his passing.

EINAR FREDBO 1909—1947

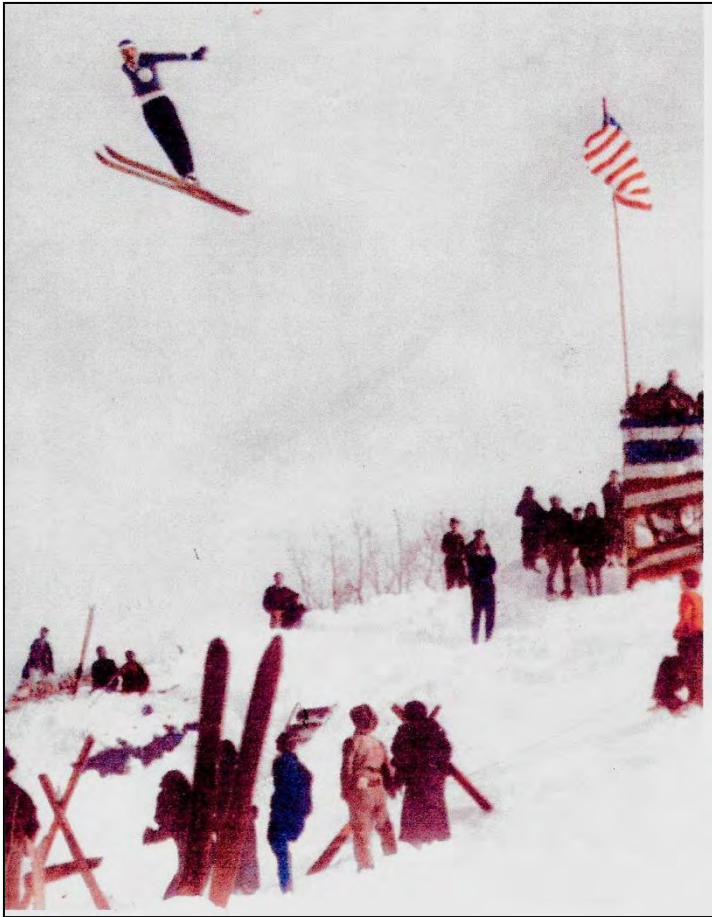


Mr. Fredbo was thirty-eight years old and was a native of Asker, Norway. He came to the United States in 1928 and worked as an electrician in Minneapolis until he was invited to go to Salt Lake City in 1930 by Mr. M. A. Strand, an electrical contractor, who employed Fredbo for several years until he was properly established.

Einar was well known in National skiing circles as an excellent ski jumper. He had a graceful and floating style of jumping which attracted attention everywhere he competed. He started skiing in Norway where he won the Norwegian junior championship in 1926. He finished third in the championships at Holmenkollen in 1928, and fourth in 1929. This identified Fredbo as one of the world's best jumpers.

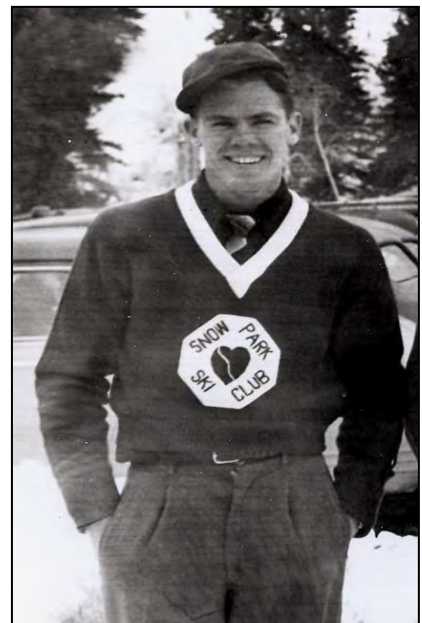
After arrival in the United States he established a long and enviable competitive record. At Red Wing, Minnesota in 1936 at the National Ski Jumping championships he won second place and was selected by the judges as the "most graceful" skier of the meet. Only last year at the National championships at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Fredbo placed second in the veteran's class and made the longest leap of the day—220 feet.

Skiers and friends of Einar Fredbo were saddened to learn of his death by accidental electrocution when he came in contact with a live high tension wire on Saturday, March 22, 1947 at Magna, Utah where he was working as foreman of a Salt Lake County electrical crew.



Einer Fredbo flying off Ecker Hill, mid-1930s

Tournaments were held at Ecker Hill considerably less often in the 1950s than in the 40s. One individual who played a very important role in keeping ski jumping alive on Ecker Hill throughout the 50s and into the early to mid-60s was Mel Fletcher, a very accomplished ski jumper. He lived in Park City and had a genuine interest in seeing Ecker Hill retain its viability as a ski jumping center; however, he did acknowledge that many of the relatively few jumping tournaments being held in the Intermountain region had moved to the Landes Ski Jumping Hill, located at the Alta Ski Area.



Mel Fletcher, acclaimed Park City ski jumper, 1948

One of the last ski jumping tournaments at Ecker Hill was held in March 1957. It was considered a regional championship ski jumping event with jumpers from Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, and Colorado participating. By day's end, the winners in the class A, B, and C divisions

were all ski jumpers from Colorado's Western State College. They were Steve Rieschl, Harald Aase, and Erlon Broomhall. A special class for those under the age of 18 were also permitted to compete on an invitation basis, based on past jumping results. On that day, only one take-off was used for the tournament. Alan Engen, then Intermountain Junior Jumping Champion, flew 174 feet to win his class. Hill conditions were excellent, with several jumpers exceeding the 200-foot mark.



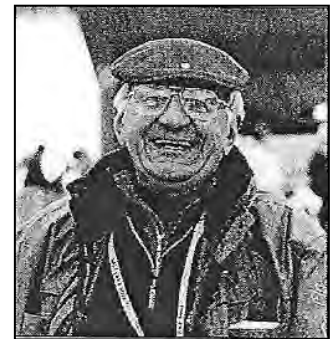
VICTORS IN ECKER WINDUP

Steve Rieschl, left, Class A; Harald Aase, Class B; Erlon Broomhall, Class C and Alan Engen, Junior 1 wound up the Ecker Hill ski jumping competition for the season Saturday winning the annual Harvey W. Eckman Jumping Tournament trophies for their respective classes. Rieschl, Aase and Broomhall are all from Colorado's Western State College.



