Cook, c. 1906

Cook, c. 1938

# *FREDERICK A. COOK RECONSIDERED: Discovering the Man and His Explorations*

## A Symposium at the Byrd Polar Research Center

## The Ohio State University

## October 22–23, 1993

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# COOK RECONSIDERED: DISCOVERING THE MAN AND HIS EXPLORATIONS

## Proceedings of the Frederick A. Cook Symposium October 22-23, 1993

Edited by

Russell W. Gibbons
Frederick A. Cook Society

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The publication of the Proceedings of this unique conference were delayed for almost four years because of circumstances involving the transmission of final manuscripts by several of the prestigious participants, whose work literally took them to the ends of the earth in that time frame.

Many of those in attendance have since 1993 requested copies, and while the tapes of the symposium were available, they proved difficult for those concerned with historic and geographic research. Accordingly, we wish to extend special thanks to all of the presenters for editing their final papers, and for those who additionally provided photographic material or maps that related to their delivery.

Not all of those images in the photo section were used by the presenters, but do reflect the highlights of the *dramatis persona* of the symposium. The maps--both those contemporary to the events and recent charts dealing with oceanographic currents are involved in the presentations at least three of those delivering papers.

This project would not have been brought to its belated conclusion without the work of Lynn Everett, Editor of Publications at the Byrd Polar Research Center, whose patience and attention to detail brought uniformity to many of the papers. The original symposium was a success largely through the Byrd Center staff and the technical support people at The Ohio State University. Director Ken Jezek and Lynn Lay, the librarian at the Goldthwait Polar Library, both brought all of the facilities of the Byrd Center to use in pursuit of an outstanding gathering.

The resources in the photo section are labeled with each image. We are appreciative of permission from the National Geographic Society for using a map and excerpts from the contribution by Joseph O. Fletcher in the **National Geographic Magazine** (103:4), April 1953.

- Russell W. Gibbons
Editor

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**Russell W. Gibbons, Editor** – Currently the Executive Director of the Frederick A. Cook Society founded in 1940, Gibbons has researched the life of F.A. Cook since completing *An Historical Evaluation of the Cook-Peary Controversy* in 1954. He has edited "Polar Priorities" and its predecessor publication of the Cook Society since 1974. He has been a contributor to "Arctic," "North," "Polar Notes" and other journals, and contributed the new profile on Cook for the *Dictionary of American Biography*. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Byrd Polar Research Center Archival Program. In 1996 he edited the 90th Anniversary Edition of Cook's **To the Top of the Continent** and in 1998 the Centennial Edition of the "Belgica" expedition, **Through the First Antarctic Night**. He was also a contributor to **Lobsticks & Stone Cairns: Landmarks of the Arctic** (University of Calgary Press, 1996).

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# INTRODUCTION

## FREDERICK A. COOK RECONSIDERED: DISCOVERING THE MAN AND HIS EXPLORATIONS

In October, 1993 an international symposium with polar researchers, scholars and field explorers gathered at the Byrd Polar Research Center on the campus of The Ohio State University to discuss the life and work of the man who may be this century's most controversial explorer: Frederick Albert Cook (1865-1940).

Ten professional papers were presented at the two-day gathering held in the Sir Hubert George Wilkins Lecture Hall of the Byrd Center. Such prominent field explorers and research scientists as Wally Herbert, Jean Malaurie, Joseph O. Fletcher and Brian Shoemaker were among the scholars from five nations, representing various disciplines.

A unique perspective of the North American Inuit, or Polar Eskimo, was offered through presentations from a Danish anthropologist and also a historian and writer of the Inuit. They gave that view of the key Inuit participants in the Cook expeditions and that of his rival, Robert Edwin Peary (1856-1920).

New postulations on the disputed Arctic Ocean journey of Cook to the North Pole in early 1908 were offered, including data on the Arctic Ocean currents assembled in recent decades, and related to Cook's original observations. The first commander of the famed "ice island" laboratories and the Navy captain who closed that research presented their work in a historical perspective for the first time at a gathering of Arctic experts.

Dissenting views were made, including Herbert, leader of the first Trans-Arctic crossing in 1968 and the world's leading classic dog sled explorer. The ten presentations and a concluding exchange among the symposium participants form the Anthology, which will include standard reference citations and bibliographies. This volume has extensive photographs, maps, charts and tables.

*SECTION I*

# COOK AS PHYSICIAN, EXPLORER AND ICE TRAVELER

# CHAPTER 1

## FREDERICK A. COOK, MD, THE PHYSICIAN: PIONEERING POLAR MEDICINE AND BEYOND

Ralph M. Myerson, MD

**Abstract**

Frederick A. Cook's life as a physician has often been obscured and overshadowed by his accomplishments as an explorer. During his career, he repeatedly demonstrated a superb caliber of medical acumen and skill, often while working under tremendous handicaps. Worthy of special mention are his contributions to the prevention and treatment of scurvy, the recognition of the seasonal affective disorder (SAD syndrome) and the institution of effective therapy for it, and the astuteness of his diagnostic skills following his examination of Robert E, Peary in 1904. He also added significantly to our knowledge concerning the ethnology and life style of the Northern Greenland Eskimos. He made valuable contributions to the safety and efficiency of polar exploration by his innovative ideas concerning tents, sledges, clothing and sun goggles. Roald Amundsen considered Dr. Cook as his mentor. Dr. Cook continued his humanitarian efforts during his confinement at Leavenworth, contributing significantly to the welfare of his fellow inmates.

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It is unfortunate but true that the controversy that surrounded Dr. Frederick Albert Cook during the later years of his life and which followed him after his death, served not only to obscure but actually negate Dr. Cook's many achievements. The contributions he made to both polar exploration and the field of medicine are well documented and are incontrovertible. This presentation will emphasize and focus on his contributions to medicine, particularly as it relates to polar exploration.

Physicians have played significant roles in polar exploration. Their importance probably reached its zenith during the nineteenth century during the intense activity that took place in the search for a Northwest Passage, the search for Sir John Franklin, and the quest for the North Pole. Although England dominated the Arctic scene early in the nineteenth century, the U.S. entered later and made its full share of accomplishments.

In addition to their medical duties, physicians often were assigned the role of 'naturalist and ethnologist', and asked to acquire data on human habitation and the flora and fauna of the areas visited. In addition, by virtue of heir education and interpersonal experience, physicians were often called upon to exercise leadership and sometimes to assume command positions.

The roster of physicians involved in Arctic exploration includes men who made important contributions to our knowledge of the Arctic. Table 1 lists the more notable of this group of unique physicians, along with the leaders and the dates of their explorations.

**Table 1**. Arctic Physicians 1819-1909

| Leader | Physician | Date | Mission |
|---|---|---|---|
| William Parry | Alexander Fisher | 1819-20 | NW Passage |
| John Franklin | John Richardson | 1819-22 | Northern Canada |
| John Franklin | John Richardson | 1825-27 | Northern Canada |
| George Back | Richard King | 1833-34 | Great Fish River |
| Dr. John Rae | | 1833-47 | Hudson Bay area |
| John Franklin | Erebus<br>Stephen E. Stanley<br>Harry D.S. Goodsir<br>Terror<br>John S. Peddie<br>Alexander MacDonald | 1845-48 | N.W. Passage |
| William Penny | Peter Sutherland | 1848-51 | Franklin Search |
| John Richardson | John Rae | 1848-51 | Franklin Search |
| Edwin De Haven | Elisha Kent Kane | 1850-51 | Franklin Search |
| Robert McClure | Alexander Armstrong | 1850-54 | Franklin Search<br>N.W. Passage |
| Edward Inglefield | Peter Sutherland | 1852-53 | Franklin Search |
| Dr. Elisha Kent Kane | Isaac Hayes | 1853-55 | Franklin Search |
| Dr. John Rae | | 1853-54 | Franklin Search |
| Dr. Isaac Hayes | | 1860-61 | Open polar sea |
| Charles Hall | Emil Bessels | 1871-73 | North Pole |
| Dr. Frederick Schwatka | | 1878-79 | Franklin Search |
| George W. De Long | John Ambler | 1879-82 | North Pole |
| Adolphus Greely | Octave Pierre Pavy | 1881-84 | Farthest north |
| Robert E. Peary | Frederick A. Cook | 1891 -92 | North Greenland |
| Robert E. Peary | Thomas Dedrick | 1898-02 | North Pole |
| Robert E. Peary | Louie J. Wolf | 1905-06 | North Pole |
| Dr. Frederick Cook | | 1907-09 | North Pole |
| Robert E. Peary | John Goodsell | 1908-09 | North Pole |

The list contains the names of many noted explorers such as Sir John Richardson, Sir John Rae and Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka. Some, such as John Ambler and Thomas Dedrick were distinguished as physicians. Unfortunately, a few did not make high marks either as explorers or physicians. Richard King accurately predicted the fate and location of the Franklin disaster, but he was so abrasive and intemperate in his behavior that even Lady Franklin rejected him. Octave Pierre Pavy was an ambitious maverick who was a thorn in Greely's side. Suspected of cannibalism, Pavy was one of the casualties of the Greely expedition. Emil Bessels was the prime suspect in the arsenic poisoning of Charles Francis Hall.

