

Ray Anderson (1918-2006) was a seasoned veteran of Ararat exploration. He recalled the days of Dr. Lawrence Hewitt and Eryl Cummings, when permission to climb in and around the Ahora Gorge was more commonplace.

Chapter 19

1973-1993 Ray Anderson



Ray Anderson studying Mount Ararat through a telescope 1982
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich

An innocent trip to a bookstore in Los Angeles one Saturday in 1972 changed my life forever. After selecting several books from the shelves, I took them to the cashier and while waiting for her to finish with the customer ahead of me, I thumbed through a book from a stack beside the cash register. It was *Noah's Ark: Fable or Fact* by Eryl and Violet Cummings. What I saw in the couple of minutes of browsing caused me to add a copy to my other purchases. When I got home and read it through without stopping, I was hooked! I was an instant "arkeologist!"

In 1972, I called Eryl at his home in Farmington, New Mexico, and asked how I might join one of his expeditions to Mt. Ararat. He was not very encouraging. During our conversation he mentioned one of his expedition partners, Dr. Lawrence Hewitt, a medical doctor in Huntsville, Alabama.

He suggested I contact Dr. Hewitt as he was putting together an expedition for the next summer (1973). Dr. Hewitt was an experienced Ararat explorer, having been on the mountain four or five times searching for the ark. I did call Dr. Hewitt, and found in the course of our conversation that we had a mutual friend in Huntsville. His medical partner was my wife's cousin. The next day he called and told me I could join their next expedition.

In the next few years I was on two Ararat searches with Dr. Hewitt and a friend of his, Jerry Williams. During these early years we usually confined our efforts to the northeast, north, and northwest sides of the mountain. We also concentrated on areas below 14,500 feet elevation, as all early evidence, such as it was, seemed to indicate that was where the Ark would be found.

During these periods, Dr. Hewitt had very little difficulty securing permits to search anywhere we cared to on Ararat. We would leave Ahora village and go onto the mountain with only one Kurdish guide and a Turkish soldier. Dr. Hewitt always brought a good supply of basic medical supplies and medicines, and when we stopped on the mountain at the Kurdish shepherd camps, the natives would appear from out of the hills bringing their families for his medical attention.