*Alan Engen Intermountain Junior Ski
Jumping Champion in flight, mid- 1950s*

It should be noted that very few jumping tournaments were held and recorded at Ecker Hill during the 1960s. In 1962, Dr. Joseph Hatch filmed a short clip of an Ecker Hill tournament in progress; however, the jumpers highlighted are not identified. The big question that remained was, “When did the very last Ecker Hill event occur?” To help answer that question, ski historian and former sports editor for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Mike Korologos, was consulted. This is Mike’s “story behind the story”:



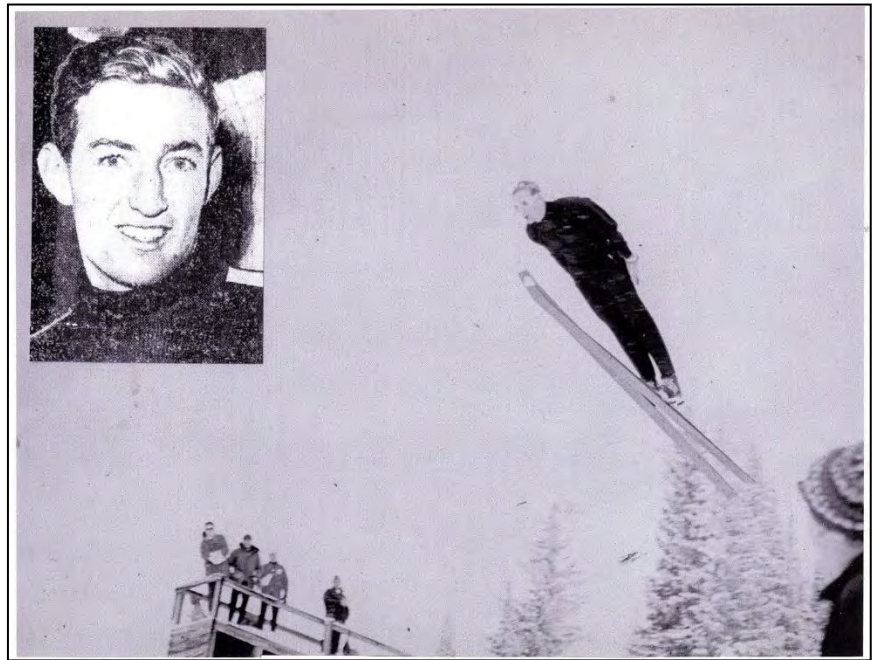
*Ski historian and former
Salt Lake Tribune sports
editor Mike Korologos*

“My guess is the year 1963 that I covered the jumping competition at Ecker Hill. I was a brand new ski writer; had never skied before and didn’t even own skis/boots. Wearing galoshes, I and Tribune photographer, late “Hypo” Van Porter, climbed up to the hill’s landing area as we were told that would be the best place for photos and to watch how far down the hill the skiers landed compared to each other. It was a collegiate tournament/jump. Pres Summerhays was the University of Utah ski coach and he had recruited several Norwegian flyers, one of which was Frithjof “Basse” Prydz. I am pretty sure he won the competition.

While watching skiers hit the landing area with photographer Porter, we were both in awe of your father who would appear to be doing a dance on his skis while tamping/smoothing down the landing area after each skier. He would rhythmically bounce up and down on the slope, get to one side, do an effortless kick turn and do the same thing coming up the hill. It was during

these slope-grooming events that photographer Porter looks at Alf in awe and then looks at me and asks: "I wonder if it hurt his mother when he was born with skis on?" I've never forgotten that line and have used it in articles I have written and talks I have given on skiing history. The reason I'm pretty sure that was the last ski jump at Ecker Hill is that, as a new ski writer anxious to get by-lines in the paper, I never again covered a jump on that hill. Surely, if there was a legitimate tournament there, I would have covered it."

So, with that wonderful expose by the nationally respected ski historian and writer, Mike Korologos, this question has been officially answered...and so written into the annals of Ecker Hill history.



University of Utah Ski Team member and NCAA ski jumping champion, Norwegian Frithjof "Basse" Prydz, mid-1960s

SECOND ECKER HILL DEDICATION – THE BACK STORY

By the early 1970s, ski jumping on storied Ecker Hill was finished. Only a few remaining wooden boards, which were part of the judges stand, remained on the large hillside where dare-devil ski jumpers brought national and international attention to Utah. Memories were all that remained for those, still living, who participated. A 1980 *Salt Lake Tribune* article, written by the late John Mooney, highlights an interview with Alf Engen about the decline of Ecker Hill. Alf in his comments, reluctantly made the observation, “It’s too bad, but Ecker Hill will soon be forgotten.” To that comment, Mooney wrote, “There



Ecker Hill, 1978. Photo by ski historian Alexis Kelner

should be a monument or plaque on the site so that future generations would realize this is where Utah’s famous snow had its first opportunity to bring national recognition to the state.”

Mooney’s written comment, while being somewhat far-fetched at the time, ended up being prophetic. That is exactly what happened a few years later, following the development of the Pinebrook community, which sprang up around the abandoned ski jumping hillside... for here-in lies another sub-story, within the larger Ecker Hill saga.

