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**The Truth About Jimmie Angel
and Angel Falls**

**The Venezuelan Ministry of Development's Expedition
Years of Exploration 1938-1939**

By Karen Angel

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Preface

In the year 1994, when the author began researching the life of American born aviator James “Jimmie” Crawford Angel (1899-1956), there were many unsubstantiated stories about him in books, newspapers, magazines, and now on websites and blogs. Some stories are known to be true and can be verified by the Angel Family and/or other sources; some stories are plausible, but remain unverified; other stories are fabrications.¹ The result is a tangle of true stories and legends. Stories that he taught himself to fly at age fourteen; was a Royal British Flying Corps Ace in World War I; created an air force for a Chinese Warlord in the Gobi Desert; worked as an aviation scout for Lawrence Arabia; or flew a mining engineer named McCracken (or Williamson)² to a secret river of gold in Venezuela remain in the unverified tangle of legends³

The author has interviewed many people who knew him and has researched archives that document his aviation explorations. The difficulty in sorting out the truth from legendary stories exists for several reasons: Jimmie Angel actively participated in the creation of the legends; the legends have been repeated by many authors; World War I records that may have helped to verify the legends may have been destroyed.⁴

What is true is that Jimmie Angel was a gifted pilot who loved Central and South America, especially Venezuela. He first saw what was to become known as Angel Falls, the world’s tallest waterfall, on a solo flight 18 November 1933 while working as a pilot in the Gran Sabana region of southeastern Venezuela for the Santa Ana Mining Company of Tulsa Oklahoma.⁵

Gran Sabana 1939

This paper will focus on Jimmie Angel’s role as the pilot-guide for the 1939 Venezuelan Ministry of Development’s Exploration of the Gran Sabana by relating the impressions and interactions of three expedition members. Dr. George Gaylord Simpson (1902-1984), a

prominent 20th Century evolutionist and his wife Dr. Anne Roe Simpson (1904-1991), a psychologist, both representing the American Museum of Natural History.⁶ The Simpsons wrote about Jimmie Angel in their travel diaries during the expedition and in various publications following the expedition. Carlos A. Freeman (1898-1973), a Venezuelan who received his mining engineer degree at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and helped found the School of Geology at the Universidad Central de Venezuela and the Venezuelan Society of Geologists, was one of the four leaders of the Gran Sabana Expedition. In the 1940s, Freeman wrote an authorized biography titled “The Life of James Crawford (Jimmie) Angel” from which the author has drawn Freeman’s impressions of Angel and his expedition activities.⁷

The Gran Sabana is a vast grassland region in southeastern Venezuela which is home to the tabletop mesas known as tepuis; the setting for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1912 novel *The Lost World*⁸; and to Angel Falls, the world’s tallest waterfall which flows from Auyántepui.⁹

The Gran Sabana Expedition was commissioned by Venezuelan President José Eleazar López Contreras on 17 December 1938 to investigate the presence and abundance of minerals; to study the soil conditions for agriculture and animal farming; to study the geography and topographic conditions for industrial purposes; to study the climate and sanitary conditions for migratory and colonization purposes; and to study possible penetration routes.¹⁰

In December 1939, the government of Venezuela published the findings of the expedition in a lengthy report titled *Exploration of the Gran Sabana* which included the following introduction: “Among the explorers of Kamarata, the North American aviator James C. Angel merits special mention for conducting three expeditions by airplane of this area from 1933 to 1937. One of Angel’s principal objectives was the exploration and layout of Auyán-tepui’s plateau where he proposed the construction of a landing strip and in 1936 he organized the first

climb to the summit in collaboration with Captain Cardona and Gustavo Heny. At the beginning of 1937, Cardona and Heny succeeded in climbing Auyán-tepui and a little time later Angel landed on the summit of the plateau on marshy terrain where the airplane inundated itself in such a manner that it was necessary to abandon it.