Of the entire group, the name of Frederick Cook stands out as the one physician who ably and effectively combined an expertise in both polar exploration and in medicine.

Frederick, the fourth of five children, was born in the small town of Hortonville, New York, near the border of Pennsylvania, on June 10, 1865. His father, Dr. Theodore Koch, a physician trained in Germany who emigrated to this country, served as an examining physician for Union recruits during the Civil War, during which time his name was changed to Cook.

Dr. Theodore Cook died unexpectedly of pneumonia when Frederick was five. Following her husband's untimely death, Mrs. Cook stayed in Hortonville for several years and then moved to Port Jervis, N.Y. and thence to Brooklyn in order to better provide for her children. Frederick was a hard and diligent worker. At thirteen, he was working in a glass factory and was a lamplighter in Port Jervis. In Brooklyn, he worked as a printer and at the Fulton Fish Market in Manhattan. His attendance at school was consequently haphazard, but after graduation from high school in 1886, he was accepted at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. Subsequently, when Columbia moved uptown, he transferred to New York University School of Medicine to save the time and expense of commuting. While in medical school, he and an older brother established a milk delivery route requiring them to arise at 2a.m. each morning. It was one of the first of such enterprises that made use of the newly invented glass bottles. During the disastrous blizzard of March, 1888 when New York was paralyzed for days and there were over 500 casualties, Frederick and his brother replaced the wheels of their delivery wagon with sled runners and successfully made their deliveries.

Despite the rigid schedule imposed by his milk delivery system and his medical school studies, Cook found time to marry Libby Forbes in 1889. Following his graduation from Medical School in 1890, Cook and his wife, mother and sister moved to West 55$^{th}$ Street, Manhattan, where he opened an office. It is still a fashionable neighborhood today. Despite the beard he grew to promote his appearance of maturity, he saw only three patients during his first six months of practice. His resultant depression was seriously compounded by the death of his wife and newborn baby following delivery.

Cook spent much of the considerable amount of spare time he had in reading. He was particularly inspired by the writings of Elisha Kent Kane. (Kane is said to have had a similar influence on Peary and Amundsen and appears to have been a more inspirational writer than explorer.)

It was at this period of relative inactivity that Cook saw and responded to a newspaper announcement placed by Navy Lieutenant Robert E. Peary telling of his need for a physician to accompany him on his forthcoming expedition to Greenland. Cook subsequently visited him in Philadelphia where Peary was stationed at League Island Naval Base helping in the construction of a dry-dock. The two seemed compatible and Cook was hired (without salary).

Peary had selected a small permanent party of seven for the North Greenland expedition. He shocked the nation by including his wife, Josephine. The other four members included Eivind Astrup, a young but experienced Norwegian skier; Langdon Gibson, ornithologist; Matthew

Henson, his "valet"; and John Verhoeff, designated as mineralogist and meteorologist. A group of nine from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences made the round trip.

The party left Brooklyn on the converted sealer, the *Kite*, on June 6, 1891. Cook's medical prowess was put to test during the rough trip to Greenland when Peary sustained a serious double-bone fracture of his right leg during a bad storm. Although carried ashore on a plank on arrival at their destination, Peary made a rapid and uneventful recovery that enabled him to make his long trek in an attempt to establish Greenland's northern coast.

During the 14 months spent in Northern Greenland, Cook amassed a wealth of information regarding the ethnological characteristics of the native Eskimos in the area. Among other things, he prepared a census, obtained detailed personal and genealogical information on 230 Eskimos in the area, and took hundreds of photographs.

He was especially intrigued by Eskimo life during the four months of the year in which they live in darkness. He wrote: "During this long Arctic night, the secretions are diminished and the passions suppressed, resulting in great muscular disability. Our own party suffered in the same way. This peculiar condition is due to the prolonged absence of the sun, and I should judge from this that the presence of the sun is essential in animal as it is in vegetable life" (Cook, 1894).

Peary paid tribute to Cook in his account of the North Greenland expedition. "To Dr. Cook's care may be attributed the almost complete exemption of the party from even the mildest indisposition, and personally I owe much to his professional skill and unruffled patience and coolness in an emergency. In addition to his work in his special ethnological field, in which he had obtained a large mass of most valuable material concerning a practically unstudied tribe, he was always helpful and an indefatigable worker" (Peary, 1893, 423). In a newspaper release of a report to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, the major contributor to the expedition, Peary stated: "This report would be incomplete without an acknowledgement of my obligation to Dr. Cook, patient and skillful surgeon, indefatigable worker, earnest student of the peculiar people among whom we lived. He has obtained, I believe, a record of the tribe unapproachable in ethnological archives" (*New York Herald*, September 28, 1909).

When the *Kite* returned to Philadelphia, Cook was approached by Henson who had suffered serious eye damage from exposure to the sun and cold and needed medical care which he could not afford. Henson was destitute and Cook arranged for his trip to Brooklyn where Cook's mother and sister boarded him while Cook made arrangements for his eye care at the hands of a noted ophthalmologist (Freeman, 1961, 85). This is a typical example of Cook's many humanitarian deeds, often performed at a sacrifice to himself.

Following his return from Greenland, Cook opened an office in Brooklyn and this time his practice flourished. He addressed medical societies on several occasions, reporting on his observations on the Greenland Eskimos. Several publications by Cook resulted from the North Greenland expedition. One, *Medical Observations Among the Esquimaux*, (Cook, 1894) reported on the ethnological features, diet, habits, sexual practices, and absence of scurvy among the North Greenland Eskimos. Another, *Some Physical Aspects of Cold, Darkness and Light* (Cook, 1897) describes Cook's observations on the effects of the long winter night on Eskimo

behavior and is an excellent early account of the so-called seasonal affective disorder (SAD syndrome).

Peary, however, had objected to Cook's publication of his findings, maintaining that they were his (Peary's) property and that allowing Cook to publish would "establish a bad precedent.... Every member of my expeditions in the future must be ruled by an iron hand" (Cook, unpublished). Cook's refusal to comply with Peary's demands caused a split between the two that continued thereafter. Actually, such a split was probably inevitable. Despite the intense interest they shared in polar exploration, the two men differed markedly in the expression of their ambitions. Cook was quiet and unassuming and tended to be a "loner". His interpersonal relationships, however, were amiable, and he was highly regarded and liked by his colleagues. Peary, on the other hand, was overt and aggressive in the assertion and exercise of his ambitions. "I shall not be satisfied until my name is known from one end of the world to the other....I must have fame", he wrote his mother (Green, 1926, 33; Weems, 1967, 84).

Cook's practice thrived after his return from Greenland, but the lure of the polar regions persisted. His interests now turned toward Antarctica, but his attempts to raise funds for an expedition were unsuccessful. In both 1893 and 1894, he organized "pleasure cruises" to Greenland which he made available to the general public for a cost of $500.00 per person. His 1893 trip on the *Zeta* was modestly successful, but his 1894 *Miranda* trip ended in near disaster, saved only by his own courage and efforts. The passengers were so taken by their experiences that they formed the nucleus of the Arctic Club of America.

In 1897, Cook joined the Belgian Antarctic Expedition under the leadership of Lt. Adrien de Gerlache, as surgeon of the expedition's ship, the *Belgica*. They explored the eastern coast of South America to Tierra del Fuego, where Cook administered much needed medical attention to the Fuegan tribes. The expedition then headed southward, charting new waters. However, as the long, dark Antarctic winter descended, the *Belgica* became firmly ice-bound. Roald Amundsen was the first mate; it was the first polar experience for this famed Norwegian explorer. Cook and Amundsen formed a firm friendship, one that endured throughout Cook's life, despite his subsequent misfortunes and dire circumstances.

During the long Antarctic night, Cook gave Amundsen valuable advice based on his previous Arctic experiences. He designed and constructed a lightweight tent, aerodynamically designed to withstand the high velocity polar winds. He also made important modifications to clothing, sun goggles and lightweight sledges.

The ice-bound *Belgica* spent 70 days in total darkness and an additional 70 days in partial darkness. Almost without exception, all 19 members of the crew, including de Gerlache and the *Belgica*'s captain, Georges LeCointe, became severely depressed, and several developed a frank psychosis. Cook, recalling his experience in Greenland, attributed these symptoms to deprivation of light. In his publications and book, *Through the First Antarctic Night*, Cook graphically describes the clinical manifestations of what is now recognized as the seasonal affective disorder (SAD Syndrome) (Cook, (1900) 1980). As therapy, he exposed the crew to periods of light and heat created by large bonfires lit on the ice surrounding the ship. The therapeutic results were gratifying, all of the crewmembers responding. In his account of the

expedition, Cook wrote: "Bright artificial lights relieve this to some extent, but all animal organism is left in a condition similar to that of a planet deprived of direct sunlight. The best substitute for the sun is direct rays of light from an open fire" (Cook, 1900, 371). Dr. Cook may have conducted the first experiment on the effects of artificial light on the SAD syndrome.