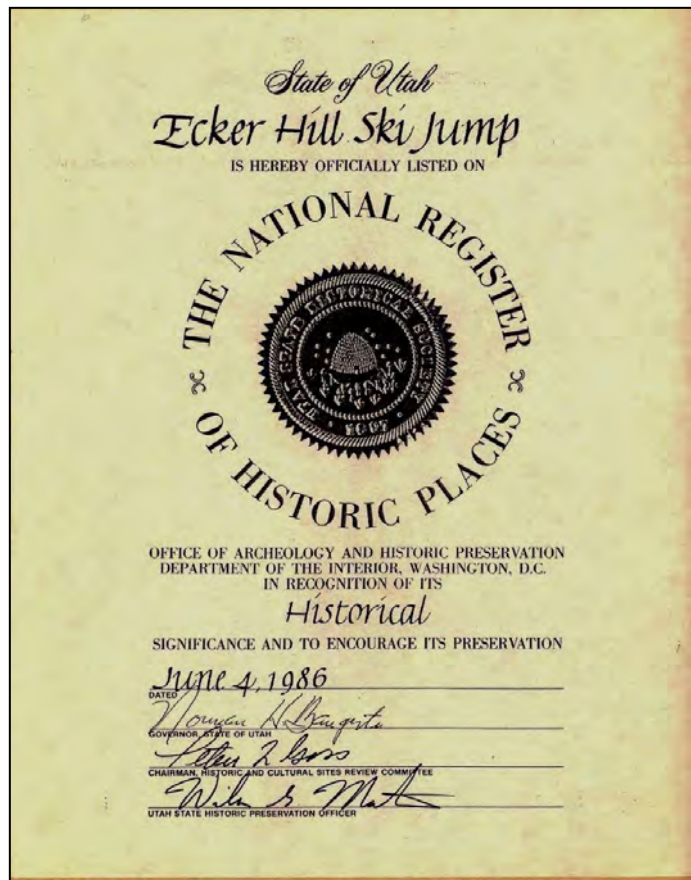


*Robert H. Anderson
who spearheaded the
second Ecker Hill
dedication effort*

One of the Pinebrook homeowners, Robert H. Anderson, lived only a “stone’s throw” from the Ecker Hill site. Having a broad interest in Utah history, Anderson began doing some research on the old hillside. Considerable information was provided by former Ecker Hill jumper and Park City resident, Mel Fletcher, who occasionally visited Pinebrook. Anderson and Fletcher developed a close friendship... and both agreed to pursue a dedicated effort to publicize the hill’s importance to Utah history. Anderson felt one way to accomplish this was to find a way to get Ecker Hill recognized on the historic register. He and Fletcher together formed a local group of ski jumping supporters and, with their collective energies, formalized a written proposal to the State Historical Society that Ecker Hill be put on the

National Register of Historic Places. This began a lengthy process, requiring approvals from not only the Utah State Historic Preservation Board of Directors, but also the Chairman of the State’s Cultural Sites Review Committee, and the Governor of the State of Utah...who was at that time, Norman Bangertter. When notification of approval was formally provided, via a document underscored by the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Department of the Interior, Washington D.C., Robert H. Anderson sent a personal handwritten letter to Alf Engen. The message read:

“Dear Alf: Congratulations! Ecker Hill has just recently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A special plaque has been ordered and will probably be mounted on a planned monument...this will be a metal commemorative which recognizes your achievements and importance of Ecker Hill in ski history. It has been a thrilling experience for me to meet you and the other jumpers and to get this proper recognition permanently established in your honor.”

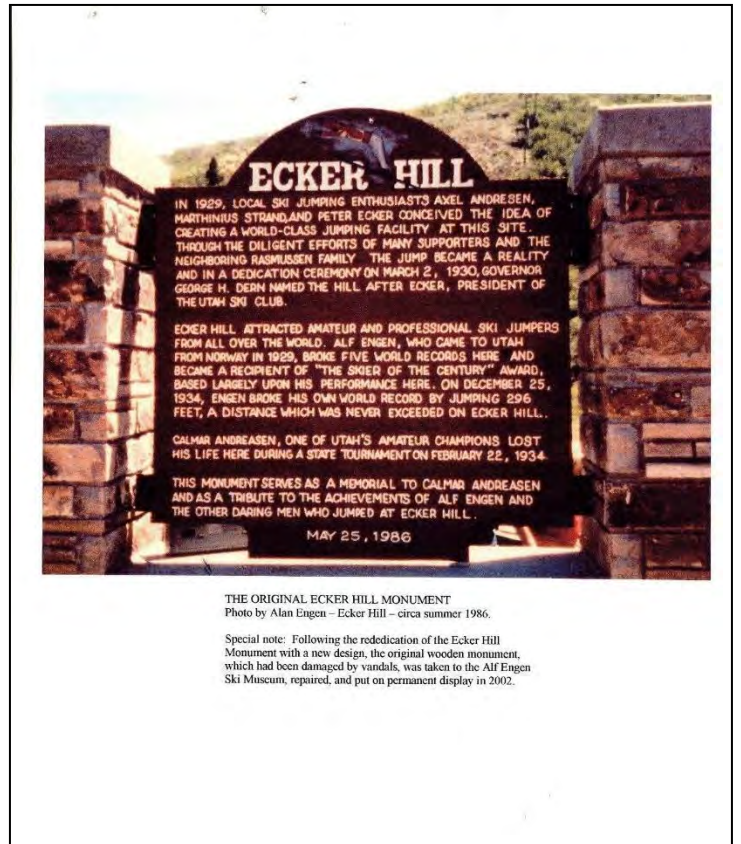


On May 25, 1986, a second “rededication” ceremony was held at the base of Ecker Hill and included a number of honored remaining ski pioneers and legends of the sport. To highlight the ceremony location, a large Ecker Hill wooden display was created as part of the memorial marker.

Several well-known ski jumpers, including Alf Engen, spoke about their experiences jumping on historic Ecker Hill. Of special mention was a comment made by former Olympic Champion, Stein Eriksen, who addressed the large crowd, paid tribute to all the honored guests, and ended his comments by saying, “Alf, when I grow up, I want to be exactly like you!”



Close friends Stein Eriksen and Alf Engen, April 1985



THE ORIGINAL ECKER HILL MONUMENT
Photo by Alan Engen – Ecker Hill – circa summer 1986.

Special note: Following the rededication of the Ecker Hill Monument with a new design, the original wooden monument, which had been damaged by vandals, was taken to the Alf Engen Ski Museum, repaired, and put on permanent display in 2002.



FORMER ECKER HILL SKI JUMPERS AT THE
ECKER HILL MONUMENT DEDICATION.
IN PHOTO LEFT TO RIGHT:

JACK WALKER
MEL FLETCHER
REX SPENDLOVE

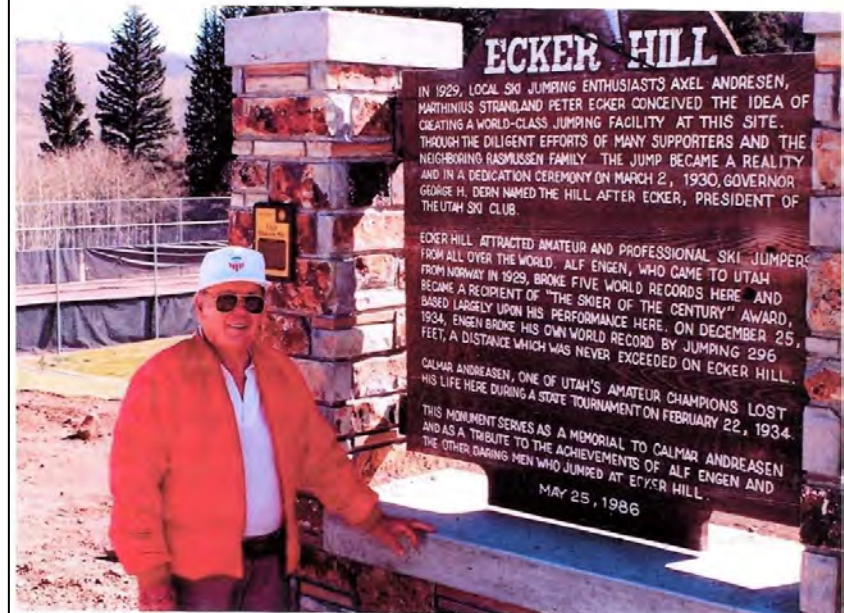
Photo: Ecker Hill – May 25, 1986



Jon, Alf, Evelyn and Alan Engen, May 25, 1986

THIRD ECKER HILL DEDICATION – THE BACK STORY

During the late 1980s and continuing through the 1990s, the historic site remained somewhat unattended, except for visitors who occasionally came to view the marker. Those with significant interest might hike up the hillside to view the remnants of the old judges stand on the side of Ecker Hill. Among the visitors who periodically came to visit the Ecker Hill site were the three legendary Engen brothers, Alf, Sverre, and Corey in the early 1990s. They would discuss among themselves the memories they had during the glory days on the giant hill. I remember on one visit to Ecker Hill with my father in October 1991, he said to me while looking up at the jump hillside, “Alan, I hope this hill can be retained as a historic place for years to come. I know the many individuals who jumped here and played an important role in Utah’s skiing past...and they should all be remembered for their participation on this hill.”



Alf Engen remembering Ecker Hill history recorded on the monument, June 4, 1986

Two other noteworthy individuals who, together on October 9, 1998, made a special trip to view and play tribute to storied Ecker Hill were Evelyn Engen and Vila Fredbo Allen. At that time, both were in their 80s and their late husbands (Alf and Einar) did indeed play monumental roles in Utah's ski jumping history.



*Alf Engen and Einar Fredbo, early
1930s*



*Evelyn Engen and Vila Fredbo Allen,
October 9, 1998*

Another part to the Ecker Hill story happened in the mid-90s. During early morning hours, some unknown individuals vandalized the memorial marker by tearing off the top which highlighted the hand-painted image of a ski jumper.

As might be expected, Bob Anderson, among many others, were heartbroken that such an action occurred. To completely replace the marker would be costly and would require a lengthy fund-raising effort, so it was decided to just replace the damaged portion with a new hand-painted ski jumper on top.

This partial fix seemed to work, but by the late 1990s, inclement weather in that mountain location caused the entire Ecker Hill monument to degrade to a point where a complete replacement was the only viable option. As in 1986, it was Robert Anderson who again stepped forward to spearhead the beginnings of a special committee to review the situation.



Thanks to the efforts of historians, residents are reminded of the days when Ecker Hill was famous around the world.

Ecker Hill ski jumping memorial vandalized

by DAVE MACFARLANE
Record staff writer

When Alf Engen set world ski jumping records in the 1930s, he didn't do it at Alta.

He didn't set the records at Park City, Deer Valley or Snowbird either. He did it at Ecker Hill.

If this "resort" doesn't sound familiar, don't feel stupid. Though it hasn't been in use since the 1940s, this steep hill near Pinebrook in the Snyderville Basin was once one of the foremost jumping hills in the world.

To make sure it was remembered as such, Pinebrook resident Bob Anderson designed and became the motivating force behind a marker placed at the bottom of the hill in 1986. The marker, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is there to commemorate the people from around the world who risked their lives on Ecker Hill.

Now that memorial has been vandalized, the name of the hill with a painting of a skier has been ripped from the top of the sign, and Anderson feels as if a part of himself has been desecrated as well.

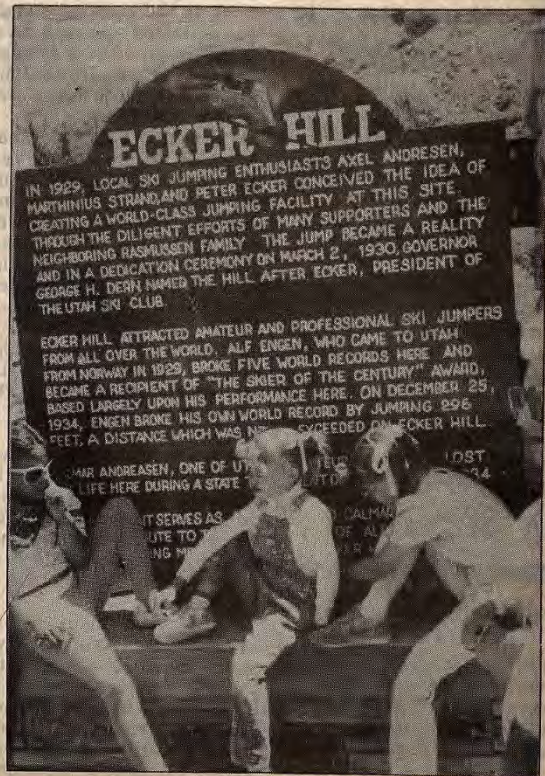
"I couldn't believe it, it was so much work to put together," Anderson said.

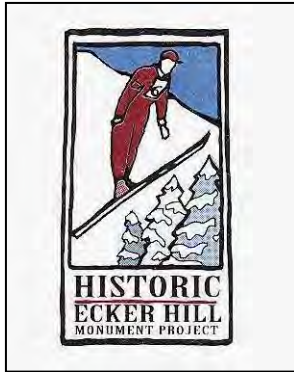
According to Anderson the cost of repairing the sign will be substantial, and he isn't even sure it can be done effectively. He said he is going to take the sign with the broken piece to a craftsman and see if it can be repaired.

"It's a mind set that I cannot understand," Anderson said of those who vandalized the marker.

Built in the late 1920s by local residents, Ecker Hill was dedicated in 1930 by Utah Governor George Dern who named the hill after Peter Ecker, president of the Utah Ski Club.

continued on A9





Unfortunately, Anderson was in failing health, so he recruited his next-door neighbor in the Pinebrook housing area, Jon Weisberg, to be a co-chair for a new group which became known as the *Historic Ecker Hill Monument Project* committee. Weisberg was an excellent choice for co-chairing this effort. He had lifetime of experience in the marketing profession; was at that time the chairman of the Utah Humanities Council and an Adjunct Professor in Westminster College's



Jon Weisberg

Master of Communications Program. In addition, he had a strong interest in ski history. Significant credit is given to Jon Weisberg for his leadership in taking over the leadership and running the campaign which was officially called the Historic Ecker Hill Monument Project. It was through his efforts and hand-picked volunteer team that the third dedication of Ecker Hill became a reality.