“The explorations by Cardona and Angel contributed to a great awakening of interest in Kamarata and Auyán-tepui with the result that at the end of 1937, Mr. William H. Phelps organized and funded a scientific expedition with the cooperation of the American Museum of Natural History. That same expedition, under the leadership of Doctor G. H. H. Tate, remained in the area for three months during which time they climbed Auyán-tepui, gathering data on the flora and fauna for correlation with studies done in Roraima and Duida.”¹¹

A map in *Exploration of the Gran Sabana* used the name “Salto Angel” or Angel Falls for the first time in December 1939. This publication by the Venezuelan government officially designates the name of the waterfall.¹²

Jimmie Angel inspired and was to have been the pilot for the Phelps Venezuela Expedition,¹³ but he was unavailable because he had damaged his airplane landing on Auyántepui, a vast 348 square miles plateau, on 9 October 1937 in search of gold.¹⁴ The airplane known as “El Rio Caroni” had to be abandoned at its landing place.¹⁵ He and his wife Marie Angel left Venezuela and returned in February 1939 with another airplane.¹⁶

Although not a member of the Phelps Venezuelan Expedition, Angel is forever linked with it because he and his discoveries were featured in two popular magazine articles authored by expedition member G. Thomas Gilliard of the Ornithology Department of the American Museum of Natural History.¹⁷ In large measure, Gilliard’s writings made Jimmie Angel and Angel Falls known to the world.¹⁸

The leaders of the Gran Sabana Expedition were geologist Santiago E. Aguerrevere, geological mining engineer Victor M. Lopez, geological engineer C. Delgado O., and mining engineer Carlos A. Freeman (1898-1973).¹⁹ They met the Simpsons in Caracas and from there traveled by airplane via Ciudad Bolivar and arrived at Kamarata Camp, the first base camp at the foot of Auyántepeui's south flank on 4 March 1939.²⁰ Jimmie and Marie Angel travelled from Ciudad Bolivar and arrived at Kamarata Camp in their Hamilton single engine airplane on 7 March with a new generator for the expedition. The Angels' intention was to resume their search for gold.²¹

According to Freeman, "the tremendous value of an airplane and the only pilot acquainted with the region was realized by all, and eventually Angel was convinced that if he joined the expedition, the members (all geologists or mining engineers) would in turn give him their professional aid in his mining problems."²²

Marie Angel wrote on 13 March to her brother Herbert Sanders in California, "The Venezuelan Government have a huge expedition here now they have one of the most elaborate equipped outfits I have ever seen going over the whole of this part of the country looking for any thing they can find."²³

In between two paleontology reconnaissance expeditions in Venezuela, the Simpsons joined the Gran Sabana Expedition for six weeks as naturalists. George Gaylord Simpson did an ethnographic study of the Kamarakoto Indians²⁴ and Anne Roe Simpson collected recent mammals for the museum.²⁵ The Simpsons also collected plants.²⁶ Marie Angel assisted both Simpsons with their research.²⁷

On their second day in camp, the Angels took the Simpsons and expedition leaders Delgado and Lopez on a flight over Auyántepeui to see Angel's waterfall which is located on its

north side.²⁸ Simpson wrote in his autobiography *Concessions to the Improbable*: “Most exciting of all, Jimmie Angel had flown us over and past the falls he had discovered, had demonstrated against universal skepticism that they do exist, and had convinced us against all probability that they are by a good margin the highest waterfalls in the world.”²⁹

Simpson recorded his thoughts about the flight in a travel diary that he and Anne shared:

“ I have been practically speechless ever since and even now I just have a sort of sinking, hopeless feeling at trying to record even a bare hint of what all this is like. It is grand, awesome, awful, beautiful, marvelous, and terrible. It seems impossible that such things can exist on our earth. It makes the greatest famous scenery of the world seem puny. Having seen it makes one feel that he can never be the same again. A man who had been to the moon and explored its craters might feel similarly exalted and cut off by the depths of his experience from his fellows and from all that he knew before. Some hint of the terrible impact of the experience: when we went into the canyon we ran very close to the jagged rim and the motor seemed to falter (probably Angel had cut it momentarily) and for a second I thought we were crashing; over the thrill of fear the thought flashed through my mind, ‘It doesn’t matter now, I’ve seen this and life hereafter is too tame anyhow.’ ”³⁰

Having seen the top of Auyántepui and the waterfall before, Marie Angel was less enthusiastic than Simpson when she wrote to her brother, “We flew over the mountain Auyan-tepui where we made our landing and had to walk off. The plane is still there just as we left it (sure looks sad) but I will never go up there again. ... This madness for gold sure gets people into some awful predicaments.”³¹

The Simpsons trusted Angel’s flying abilities. In their travel diary, Simpson recorded his next flight with Angel, “I had more confidence in plane and pilot, and had gotten over the feeling

of blank amazement, to some extent, and could take it all in better.”³² In the same diary, Anne Simpson wrote: “that if G went flying with anyone but Jimmie I’d go along or not let him go.”³³

