

Members of the Mt Logan Expedition - May - June 1925

(Described as a "hodgepodge of Brits, Americans, Canadians, privileged alpinists, World War I veterans, and inveterate Sourdoughs).

Captain Albert MacCarthy (49), leader of the expedition, US Navy Captain, Alpine Club of Canada; Andrew Taylor, the expedition supply manager, transport officer, Alpine Club of Canada; H.F Lambert, deputy leader, a Dominion Land Surveyor on loan from the Department of the Interior; Lt Col W.W. Foster, DSO, (49) McCarthy's partner, former BC deputy minister of public works; Allen Carpe, (31) American Alpine Club, research scientist in radio and telegraph; H.S. Hall Jr., Boston, later president of the American Alpine Club; N.H. Read, Manchester, Massachusetts; R.M. Morgan, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire; Hamilton Mack Laing, (42) National Museum of Canada 'sent by the Canadian government to study the birds and mammals of the Chitina valley and whose uncanny ability to make friends with the wild things of the woods deserves a story in itself'. (Allen Carpe).

Laing remained at the tree line camp collecting samples, making notes, and filming the local flora and fauna, per his directive from the National Museum.

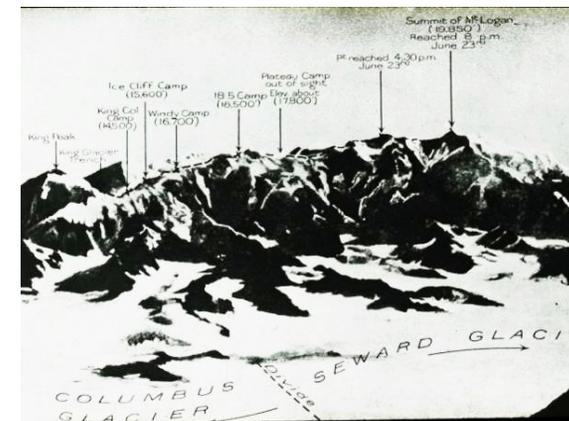


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Presented by the Mack Laing Heritage Society of the Comox Valley
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The First Conquest of Mt Logan, Yukon, May - June 1925

Filmed by Hamilton Mack Laing (National Museum of Canada)
and Allen Carpe (American Alpine Club)



Mt Logan, was named by Israel C Russell, of the US Geological Survey, in 1890. It was named for Sir William Edward Logan (1798-1875), who formed the Geological Survey of Canada. It has a massif with 11 peaks over 5,000 m (16,400 ft) and is the highest peak in Canada and the second highest in North America (after Mt McKinley in Alaska). In 1925, Mt Logan was the highest unclimbed peak on the North American continent.

The summit is 19,551 ft/ 6050 m high (from a GPS in 1992). It is 16 miles to the summit from 9,000 ft. It is 100 miles around at the base - the largest circumference of any non-volcanic mountain on the planet. It is 3,000 miles further north than Everest. Eternal ice and snow stretch 16,000 ft (compared to Everest's 12,500), and it looms 14,000 ft above the biggest glacial area in the world, apart from the Antarctic and Greenland.

The 1925 Expedition

Subscriptions totaling \$12,790 had been collected by the Alpine Club of Canada. The expedition was to be filmed, so Hamilton Mack Laing travelled to Seattle, to learn from Pathé how to use the 16 mm movie camera. He was authorized to shoot 4,000 feet. Allen Carpe would film the climb, using a camera designed for extreme cold.

The preparatory expedition of caching food and supplies began in February 1925, at the height of an exceptionally cold winter, with an unusually heavy snowfall. The freighting party of six men, six horses, and three teams of seven sled dogs, itself needed more than 5 tons of supplies for its-three-month task. After this preparatory phase, Captain Albert MacCarthy, the expedition leader, wrote: *"We had traveled 950 miles in 10 weeks under arctic conditions (returning April 26), and cached 8,700 lbs of provisions, feed and equipment."*

He waited in the coastal town of Cordova for the climbing team, who arrived by steamer, then they all took the train to McCarthy.

The 10 horses acquired by the expedition were needed as pack animals, so the men had to walk 100 miles up the valley of the Chitina River before reaching the ice-fields.

They left on May 12, 1925. On May 22nd, the team took to the ice, the last night on land for six weeks. It was another 100 miles to the top. On May 26 they reached the final cache at 6,050 ft.

Camps: 1) Turn 2) Advance Base Cache; 3) Cascades - elevation 7,800 ft.; 4) Quartz Ridge - 8,800 ft.; 5) Observation Camp; 6) King Col Camp, 13,875 ft.; 7) To King Col Camp; 8) Windy Camp; 10) 18.5 Camp; 11) Plateau Camp, 17,800 ft.

Thin air made them all less hungry and prone to dehydration (from hyperventilation), plus euphoria/depression.

Perspective vanishes on ice, so the team carried willow switches. When planted in the snow, the landscape changes because the eye has something of recognized stature to focus on. The willow switches were placed about 100 feet apart.

Conquered: At 8 pm on June 23, 1925, MacCarthy, Lambert, Carpe, Foster, Read and Taylor stood on the summit for the first time. They remained there for only half an hour, because of worsening weather. It had taken them 63 days from McCarthy. The return trip was harrowing and several men suffered from frostbite. They built rafts on the Chitina River, returning to McCarthy on July 15th.

Equipment

Each man carried a 16 lb Arctic eiderdown bedroll. Two could be fastened together to make a bag about 6 feet wide. For 12 days, four of the climbers slept together in one of these.

They all wore two sets of the heaviest woollen underwear, with long legs and sleeves; windproof canvas trousers; up to three woollen shirts; at least one sweater; a hooded, knee-length parkas of windproof drill cloth; a woollen balaclava helmet ; two pairs of wool gloves with windproof overgauntlets.

The tents were 8 sq.ft at the base, 7 ft high at one pole, tapering to 18 in. at the other end, with a sewn-in waterproof groundsheet. Each weighed 10 lbs and slept four men. They slept on individual 8 lb air-mattresses of heavy-gauge rubber, inflated with a bicycle pump. Food and supplies had to be carried in shifts to every new camp, until the final push to the summit. On the seventh day, the team reached the edge of the Chitina glacier and the horses were sent back to McCarthy. There were now 80 miles of glaciers and 17,000 feet of altitude separating them from the summit of Mt. Logan. Their backpacks were very heavy. Carpe's pack, with the expedition's camera equipment (the first to do so until the Mt Everest expeditions), weighed 75 lbs, Lambert's 103 lbs.