At the same time as this fund-raising effort was beginning, just a mile or so, "as the crow flies," from the top of Ecker Hill lay a relatively new sports development area, called the Utah Winter Sports Park. The Park, originally called Bear Hollow, began in the early 1990s as a result of an intensive investigation of several sites where a new ski jumping and winter sports complex could be built. The actual decision for choosing the Bear Hollow location was made in October 1990 by formal



No. 109 Winter, 1993

Utah's Jumping Again

Bear Hollow Takes First Leap on Olympic Path

Photos by Alan Engen

A resurgence of ski jumping is under way with the new ski jumping facility at the Utah Winter Sports Park in Bear Hollow Canyon northeast of Park City. Bear Hollow is located just off I-80 at Kimball's Junction on U-224 and is visible to motorists approaching Park City from the east on I-80.

A winter sports complex was part of a move to lure the Winter Olympics to Utah. John Bowers, ski jump complex manager, said the selection and construction of a jumping complex was not a choice, but a requirement for bidding by Salt Lake City for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Bear Hollow was one of five sites extensively investigated over a two-year period; four sites were in Summit County and one in Wasatch County. Snow conditions were recorded and wind studies were made of each of the areas.

The six-member investigation committee included John Bowers, a former Olympic ski jumper and former director of ski jumping and Nordic combined for the U. S. ski team. Other members included Neil Richardson, chair for the Salt Lake Olympic Bid Committee's technical committee; Neal Stowe, director of State Facilities Construction and Management; Charles Winters, Utah Sports Authority; Alf Engen,



Alf Engen and John Bowers, L to R, view take-off of the 90 meter jump.



The 90 meter Olympic-caliber hill at Bear Hollow was first tested by the country's top jumpers on December 12-13.

Bear Hollow was selected because the area best filled the criteria required for a jumping complex. The Bear Hollow site is aerodynamically sound and environmentally satisfactory. Bear Hollow has desirable wind conditions; the big jump hill is protected by two ridges from dangerous cross winds and by trees that further disperse the winds; the hollow has trees that outline the jumps; and the jump line has the advantage of the ridges' natural contour. Furthermore, the jump did not require huge concrete structures.

The Bear Hollow complex has on site four Olympic-caliber jump hills (18, 35, 70 and 90

Continued on page 2

recommendations to the Salt Lake Olympic Committee. A *Ski Meister* publication in 2020 mentions that decision:

While most Utahans remember exactly where they were in June 1995 when Salt Lake City was awarded the XIX Olympic Winter Games, not many will recall six years earlier, in 1989, when Salt Lake City was designated as the United States' official candidate city.

That was the decision which prompted a special Salt Lake Olympic bid sub-committee comprised of Alf Engen, his son Alan, and former U.S. Nordic skiing coach, John Bower to hike up the hill from Kimball Junction, through sage brush, scrub oak and aspen, to a site called Bear Hollow. At the time, Bear Hollow was the frontrunner in the committee's consideration of where to build a new winter sport training center and potential competition site for ski jumping and bobsled events.

According to Alan Engen, the consensus after that 1990 site visit was that Bear Hollow was the most favorable location, as its geography offered future ski jumpers protection from wind gusts. *"Bear Hollow appeared most favorable, primarily based on previous wind studies. [It] provided special protections from wind which was not evident to the same degree in the other site locations under consideration."*

Although not an official member of the committee, Bonnie Bower (John's wife), was also on that site visit hike and recalls vividly the experience: *"It was an inspiring day. Not only was it beautiful but it was fascinating to hear these men talk about the site and how it would work for the ski jumps. I came away with a great feeling of awe for Alf. He had the vision! He saw what this location could offer, and I think to him it was all about how it could be used to train 'the kids' as he always called them. He always saw what the facility would be."*

Within the park, two Winter Olympic ski jumping hills had been created...one was an upgrade to the 90-meter hill built in 1993, and in addition, an additional 120-meter jumping hill was constructed in preparation for Salt Lake City hosting the Olympic jumping venues at that location.



In addition, a new building was under construction which was to be named the Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center/Alf Engen Ski Museum...both names prominent in Ecker Hill history.



*S. Joseph Quinney and Alf Engen,
1976*



*Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center / Alf Engen Ski
Museum under construction, January 23, 2001*

Both namesakes, of course, played a huge part in the history of Ecker Hill. It was certainly recognized by most Salt Lake officials that not only were these two icons tied, by name, to both locations, but the ski jumping venues at the Utah Winter Sports Park, as well as the storied Ecker Hill site, were both destined to become a future points of "World" interest in the annals of Utah sports history. The newly constructed Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center/Alf Engen Ski Museum was turned over to the Salt Lake Olympic Committee (SLOC) during the 2002 Winter Olympic Games and was used as a media center...which highlighted many selected Utah locations of interest... including Ecker Hill.

SLOC accepts use of center

By Ray Grass

Deseret News sports writer



2002 OLYMPICS

The giant key that passed hands Tuesday outside the new Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center came with a condition: "Use it and enjoy it, but come April we want it back."

With that, Salt Lake Organizing Committee president and CEO Mitt Romney took the four-foot-long key with the Olympic logo printed on it, said thanks and — to himself — gave a deep sigh of relief.

Located between the bobsled run and the ski jump arena at the Utah Olympic Park, the new 29,000-square-foot center is nearly ready to be occupied — short-term — by the world's media during the 2002 Winter Games.

"This is a big plus for us," said Romney as he spun around to look at the three-story structure with the etched-glass front. "The world media will be warm and secure, in a well-lit building, instead of having to stay in the tents and trailers we would have had to use."

The new building will be the media sub-center for journalists covering ski jumping, luge, skeleton and bobsled.

In 1969, Alan Engen expressed a wish to David Amidon to build a small A-frame structure near Alta to display the hundreds of awards and memorabilia belonging to Alf Engen, his father, who is recognized as one of the great pioneers of skiing.

The wish eventually led to the construction of the \$10 million Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center, which next spring will house, among other things, the Alf Engen Museum and a display of the 2002 Winter Games.