Carlos Freeman recounted the manner in which Angel maintained his airplane: “After each flight, no matter how, short, Jimmie always inspects his motor and closely checked the working parts of the plane. He had trained a young Indian boy about thirteen years of age to help him service the plane, and it was amusing to see Jose Manuel Angel (Jimmie had taken him to Ciudad Bolivar on one of his earlier trips, where he was registered and baptized, and Angel added to his name) greasing the plane and removing rocker arms or wiping the machine. In more than three hundred hours of flying under extremely adverse conditions, not once did Jimmie have to turn back or make a forced landing due to motor or other plane trouble. This is quite an achievement and a credit to his mechanical ability.”³⁴

Speculating about Jimmie Angel’s stories, George Simpson noted in his travel diary: “I can see why no one believes Jimmie’s tales: he does things that practically no one else would have the skill or the nerve to do, and then takes them so casually that it is hard to believe he did them. He also does have a tendency, entirely unconscious, to exaggerate non-essential points like elevations of mountains, or rather he both over- and under- estimates on occasion. In fact I believe that all his stories are true with this slight correction – all, that is, that he gives on his own authority.”³⁵

By the third week with the expedition, George Simpson was irritated with camp life: “Truth to tell, the outfit is getting so large that I am getting somewhat fed up with it and glad that I will soon be done and move on. We have eleven white people in camp, ten servants, and about twenty-five employed Indians, which is simply ridiculous and what should be a peaceful and pleasant spot begins to resemble rather a madhouse.”³⁶

By their fourth and final week in Camp Kamarata, George Simpson complained that two astronomers had arrived in camp with “three tons of baggage and each with a personal servant. “... Since arriving here they have done nothing whatever but lie around in their hammocks and go hunting (they aren’t ever good hunters).” Simpson did not like the expedition doctor either and remarked, “Not unnaturally, the M.D. and the astronomers have clubbed together and formed a clique – they are our leisure class.” About the expedition leaders, he wrote: “our four geologist-topographers work very hard, know their jobs, and do them, and are good company.”³⁷

When the Simpsons departed Camp Kamarata at the end of March, George Simpson recorded that a soil and a colonization expert had joined the expedition which had now reached fourteen in number – “the largest crowd I ever was with on a scientific expedition (although at least five of these hardly rate as scientists, in fact).” According to Simpson, Camp Kamarata had changed from “madhouse” to “pandemonium.”³⁸

In the introduction to his ethnographic study, *The Kamarakoto Indians*, published in June 1940, Simpson thanked Jimmie Angel, and the expedition leaders for their excellent equipment and organization and remarked, “I had none of the usual executive tasks or camp work to do or to supervise and was able to devote all my waking hours to the study of the Indians.”³⁹ Apparently some among the pandemonium had performed the tasks that freed Simpson to accomplish his research in the short time he was in the Gran Sabana.

The other expedition members and the Angels labored on until 31 July 1939. During the five months the expedition was in the field, base camp was moved to three additional locations after Kamarata Camp: Luepa, Santa Elena and Wonken. The expedition also explored the diamond mines of the Venezuelan-Brazilian frontiers.⁴⁰

On 1 May 1939,⁴¹ the beginning of the third month of the expedition, Angel flew Carlos Freeman to the immense cleft on the north side of Auyan-tepui where Freeman took photographs and moving pictures of Angel Falls. Two of the photographs were published in the official report of the expedition.⁴² According to Freeman, “These are the only pictures of the cataract so far taken that permit man to behold the grandeur of the World Wonder in its entirety.”⁴³

During the expedition, the Simpsons’ relationship with the Angels was friendly with admiration for Jimmie Angel’s abilities as a pilot and Marie Angel’s good natured cooperation and support of the expedition field work. According to Dr. Joe Cain, who specializes in the History of Science at University College London and has extensively researched the lives of prominent 20th Century evolutionists, “Simpson took a strong liking to him, which was something rare.”⁴⁴ Cain also wrote of Simpson, “he detested women in field camps (Anne and Marie were the exceptions -- never complained about them).”⁴⁵

In June 1942, the Simpsons were guests on the radio program *Ripley’s - Believe It or Not* and talked about the Angels and Angel Falls. Simpson said: “Well, Jimmie Angel is certainly a romantic figure. He’s been everywhere and seen everything. He’s a man of about forty with the scars of dozens of campaigns.” Anne Roe Simpson said: “Yes...and he’s different from any soldier of fortune I’ve ever read about in at least one respect... He takes his wife with him wherever he goes ...no matter how hazardous or dangerous his mission may be.”⁴⁶

