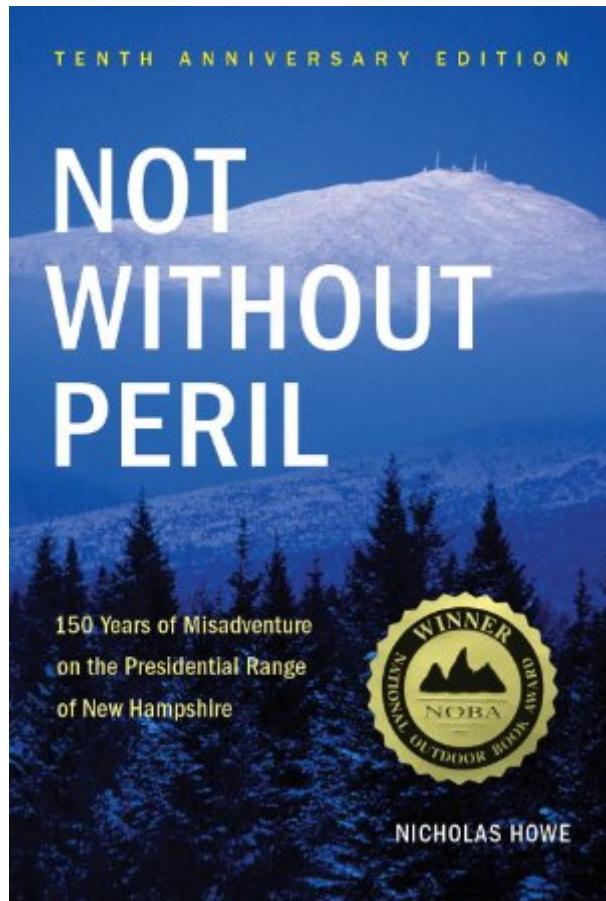


The book was found

# Not Without Peril



## Customer Reviews

Those who grew up in part, as author Nicholas Howe did, climbing Mt. Washington, remember well their first experiences of encountering crosses and other memorials within an easy calm-weather walk and even within fog-free sight of shelter on this mountain. Brief accounts are shared in low somber voices among hikers of victims that gave up and lay down to die of hypothermia, leading neophytes visiting the mountain in warm, clear, placid weather to wonder how such a thing could repeatedly happen. "Not Without Peril" brilliantly fleshes out historical background and details of nineteen mostly long-forgotten climbing tragedies, with dogged, disciplined library research and interviews. Most of these people who did die did not succumb to falls off cliffs or ropes. They most often died of exposure, on or near ordinary hiking trails, in treacherous weather that may have blown in with little warning, usually between May and October. The clearly labeled, story-specific topographical trail maps are particularly helpful and often omitted from other books of this genre. The key lessons (carry proper synthetic-fiber or wool cold-weather clothing at all times of the year, and descend immediately when weather conditions threaten or begin to deteriorate) are clear. Most victims ignored both of these rules, as countless trampers more fortunate than they still do, at their peril. The most compelling account in the book is its most detailed one, that from 1986 of Don Barr, who made a classic series of ill-advised decisions and collapsed from exposure during a raging late-August winter storm, half a mile from and above the AMC Madison Hut. The hut staff, 52 hut guests, and rescuers converging on the scene were unable to help in time.

Not Without Peril details the deaths and mishaps that have claimed over a hundred lives of hikers on Mt. Washington and the surrounding Presidential Range Mountains. I bought this book in the Mt. Washington Observatory bookstore at the top of the mountain - fresh from the thrilling views observed on the way up to the 4,000 foot level and the cold enveloping mist of the ever present fog at the peak (one wonders why so many flock to a mountain top whose view is obscured 300 out of 360 days a year on average - but the views on the lower levels are spectacular). And I have to agree with one reviewer who stated that this book will primarily be of interest to those who know the Presidential Range. I would add avid outdoors types to this list, also. The author writes an interesting book about death and mayhem on the mountain. The chapters cover a hapless (nearly always) hiker or hiking party who met usually with death at the place billed as having the world's worst weather (and the highest ever recorded wind speed of 231 miles per hour). Mt. Washington is the convergence point for three jet streams and its altitude combined with location produces wild, cold, and snowy weather with high winds very consistently. Most of those who died did so because they

ignored warnings or were foolish in estimating their ability to survive in extreme weather or took very bad risks. That central theme runs through nearly all the stories. This book is in some ways a warning to those who would take risks in the outdoors - don't; and even if the weather reports are fine, be prepared with shelter and food and most importantly let others know your route. The writing is fine, though some of the stories picked are very short.

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