During the long Antarctic night, Cook was faced with another serious problem - scurvy. The supplies of limejuice and fruits had been exhausted and the crew was beginning to manifest the early signs and symptoms of scurvy. Again, Cook drew on his experience with the Eskimos of Northern Greenland. Despite a total absence of fruits and vegetables from their diet, Eskimos did not develop scurvy. He had commented on this phenomenon to Peary during the Greenland expedition: "Scurvy is in the shadow line between tinned food and raw meat. In the process of cooking and preserving, something vital to our lives is in part destroyed....The effect on all of us half-witted whites is the same, while the Eskimos are in full vigor. Raw meat is the answer" (Cook, unpublished). This occurred before the identification of vitamin C in the treatment and prevention of scurvy and at a time when many considered "toxins and ptomaine" more important than a dietary deficiency as the cause of scurvy.

The *Belgica* crew gave Cook an opportunity to test this hypothesis. Slightly cooked walrus, seal and penguin meat was made a part of the *Belgica* crew's diet. Signs of scurvy disappeared and no new cases developed. In his comprehensive review of the history of scurvy and vitamin C, Carpenter cites a number of similar instances in which a diet of raw meat was effective in both the prevention and treatment of scurvy (Carpenter, 1986, 133-57). Subsequent studies have confirmed the presence of vitamin C in the meat of marine animals and birds (Pennington, 1985).

The *Belgica* was freed from the ice in early 1899 largely by Cook's ingenuity. When an open lead appeared about 1000 yards from the ship, Cook suggested that the crew dig a channel from the ship to the lead. This arduous task was successful in freeing the ship and, long given up for lost, the *Belgica* reached Punta Arenas on March 28, 1899. Again, Cook took the time to administer necessary medical care to the Fuegan people.

Both de Gerlache (de Gerlache, 1902) and Amundsen (Amundsen, 1927) credited Cook for saving the expedition. In his account of the *Belgica* Expedition, Amundsen states: "It was in this fearful emergency, during these thirteen long months in which almost the certainty of death stared us steadily in the face, that I came to know Dr. Cook intimately and to form the affection for him and the gratitude to him which nothing in his later career could ever cause me to alter. He, of all the ship's company was the one man of unfaltering courage, unfailing hope, endless cheerfulness, and unwearied kindness. When anyone was sick, he was at the bedside to comfort him; when any was disheartened, he was there to encourage and inspire. And not only was his faith undaunted, but his ingenuity and enterprise were boundless" (Amundsen, 1927).

For his many valiant deeds while aboard the *Belgica*, Dr. Cook was awarded the gold medal of the Order of Leopold by King Leopold of Belgium.

Meanwhile, Robert E. Peary was continuing his polar efforts, but meeting with only limited success. Three attempts to reach the Pole had been thwarted. On one such effort, he developed frostbite necessitating amputation of four toes on each foot.

In 1901, a group of wealthy men who had united to form the Peary Arctic Club became concerned about Peary's welfare. He had been in the Arctic for four continuous years and nothing had been heard from him for about two years. They decided to form a relief party and invited Cook to go along as second in command to Herbert Bridgman, the secretary of the Peary Arctic Club. Cook agreed and the relief party made its way uneventfully to Etah in northwestern Greenland, Peary's encampment.

Peary was obviously in poor physical and mental condition. At the urgent request of Mrs. Peary and Bridgman and with Peary's consent, Dr. Cook performed a remarkably complete physical examination under the most difficult of conditions; the results are graphically described in Dr. Cook's memoirs (Cook, unpublished).

Cook noted that Peary had all the outward appearances of some morbid disease. He described a slight yellowness to his eyes and the presence of a "well marked and deep seated anemia". Cook commented that this appeared to be different from the common type of so-called "polar anemia" that we now recognize as being due to iron deficiency contributed by a lack of vitamin C and the resultant secondary difficulty in converting ferric iron in the diet to the more absorbable ferrous form. Actually, Cook did note that there were premonitory signs of scurvy in Peary's gums.

Cook goes on to state: "Peary was inclined to ascribe all his trouble to 'nerves'....In this, we disagreed. About all the symptoms and objective signs found in Peary are common for brief periods to all polar explorers, but in Peary there was a chronic deep seated effect which worried me" (Cook, unpublished).

Cook suggested the diagnosis of pernicious anemia and recommended a diet including liver and raw meat (Cook, unpublished). He also urged Peary to return home for a period of recuperation. Peary refused to comply with either recommendation, stating, "If I must eat raw meat, then I will quit this part of the world" (Cook, unpublished).

Cook's recommendation for a diet high in liver occurred some 25 years prior to Minot and Murphy's description of the use of oral liver in the treatment of pernicious anemia (Minot, 1926). Peary's refusal to comply with the recommendation may have served him well, potentially saving him from the serious hypervitaminosis A that has been reported secondary to the ingestion of polar bear and seal liver by Arctic explorers (Rodahl, 1943; Carpenter, 1986). Actually, Peary was later diagnosed as having pernicious anemia, and in accordance with standard and traditional medical practice at that time, received multiple transfusions as therapy. Pernicious anemia was, in fact, the underlying cause of Peary's death in 1920.

Despite the rift in their relations, Peary urged Cook to remain as his epedition's surgeon. Peary had dismissed Dr. Thomas Dedrick as surgeon because of the latter's concerns on the adverse effects of the expedition on Eskimo health. Dr. Dedrick had remained with the Eskimos to care for them.

Cook refused Peary's offer and again returned to the practice of medicine. However, his spirit of polar exploration and adventure was irrepressible and was given his priority. In 1903, he made a cicumferential trip around the base of Mt. McKinley. On a second attempt in 1906, he claimed

to have made a successful ascent to the summit. On his return to civilization following the latter expedition, Dr. Cook, himself exhausted and in poor physical condition, was faced with the problems of several men who had been rescued from a shipwreck and were in dire need of medical attention. Cook worked over them for hours, and, only after he was satisfied with their condition, did he attend to his own needs.

On July 3, 1907, with the financial support of John R. Bradley, a wealthy sportsman, Cook set sail for Greenland. Although Bradley's original intent was said to be an Arctic hunting trip, Cook suggested that they make a try for the North Pole. Bradley turned down the offer for himself, but agreed to support Cook if the conditions were favorable. They were and Bradley and the ship returned to the U.S. without Cook.

Cook was meticulous in his preparations for his trip to the Pole. He was keenly aware of the importance of diet and of the adverse effects that an inadequate diet had had on previous expeditions. In this regard, he was assisted by his observations of the Greenland Eskimos. He had noted that "animal food, consisting of meat and fat, is entirely satisfactory as a steady diet without other adjuncts. His food requires neither salt nor sugar, fruit or vegetables, nor is cooking a matter of necessity. Quantity is important, but quality applies only to the relative proportion of fat" (Cook, 1911, 134-135).

Cook carefully calculated the amount of food necessary for the trip to the Pole. Pemmican, invented by the American Indian, and consisting of pounded ground beef, sprinkled with a few raisins and currants, and slightly sweetened, was the dietary staple. The mixture was cemented together with heated tallow and packed into tin cans. Cook's supply of pemmican consisted of 240 pounds for the men and 480 pounds for the dogs. He was, however, aware that pemmican was not, in itself, anti-scorbutic, and in addition to the pemmican, Cook's supplies included walrus meat, musk-ox tenderloin, tallow, milk biscuit and 50 pounds of "surprises", including gumdrops, for his Eskimo companions (Cook, 1911).

Dr. Cook, unlike other Arctic explorers recognized and appreciated the contributions to exploration that had been made by the Indians and Eskimos. In fact, he dedicated his book *My Attainment of the Pole* to them: "To the Pathfinders; to the Indians who invented pemmican and snowshoes; to the Eskimos who gave the art of sled traveling; to this twin family of wild folk who have no flag, goes the first credit" (Cook, 1911).

Cook left Greenland on February 19, 1908, taking an initial westward course because of the presence of game in that area. Then, leaving most of the initial party behind, he headed northward for the Pole in the company of two Eskimos, two sledges and 26 dogs. His northward trip covered 835 kilometers and took 35 days. He claimed to have reached the Pole on April 21, 1908. On his return trip, vividly described in his book *Return from the Pole* (Cook, 1951), he became lost and wandered far off course. The return took 12 months, three of which were spent with his two Eskimo companions in an underground cave, existing under Stone Age conditions. Their survival was in large measure attributable to Cook's polar and medical expertise. Finally, near death, they reached Greenland on April 15, 1909. In September, Cook telegraphed the news of his feat to *the New York Herald* from the Shetland Islands.