Twenty years after the expedition, George Simpson wrote to Marie Angel: “We do hope that you and the children are well and finding life pleasant. The time we spent with you and Jimmy in Kamarata still stands out, after all these years, as one of the most fascinating experiences of our lives.”⁴⁷

Almost forty years later, Simpson devoted the first chapter of his 1978 autobiography to his departing flight with Jimmie Angel from Camp Kamarata to Santa Elena.⁴⁸

Carlos Freeman's relationship with the Angels developed into a friendship that endured many years beyond the expedition with Freeman writing an authorized Jimmie Angel biography⁴⁹ The unpublished biography is a memoir of Freeman's expedition experiences; a retelling of many of the legendary Angel stories; and a testimonial to Jimmie Angel's aviation skills: "Without the services of Jimmie the expedition could not have accomplished what it did on the five months' trip. He flew more than three hundred hours supplying food, scouting from the air, moving camp, taking aerial photographs and mapping, and in addition transporting the members to remote spots."⁵⁰

When the expedition concluded its five months of field work, Jimmie Angel was persuaded to remain in the region and work for the Venezuelan-Brazilian Boundary Commission.⁵¹ Under often difficult conditions, he piloted his airplane for an additional four months taking aerial photographs, establishing emergency landing fields, mapping the region, and transporting equipment, supplies and personnel on the Venezuelan-Brazil frontier for the Venezuelan government.⁵²

Conclusion

One of the most repeated legends about Jimmie Angel is that he was hired in Panama in the year 1921 to fly a mining engineer named McCracken to a secret river in Venezuela where many pounds of gold were collected with Angel subsequently spending the balance of his life searching for the river of gold. In fact, the five months that Jimmie Angel worked for the Venezuelan Ministry of Development and the four months that he worked for the Venezuelan-

Boundary Commission in the year 1939 are representative of much of his professional life as a pilot. It is true that Jimmie Angel did search for his dreamed of El Dorado whenever he could create an opportunity, but his living and his reputation as a “master pilot”⁵³ were earned by flying thousands of hours, often in dangerous conditions, for other people in support of their enterprises and dreams. ⁵⁴

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Joe Cain, Ph.D., while on sabbatical from London University College at the American Philosophical Society Library (APS), invited me to research the George Gaylord Simpson Papers at the APS in 2003. My thanks to him for identifying relevant materials and assisting me with my research at the APS and for his continued assistance. Others who were especially helpful at the APS were Rob Cox, Manuscripts Librarian; Roy Goodman, Assistant Librarian and Curator of Printed Materials; and Valerie Lutz, Head of Manuscripts Processing and Library Registrar.

Appreciation to Adrian Warren, Last Refuge Ltd., for providing me with a photocopy of the page from Jimmie Angel pilot’s log which verified that 18 November 1933 was the date Angel first saw the waterfall and recorded this remark “FOUND MYSELF A WATERFALL.”

Betty Christian, step daughter of Carlos A. Freeman, and her husband Harry Christian have provided me with a wealth of information and photographs from the Carlos A. Freeman Archive. My heartfelt thanks to them for their tireless assistance gathering materials for this paper and for future publications.

Finally special thanks to Jimmie Angel Historical Project board members Jorge González, Ph.D., Research Associate, McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity, Texas A&M University, Department of Entomology, who assisted me with reference materials, especially those related to the discovery of the waterfall, and translated materials from Spanish to English, and John de Coup-Crank who translated various documents from Spanish to English for me and who, while a City of Los Angeles Police Department Detective, investigated the grievous taking from Marie Angel of Jimmie Angel’s pilot log books, passports and other documents by Marvin Grigsby.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The author is the niece of James “Jimmie” Crawford Angel (1899-1956). Her father Clyde Marshall Angel (1917-1997) was Jimmie Angel’s youngest brother.

- 2 McCracken is the name most frequently given to the individual who hired Angel in Panama to fly him to a river of gold in Venezuela. Sometimes the individual is described as a mining engineer, sometimes as an old prospector. Another name occasionally attributed to the individual is Williamson.

- 3 The Jimmie Angel Historical Project (JAHP) was organized in 1996 in the State of California as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation, EIN 68-0372407. The purposes of the JAHP include providing accurate information about James “Jimmie” Crawford Angel, his associates, and their era of aviation and exploration. The JAHP maintains an archive that is shared by appointment with journalists, filmmakers, museum curators, and educators.