Money for the center came in a number of ways, said David Quinney, trustee for the S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation, a major contributor to the center. One of those was from private donors, who "gave \$5 and \$10, up to \$100 and \$1,000," he said. "All total, these amounted more than \$1 million."

In order to use the building during the Olympics and Paralympics, SLOC contributed \$250,000 to the fund.

The center is expected to open to the public in early June. The museum will take up 5,000 square feet and the Olympic showcase another 4,500 square feet, with the remainder housing an auditorium and a small eating area called the Ecker Hill Cafe. The cafe is named after the once-famous Ecker ski jumping hill that is located over the mountain to the north.

The most striking feature of the new building is the "glass" front. Etched in Plexiglas are the names, logos and a two-story resemblance of Alf Engen in a classic ski jumping pose.



SLOC president Mitt Romney, second from the right, receives the 'key' to the new Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center from members of the Quinney and Alf Engen families on Tuesday.

"We originally wanted to use glass," explained Alan Engen, "but it was much too expensive. We chose, instead, to use Plexiglas. They etched in the figures and then put on a special backing to make it look like real glass."

Romney talked about the generosity of people, not only towards this building but to other causes. He mentioned about initial doubts of SLOC raising \$50 million for the Games through local contributions and sponsors, "and instead we raised \$150 million."

He also told the group that a special Olympic pin, with red and white bars and a blue crown commemorating last week's tragedies in New York and Washington,

was designed and offered over the Internet Monday night.

"It hit the news and was reported that the pin would cost \$5, but that \$4.62 of that money would go to the victims in the Sept. 11th tragedy," he said. "When I left my office this afternoon, we'd sold 50,380 pins."

More than 9,000 members of the media are expected to come to Utah in February. Romney believes most will have reason to visit the new center at the Olympic Park, "not only because of the events, but because we expect this to be a showcase site for media facilities."

E-MAIL: grass@desnews.com

I was involved as a participant in the events at the Utah Winter Sports Park, (renamed Utah Olympic Park - March 28, 2000), during the 1990s and well into the early part of the 21st century. My primary attention was focused on the Quinney/Engen building construction efforts; however, I felt, because of the part the three Engen brothers played in Ecker Hill's history, it was appropriate for me to also become a part of the new committee being established for the Ecker Hill monument project. It was my hope that world-wide attention to the Ecker Hill story might occur when the Olympics were held in 2002. If so, I believed I might be able to make a small contribution to help make that a possibility.

During October 2000, Jay Hamburger, of the *Park Record* newspaper, wrote a story titled “Ski-Jumping Monument Needs Help – Backers Want Monument Refurbished.” As one of several individuals interviewed, I had the opportunity to highlight the importance of Ecker Hill in Utah history. Further, that I felt we needed to have a way to properly underscore Ecker Hill’s storied history as an important basis for holding the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympic jumping venues at Utah Olympic Park in Park City.

The *Park Record* article resulted in a positive response from interested Park City and Salt Lake residents. By early 2001, sufficient funding permitted a new, much higher quality monument to be constructed, complete with names of all the Ecker Hill jumpers, judges, and key officials engraved on a specially mounted plaque. With Jon Weisberg’s efforts, Metal Works, a local foundry in Lehi, Utah was retained to develop a bronze bas-relief ski jumper image in flight.

The legendary Alf Engen goes airborne in this photo at Ecker Hill, circa 1934, when jumping dominated ski interest.

Ecker Hill: An Air-Time Heirloom

Project aims to preserve memories of birthplace of Utah’s ski popularity

BY BRIAN MAFFLY
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

PARK CITY — Long before the current obsession with “air” began driving skiers, brave men on boards flew the length of a football field before thousands of awed spectators.

It was the 1930s, back when skiing pretty much meant ski jumping. There wasn’t much money in it, though Alf Engen made a few bucks for appearing on a Wheaties cereal box.

And the place was Ecker Hill, a crucial slice of Utah’s ski history that is disappearing into a hillside near Park City.

Built in 1929, records at Ecker during the heyday of drive to rededicate Ecker Hill with a



Steve Griffin/The Salt Lake Tribune

Alan Engen, left, Corey Engen and Jon Weisberg gather at the foot of Ecker Hill. Corey Engen holds a clay model of a plaque that will memorialize the site.

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The initial 18-inch clay model prototype design required refining. As a committee member and former ski jumper, I was asked to put together a more accurate representation of what the ski jumper image should look like. Using my background experience in commercial art, a sketch was created, which received committee approval. Metal Works then proceeded to use the sketch design for the final bronze casting which was subsequently incorporated into the monument.



Ski jumper sketch design by Alan Engen which was provided to Metal Letters to follow in their clay model.

There was one additional part of the story surrounding the new Ecker Hill monument...namely what to do with the “original” Ecker Hill monument front side, which was not heavily damaged. A collective committee decision was made to retain it in temporary storage until after the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. At that time, the piece would be transferred to the new Alf Engen Ski Museum, incorporating it as an eye-catching display piece. A well-worn and faded Ecker Hill - Utah Ski Club sign, heavily used on the large ski jumping takeoff during tournaments, was also retained for the same museum purpose. This plan worked out well, and both pieces were successfully installed in time for the official public opening of the Alf Engen Ski Museum in July 2002.



Original Ecker Hill Utah Ski Club sign on display at the Alf Engen Ski Museum in Park City, UT (Left side of entrance)

On September 1, 2001, only a few days prior to the infamous 9-11 national tragedy, a third Ecker Hill rededication was held at the base of the well-known Pinebrook development hillside, officially set aside as a historical site. The wording on the new dedication plaque was updated to more closely describe the Ecker Hill history.

Only one of the famous Engen brother dynasty, Corey Engen, remained and was an important part of the gathering of dignitaries and unveiling of the new monument. Approximately 200 former jumpers, past officials, and interested ski jump enthusiasts, gathered to view a much more permanent Ecker Hill monument which had incorporated a large bronze 1930s era ski jumper image into the monument's front side. The reverse side of the new monument contained another bronze plaque that lists the names of all the "verified" known ski jumpers who jumped off the "A" and "B" Ecker Hill take-offs over the timespan 1930 to the mid-1960s. Alf Engen, for sure, would have been pleased to see that plaque added to the memorial monument as it was certainly in keeping with his wishes.

U.S. Senator Jake Garn was the keynote speaker for the third Ecker Hill dedication ceremony. Other speakers included Jon Weisberg, Gregory C. Thompson, Mel Fletcher, and Alan Engen.