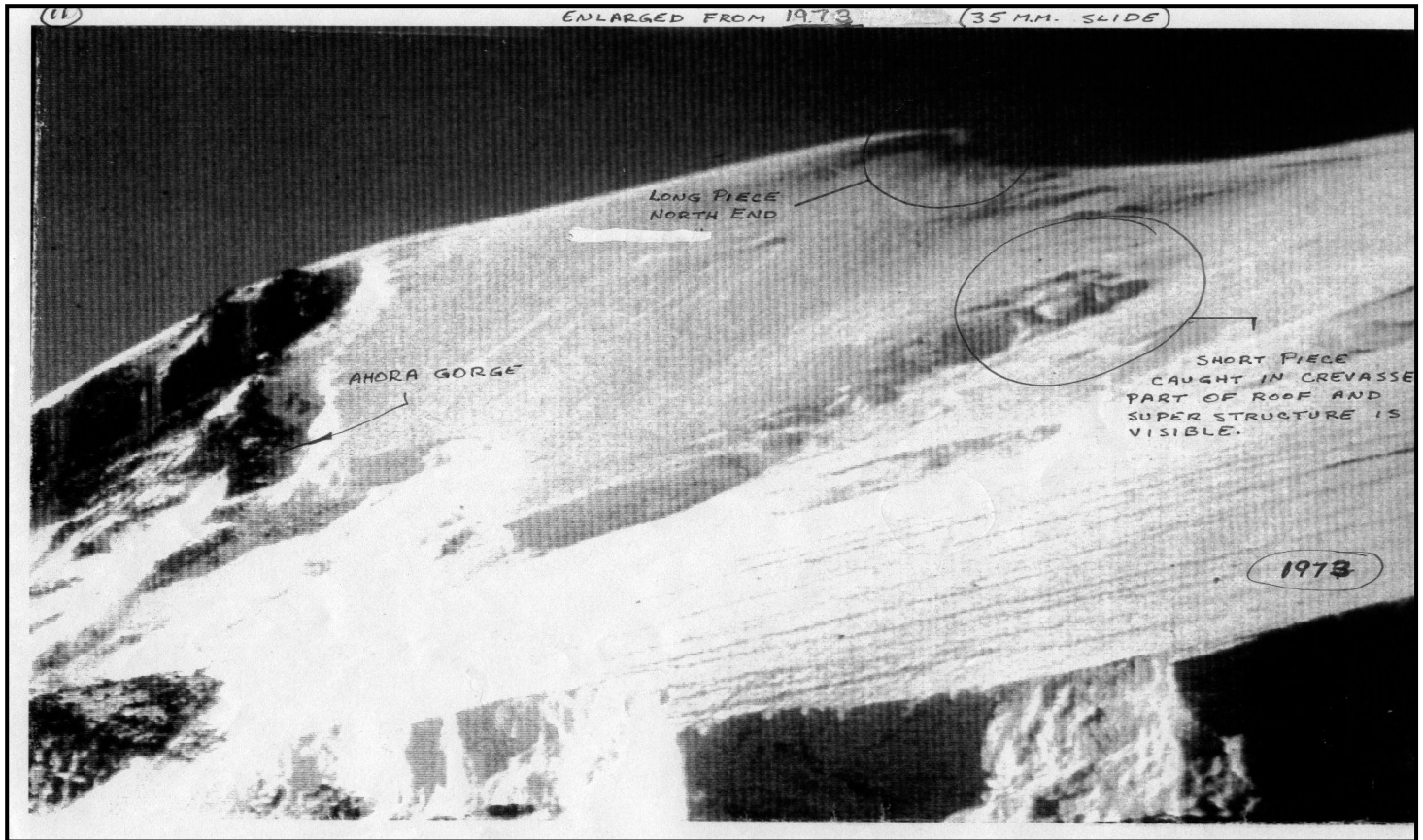


Ray Anderson on Northeast Side of Ararat 1983
Courtesy of Ray Anderson

From the beginning, some of the early search groups scorned anything coming from Adventist efforts, feeling that God would surely not reward them with credible information. To this day, I think some are still uncomfortable with my findings because it came through my association with Adventists. I had a close relationship with Hewitt, Williams, their families and friends.

Around 1984, I received a telephone call from my old climbing companion, Jerry Williams, the Adventist minister. In a conversation with a high official of his church, the subject of his involvement in the Ark search arose. This official told him that he was working with a new member of their lay-missionaries who was a former U-2 pilot but was now out of the service. He had shared some of his experiences as a pilot during the 1960's with this official. Some was still classified but he felt he could tell him about seeing what he believed was a section of Noah's Ark. He had been flying a very low-level photographic mission along the border of Turkey near Mt. Ararat. Another highflying U-2 was flying a very high flight to decoy radar away from him. Before heading back to his base in Turkey, he made a low sweep up the north side of Ararat, just to the right of the Ahora Gorge. As he swept across the mouth of the gorge at a very low level, he looked out of the left side of his cockpit and saw at the top of the ridge, a bowl shaped formation, which he also described as an inverted fish hook. Inside this, against the wall, he saw protruding from the glacier, about 20-25 ft. of what he believed to be a man made structure. It was rectangular in shape and had some damage. He made a quick turn and flew over it again, getting his left wing tip within 200-300 ft. of it. He was convinced it was man made and being a religious man, concluded it had to be Noah's Ark. Through church connections, my friend Williams was able to contact the man who confirmed the story.

Sometime later I contacted Williams again and he refused to talk about it, saying that I must have misunderstood him. He claimed no recollection of the conversation. I tried to locate the pilot through the Adventist church offices but found no one who knew anything about him.



This is a color copy enlargement of a slide taken across the top of the Ahora Gorge. The Ray Anderson object long piece is circled at the top of the photo. The Ray Anderson short piece is circled at the center of the photo which is the disruption in the Abich II glacier. At the upper end of the disruption is a box-like structure. This is the area specified by Satellite Remote Sensing Analyst George Stephen III and given by Don Shockey and Robin Simmons to Ahmet Ali Arslan in 1989. Arslan photographed the same area and it appears that this Hewitt/Anderson slide and the Arslan photo may be showing the same object. This slide, taken in 1973 (probably August) by explorer Dr. Lawrence Hewitt, appears to show fresh snow on the ground. Note that Ed Behling claimed to see a similar structure in late May/early June of 1973 and the Navy's Al Shappell sighting was in 1974.