- 4 Marie Angel wrote to the United States Veterans Administration regarding her eligibility to receive Jimmie Angel’s non-service connected disability pension and received the following about his military service dated January 9, 1957: “The Department of the Army reports that Crawford Angel entered Federal Army Service on August 5, 1917; that he was physically examined and rejected for World War One Service and honorably discharged August 9, 1917 by reason of Physical Disability Underweight.”
 Jimmie Angel’s parents and brothers knew that he had been discharged in 1917, but believed that Jimmie had successfully reenlisted and served in World War I.

 Jimmie Angel is frequently referred to as a World War I Ace with service either in the Royal British Flying Corps or the U.S. Army Air Corps. Archival record searches in the U.S.A. and the U.K. may have not revealed information about Angel’s aviation service for the following reasons:

 United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (Correspondence to the author, 13 June 1996) “Enquirers for soldiers’ records are warned that a majority of the First World War were destroyed by enemy air action in 1940 and of those that survived, many are in very poor condition having been damaged by fire and water.” JAHP Archive, Eureka, California.

 A 1973 fire destroyed approximately 16-18 million (80%) of the files for U.S. Army personnel discharged between 1 November 1912 – 1 January 1960. National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri, <http://www.nara.gov/regional/mprfire.html>, accessed 28 April 2001.

 Harry Middleton, (interview with the author, Paradise, California, 26 December 1997). Middleton stated that he first met Jimmie Angel at an airfield in Texarkana, Texas in 1920 or 1921. Angel was taking flight lessons at the Twin City Flying Service and had just soloed. Middleton understood that Jimmie Angel had been the Crew Chief (mechanic) assigned to Eddie Rickenbacker's 94th "Hat-in-the-Ring" Squadron in France. Middleton’s account can be interpreted, at the least, in two ways: Angel did not learn to fly until 1920 or 1921 when he was age 21 or 22; or like many self-taught pilots, in order to receive his

pilot's license, he had to attend a certified flight school. Middle also stated that in 1930, he was employed by a subsidiary of Pan American Airways in Mexico where he met one of their captains named K.K. Hoffman. Hoffman introduced himself as a former Lieutenant in the 94th and told Middleton that Angel was Crew Chief for the 94th. JAHP.

- 5 Jimmie Angel, photocopy of log book page 30 October – 22 November 1933. Date: 18 November 1933. Aircraft License: NC431W. Aircraft Type: Travelair. Engine Type: J69. Remarks: "FOUND MYSELF A WATERFALL." JAHP.

In the author's two previous papers for the Alexander von Humboldt Conference (2001 and 2005) 14 November 1933 was reported as the date of discovery. This incorrect date was taken from Marie Angel's unpublished manuscript titled *The Angel Falls*. She wrote her manuscript in 1978 when she no longer had Jimmie Angel's log books in her possession and relied on memory for the date of discovery. JAHP.

Karen Angel, *The River of Gold: The Life of Jimmie Angel, Explorer-Aviator: Discover of Angel Fall*, unpublished manuscript, Eureka, California 2009), 32. JAHP.

- 6 Roy Chapman Andrews, Director of the American Museum of Natural History, to Diogenes Escalante, Venezuelan Legation, Washington, D.C. (correspondence, 20 July 1938). Central Archives, AMNH: Box 1212.

- 7 Elizabeth Graham Marsh Christian and Diana Kent Marsh Fontana, "Biography and Loving Tribute to our Stepfather Carlos A. Freeman" (Manuscript, 2004). JAHP.

Abstract: Carlos A. Freeman (1898-1973) was born in Barcelona, State of Anzoátegui, Venezuela, 17 February 1898. He was the youngest of three children. His father, who was a mining engineer, was a naturalized American of German descent who anglicized his surname from Friedman to Freeman. His mother was Celsa Moron Freeman from a well-known family in Barcelona, Venezuela. Freeman was sent to high school at Bordentown Military Academy in New Jersey, U.S.A. After graduating from Bordentown, he completed his degree in mining engineering at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. He remained in the U.S.A. for fourteen years working for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. During this period he married and had one son Carlos Freeman, Jr. He returned to Venezuela with his family and revalidated his degree at the Universidad Central de Venezuela. He was one of the founders of the School of Geology at the University and of the Venezuelan Society of Geologists. In 1937 he went to work for the Venezuelan Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons, and in 1939 took part in the Gran Sabana Expedition. Freeman divorced and in 1944 married Ruth Maurine Aubrey Marsh, a United States citizen and mother of Christian and Fontana. In 1942 he became a member of The Explorers Club of New York. Freeman left the Ministry of Mines on 2 August 1944 to work in Venezuela for Harry Winston Inc., of New York, a jeweler and buyer and seller of diamonds. The Venezuelan Government granted Freeman concessions in the Gran Sabana to seek diamond and gold mines of his own. This was an unsuccessful economic venture. During WWII, he assisted the U.S. Government spying on Germans on the Island of Margarita. Later he had to give up his U.S. passport because his father had never registered

