**Hiking Paragraphs**

**Long Distance Hikers Who Made History**

1. Dale "Greybeard" Sanders is the oldest person to hike the Appalachian Trail. He completed the 2,190-mile trek on October 26, 2017, at the age of 82. Sanders started his journey in January 2017 when he hiked a short section of the trail in Georgia. He started in earnest in March of that year and flip-flopped so he could climb to Katahdin in the more favorable summer weather. Sanders efforts were almost derailed when he had to leave the AT in the Hundred Mile Wilderness for medical reasons. Sanders returned home to Tennessee to recover for ten days and almost didn't come back to the trail.
2. John Muir is arguably one of the best-known naturalists and conservationists of the 20th century. Born in Scotland in 1838, Muir's family immigrated to the United States in 1849, settling in Wisconsin. From his youth, Muir was prone to wandering and exploration. He eventually settled in San Francisco and fell in love with the Sierra Nevadas. Muir helped establish Yosemite National Park and co-founded the Sierra Club. His journal writings from the time he spent in the Sierras are famous for their vivid details and inspiring prose about the natural world.
3. Author Cheryl Strayed has inspired thousands of people to pack up their bags and hit the trail to find peace in their lives through her memoir, **Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail**.Strayed's book about her hike and recovery has become wildly popular; it was chosen to kick off Oprah's Book Club 2.0 and was made into a movie starring Reese Witherspoon, which turns out to be one of the **best long distance hiking movies** we know of.
4. Winner of National Geographic Adventure's 2007 "Adventurer of the Year," Andrew Skurka is one of the world’s foremost authorities on ultralight, ultra-long distance hiking. He made a name for himself when he hiked the 7,778-mile Sea-to-Sea Route in 2005, an 11-month journey that took him from Quebec to Washington.
   1. In 2017, Skurka followed this epic adventure with the 6,875-mile Great Western Loop that traverses five long-distance hiking trails through 12 National Parks and more than 75 wilderness areas. He completed this loop in 208 days at a record-breaking pace of 33 miles per day. Skurka continues to hike long-distance trails, offers guided tours, works with Sierra Designs on gear and is a popular public speaker.
5. Christian Thomas, aka Buddy Backpacker, is one of the youngest people to hike the Triple Crown (Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, and Continental Divide Trail). Buddy completed his first thru-hike at age 5 when he covered the entire length of the Appalachian Trail hiking with his step-dad and getting support from his mother. Two years later, Buddy was on the trail again conquering the Pacific Crest Trail along with his parents. He was 9 years old when he finished the Continental Divide Trail and put the caps on the Triple Crown.
6. Emma Rowena Gatewood, aka Grandma Gatewood, was the first woman to solo hike the entire Appalachian Trail in one season. She completed the feat in 1955 at age of 67. Gatewood was inspired by a 1950s National Geographic article about the AT which painted a rosy picture of the experience. She told her adult children that she was going for a walk and started the thru-hike wearing a simple pair of Keds sneakers, and carrying nothing but a blanket, a raincoat and a plastic sheet inside a homemade denim bag. News of her journey spread and she was featured by the Associated Press and Sports Illustrated. She hiked the AT a total of three times and also covered the 2,000 mile Oregon Trail before she passed at age 85, in 1973.
7. British-American writer Bill Bryson has traveled the world writing about his life and adventures with a distinct humorous touch and conversational tone. While he was visiting the United States, Bryson decided to hike the Appalachian Trail with his friend Stephen Katz, an overweight, struggling alcoholic. Bill Bryson retraced their chaotic 800-mile journey in his book **A Walk in the Woods**, published in 1998. The book was eventually adapted into a comedy film starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte in the roles of Bryson and Katz.
8. George "Billy Goat" Woodard has been on the trail since 1988, logging over 48,000 miles to date. Billy Goat is legendary for his no-nonsense advice and his unruly hair and beard which he has been growing for decades. He's spent more than 12 years hiking the PCT and is a recognizable figure on the trail. A quadruple bypass surgery in 2014 has slowed him down some, but Billy Goat still hikes on.
9. Jennifer Pharr Davis is a long-distance hiker who has set a string of fastest known times for multiple trails in the past decade. Pharr Davis completed her first thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail in 2005 and wrote about the journey in her book *Becoming Odyssa*. Pharr Davis set out again on the AT to beat the women's and men's record in 2011, which she did. She hiked the full length of the AT in only 46 days, 11 hours and 20 minutes. Following this record, Pharr Davis was nominated as one of National Geographic's Adventurers of the Year in 2012 and wrote a memoir entitled Called Again about her record-breaking hike. She held the AT fastest known time for four years before Scott Jurek broke it in 2015.
10. Bill Irwin was the first blind person to hike the entire Appalachian Trail. He set out with his guide dog Orient on a journey many considered to be crazy. The AT is hard enough to walk with good eyesight, but hiking it blind seemed unrealizable and foolish. Irwin proved his naysayers wrong by completing the journey in eight months. By the end of the trip, Irwin had fallen so much that he wore shin guards to protect his legs from the inevitable knee-crushing stumbles. Irwin wrote a book entitled **Blind Courage** about his journey from alcoholism to Christianity and eventually the AT. The book is in the process of being adapted for the screen.