Courtesy of Eryl Cummings via Dr. Lawrence Hewitt via Ray Anderson 1972

I traced the pilot to his hometown in Louisiana and located his father who confirmed that his son had been a U-2 pilot but had given him orders to not reveal his name or location. The father thought it was something about security and classified information. I believe the pilot's story because several years later, Ed Davis told me the object (long piece) the Kurds showed him was resting against a wall of a bowl or horseshoe shaped formation just above the mouth of the Ahora Gorge at the top of a ridge. Just as the pilot described it and as my picture shows it. The Kurds told Ed that a few feet of the north end is exposed almost every late summer regardless of the winter temperatures and ice cover, because very hot winds sweep up the north slope of the mountain coming from Armenia and the hot summer plains. This will melt the ice off a few feet of the end of the ark.

Dr. Hewitt's team felt no need to search above about 14,000 feet, so needless to say we found no evidence of the ark. Shortly after returning from our second journey Dr. Hewitt died, and from 1976 through 1993 I went on five more expeditions with various groups, including one with simply my son John and myself. On one trip I was fortunate enough to be included in three flights around the mountain in a Turkish Air Force aircraft secured by Apollo astronaut Jim Irwin. The granddad of all Ark searchers, Eryl Cummings, was with us and I believe it was his last trip to the mountain. Both Eryl and his wife Violet have since passed away.

None of these expeditions, including the aircraft search, revealed any clues concerning the location of the ark. But we were still looking below the 14,500-foot level. Around 1990 I began having serious doubts that the Ark was hidden

below that altitude. By the time of our 1986-87 expedition every square foot of the mountain below that altitude had been thoroughly explored.

During my association with Dr. Hewitt, we had exchanged many photos and slides, including some he had taken on searches before I met him. I have a low-power binocular microscope, which can be used to study 35mm slides. It reveals small details not seen even when the slide is projected onto a screen or viewed through the usual viewer.

I decided to take another look at my collection of Ararat slides through the scope and examine the areas above 14,000 feet. About halfway through the slides, I came to one taken by Dr. Hewitt in 1973. As I examined the upper right-hand corner at about the 15,500-foot level, BINGO! I saw what appeared to be a small section of the end of the Ark protruding from the glacier.

I took this slide to a photo technician in Nashville who specializes in enlarging and optimizing 35mm slides. She became very interested in the Ark and spent many hours bringing out as much detail as possible in the object and the surrounding area. Unfortunately this slide was taken quite some distance from the object and the camera was pointed across the Ahora Gorge at another area about 2,000 feet lower.

The technician was able to enlarge the object and its immediate surroundings onto both 35mm and 4 x 5 transparencies. I have studied both of these under my scope for many hours and am convinced it is a small section of the north end of the long section of the ark.

I mention the long section specifically because of another event that occurred shortly after my find on the slide. I decided to try and contact Ed Davis and get firsthand details of what he had really seen on his trip to Ararat in 1943.

I got acquainted with Ed over the phone, eventually becoming a very good friend with him, and we talk with each other every few weeks. Ed had convinced me that the Ark is in two pieces. He described in detail where the short piece is located in relation to the long piece. That convinced me I should take another look at the original Hewitt slide showing the north end of the long piece. Ed had told me that the short piece is about 110-125 feet of the south end of the Ark which has slid down the glacier about 500 feet below the long piece. It is captured in a large crevasse with one end butted against a rock wall under the ice.