him at the U.S. Embassy. Freeman remained a consultant with the Venezuelan Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons until his death from a heart attack in Caracas on 18 October 1973.

8 Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

9 Ruth Robertson, *Churun Meru – The Tallest Angel* (Ardmore: Whitmore Publishing Company, 1975). 330.

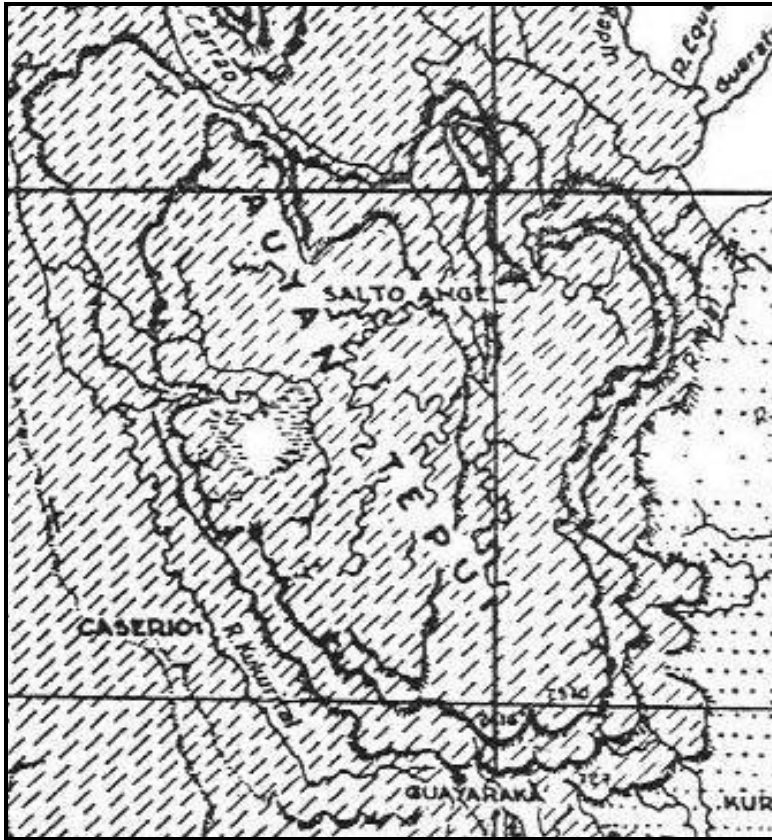
Auyántepui is used in this paper except in those cases where Auyán-tepui is within quotes.

10 José Eleazar López Contreras, “Decreto Eiecutivo,” *Revista de Fomento* Vol. III, 19 (Caracas: Ministry of Development, December 1939), 390. Spanish to English translation by Jorge González, Ph.D. JAHP.

11 S. E. Aguerrevere, et al., “Exploración de la Gran Sabana,” *Revista de Fomento* Vol. III, 19 (Caracas: Ministry of Development, December 1939) 511. Spanish to English translation by John A. DeCoup-Crank. JAHP.

12 Jorge M. González Ph.D., Department of Entomology Texas A & M University and Charles Brewer Carías Venezuelan Naturalist and Explorer (personal communication with the author 14 April 2010). “Salto Angel” was the Name Officially Adopted by the Government of Venezuela in 1939:

“The president of Venezuela, Eleazar López Contreras, emitted a presidential order (Decreto) 17 December 1937, to explore the Gran Sabana region. As a result, several appointed researchers started exploring the region and produced several works including one titled “*Exploración de la Gran Sabana.*” In this work, published in December 1939, there is a detailed map which accompanied the commission’s report. Because of the fact that the report originated from a presidential order and the *Revista de Fomento* was an official/governmental journal, the map is considered an official document, thus the name “Salto Angel” was officially accepted by the Venezuelan Government on that date. In 1953, the report and the maps were reproduced by the *Revista de Ministerio de Hidrocarburos y Minas* and a caption on a photo of Angel Falls taken by Carlos A. Freeman from Jimmie Angel’s airplane on 1 May 1939 bears the following text: “Salto Angel, bautizado así en honor de su descubridor, James Angel.”