Peary's final assault on the North Pole began on February 28, 1909 and was performed in multiple stages. The final lap was accomplished by Peary, Matthew Henson and four Eskimos and the Pole was claimed on April 6, 1909, almost one year after Cook's claimed attainment. The rest is history.

During the Cook-Peary controversy that took place over the rest of his life, Dr. Cook never returned to the formal practice of medicine. His conviction for using the mails to defraud resulted in his incarceration at Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in 1925. His stay in prison of almost 5 years was characterized by devoted service to his fellow inmates. He was appointed night superintendent for the prison hospital and was editor of the 17-prison's monthly magazine, *The New Era*. He devised a treatment and rehabilitation program to assist the many drug and alcohol addicts among the prison's 4000 inmates. He lectured to them and contributed articles to the prison magazine. He also organized a school to help educate the many illiterate prisoners.

Dr. Cook, then 65, was paroled on March 8, 1930 after almost 5 years incarceration. Penniless, he depended on his family and many friends for support. Ironically, many investors who had taken his advice became wealthy as a result of oil discoveries on the land he had recommended for investment. Cook's continued efforts to establish the validity of his claim to have reached the Pole were in vain.

Dr. Cook died on August 2, 1940 because of a stroke. Prior to his death, he was granted a full pardon by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Although avid supporters of Dr. Cook still fight for his cause, there are no lasting memorials or monuments to this accomplished physician and polar explorer.

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**About the Author**

Dr. Ralph Myerson, a Philadelphia physician who has contributed to historical as well as medical literature, provides this insight into understanding Frederick A. Cook as not only an explorer but a "doctor afield". A cum laude graduate of Tufts Medical School, Dr. Myerson was until recently an associate dean at the Medical College of Pennsylvania and has occupied several clinical posts at the college and various hospitals. He recently authored a paper on Cook in the journal of Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honorary society. He has been involved with various European groups interested in commemorating the work of the Belgian Antarctic Expedition, which is approaching its Centennial later this decade.

# CHAPTER 2

## DAGTIKORSSUAQ AND INUGHUIT: COOK AND THE POLAR ESKIMOS

Rolf Gilberg

**Abstract**

Frederick Cook did one thing which may have been more surprising than controversial to his contemporary fellow explorers of the Arctic. He dedicated his book on the polar journey, *My Attainment of the Pole*, to "the pathfinders" the Eskimos without whom he could never have launched or completed a polar expedition. Arctic explorers did not usually pay cognizance to the Eskimo other than recording their number as inventory along with the dogs. Thus, Cook became among the first to acknowledge them not only as human beings but also as persons with skill and knowledge. "Dagtikorssuaq" is the Eskimo name for Dr. Cook and "Inughuit" is their name for themselves. This presentation will examine this unique relationship and its bearing on what would be a controversy in both the world of the "white men" and among their own people.

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Growing up with a red painted dog sled in the living room gives one a certain dimension of imagination about faraway places. Every time guests needed to stay over in my parents' home, I was asked to sleep on the dog sled, which was covered by a huge polar bear fur. My parents spent some time in 1930's in North Greenland, where my father served as the first governmentally employed medical district officer and physician among the Inughuit. He had brought the sled with him, when returning to Denmark. Naturally, a desire grew in me to know more about the people who used a vehicle like that.

Inughuit, the northernmost people on Earth, lives in Northwest Greenland. This people have been called many different names since the white man first visited them in 1818. Some of these names are Arctic Highlanders, Smith Sound Eskimos, Peary Eskimos, and Cape York Eskimos. The most used name, the Polar-Eskimos, was given them by the Danish polar explorer Knud Rasmussen in 1903.

Most Eskimos do not call themselves Eskimos, but Inuit, which means 'human beings'. One Eskimo is called Inuk. The Polar-Eskimos call themselves Inughuit, which means 'the real and great human beings'. I prefer to use the name Inughuit, which is not exactly the same as Inuit. All Inughuit are Inuit, but only a few Inuit are also Inughuit.

In this paper, I will use the term 'culture' in the meaning of a people's culture. In this term I include everything these people are doing - physically as well as mentally, its history, language, worldview, and so on.

The goal of my paper is to focus on some of F.A. Cook's writing on the Inughuit in order to show his respect for them as human beings. This side of Cook's work has not been focused on by scientists or anyone else. Cook has done so many other famous things in his life, and I am sure many of the speakers at this symposium will focus on these items. I would like to emphasize that at this meeting I do not speak as a representative of the National Museum of Denmark, where I happen to work. I speak from my own point of view according to the research I have done among the Inughuit.

Around the change of the century (1900) it was not uncommon that many Europeans and Americans did not show a lot of respect towards non-whites and considered them to have a lower status. Sometimes even below the level of human beings. Even today, some persons share this point of view. In addition, in this matter Cook turned out to be a pioneer. In his writing he showed a good example. He wanted to change the readers attitude to a more positive one towards foreign people. He tried not to offend or insult his American reader and explained his viewpoints in a cautious and gentle way, but without loosing the main point. Here is an example (Cook, 1902, 32):

> *"These northernmost people, almost inhuman in their manner of living, are still, in their relation to each other and to the rest of mankind, very human. They have a deep sense of honor, a wholesome regard for the rights of their fellows, and a sympathetic temperament. Theft are almost unknown, cheating and lying are extremely uncommon. Quarrels, through frequent, are restrained because of a well-developed habit of suppressing all emotions. Morally, even when measured by our own standard, they are superior to the white invaders of their own country."*

From his first visit in 1891-1892 and again in 1901 and 1907-1909 to the land of the Inughuit, Dr. Frederick A. Cook had the possibility to study the culture of the Inughuit. Cook used this possibility. He respected the Inughuit so much that he even learned to talk their language. Cook was a kind and a friendly person who cared about his fellow men, no matter where they lived. He had an open mind and a will to understand the Inughuit and their way of life.

This has fascinated me, because another American who visited the same area at the same time, had only very little interest in the local people. Later I shall return to this point. The purpose of this paper is to try to shed light on the relations between Cook and the Inughuit.

My special interest in Cook as an anthropologist made me write his daughter in October 1971 starting out with a statement that I was not interested in who raced for the North Pole, but that I wanted to know more about the Inughuit. Well, I did not use that name at that time, as I had not yet learned enough about them. Helene Vetter wrote me back within few weeks. We continued our dialogue at a distance as I never got the possibility to meet neither her, nor her daughter Janet, who took over the communication, when Helene died. I am sorry I never got a chance to meet either of them. However, I am grateful for the possibility at this symposium on F.A. Cook to give my views on him and his relations with the Inughuit.

At the time of Cook's visits to Greenland many people had the idea that natives in far-away places could not be considered real human beings, but something on a lower status. An opinion

like that is of course wrong. The excuse for applying such a wrong point of view I will explain with ignorance and lack of knowledge. Cook was aware of this attitude. In a pedagogical way he told the American people about Inughuit. He presented the natives of North Greenland as being as human as the Americans with the same types of wants and needs, of course in a completely different setting as nature and climate was so different. In that context, by describing the Inughuit with great respect and treating them as normal human beings, Cook seems to have viewpoints, which were ahead of his time. Another contemporary American, Robert E. Peary, sometimes writing about the same ethnic group, dissociated himself from the Inughuit by calling them 'My Huskies' and generally looked down own them as human beings. Thus, Peary would focus on the negative relations to the Inughuit in contrast to Cook, who was always looking for the positive aspects. To stress my point I should like to put forward a couple of examples.

The Inughuit had adapted so fine to their environment that Cook wrote (Cook, 1902, 19-20):

> *"So superior have been their (Inughuit) habits of life to those of the white men in the Arctic, that Peary, his men and even his colored helper have gradually adopted the Eskimo mode of life. They wear Eskimo clothing, use Eskimo tactics in hunting, travel with Eskimo sledges and outfits, and even eat Eskimo food. These same people, the Eskimos, have been regarded as dwarfs, mentally, physically, and morally. Their manner of life has always been viewed with an air of disgust, but one finds germs, even in the muddiest places."*

In most cases when Cook use the word 'Eskimos' he refers to the Inughuit. This ethnic group, living in Northwest Greenland, is of course Greenlanders, but due to having a high Arctic culture and their own Inuit-dialect, they consider themselves a separate nationality within the Greenland population, of which they only account 1 %.

