

# VALUABLE SKI-DOO ARRIVES IN ST.GERMAIN

Early production sled now in Snowmobile Hall of Fame Museum

St.Germain, Wisconsin.....The Snowmobile Hall of Fame and Museum (SHOF) is now home to a rare piece of sled history. After finishing its showing at the world's largest vintage show in Waconia, MN on Feb 1, 2009, the 1960 Ski-Doo with its wooden skis, came home with other rare sleds brought by the St. Germain museum to the show. Five other rare and valuable Ski-Doo sleds were also on display at the promoters request from the extensive collection at the SHOF.

Phil Mickelson, now retired but formerly with the Halvorson organization of Duluth, MN, has been the caretaker of the early Ski-Doo and wrote the following history of the sled. It was presented to the SHOF for all future generations to see and appreciate. The SHOF is located on Hwy 70 W at Sled World Blvd. in St. Germain. For more information contact the SHOF at 715 542-4HOF or [www.snowmobilehalloffame.com](http://www.snowmobilehalloffame.com).

***1960 Ski-Doo model K60, serial number 60190, engine serial number 439776, Kohler 4 stroke-cycle, 7 hp***

*This is a very special 1960 Ski-Doo! Roy Halvorson of Duluth, Minnesota created a business known as Halvorson Tree Co. in 1929. He harvested black spruce trees from peat bogs and swamps, today we call them wetlands, in northern Minnesota and Canada, removed their beautiful tops and treated them to reduce transpiration, hold their needles and enhance their color, added a nutrient filled base and shipped them allover the world as living Christmas trees.*

*Harvesting the trees meant operating in the peat bogs of northern Minnesota was required and hauling the trees out of the bogs was a difficult operation. Roy had employed everything from horses to wide tracked Caterpillar tractors to move his product. He had heard of a company in Valcourt, Quebec that was building a soft terrain machine that just might do the job for him. Roy tracked down a Bombardier dealer in Cochran, Ontario, Canada in 1955 and purchased one of Bombardier Ltd's Muskeg tractors and had it shipped to him. The tractor proved to be a smashing success and Roy quickly realized how valuable the machine was to his company and the saleability of this versatile machine.*

*In 1956, Roy Halvorson flew his Aero Commander airplane to Montreal, Quebec, Canada, drove to Valcourt and met with Armand Bombardier. Upon realizing that Armand spoke little English and Roy spoke no French, Armand referred Roy to Armand's brother, Alphonse-Raymond, who could converse comfortably in English. Roy was able to*

*set up a distributorship for Bombardier's products in Duluth, Minnesota and founded Halvorson Forest Equipment Co. to be headed by his son, Tom, who had recently graduated from college.*

*The tracked vehicles from Bombardier performed admirably and Halvorson Forest Equipment grew rapidly. In the late summer or early fall of 1959, a rail shipment of tractors from Bombardier included a strange, little, yellow machine named Ski-Doo*

*Neither Roy nor Tom said they had ordered the machine and noted that Armand had probably shipped it to them on speculation that it might arouse their sales instincts. Roy argued with Charles Leblanc, Bombardier's chief legal consultant, over whether or not they ever really ordered that first Ski-Doo or if it was just shipped as a sample.*

*The Halvorsons really didn't know who or what the market was for the little machine and simply unloaded it and stored it in their tractor repair shop in Duluth. In March of 1960 Harland Rousse,*

*manager of the tractor shop, asked to have the little machine removed from the shop so he could use the space it occupied.*

*Tom Halvorson had it moved to his garage in Duluth. His home was adjacent to the Northland Country Club in Duluth, a private golf club with lots of open territory and a lot of elevation change. Tom cleaned the dust and dirt off the machine, urged by John Hoff Jr., fired it up and took it out on the golf course on the sparse snow that was remaining. He had an absolute ball with the machine!*

*Tom was smiling from ear to ear that next Monday and announced that this machine was really a fun machine! Roy and other employees of the company and friends rode the strange little Ski-Doo as soon as they could. Everyone was thrilled with what this little machine could do and it was then that Tom and Roy realized that this was not an industrial or work machine, like those they had been marketing equipment to, but was a big boy toy that was really fun to ride when there wasn't much else to do to have fun in the winter.*

*This particular machine, serial number 60190, is that first Ski-Doo shipped to the mid-west of the United States and is the machine that turned Tom and Roy Halvorson's attention from industrial applications to recreational applications.*

*This is also the first Ski-Doo sold by Halvorson Forest Equipment. It was originally sold to John Bero of Duluth, MN who "just wanted it to play around with". Roy Halvorson, several years later, bought that first Ski-Doo back, knowing it had a special place in the history of snowmobiling. This sled was on display at Halvorson Incorporated's office till they were purchased by Bombardier Inc. in 1973. The sled was then displayed in the entry of Bombardier Corp.'s office in Duluth till they moved to Wausau, WI in 1991.*

*When Bombardier's Duluth distribution center was shut down, I was left in charge of the building till the lease on the building expired. Our service department and several service operations that were still functioning in Duluth were then moved to Wausau, WI.*

*I knew the entire history of this 1960 Ski-Doo that I had walked past every day for twenty four years and wasn't about to let it leave Duluth. I kept this Ski-Doo in Duluth and later contacted Tom Halvorson to see if he wanted to have it back. He said that he would rather see it in a significant museum.*

*In 1987, I had worked with Randy Mason, Curator of Transportation, at the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan. The Museum has a 1961 Ski-Doo in their display. The Ford Museum is one of the largest museums in the world and I had thought this might be a great home for this first production run Ski-Doo.*

*The problem was, Detroit was not in the original Halvorson distribution territory. Lower Michigan was provided Ski-Doo distribution by Brooks Equipment, based in Richmond, MI.*

*As I looked for a permanent home for this historic Ski-Doo, I looked to St. Germain, WI at the Snowmobile Hall of Fame. They already had an incredible collection of very special sleds and this was a location right in the middle of the original Halvorson distribution territory.*

*I am pleased that this original Ski-Doo, with its incredible background, will be on display at the Snowmobile Hall of Fame for all of snowmobile history!*

*Phil Mickelson January, 12, 2009*

For additional information, contact Loren Anderson at 715 542-4HOF

NOTE: Photos being sent by separate email