

# METHODOLOGY, LITERATURE, AND TEACHING

## The Language of American Skiing, 1840-1940

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The word is half his that speaks  
and half his that hears it  
Montaigne, *Essays*

To understand the modernizing developments of skiing, a linguistic history and analysis of terms used is required. Following the morphological construction of a given term, sometimes taken over entirely from another language, its use became common enough to express real meaning first to the initiated and then to a larger interested public: a new *Gemeinschaft* was in the making. Some words and expressions became talismanic to certain groups, some disappeared, and others changed radically from the time they were first used until the Second World War.

The analysis of Scandinavian terms in the first part of the paper, *Andor*, *Skidor*, *lobere*, *Slalaam*, and especially *Idraet* provide insight into the equipment, technique, style and ambience of early American skiing from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s.

The remarkable and quick shift under Germanic influences came with Arlberg instruction and alpine *gemutlichkeit*. When added to certain British upper-classisms, America's well-to-do at Ivy League colleges, in Boston and New York, found that foreign language -*Vorlage*, *Langlauf*, *Schuss* - expressed the new way to ski and gave them a separate sense of community. Ski Heil!