

# John "Snowshoe" Thompson

John Albert Thompson (born Jon Torsteinsson Rue; April 30, 1827 - May 15, 1876), nicknamed Snowshoe Thompson, an early resident of the Sierra Nevada of Nevada and California, was a Norwegian-American considered to be the father of California skiing. Jon Torsteinsson Rue was born on the Rue farm in Austbygdi, Tinn in Telemark, Norway. He was the son of Torsten Olsen Rue (ca. 1760-1829) and Gro Jonsdatter Håkaland (1781-ca. 1846). His father died when Thompson was 2 years old. In 1837, at the age of 10, Thompson came to America with his mother, settling first on a farm in the Fox River settlement in LaSalle County, Illinois. The family subsequently moved on the Norwegian immigrant settlement in Shelby County, Missouri which was under the leadership of Cleng Peerson. In 1839, they were joined by Thompson's brother Tostein (1819-1880) and sister Kari (born 1822). In 1840, they followed Hans Barlien and moved to the Sugar Creek Settlement in Lee County, Iowa. In 1846, Thompson and his brother Tostein came to Dane County, Wisconsin. In 1851, Thompson drove a herd of milk cows to California and settled in Placerville. For a short while he mined in Kelsey Diggins, Coon Hollow and Georgetown. With the small amount he saved, he bought a small ranch at Putah Creek, in the Sacramento Valley. In 1860, Thompson homesteaded a 160-acre ranch in Diamond Valley, south of Genoa in California's Alpine County.