Slide scan of upper Ahora Gorge and Abich II depression 1972
 Courtesy of Eryl Cummings via Dr. Lawrence Hewitt via Ray Anderson

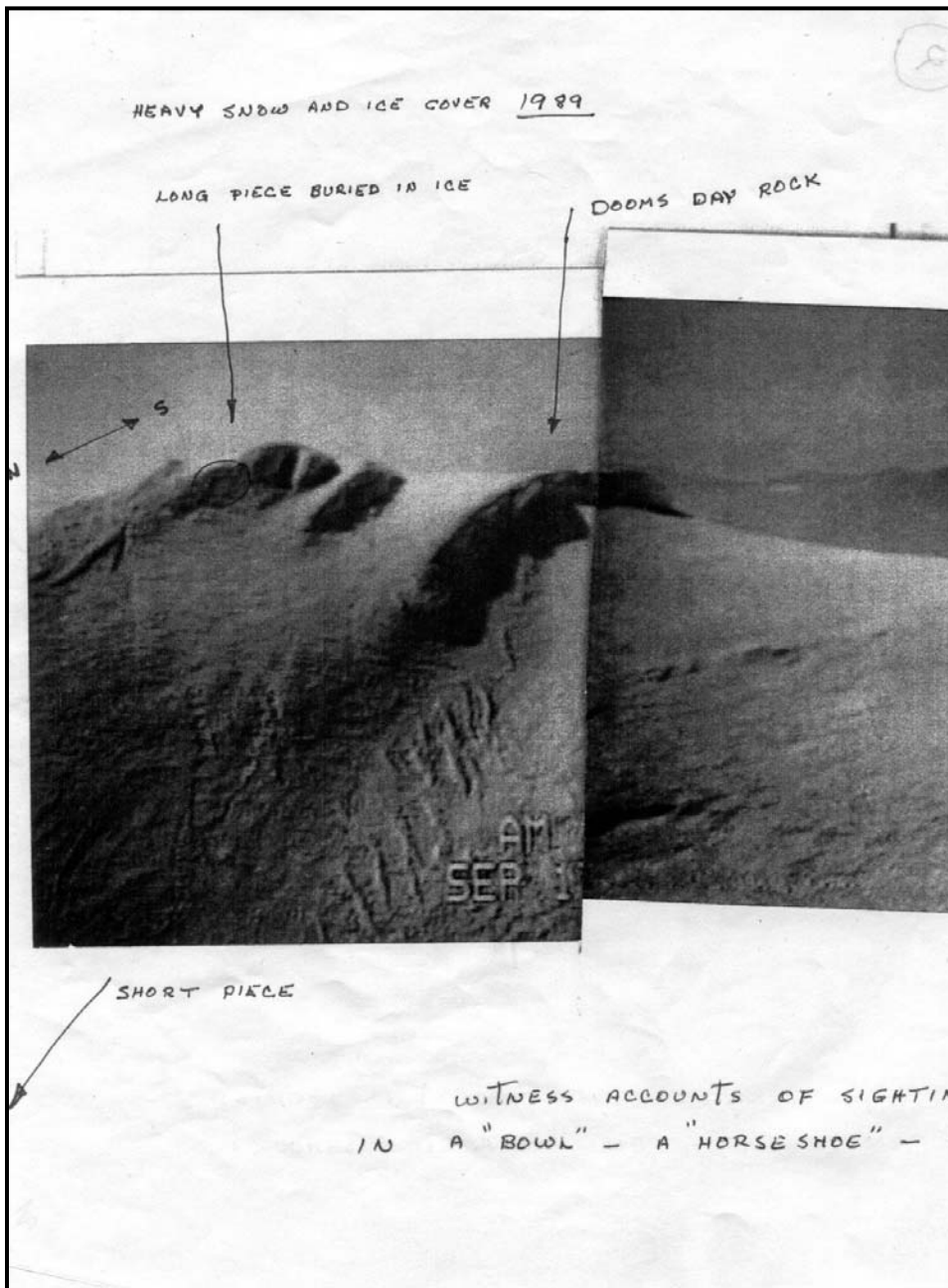


Photo showing the area of the Ray Anderson long piece object 1989
Courtesy of Ray Anderson

I looked down the glacier to about the 15,000-foot level and there was the crevasse with an object in it that appeared to be a small section of the Ark roof and superstructure. My photo technician enhanced this photo as she had the slide of the north end of the long piece and produced transparencies showing detail that has convinced me that it is the short piece that had broken off the south end of the ark.

I have seen a number of photos and slides taken of this area during other years, and while the outline of the crevasse is clearly visible, my 1973 slide is the only one with enough ice melted off to show the object. I have seen photos and slides taken in other years that do show the outline of the north end of the long piece, so evidently the ice melts off it quite often.