Corey Engen, 1934



Corey Engen, 2001



**Dedication of Permanent Historic Monument
Commemorating the Site of the First International Ski Competitions
in the
State of Utah**

September 1, 2001

**Organized by The Historic Ecker Hill Monument Committee
in Cooperation with The Park City Historical Society**

PROGRAM

Welcome and Introduction

Jon Weisberg, co-chairman, Historic Ecker Hill Monument Project

Preserving Skiing History

Gregory C. Thompson, director, Utah Ski Archives

Ecker Hill: A Utah Ski Legacy

Alan K. Engen, author, ski historian and Director of Skiing, Alta

Memories of Jumping the Hill

Mel Fletcher, jumper from the '40s

Keynote

Sen. Jake Garn, United States Senator of the State of Utah (retired)

Monument Unveiling

Corey Engen, Captain 1948 US Olympic Classic Combined Team
Lindsey Van, National Jumping Champion, 2001

RECEPTION

**Presentation of the new
Ecker Hill Trophy**

to first day winner of the Continental Cup

Presentation of medallions to Historic Ecker Hill Monument Project members

P.O. Box 555 • PARK CITY • UTAH • 84060

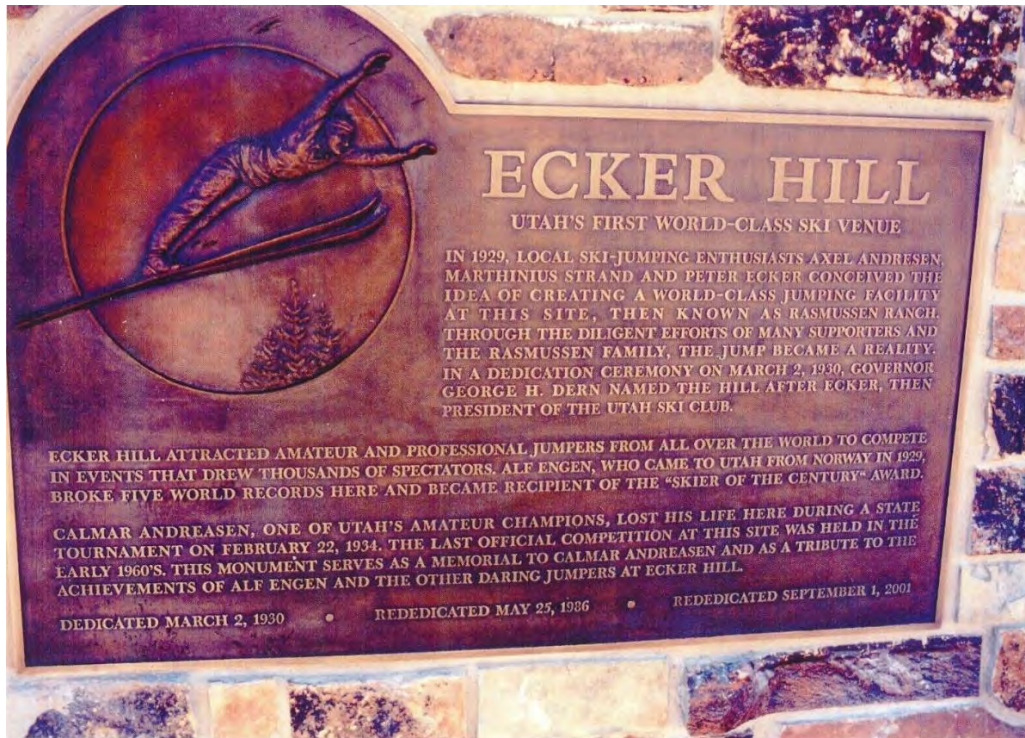


*Alan Engen and Senator Jake Garn,
September 1, 2001*



All in attendance agreed the day's event was very successful. In order link the large ski jumping facility at Utah Olympic Park with the Ecker Hill dedication ceremony, a ski jumping tournament, called the Continental Cup, was held earlier in the day at Utah Olympic Park. The winner of the competition, Alan Alborn, received the first annual "Ecker Hill Trophy" which was presented to him by ski legend, Corey Engen, at the conclusion of the dedication ceremony. A *Salt Lake Tribune* article, dated September 2, 2001, stated, "Alborn was awarded the inaugural Ecker Hill Trophy, given to the winner of the first day of the Continental Cup event at the Utah Olympic Park. The trophy will be on display at the Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center/Alf Engen Ski Museum, set to open next summer at Utah Olympic Park."

In the span of 71 years, Ecker Hill has had three official dedication ceremonies in its honor...March 2, 1930, May 25, 1986, and September 1, 2001. On the front side of the new monument, a large bronze plaque underscores the importance of Ecker Hill best by highlighting the location as "Utah's First World-Class Ski Venue."



On the reverse side of the memorial Ecker Hill monument is another bronze plaque, listing all verified ski jumpers. A listing of the names inscribed the plaque are included in this article, addendum ³



on

THE ECKER HILL STORY CONTINUES IN THE ALF ENGEN SKI MUSEUM

Additional information on the Ecker Hill story can be found at the Joe Quinney Winter Sports Center/Alf Engen Ski Museum. Under the leadership of Connie Nelson, Executive Director, the museum has grown to where it accommodates approximately 500,000 visitors annually. The Ecker Hill displays are readily apparent to visitors, as it constitutes an entry into the body of the ski museum. It is hoped that these exhibits might encourage people from all walks of life and age groups, to come and visit this world-class ski museum facility to learn more about the Intermountain regions rich skiing heritage.





To commemorate ski jumping's importance to Utah's history, in 2007, the State Capital House of Representatives commissioned artist David Koch to create two special murals, both of which highlight a special event that "changed the destiny of the state." One of the two murals featured the Engen brothers - Alf, Sverre, and Corey - and Ecker Hill. Mr. Koch said he visited the Ecker Hill site and when he read the information on the memorial monument, it inspired him and served as a basis for his mural selection concept... based on the Engen Brothers at Ecker Hill. Part of the mural information in the House of Representatives reads: "The Engen brothers came to Utah in the 1930s to compete in ski-jump competitions sponsored by the Utah Ski Club and other promoters. Many record-setting jumps at Ecker Hill and other locations turned the world's eye to Utah as a premier location for skiing. The vision of these men enabled them to literally use materials from the declining mining industry, which had been the staple of Utah's economy for so many years, to build ski jumps and other ski equipment that would help launch Utah's future economy. This mural symbolizes the facts and ideals of these great men with the intent to inspire each of us to reach for the same qualities. These qualities will enable us to be prepared for the great opportunities that are certain to come."