This map section above was presented by the Exploring Commission of the Gran Sabana which was appointed by President Eleazar López Contreras. The map contains the name Salto Angel for the first time ever and appeared in December, 1939. Since this was part of an official report, the name Salto Angel was officially adopted by the Venezuelan Government. Map provided by the Venezuelan Naturalist and Explorer Charles Brewer Carías.

- 13 William H. Phelps, Sr. to Frank M. Chapman, Curator, Department of Ornithology, (correspondence, 9 June 1937). Department of Ornithology Archives, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), New York: Box 1218.
- 14 Joseph P. Juptner, *Metal "Flamingo", G-2-W*, U.S. Civil Aircraft, Vol. 2 (1964). The Metal Aircraft Corporation manufactured Jimmie Angel's airplane, which he named the "El Rio Caroni," (Registration number NC-9487) in 1929 at Lunken Airport, Cincinnati, Ohio. It was the eleventh of twenty-one airplanes of its class produced. Its welded steel tube framework is covered with aluminum alloy.
- 15 Phelps to Chapman (correspondence, 14 October 1937).

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- 16 Jimmie Angel, "*Pilot Flight Record and Log Book*: Date: 22 February 1939. Aircraft License: NC854E. Aircraft Type: Hamilton. Engine Type: Hornet. Flight From: Barranquilla, (Columbia) Flight To: Maracaibo (Venezuela). Duration of Flight: 2 hours, 5 minutes. Total Accumulated Flying Time: 8,016 hours, 17 minutes." JAHP.
- 17 E. Thomas Gillard, "Unchallenged Champion," *Natural History: The Magazine of the American Museum of Natural History*, December 1940.
_____ and C. E. Scoggins, "The Eighth Wonder of the World," *Saturday Evening Post*, 26 July 1941.
- 18 Karen Angel, "The Truth about Jimmie Angel and Angel Falls: Why the World's Tallest Waterfall is Named Angel Falls: The Phelps Venezuela Expedition: Years of Exploration 1937-1938, Alexander von Humboldt Conference, Veracruz, Mexico 2005, 9. JAHP.
- 19 Expedition leaders Aguerrevere with Victor M. Lopez Doctor of Geological Mine Engineering; C. Delgado O, Geological Engineer; and C. A. Freeman, Mining Engineer are the authors of "Exploration of the Great Savanna, A report presented to Citizen Doctor Manuel R. Egaña, Minister of Projects, the Exploration Commission of the Great Savanna," inside cover. Spanish to English translation by John A. DeCoup-Crank. JAHP.
- 20 George Gaylord Simpson Papers, Series VIII: travel diaries, folder 5 "Venezuela (1938-1939)," American Philosophical Society (APS), Philadelphia, PA, 166 and 170.
- 21 Jimmie Angel, *Pilot Flight Record and Log Book*, Date: 7 March 1939. Simpson, 173.
- 22 Carlos A. Freeman, *The Life of James Crawford (Jimmie) Angel*, (Manuscript, 1941-1945) 66. JAHP.
- 23 Marie Angel to Herbert Sanders (correspondence, 13 March 1939), JAHP.
- 24 Simpson, "The Kamarakoto Indians: A Carib Tribe of Venezuelan Guayana," *Revista de Fomento* Nos. 22-25, (Caracas: Ministry of Development, June 1940).
- 25 Simpson, "Research in Venezuela," (Reprinted from *Science*, 1 September 1939, Vol. 90, No. 2331, pages 210-211), Vertebrate Paleontology Archives, AMNH, 4.
Simpson wrote in his travel diary "It does seem odd for me to be doing anthropology, but it is what needed doing here and I think I'm getting it all right. I've always maintained that given a little basic background, a real scientist could transfer his scientific method to any field, and this will be a good test of my claim." 201. APS.
- 26 Simpson, "Research in Venezuela," 3.