I am convinced the long piece of the Ark is resting on a rock shelf, inside a bowl or horseshoe-shaped valley, sometimes described as a fishhook. It is at about the 15,500-foot elevation. The short piece is down the slope of the glacier at about the 15,000-foot elevation, and this is usually covered with ice.

I realize that other explorers feel the Ark is at other locations, and I respect their views. I feel that we must all continue our efforts to reach the sites with equipment and witnesses who will be credible to the world. I expect that while the tensions continue to exist around the mountain, none of us will get permission to make ground approaches to the sites.

Our best hope to find the truth seems to be helicopter flights up to the glacier. This, unfortunately,

makes any expedition quite expensive and complicated. I believe, however, that God will in his timing overcome all of these problems and allow the Ark to be exposed to the world in order to help people build their faith.

I consulted with cubit experts, one in particular who is an Orthodox Jew with a solid background of Jewish history of the Torah, the sages and elders in Hebrew history. I'm now confident that Moses was thinking of his Egyptian education and their definition of a cubit, 20.6". There was no established Hebrew cubit of 18" at the time of his writing.

About a year ago I decided to try and get some accurate measurements of the two objects showing in the upper "horseshoe" formation and lower in the crevasse. The original 1972 picture was taken by Eryl Cummings, now deceased, and investigation indicated he had given his camera to one of his Kurdish guides but I was able to talk to his son in law who was with him when he purchased the Topcon camera. With his remembrance of camera details and appearance, I located a camera shop with an elderly employee who had sold and used all models of the Topcon. He readily identified Eryl's as a model with a 135 mm lens and said he personally had used that model many times.

Using this information, a very accurate topographical map of Ararat, a formula used in determining size of objects in a given picture, and the enlargement factor in enlarging my slide from 35 mm to a very large 1211 mm, I was able to take the measurements from this large image of the crevasse object. This is the object which Ed Davis said his Kurdish



Eryl Cummings and Jim Irwin 1983
Courtesy of Bob Stuplich

guides had described as the piece that broke off the south end of the Ark section resting in the upper formation and slid down the slope into the crevasse. Because of the approximately four foot width of my scanned slide, I feel that the measurements taken with a millimeter gauge are very accurate.

I then made the same measurement on the object showing in the upper formation. The two sets of figures were then fed into my formula and the results were somewhat surprising. I had felt for several years that Moses must have been thinking of the Egyptian cubit, 20.6 inches, when he wrote the account of the flood. He was educated in the Egyptian schools and certainly had drilled into him, the size of that cubit. The Hebrew cubit, 18 inches, had not been established at the time of his writing of the flood. My formula produced the figures shown.

S = Size of object in FEET

d = Distance from camera to objects in METERS.

s = Size of object in picture in METERS

f = Focal length of lens in METERS

$$S = \frac{(d \times s)}{(f \times 34.6)} \times 3.28$$

34.6 = enlargement factor going from 35 mm to 1211 mm.

The Egyptian cubit sizes matched almost perfectly, giving these sizes. W 85' x H 51' x L 515'. The object showing in the upper formation measured 23 ft. wide. This measurement taken from the four foot enlargement of the original 35 mm slide taken in 1972. Another view of the upper object was taken from the air in 1988. I believe this is the broken end of the superstructure which protrudes a few feet beyond

the roof of the main structure which is buried in ice below it. This dark colored section seems to melt off and become visible frequently. Ed's guides said it became visible almost every year for a short time when hot summer winds blew from the north plains and swept up the glacier. Ed Davis told me his Kurdish guides described the Ark as originally resting on the rock bottom of the upper formation described to me by Ed as looking like a horseshoe when they walked around the rim. The shorter section represents the south end that broke off during an earthquake and slid down to be caught in the crevasse. The middle section represents the one shown to Ed and is still buried under the ice covering the formation. The longer represents a section which may have broken into two pieces but seems to have disappeared. Obviously this resting place offered perfect protection from moving down the glacier with the ice flow and the east wall of the formation prevented it from being shaken into the Ahora Gorge during the thousands of years it had rested there. Many alleged sightings report the structure is surrounded by rock walls. My slide of 1972 seems to be the only picture available that shows the upper formation and the crevasse partially uncovered.