Source: https://www.greenbelly.co/pages/most-famous-hikers-of-all-time

**Colorado 14ers Paragraphs**

1. Colorado is home to 58 of the nation’s mountain peaks taller than 14,000 feet in elevation. Known colloquially as “Fourteeners,” these mountains dominate Colorado’s skyline and shape the way people live and identify with nature in the Rocky Mountain West. Throughout Colorado’s history, these majestic mountains have captured the human imagination and have been used for everything from hunting grounds to climate research outposts.
2. Colorado’s Fourteeners are dispersed throughout the state’s Rocky Mountain backbone, rising in the San Juan, Sawatch, Elk, Mosquito, Tenmile, San Miguel, Sangre de Cristo, Front, and Gore mountain ranges. According to the Colorado Geological Survey, the tallest is Mount Elbert at 14,440 feet and the smallest is Sunshine Peak at 14,001 feet.
3. In addition to being over 14,000 feet in elevation, a peak must stand 200 feet to 500 feet higher than the mountain’s next-highest feature to qualify as a Fourteener. There is some disagreement among mountaineers over how much taller than its neighbors a mountain needs to be for inclusion in the list of Colorado Fourteeners, but most agree that any peak over 14,000 feet should be considered such.
4. Responsibility for managing most of Colorado’s Fourteeners falls to the US Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. Two exceptions are Longs Peak, which lies within the boundaries of Rocky Mountain National Park, and Culebra Peak, which is privately owned. Mountains like Longs Peak and those in the Elk and Gore Ranges are the most popular because they are closer to Denver, but Coloradans have been known to drive many hours to experience the thrill of climbing new peaks.
5. Some of Colorado’s Fourteeners require specialized mountaineering gear, but most can be summitted without the assistance of rock-climbing equipment. For example, Pikes Peak outside Colorado Springs can be summitted in a car or by cog railway. Nearly all of the Fourteeners have some history of mining activity and a few, like Pikes Peak, have hosted ski areas. Today, Fourteeners figure as prominently in the hearts and minds of Coloradans as they do in the state’s rugged skyline.
6. Archival and archaeological evidence suggests that Ute and Arapaho peoples were some of the state’s first mountaineers. Though most of these native hikers left little behind that might serve as proof of their ascents, stories like that of an Arapaho elder named Old Man Gun Griswold and his eagle trap can give us an idea of why Native Americans would have wanted to climb Fourteeners. In 1914, Old Man Griswold’s son, also named Gun Griswold, made the trip from the Wind River Reservation to Rocky Mountain National Park to visit his old hunting grounds.
7. On this trip, the younger Griswold ran into explorer Oliver Toll and told the story of a trap his father built on Longs Peak’s 14,259-foot summit. According to Toll, Old Man Gun would climb to the top of Longs Peak and wait patiently in a stone shelter for a passing eagle to come investigate a coyote carcass he would leave out as bait. When an eagle lit near the carcass, Old Man Gun would leap from his shelter and grab the eagle by the feet. Though subsequent explorers did not see any physical evidence of Griswold’s blind, anyone who has been to the four-acre summit will tell you that a small stone shelter there would be easy to mistake as simply another pile of boulders.
8. Accessing the state’s most impressive mountains in the early days of Colorado mountaineering involved hiring guides, loading mules, and trekking on foot or on horseback through extremely rugged terrain. Before 1900, wealthy tourists and Colorado-based “thrill seekers” (as early climbers were known) established trails and climbing routes to the summits of most Fourteeners and solidified their knowledge of the tallest peaks in the Colorado Rockies.
9. One such thrill seeker was Isabella Bird, the first Anglo-American woman to climb a Colorado Fourteener. Born in Yorkshire, England, Isabella Bird came to Colorado in 1871 searching for a climate that would be good for her health. Bird was awed by the sight of the mountains and published an inspirational account of her ascent of Longs Peak. As mountaineering became more popular, climbers repurposed the roads miners and loggers carved into mountainsides to carry carloads of climbers into the heart of the high country. The founding of the Colorado Mountain Club in 1912 helped turn mountain climbing into one of the state’s signature pastimes by sponsoring annual summit outings.
10. By the early 1960s, Colorado’s ski resorts were introducing tourists and Coloradans alike to the joys of high-altitude recreation. In the 1960s and 1970s, other factors, including increased leisure time, a rise in automobile ownership, and improvements in outdoor equipment, also helped put 14,000-foot summits within reach for more people. Today, observations by US Forest Service personnel indicate that more than 500,000 ascents are made every year.
11. The popularity and geographic prominence of Fourteeners in Colorado has led to the growth of distinct communities that identify strongly with a particular peak. Towns like Minturn, Buena Vista, Leadville, and Ouray have organized economically and socially around nearby mountains. This has transformed several of Colorado’s Fourteeners into potent symbols of community and also transformed these small mountain towns into popular jumping-off points for visitors wishing to experience the surrounding nature.
12. Development of a community identity surrounding Fourteeners is not limited by physical space. In the last several decades, the desire to climb all 58 of Colorado’s Fourteeners has become a uniting force for “peak baggers.” These intrepid hikers might drive from all four corners of the state – or even from outside Colorado – to summit distant and rugged mountains. The most committed peak baggers may summit several or even all of the mountains in a year, often during winter months when the opportunity to ski down the mountain makes the task of descending significantly less tiresome.

Source: https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/fourteeners