

**Volume 11**

**Number 032**

**Quest for Mt. Everest - I**

**Lead: The highest point on earth is the peak of Mt. Everest, part of a geologic eruption along the crest of the Himalayas on the border between Nepal and Tibet. Until 1953 no one had been able to go up there.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: It is known as Chomolungma, Goddess Mother of the World, and it towers 29,035 feet above sea level, dwarfing the glaciers that wrap themselves around its base. Until 1852 when its true height was determined at a distance by an India**

**surveyor, the mountain was known simply as Peak 15. In 1865, it was named for Sir George Everest, previously Surveyor General of India.**

**Though many had tried, there is no evidence any scaled the peak to its top until 1953 when an expedition organized by the British Royal Geographical Society supported a successful assault on the mountain by Tensing Norgay, a Sherpa guide, and Edmund Hillary, a raw-boned New Zealand beekeeper. Their accomplishment electrified the world, but it was the culmination of many attempts at climbing Everest and initiated a steady stream of climbers that would in the following decades top the mountain.**

**Since the Himalayas began rising out of the Eurasian tectonic plate 30,000,000 years ago, that part of the mountain massif that would come to be called Everest has continued to reach skyward, slowly, ever so slowly. Since the 1990s satellite measuring estimates that the peak climbs upward a fraction of an inch each year as well as creeping a few inches to the northeast. What made it such a challenge to climb is the mountain's structure and its isolation. It is built like a pyramid with three sides or faces covered by ice or hard snow for most of the year and it is far off the beaten path. Next time: The early assaults.**

# **At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## **Resources**

**Dyhrenfurth, Gunter Oskar. *To the Third Pole: the History of the High Himalaya*. London, UK: W. Laurie Publishing, 1955.**

**Hunt, Sir John. *The Ascent of Everest*. New York, NY: Dutton, 1954, 1993.**

**Morris, Jan. "Finally, the Top of the World," *Smithsonian* 14 (1, May 2003): 54-63.**

**Royal Geographical Society, *Everest: Summit of Achievement*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2003.**

**Unsworth, Walt. *Everest: A Mountaineering History*. London, UK: Baton Wicks, 2000.**

**Younghusband, Sir Frances. *The Epic of Mount Everest*. New York, NY: Longmans Green and Company, (1926).**

**<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/everest/>**

**<http://www.panoramas.dk/fullscreen2/full22.html>**

**Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.**