Cook gives another example to humanize the Inughuit (Cook, 1902, 20):

> *"Their Eskimo home, viewed from the standpoint of local needs, is a well-organized institution. Indeed, it is about the only part of their life which can be said to be organized and systematized, since disorder, freedom from conventionalities, and independence are characteristic traits of every Eskimo. As we first saw this wilderness of domestic life, we were heartily disgusted with our neighbors. We could not understand how human beings could subsist and extricate anything worth living for in an irregular dungeon, less than ten feet in its longest diameter, hardly affording standing room, and with bits of stone and ice for furniture. The luxurious Caucasian loses all sense of proportion as he first views this home, but after he is compelled to undergo the life of hardship and suffering which is the lot of his Eskimo friends, he learns to regard this dark chamber as a kind of paradise. He forgets his own palatial home, and feels real comfort and spiritual elation, snugly tucked under furs, as the freezing wind and snow rush over his head. After all, everything in life is good or bad by comparison."*

Even seen with today's eyes, Cook shows an excellent understanding of the way of life among the Inughuit. He has a lot of good observations still useful for research. He shows special understanding and human knowledge when dealing with the Inughuit, and has given many

comprehensive portraits of persons he met among the Inughuit. Cook also managed to depict the human feelings of joy and sadness with a deep understanding so that the reader can easily imagine the situation like a third person being present, when the event happened. I should like to bring forward such an example. Among the unpublished material left from Cook's hand there is a small story which feelings touch me each time I read it. I want to share this story with you.

**Eskimo Tears and Echo Give Voice to the Dead**

*"The most pathetic expression of Eskimo life is that of women in the presence of death. She seaks to give voice to the parting breath. She tries to continue this for a long time to those of her loved ones who have passed and like our spiritualists, she gets replies. On land she does this most when alone in the darkness and silence of the cold night, but occasionally she gives a dramatic expression of fealing death in song and dance and when she does all feel with wet eyes, waves of sympathetic sadness. The effect was as liquid to my eyes as to the others, even when I did not grasp the meaning of the words.*

*The first weeks of the long night give a seasonal exarcise for this kind of tear thrills. If there is an open roft in the icesealed sea, as there usually is at this time, the stage is permanantly set for tragedy. Hysteria now betomes endemic. Light laughter and crasy sadness is in the very air of storm and gloom. The spirit of the dead for passing years must now be awakened to the call of earthly broken hearts. I have seen this appeal to death in the lighted stone house; have heard it in the dark outdoors under a cold blue moon, but to me the act is best in the noonday twilight of the passing day and when the woman is alone and of middle age. At any rate she does her tear stuff best when there are no other natives about.*

*Going along the ice foot, the ice rim which adhere to the shore, at noon I saw a woman behind the rocks nearby. She was making a whining noise and acting suspiciously much like a wild animal when caught in a trap. It was several days after sunset, but the waning twilight which was to last a fortnight longer, was bringt and rich in purple blue. There was no wind. The temperature was low, perhaps ÷30°F (÷36°C) The tide was going out leaving the ice to settle and tear loose from the land with a little noice that of a saw on wood. The sound of the sliding ice was low piched with some regular rhythm - now and then there was asharp crack. The native woman's earlier note of cries now tuned in on this lilt of the slipping ice. The combined notes rolled out on the icy air in a muffled undertone. The thing was beautiful even tomu untrained ear, but so sad that it was necessary to close my eyes to mop the gathering tears. Pulling the fox tail fur of my hood over the wet eyes, I sat down on a piece of ice to further engage the thrill of grief In a short time the voice lifted slightly and went adrift in long bars of monotone. This I knew to be a distant call, but it brought cold shivers. In it was the very sound of the end and the silence of death. So real was the impression on me that I got up expecting to find her breath had gone. Going over with the frozen gignity of an undertaker, I found the poor woman prostrate on the snow face down.*

*Then came the thought after all, can it be? Is she dead? I called. There was no response. I turned her over. She was limp. Her face under the feeble light was ashy. Her lips blue. Eyes closed. Dressed in a new garb of blue fox with white fur fronts to her panties and*

*spotless boots, the picture was not unattractive. With a bared hand, I pulled down her eyelids. Tears oozed out to freeze on her cheeks in pearls. Then she slowly got up and began to talk.*

*I did not understand a word she said. She knew me and I knew her. She called me Doto and I called her Soso. She knew that I knew what her grief was. No explanations were necessary. The woman had lost her husband and her child. Her husband had been carried into the sea by an avalanche. When a husband dies, by the custom of the land, if the widow has a child under two years, it must also die. The baby had been strangled with a line around its neck.*

*Now the troubled woman was calling to her husband 's spirit in the sea and singing to her child 's spirit in the air. I knew the story of her love for her man and her boy. I could feel her heart aches in the tone of her voice, but I was speechless. What could I do!*

*She now had another husband. It was a trial marriage as are all Eskimo mates, but her love ran out to the spirit of the dead. She pulled the fox tail of her hood to dry her eyes. The she shouted with the penetrating call of one with a death wound. This frightened me, I stepped backward. Then she called again in short even sounds. There was some period between these sounds. The I heard the echo of these sounds from rock to rock. After a few experimental echo tests she so timed her sounds as to be an answer between the words of rebounding echo. The followed a series of sounds with echoes and answers so nicely timed as to appear like regular conversation with some one not far away. This to me was the most surprising human phenomena that I had ever heard. She was talking to her dead husband and heard her baby cry. For spiritual realism the thing was amazing - so natural that I felt creepy.*

*With sounds in length time and tune correctly placed, the inter echo conversation continued with something like rhythm. It was spread over a time which seemed like an hour. We were both so well dressed in furs that the cold did not disturb the engaging thrills. When the interview with the dead was over, I walked with the sad woman back to her house. As we stepped along she breathed hard and seemed tired. I tried to elicit from her the trend of her conversation, but she said the voice of death must never be repeated. She kept her secret - would not mention the theme or the names of her dead husband or child. This was the first echo talk with the dead that I had over heard. I never heard it again, though I was told about it by others, and to be frank, it was so spoocky that I do not care to hear it again. Soso did not invite me to this gruesome aspect of the supernatural. I had intruded into her secret sphere between the living and the dead. I got what I had not expected, but it was worth the price in tears."*

After this I should like to forward a few examples showing Peary' s view on the Inughuit who he in this case calls 'the Smith-Sound Eskimos'. He gives (1898(1): 480) the following description of them:

*"This little tribe, or perhaps, more properly speaking, family of Eskimos is found maintaining its existence in comnplete isolation and independence, under the outmost*

*stress of savage environment. Without government; without religion; without money or any standard of value; without written language; without property, except clothing and weapons; their food nothing but meat, blood, and blubber; without salt, or any substance of vegetable origin; their clothing the skin of birds and animals; almost their only two objects in life, something to eat and something with which to clothe themselves, and their sole occupation the struggle for these objects; with habits and conditions of life hardly above the animal, these people seem at first to be very near the bottom of the scale of civilisation; yet closer acquaintance shows them to be quick, intelligent, ingenious, and thoroughly human."*

Peary did think not much of the Inughuit. His point of view was shared by many whites at that time. As you can detect, I do not share Peary's point of view. Maybe, it is not so strange since I belong to another period. But it is my opinion that Cook, who was a contemporary of Peary did not either, and that makes him progressive.

Peary only ranked the Inughuit according to how useful they were to him. Let us listen a little more to Peary (Peary, 1910, 47-48):

*"I have been stydying the Eskimos for eighteen years and no more effective instruments for arctic work could be imagined than these plump, bronze-skinned, keen-eyed and black-maned children of nature. Their very limitations are their most valuable endowments for the purposes of arctic work. I have a sincere interest in these people, aside from their usefulness to me; and my plan from the beginning has been to give them such aid and instruction as would fit them more effectively to cope with their own austere environment, and to refrain from teaching them anything which would tend to weaken their self-confidence or to make them discontented with their lot."*

Peary goes on: *"To Christianize them would be quite impossible; but the cardinal graces of faith, hope, and charity they seem to have already, for without them they could never survive the six-months' night and the many rigors of their home. Their feeling for me is a blending of gratitude and confidence. To understand what my gifts have meant to them, imagine a philanthropic millionaire descending upon an American country town and offering every man there a brownstone manison and an unlimited bank account. But even this comparison falls short of the reality, for in the United States even the poorest boy knows that there is a possibility of his attaining for himself those things on which he sets his heart, if he will labor and endure, while to the Eskimos the things which I have given them are absolutely out of their world, as far beyond their own unaided efforts as the moon and Mars are beyond the dwellers on this planet."*

It is possible to find many more Peary-statements, where he presents himself as a good guy, a Santa Claus, or a philanthropist, because of all the things he gave. There is nothing wrong in giving gifts, but in my opinion he only gave the Inughuit these "gifts", because he wanted them to work hard for him, to bring him to the point of nothing, called the North Pole among whites. When Peary was convinced that he had reached this point so attractive to white men, he never went North again. Thus leaving the Inughuit with empty guns and an unfulfilled taste for tobacco, tea and coffee. This way the Inughuit was worse off after his leaving in 1909 than

before his arrival in 1891. Had not the Danish polar explorer Knud Rasmussen, assisted by his friend Peter Freuchen, founded the most northern shop to supply all these items, Peary had made the Inughuit dependent on, they would have had to sled thousands of kilometers in an icy and hazardous world to go shopping in West Greenland.

