

# **Adventures: Arctic, Subarctic, and Antarctic Travel**

**George J. Hill, M.D.**

## **Member**

**Yale Outing Club – Life Member. Treasurer, 1952-53. Member, Yale Rifle Team, 1950-52**

**Harvard Mountaineering Club – Life Member since 1955**

**American Alpine Club – Life Member, and Member, New York Section AAC**

**The Explorers Club – Fellow, Class of 1974; now Fellow Emeritus**

**Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, Vt. – Trustee Emeritus – famous for its yearly winter expedition on snowshoes**

## **Consultant**

**Served as The Consultant in Cold Weather Medicine to the Surgeon General of the Navy from 1976 until I retired from the Navy in 1992. Authored the Naval Medical Command’s Instruction “Prevention of Cold Casualties,” issued by command of the Surgeon General in 1986.**

**Served on cold weather research project review panels for the Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda, Md.**

**Served in 1983 as the representative of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy at the post-Falkland Island review of cold weather issues at Royal Navy Headquarters, Portsmouth, England.**

## **New England**

**I have climbed Mount Washington in every month of the year, and I have also climbed Mount Washington by every trail on the mountain. I have skied the Headwall in Tuckerman’s Ravine.**

**Member of 4,000-Footer Club – My wife and I have climbed all peaks in New Hampshire above 4,000 feet. See my article in *Appalachia* (Summer/Fall, 2008) \***

**Ice-climbed in Huntington’s Ravine on Mount Washington: Odell’s Gully, North Gully – all of the major routes except Pinnacle**

**Slept out solo in a blizzard on New Year’s Eve, 1958-59, in Mount Washington Valley with only a sleeping bag and poncho**

**I was President and CEO of our family’s nationally certified Tree Farm in the Mount Washington Valley from 1964 until 2020, when we donated it to the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust.**

## **British Columbia, Canada \***

**As a medical student, served as the trip “doctor” for the 1955 Harvard Mountaineering Club Summer Climbing Camp, in the Southern Selkirk Mountains. In 3 weeks, I participated in two recorded first ascents and one recorded new route, and in several second ascents of peaks and routes. Reported by others in *Journal of the American Alpine Club* and *Harvard Mountaineering* and in William Putnam’s *Climbs in the Southern Selkirks*. My article on this trip was printed in *Canadian Alpine Club Journal*.**

### Rocky Mountains and Far West\*

5 summers – 15 months – between 1948 and 1954 as a ranch hand in Montana, in Wheatland and Meagher Counties, on the north slope of the Crazy Mountains, altitude 5,000-10,000 ft. Almost every day I was on horseback or driving a team of horses. Slept in bunkhouse or log cabin for four summers, and in a sheepherder's wagon for one summer. \*\*\*

Climbed Mt. Baker in Washington State in 1955.

Worked as a deck hand on a 2-man salmon troller, *Adhara*, fishing for King salmon, weighing 30-50 pounds, also known as Chinook salmon. \*

Many climbs of 14,000-foot mountains in Colorado between 1966 and 1972 including Long's Peak and Pike's Peak.

My trophies in Colorado and South Dakota include a ring-neck pheasant\* and a young bull elk, in 1972-3. \*

### Alaska\* \*\*

As the staff surgeon at U.S. Naval Hospital Kodiak Island, Alaska, in 1970, I hiked every trail and climbed every peak within ten miles of Kodiak, solo.

Fished for and smoked my own salmon caught in local streams.

Fished for halibut in the Bay of Alaska and was the Senior Officer Present Afloat (SOPA) on the Navy tug which was the fishing boat.

Hunted successfully for deer on Whale Island, near Kodiak.

Served as Medical Officer for Alaska Rescue Coordinating Center (RCC), dispatching rescue operations over all of Alaska. Assigned myself to be the medical officer on a MedEvac flight from Kodiak to St. George Island, Pribiloff Islands, in the Bering Sea, and flew in C-130 with the patient to Elmendorf Air Base Hospital, Anchorage.

Flew with staff of Kodiak Naval Station in a PBV "Catalina" seaplane to an unnamed lake in central Alaska, piloted by the Navy's last World War II Chief Petty Officer pilot.

### Iceland\*

Stationed at the NATO base, Keflavik, Iceland, in 1990 during the Gulf War, as Surgeon to the U.S. Naval Hospital. Lectured at the University of Iceland Medical School, Reykjavik.

### Norway\*

Served as the Senior Medical Officer and Chief Medical Umpire for the 1982 NATO Winter Exercise in North Norway, "Alloy Express." Based at Bardufoss, Norway. My area of responsibility extended south to Narvik and onto a helicopter support carrier in the North Sea. All of these maneuvers took place north of the Arctic Circle in March 1982. I skied at night with the Bardufoss College Ski Team and during the day with the U.S. Marine Corps.

I also visited Thor Heyderdahl's "Kon Tiki Museum" in Oslo. Heyderdal is a Fellow of the Explorers Club.

## Europe

Ski-toured the Haute Route\* in 1972, from Mount Blanc, France, to the Matterhorn in Switzerland, crossing into Italy and ascending to 14,000 feet on skis several times.

Trekking and hiking in the area of the Eiger and elsewhere in Switzerland\* and Italy on other occasions.

## Nepal

Two trips to Nepal: in 1972 and 1980. In 1972, a brief visit to Kathmandu, for orientation. In 1980, a trek from Lukla to Namche Bazaar to Mount Everest Base Camp, round trip via Pheriche and Tengboche. Ascended over 18,000 feet on three occasions. Our traverse of the Lho La Pass was said to have been the first by Westerners since it was crossed by the 1953 British Everest Expedition. \* \*\*

## Colombia, South America\*

1972: A four-man mini expedition to the Eastern Cordillera, on the border between Colombia and Venezuela, to explore the routes and feasibility of climbing a rock peak known as Pulpito Diablo and a glaciated peak, Pan de Azucar. My report of this trip in *Harvard Mountaineering* led to a response that said we were only the second expedition ever to venture into this area. This was a side trip during my work as a surgeon and consultant in northern Colombia, near the Rio Atrato, at the Darien Gap, on the border with Panama.

## Peru, South America\*

Rafted the Rio Urabamba near Cuzco, and then hiked five days on the Inca Trail from the Urabamba to Macchu Piccu.

## Bolivia, South America\*

Climbed Cochabamba above Lake Titicaca, and day hikes near Santa Cruz and on the *altiplano*.

## Equador, Chile, and Argentina – day hikes \*

## Antarctica

Travel to Antarctica from the Falkland Islands on the Russian ice breaker *Capitan Dranitsyn* in December 1994, visiting and hiking on several islands including Elephant Island, where the crew of Shackelton's *Endurance* had waited for rescue. Landed on and hiked on the Antarctic Peninsula south of the Antarctic Circle before returning to Ushuaia, Tierra de Fuego, Argentina. \*

## Africa

Climbed the trekker's peak on Mount Kenya, in Kenya in 1985, and attempted Mount Kilimanjaro, in Tanzania. One of the members of my climbing party became ill and we aborted the Kilimanjaro climb just below the summit. \*

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I have color slides of many of these experiences (\*), color movies of some (\*\*), and also some power point presentations (\*\*\*). All of the slides could be converted to power point, on request.  
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