Corey, Sverre and Alf Engen, 1960s



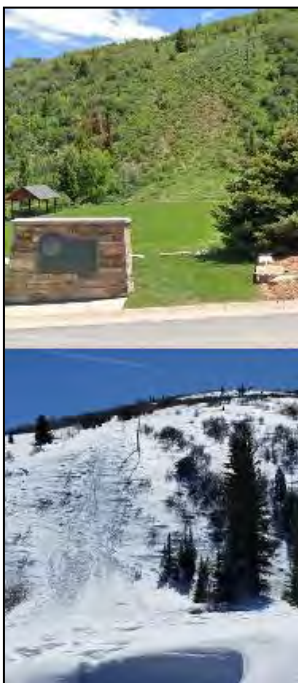
Over 80 years ago, Marthinus (Mark) A. Strand, one of Utah's premier early Utah ski pioneer promoters, made an interesting observation. In a 1940s article titled, *Winter Sports*, he stated, "There are certain conditions and requirements on which the success of winter sports depend. First, good hills and forests with plenty of snow. Second, an even, moderate temperature that is not too severe. All these conditions are to be found in and around Salt Lake City. Nowhere have I seen mountains better adopted for the sport of skiing than here, conditions to meet the requirements of expert and novice alike. Oh, if only our people could see it as I do, that here within our grasp lies Utah's hope for future recognition as the nation's most outstanding center for winter sports. Salt Lake City would

become a byword in the world, and a source of wealth yet untouched. Am I dreaming? No, merely stating facts which some day in the near future will be reality."

Well, Mr. Strand, your vision has, in fact, become reality...and I think you can be very proud to know you played an important role in its success.

Ski Heil.

Ecker Hill 2018



Alf Engen at Ecker Hill, 1995



Ecker Hill 1930

ALF'S FINAL "POSSIBLE" TRIBUTE TO ECKER HILL

As has been mentioned, in the years following the decline of ski jumping at Ecker Hill, homes were developed around the storied site. One of those homes, located at the base of Ecker Hill, was occupied by Karl Jacobsen and his family. As a point of interest, Karl Jacobsen was an outstanding former alpine gelande jumper and won the overall title at the Alta 50th Anniversary Celebration gelande tournament in 1989.

On the same day Alf passed away (July 20, 1997), as I remember, Karl told me that in the early morning hours, a small herd of elk suddenly appeared on the jumping hill, near where the large take-off once stood. The herd, according to Karl, remained in a stoic position, overlooking the lower steep hillside, throughout the remainder of the day. Then, just as the sun started to fade over the distant



mountainside at day's end, they vanished...just as suddenly as they had appeared.

Karl said he wanted me to know about this and said that it could just be coincidental...but to his knowledge, having a herd of elk show up suddenly on Ecker Hill had not happened before...and to have them virtually disappear at dusk, was very unusual.

Was this a final tribute being given to one of Ecker Hill's premier ski-jumping champions? Who knows! But if it was indeed an honorary salute being offered, there could be no finer "majestic icons" than the image of elk to deliver the message.

REFERENCES:

Special appreciation is given to the University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library Ski & Snow Sports Archives, and the Alf Engen Ski Museum Foundation, for images provided in this article... most of which come from the *Alan Engen Ski History Photo Collection*.

In addition, selected pertinent clippings contained in the Alf Engen ski history scrapbooks - (reproduced by the U of U, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections Department) are also acknowledged, covering a voluminous amount of information, via articles manuscripts, documents and photos from the late 1920s through the early 1950s.

Material contained here-in, is to be used for ski history purposes...and authorized by the Alf Engen Ski Museum Foundation.

Book references used:

FOR THE LOVE OF SKIING – A Visual History – by Alan K. Engen

SKIING IN UTAH – A History - by Alexis Kelner

FIRST TRACKS – A Century of Skiing in Utah - by Alan K. Engen and Dr. Gregory C. Thompson

SKIING A WAY OF LIFE – by Sverre Engen

Article references used:

Utah Leaps to Thrilling Leadership in Winter Sports – *The Improvement Era*, Vol. 35, No. 4, February 1932, by Louis W. Larson

Winter Sports - by M.A. Strand

Skiing – The New American Sport - by George Gardner and Austin Burbridge

Ecker Hill and Sun Valley – by Ken Binns – *1938 American Ski Annual*

The Flying Engens – *Utah Life* - by Venessa Zimmer – March/April 2020

Ecker Hill – A Fading Monument – John Mooney – *Salt Lake Tribune* – April 20, 1980

Alf Engen: A Son's Reminiscences – by Alan K. Engen – *Utah Historical Quarterly* – Fall 2001, Volume 69, Number 4

Pro vs. Am: Class Warfare in Early American Ski Competition – by John Lundin – *SKIING HISTORY Magazine*, July-August 2022, Volume 34, Number 4

Memories of Bear Hollow – *Ski Meister* – Summer 2002 issue

Other references acknowledged:

Written response to question: When was the last ski jumping tournament held on storied Ecker Hill? Answer by ski historian and former Tribune Sports Editor, Mike Korologos.

Ecker Hill postscript story provided verbally by Karl Jacobsen.

Related DVDs Covering Ecker Hill history:

DVD: *SKI RIDERS OF THE WASATCH* – *KUTV News* - narrated by Larry Warren

DVD: *ALF ENGEN – An American Ski Legend* – narrated by Alan Engen

DVD: *STORIED ECKER HILL – A look back* – consolidated images from three films – Alan Engen

DVD: *SKI SPORT – Snapshots From The Past* – Produced/narrated by Alan & Barbara Engen

DVD: *ALF ENGEN PROFILE – Grace Under Pressure* – narrated by Paul Kirwin

DVD: *Alan Engen Remembering Ecker Hill* – Produced by Dr. Joe Hatch – Version August 2014, Joe Hatch Film Library

ADDENDUMS:

- 1 Anders Haugan – The man Who Received a Bronze Olympic Medal a Half-century Late but Still is Not Recognized by the IOC for Winning It.
- 2 The Great 1937 National Ski Jumping Championship Debacle
- 3 Ski Jumpers Who Participated at Ecker Hill