In the beginning the Inughuit were happy to go sledding along with Peary and his crew towards the north, Knud Rasmussen (Rasmussen, 1919, 84-85) writes, because the Inughuit expected to meet new people, new hunting grounds, or new land to settle. They did not meet new people, because Ellesmere Island and Greenland north of the land of the Inughuit is a country not inhabited by human beings. They did meet good hunting grounds, which they appreciated.

Each time Peary began a new expedition he visited all the Inughuit settlements and picked the best hunters to go north with him. This way he drained the whole Inughuit society for the best active men and women, leaving the rest to a poorer life than they would have had otherwise.

Later on when sledding continued into the icepack of the polar sea, the Inughuit were explained that the purpose of all the trouble was to reach a geographical point in the desert of pack ice. Inughuit, in spite of the extreme aimlessness of the hardships of traveling, participating in the Peary expeditions got a new approach. The Inughuit went along partly to acquire the attractive gifts of guns, tobacco, tea, coffee and the like, partly and mainly because Peary had so strong a will that it was difficult to say no. Rasmussen concludes that the Inughuit's respect for Peary was much stronger than their love for him.

Returning once again to F.A. Cook, Inuutersuaq Ulloriaq (Ulloriaq, 1984, 70-78) - hunter and author of the Inughuit - tells about him that he spoke very well the Inughuit language, and that they did not have bad things to tell about him. It was his kindness to and knowledge of the Inughuit that made Cook talk them into going along with him to the North Pole.

In his papers - "Gynaecology and Obstetrics among the Eskimos" (Cook, 1894a) and "Medical Observations among the Esquimaux" (Cook, 1894b) - Cook gave a very good ethnographical description of the culture of the Inughuit. He shows a great insight of the daily life and the mind of the Inughuit. Of course there are statements which makes one to think: Can that be true? So much have changed since Cook lived among the Inughuit that it may be too difficult to get the answers today. To me it was a surprise to read that a lot of women did not have their periods during the dark season. This subject is not easy for a man to ask women about, especially not a white man like me who has only stayed among them for a short while. After some time - meaning several years - some of my female Inughuit friends indicated that this certainly was the case for some Inughuit women. Right away, I remembered that Cook mentioned this all the way back in 1894.

A question like that of course needs much more research, preferably done by a local woman. I mention this just as an example to show that there is a lot of ethnographical data to retrieve from the writings of F.A. Cook. Data which no longer can be collected, because modern progress - whatever that is - has slowly changed the culture of Inughuit, so that their customs are much different at some points compared to a hundred years ago.

Cook really wanted to bring proper information to the public - I have a similar purpose with my work, so I fully understand Cook on this point. Allow me to give a small example from Cook's writing (Cook, 1894a, 156):

> *"These people"* - Cook talks about the Inughuit - *"have nothing to eat but what they get from the animal kingdom. Their only food is meat and blubber. It is commonly supposed that people drink fat very much as we do water, and most of us, I think have been taught that in the schools. This is not the case. They do eat some fat, but they eat it almost the same way that we eat cheese, taking small pieces between times.*

One could go on giving several examples of similar type, but this should be sufficient to stress my point that Cook in his writings was trying to make the American public abandon their wrong ideas about the Inuit by using the Inughuit as an example.

Thus we have two contemporary Americans, Cook and Peary, both well educated, both visiting the same Arctic people, together or alone, and it is amazing to see how different a picture each of them gives of this people. Peary used his power of strong will and expensive gifts to make the Inughuit do what he wanted. Cook on the other hand did none of that, but treated them with kindness and patience supplied with his sense of humor and his knowledge about their culture to make them help him. This difference in attitude is also reflected in the fact that Cook learned to speak the language of the Inughuit, while Peary, besides knowing a few central words, had people to do that for him.

When comparing these two men and focusing on their deeds, one should start out from the same level, and not begin calling one of them the villain and the other the hero. Both should be treated on an equal basis. Doing that Cook seems to be the better anthropologist of the two. Even today in the society full of racial problems, Cook with his modern viewpoints on other nationalities has something to teach us.

I should like to suggest that the Frederick A. Cook Society collect all the published and unpublished writings by Cook on the Inughuit and turn them into a book. This would give a completely new dimension of Dr. F.A. Cook, showing him as an eskimologist as well as an anthropologist.

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**About the Author**

Rolf Gilberg is a curator at the National Museum of Denmark and has done ethnographic fieldwork and studies among the Smith Sound Inuit in northwest Greenland. His work has been cited by many writers and historians who have covered this region and its native people. Dr. Gilberg for many years had been in communication with Dr. Cook's daughter, Helene Cook Vetter and later his granddaughter, Janet Cook Vetter, in searching out the work of Cook with the Inuit during his various trips to the Arctic. The involvement of Danish explorers in the Cook story and the explorer's return to civilization via Copenhagen, where his recognition still stands, makes Dr. Gilberg's research and presentation significant.

# CHAPTER 3

## LIARS AND GENTLEMEN: COOK, RASMUSSEN, FREUCHEN AND THE POLAR ESKIMOS

Kenn Harper

**Abstract**

Peter Freuchen once remarked that Frederick Cook was a liar and gentlemen and that Robert Peary was neither. This presentation will examine the reactions to Cook's account of his polar journey from the Danish adventurers, Rasmussen and Freuchen. It will discuss Rasmussen's initial pro-Cook stance, his interviews with Cook's Eskimo assistants, and his subsequent about-face on the issue after meeting with Freuchen in Denmark. Conflicting testimony in the Eskimo account of the journey also will be examined. Freuchen's motives will be examined, and a possible reason for Rasmussen's abandonment of Cook will be suggested.

### LIARS AND GENTLEMEN

I have lived in the Arctic for the past 27 years, and speak the Inuit dialects of eastern Canada, West Greenland and the Thule District. For two of those years I lived among the polar Eskimos of Qaanaaq, Greenland and I have visited Qaanaaq at least once every year since 1975. In this time, I have heard much from the polar Eskimos of their views of northern history, and in particular of their admiration for the abilities of four non-Inuit – Cook, Peary, Freuchen and Rasmussen - whose paths crossed in the high Arctic as they do in this paper. This paper will examine in particular the roles of Freuchen and Rasmussen in the disgrace of Frederick Cook, and investigate the reliability of Eskimo folk-memory.

The title, "Liars and Gentleman," is from a statement of Peter Freuchen, master of the one-liner, who once remarked that Frederick Cook was a liar and a gentleman and that Robert Peary was neither.

On May 21, 1909, Frederick Cook, traveling with the polar Eskimo, Qulutannguaq, reached the Greenland community of Upernavik, south of Melville Bay, on his way south to announce his attainment of the North Pole. He stayed there for a month as the guest of H. Kraul, Danish governor of the district.

A month later, on June 20, the ship *Godthaab* under the command of Captain Henning Schoubye called there. Aboard were Jens Daugaard-Jensen, the Inspector of North Greenland, his staff, and a number of Danish reporters and scientists. Governor Kraul introduced Cook to them as the first man to have reached the North Pole.

Cook took passage on the *Godthaab* from Upernavik to Egedesminde, to await the departure of another ship, the *Hans Egede*, for Copenhagen.

From Egedesminde, the *Godthaab* left for North Star Bay with two Greenlandic missionaries, Gustav Olsen and Sechmann Rosbach, to establish the first mission to the polar Eskimos. The ship stopped at Umanak on its way north to pick up Olsen's childhood friend, Knud Rasmussen, who would assist in the establishment of the mission.

Rasmussen had been born in Jakobshavn, Greenland. He was of mixed Eskimo and Danish blood and his first language was Greenlandic. He had been educated in Denmark and had worked a time as a journalist in Copenhagen. He had met the polar Eskimos for the first time in 1903 when he took part in Mylius-Erichsen's so-called Literary Expedition to northwestern Greenland.

The ship *Godthaab* reached North Star Bay, near the Eskimo village of Uummannaq, on July 23, 1909. But Knud Rasmussen had written to Cook four days before the ship's arrival there, to congratulate him. He wrote thus:

> *"My most hearty congratulations to you on your successful voyage to the North Pole. You have won the victory, and this victory, the greatest in arctic history, will in spite of all the honors which will overwhelm you from the whole world be the greatest remuneration in itself."*
>
> *"Your display of energy has been wonderful, and I admire you deeply. But it is well known that all great victories produce envy, and you certainly know that you will have to fight a bitter battle against all the skeptics in the world.*
>
> *"I have therefore thought that I perhaps might help you if I, during my stay this summer among the Eskimos at Cape York, had a serious interview with your followers and later published that interview. For the construction of this interview I would be much obliged if you would send me a small sketch of your travel before you leave Greenland, and I ask you to send it to me at Umanak with the Hans Egede"* (*The Witnesses for Dr. Cook*, Maurice Francis Egan, *The Rosary Magazine*, November 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 130).