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- 27 Anne Roe (Simpson), Ph.D. “La Fauna De Mamiferos de Kamarata y Santa Elena,” *Revista de Fomento*, Vol. III, No.19 (Caracas: Ministry of Development, December 1939) 559. Spanish to English translation by John A. DeCoup-Crank. JAHP.
_____ to John M. Harries, Natural History Museum Los Angeles County, (correspondence 9 January 1985). George Gaylord Simpson Papers, Series XII: miscellaneous, box: 1993-54ms: APS.
- 28 Jimmie Angel, 8 March 1939.
- 29 G. G. Simpson, *Concessions to the Improbable: An Unconventional Autobiography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 4.
- 30 G. G. Simpson, travel diaries, 175.
- 31 M. Angel to H. Sanders (correspondence, 13 March 1939). JAHP.
- 32 G. G. Simpson, travel diaries, 190.
- 33 A. R. Simpson, travel diaries, 190-191.
- 34 Freeman, 83.
The Jose Manuel Angel (Ugarte) referred to by Freeman was known as the adopted son of Jimmie and Marie Angel. He accompanied their biological son Rolan Angel’s 1965 Auyantepui expedition to place a commemorative plaque on Jimmie Angel’s airplane El Rio Caroni. The expedition included *Life* magazine writer and photographer Carl Mydans who published the story in the 15 October 1965 issue of *Life*. In 1994, the author met Jose Manuel Angel (Ugarte) in his home village of Kamarata. He died in Kamarata in 2001.
- 35 G. G. Simpson, travel diaries, 186.
- 36 G. G. Simpson, 188.
- 37 G. G. Simpson, 199.
- 38 G. G. Simpson, 202.
- 39 G. G. Simpson, “The Kamarakoto Indians: A Carib Tribe of Venezuelan Guayana, ” English manuscript, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, (1939) 1940, 9-10.
- 40 Freeman, 77, 85, 89.
- 41 Jimmie Angel, 1 May 1939.

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- 42 Aguerrevere, Figures 25 & 26.
- 43 Freeman, 85.
- 44 Joe Cain, e-mail to the author, 28 January 2003.
- 45 Cain, e-mail to the author, 1 July 2003.
- 46 *Ripley: Believe It Or Not: Episode 21*, George Gaylord Simpson Papers, Series V: radio script, 13 June 1942, 6. APS.
- 47 G. G. Simpson to Marie Angel, George Gaylord Simpson Papers, Series I, correspondence, 1 May 1959. APS.
 As a boy James Crawford Angel was called Crawford. As an adult he wanted to be called "Jimmie." He was constantly correcting the spelling of his name from Jimmy to Jimmie. The JAHP continues with this task for him.
- 48 G. G. Simpson, *Concessions to the Improbable: An Unconventional Autobiography*, 4-8.
- 49 Jimmie Angel. "As several articles have already been written about my experiences in Venezuela. This is my story as I have told to my good friend Carlos A. Freeman. Caracas, Venezuela. November 30, 1941. (signed) James C. Angel."
- 50 Freeman, 66.
- 51 Freeman, 95.
- 52 Freeman.
 Angel. According to Jimmie Angel's "Pilot Flight Record and Log Book" for the period 4 May 1938- 5 December 1939, his last flight for the Gran Sabana Expedition was on 30 July 1939. He resumed flying on 24 August 1939. A 25 September 1939 letter from Marie Angel to her brother Herbert Sanders indicates that they were in Caracas during the interval between the Gran Sabana Expedition and commencing work for the Venezuelan-Brazilian Boundary Commission.
- 53 Patricia Grant correspondence to the author, 23 May 1996. JAHP.
 Patricia Grant (1920-1999) and Jimmie Angel were close friends and fellow pilots. She flew crude rubber out of the interior jungles of Nicaragua and Honduras with him in the early 1940s. She and photo journalist Ruth Robertson (1905-1998), whose 1949 expedition measured Angel Falls, were also close friends. In the 1950s Grant lived in Venezuela ferrying new Cessna airplanes from Wichita, Kansas to Venezuela. She concluded her many years as a pilot working as a flight instructor in Florida.

54 Henry J. Allen, *Venezuela A Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1940) 96. Allen, a former governor of the state of Kansas and special adviser to the U.S. State Department visited the Gran Sabana Expedition and recorded the following about the expedition leaders: “They were all full of hopeful prophecies about the Gran Sabana as a future agricultural dependency. Some of them talked about it with the excitement in their voices which I imagine may have characterized those United States pioneers who talked about Oregon and other far Western agricultural lands which were even more remote from transportation facilities than the Gran Sabana is today.”

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