Cook did not comply with Rasmussen' s request, but Rasmussen took no offense at his failure to reply:

> *"I naturally surmised that he considered my proposal unimportant. A few days later I met Dr. Cook personally, just before the start of the Hans Egede and, as I then got the impression that he looked upon possible skeptics with dignified and proud superiority, I deemed any defiance to be out of place and prepared to say nothing until the right moment shouted come"* (*The Witnesses for Dr. Cook*, Maurice Francis Egan, *The Rosary Magazine*, November 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 130).

The *Godthaab* remained in North Star Bay for two weeks before returning to Egedesminde, where Cook was still awaiting the departure of the *Hans Egede* for Copenhagen. Freeman reports that the Danish officials had heard "at each Eskimo settlement on North Star Bay that Etukishook and Ahwelah had been to the "Big Nail" (the Pole) with Cook" (Freeman, 1961, 130).

In Egedesminde, on August 9, the day before their departure for Denmark, Daugaard-Jensen hosted a dinner in Cook's honour, at which Cook gave a lecture. After Cook had finished speaking, Captain Schoubye told that he had heard Knud Rasmussen question at least 35 Eskimos at North Star Bay regarding Cook's journey. He reported that the natives said Cook "jumped and danced like an angacock when he had looked at his 'sun glass' and seen that they were only a day's journey from the 'Great Nail'" (*The Witnesses for Dr. Cook*, Maurice Francis Egan, *The Rosary Magazine*, November 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 131).

Dr. Hans Steensby, an anthropologist traveling aboard the *Godthaab*, felt that the reason for Cook's success was his complete understanding of the Eskimo people (Freeman, 1961, 131).

On September 1, 1909, Cook cabled the International Polar Commission in Brussels from Lerwick. Shetland Islands, that he had reached the North Pole on April 21, 1908. That same day, Jens Daugaard-Jensen cabled Denmark: "Dr. Cook reached the North Pole April 21, 1908. Arrived May 1909 at Upernavik from Cape York. The Cape Yorkers confirm to Knud Rasmussen the voyage of Cook" (Freeman, 1961, 141).

A copy of this telegram was delivered on same day to Dr. Maurice Francis Egan, United States Minister to Copenhagen. Egan later wrote: "Nobody questioned the truth of the story, for Knud Rasmussen's nave is a talisman, and the officials in Greenland do not take travelers' tales seriously unless the travelers have serious claims" (Maurice Francis Egan, *Recollections of a Happy Life*, George H. Doran and Company, New York, 1924, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 141).

On September 4, Cook met two reporters. Theon Wright described them as "...two men who probably contributed as much to Cook's ultimate downfall as anyone except Peary" (Wright. 1970, 233). They were Philip Gibbs and Peter Freuchen. Philip Gibbs, a feature writer from the *Daily Chronicle* in London had arrived in Copenhagen the day before, in his own words "vastly ignorant of arctic exploration" (Freeman, 1961, 142). But that very day, he happened to meet Knud Rasmussen's wife and Peter Freuchen. Freuchen had just been hired by *Politiken* to investigate the Cook story.

Freuchen had been stoker on an expedition to northeastern Greenland in 1906 and had passed two winters there. The newspaper *Politiken* hired to cover the Frederick Cook story, because of his arctic experience. Freuchen demonstrated his habit of playing fast and loose with the facts in his admission that "This was the biggest news break of the year, and any slant we could invent was a story" (Freuchen, 1935. 30). In his first article, he made himself the subject of ridicule by stating that the date Cook had arrived at the Pole, April 21, was the spring equinox. He kept his job, however, because of his editor's belief in his "gift of fantasy" (Freuchen, 1935, 31).

Gibbs and Freuchen, with other newsmen, boarded the *Hans Egede* at Elsinore and met Cook the morning of September 4. Gibbs interviewed him over breakfast, and asked Cook for his proofs of having reached the pole. Cook replied: "You believed Hansen and Amundsen and Sverdrup. They had only their story to tell. Why don't you believe me?" (quoted in Gibbs, *Adventures in Journalism*, 46-7, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 144).

Gibbs claims that he had initially believed Cook, but that "by intuition rather than evidence... I was convinced absolutely at the end of an hour that this man had not been to the North Pole but was attempting to bluff the world" (quoted in Gibbs, *Adventures in Journalism*, 46-7, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 144).

Gibbs asked Freuchen his impression of Cook, while they were still on the ship. Freuchen initially claimed that he could be no judge of the matter. But Gibbs insisted that Freuchen, as a veteran of one arctic expedition, must know something about the matter, Freuchen stated: "...I have a hunch his whole story is a damned lie." Gibbs' reaction, quoted in Freuchen, was: "I thought Cook was a faker from the very start, and I'm going right after him!" (Freuchen, 1935, 31).

Later that day, when the ship had reached Copenhagen; Cook gave a press conference in Phoenix Hotel to about 50 reporters. William T. Stead, editor of the Review of Reviews, representing the Hearst newspapers, was at the conference and concluded: "Some believed in Dr. Cook at first; all believe in him now" (Stead, *New York Herald*, September 6, 1909, in Freeman, 1961, 148). Gibbs was not present at this press conference, however, because he was in his hotel writing the first of his condemnatory articles on Cook. He used some material from the Phoenix Hotel interviews, which he got second-hand.

On Sept 6, 1909, the *New York Times* had reported as follows:

> *"A dispatch to Le Matin from Copenhagen says that Mrs. Rasmussen, wife of Knud Rasmussen, who was with Dr. Cook in Greenland, has received a letter from her husband by the steamer Hans Egede."* The explorer writes:
>
> *"I never was so much moved in my life as by the success of Cook, for I hoped to carry off this honor myself...."*
>
> "*My husband*," writes Mrs. Rasmussen, "*was the first to congratulate Dr. Cook....My husband does not doubt in any way Dr. Cook's veracity. He is mortified not to have performed the feat himself. He nonetheless congratulates the great explorer*" (*New York Times*, September 6, 1909, in Freeman, 1961, 151-152).

Philip Gibbs, however, had a different version of events. He claimed that, over lunch with Mrs. Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen, Mrs. Rasmussen had shown him a letter that her husband had sent her. He claims she gave him permission to use part of it. Gibbs claimed "It was Peter Freuchen who copied out the words in Danish and Oscar Hansen (the *London Chronicle's* Copenhagen correspondent) who translated them into English....They were a repudiation by Knud Rasmussen of his faith in Cook and a direct suggestion that he was a knave and a liar" (Gibbs, *Adventures in Journalism*, page 52, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 151).

Was Gibbs unaware of the Le Matin report that had already been picked up by *the New York Times*? On September 17, the *New York Herald* published a statement from Mrs. Rasmussen in which she flatly denied the interpretation of Knud Rasmussen's letter given by Gibbs, Freuchen and Hansen (Freeman, 1961, 287). But the damage to Frederick Cook's reputation had been

done, even before Peary's first charge, and it had been started by Philip Gibbs and Peter Freuchen. It would be continued almost immediately by Robert Peary.

Peary's first charge against Cook raised the question of the testimony of the two Eskimo young men who had accompanied him on his expedition. In a wire from Battle Harbor, Labrador, on September 7, he charged:

> "*Cook's story should not be taken too seriously. The two Eskimos who accompanied him say he went no distance north and not out of sight of land. Other members of the tribe corroborate their story*" (*New York Herald*, September 7, 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961,157).

A Danish newspaper, *National Tidende*, immediately published a defence of Cook: "Doubtless Knud Rasmussen has means of producing reliable evidence, and when he says Cook must be trusted, that opinion counts for more than Peary's statement of what Eskimos told hit. Peary is too much a party to the case for his word to be accepted unconditionally..." (quoted in the *New York Sun*, September 9, 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 158).

As part of his attack against Cook, Peary published a document and map in which the two Eskimos who accompanied Cook are purported to have said that Cook had never left sight of land. In the *New York Times* of October 13, 1909, Peary claimed that the Eskimos were questioned aboard the Roosevelt in the following manner:

> "*One of the boys was called in and with a chart on the table before him was asked to show where he had gone with Dr. Cook. This he did, pointing out with his finger on the map but not making any marks upon it. As he went out, the other boy came in and was asked to show where he had gone with Dr. Cook. This he did, also without making any marks, and indicated the same route and the same details as did the first boy*" (*New York Times*, October 13, 1909 quoted in Freeman, 1961, 188).

As Freeman points out, Peary's reference to Cook's companions as boys was a purposeful attempt to make them out as immature and inexperienced, in contrast with Peary's own Eskimos, who were experienced travelers, some veterans of Peary's many expeditions, and leaders of the Inughuit.

One wonders about the accuracy of the white interrogators' understanding of the Inuit testimony. The main interrogator was George Borup, a Yale graduate on his first trip to the Arctic; Theon Wright inexplicably describes him as a man "who knew Eskimo languages" (Wright, 1970, 217). His knowledge of Inuttut, the language of the polar Eskimos, was. in fact, inadequate, a fact which he labours to cover up in his own book, *A Tenderfoot with Peary*. Indeed, the only member of Peary's expeditions who did well in Inuttut was Matthew Henson and his command of the language is still remembered by the polar Eskimos as being virtually flawless. But there is no record that Henson was present during the interrogation. The other two interrogators were Bob Bartlett and Donald MacMillan. Bartlett had never claimed to know any of the Eskimo dialects with which he came in contact. MacMillan made much, over the years, of his knowledge of the Eskimo language, but his claims were baseless and fraudulent. Ironically, one

of those who blew the whistle on MacMillan's abysmal knowledge of Inuttut was Peter Freuchen. In an article published in Danish in *Politiken* on June 29, 1925, Freuchen states: "When one knows MacMillan one is surprised at nothing.... look at the examples of what he calls Eskimo in his latest book and remember that in the four years when I used to meet him he did not learn to speak a single Eskimo sentence correctly..." (Freuchen, 1925).

It may be appropriate at this point to mention that white explorers had, by this time, been misunderstanding and mis-reporting Eskimos for years because of their inadequacy in the Eskimo language, and had not even gotten the Eskimo word for the North Pole correct. Theon Wright reports, on no quoted authority, that "the Eskimo word for the North Pole is Tigi-su, which means 'Big Nail' " (Wright, 1970, 22). It is not. The Eskimo word for the North Pole is qalaserssuaq, in Polar-Eskimo Eskimo dialect qalahirriag. It means, not "big nail," but "big navel," and is derived from the word qalaseq (navel), which in turn is derived from the word qalak, meaning bubble (Schultz-Lorentzen, 1927, 83) or the center of concentric rings. Of course the Eskimos had no word for North Pole before the arrival of white explorers; the word can only have been coined after seeing explorers pouring over polar projection maps and learning that the object of their quest was the centre of a widening series of latitudinal rings. Thus, the North Pole was conceived of as "the big navel." White explorers inevitably transformed "navel" to "nail," a word similar to their concept of "pole," and the myth was born that the Eskimos call the North Pole "the Big Nail".

On October 21, 1909, the *New York Times* published a report from Knud Rasmussen, received via Rasmussen's wife in Denmark. Rasmussen began by stating that "the last post from Denmark tells me that there has been some surprise among my countrymen that I, who was the only white man with a real knowledge of the Eskimo language who had been in contact with the Cape York Eskimos, have not sent any statement to civilization about my impression of Dr. Cook's North Pole trip... I therefore now hasten to take this opportunity...to expedite the sending of my opinion to Denmark, an opinion which in view of Peary's attack may be of value" (*New York Times*, October 21, 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 189).

Thus, Rasmussen was still firmly on the side of Cook in opposition to Peary. He had still not interviewed Ittukusuk and Aapilak, but had gained his information from their fellow Inuit. What followed was a detailed report of approximately 900 words. Salient points are these:

> *"The Eskimos of course cannot give the distance in figures, but they say that on the journey over the ice field from the shore the sun began to appear and stood high in the sky and at last did not disappear at all, so that it was almost summer before they reached land again*" (Freeman, 1961, 190).

As Wally Herbert has correctly pointed out, however, this was merely a reference to the midnight sun, and thus Rasmussen's statement did nothing to materially support Cook's claim (Herbert, 1989, 298).

Rasmussen continued: "The Eskimos have told their friends that they were very much surprised when Cook told them the goal was reached, because the spot was not the least different from all the other ice they had passed over. They had often asked Cook to return, but that was only

because they had a feeling that they were very, very far from shore and that they would never get back alive again" (Freeman, 1961, 191). Rasmussen noted also that "....the Eskimos think that Cook reached the goal...." (Freeman, 1961, 191).

Rasmussen stated as his conclusion "That whenever Cook's statements are compared to the statements of his companions, they appear to be quite truthful." (Freeman, 1961, 190-91). And again, "Personally I want to express my unreserved admiration for Dr. Cook.... No one in the world can name him as a swindler" (Freeman, 1961,191-2).

The last statement is particularly interesting. Rasmussen had written his report while still in Greenland, but he had written it in response to mail from Denmark in which he had become completely aware that there was intense controversy over Cook's claim to the Pole, and that serious allegations of fraud had been made against Cook. By stating that no one can call Cook a swindler, Rasmussen was coming down unequivocally on the side of Cook. It is important to remember, nonetheless, that he had made no judgment on Peary's rival claim.

On December 21, the University of Copenhagen completed its deliberations on material Cook had presented. Its decision was: "The material which has been presented to the university for examination does not contain observations or information which could be regarded as proof that Dr. Cook reached the North Pole...." (*Aarbog for Kobenhavns Universitet*, 1914, page 1247 in Freeman, 1961, 203). This statement, as the *London Geographical Society's Journal* noted, was neither an endorsement nor a repudiation. In Freeman's words, "the university had ruled that the data Cook submitted contained neither a proof that he had reached the Pole nor proof to the contrary" (Freeman, 1961, 203). This makes all the more peculiar the statements attributed to Knud Rasmussen in the *New York Times* of 22 December 1909. Rasmussen, on his return to Denmark from Greenland had stated initially that he had read Cook's original diary and "found it correct and satisfactory in every detail," then later as saying "The university would not call me at first because I was one of Dr. Cook's strongest supporters."

"Later however I was invited to the investigation, and when I saw the observations, I realized it was a scandal...No schoolboy could make such calculations. It is a most childish attempt at cheating. Cook had killed himself by his own foolish acts" (*New York Times*, 22 December 1909, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 204-5). This is a peculiar argument. It attacks Cook based on material that Cook had presented to the University of Copenhagen. Yet Rasmussen's lengthy support of Cook published in late October had dealt almost exclusively with the Eskimo reports of Cook's trip, and it was this on which he had based his faith in Cook.

In 1910 Bartlett, who had been back to Northern Greenland, claimed that Rasmussen had interrogated Cook's Eskimos and that the information they supplied supported Peary. Freeman states that Rasmussen had claimed in his published report that he had received the information second-hand rather than through direct interrogation of the Eskimos. According to Freeman, Cook said that two Danish missionaries who "could not speak the North Greenland dialect conducted the examination and prepared a report which Rasmussen subsequently translated" (Freeman, 1961, 216).

This time, the Eskimo testimony contradicted that of 1909, yet both reports were communicated to the world at large by Knud Rasmussen, who opened his report in the *Chicago Daily News* on November 8, 1910 with:

> *"Already in the fall of 1909, when I was on an expedition to Greenland, there existed grave doubts as to whether Dr. Cook had been near the North Pole, and I made up my mind to secure through thoroughly disinterested people a bona-fide report of his Eskimo fellow travelers, Etukishook and Ahwelah"* (*New York Times*, November 8, 1910, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 216).

It is important to note that Rasmussen stated that "there existed grave doubts:" yet he did not state that he himself harboured grave doubts at that time. The disinterested parties can only have been the missionaries Cook mentioned. These can only have been Gustav Olsen and Sichuan Rosbach. However, Cook is in error in calling them Danish missionaries. They were missionaries of the Danish Lutheran Church, but they were native West Greenlanders, both in their thirties, natives of Disko Bay. As such, they both spoke the Kalaallisut or West Greenlandic language, which is related to Inuktun, the language of the Inuhhuit or Polar Eskimos of the Thule District.

This time, the natives' story, as reported by Rasmussen, ended with the natives accusing Dr. Cook of swindling them by not paying them well enough for their having accompanied him on the trip. Rasmussen quoted the Inuit as saying, "Dr. Cook....promised us a good reward, but he proved himself a liar and swindled us in the payment....He gave us only a knife, some matches, and a useless boat" (*New York Times*, November 8, 1910, quoted in Freeman, 1961, 216-217). Thus, this argument too, advanced by Rasmussen in contradiction of his own earlier reports, attacked Cook based on details other than the story of the polar trek.

The question must be asked: Why did Rasmussen, who believed so strongly in Cook's story in 1909, even on the basis of second-hand evidence, seek to distance himself from Cook in 1910, even to the point of implying that he had harboured doubts the previous year ?

I think there may be a simple reason. It is an unprovable hypothesis, which I will here advance. It involves the relationship between Rasmussen, the poet and dreamer, and Freuchen, the pragmatic realist. As early as 1910, Knud Rasmussen had published his plans of the project which would, in 1921, become the culmination of his life's work, the Fifth Thule Expedition. The outline of this project was published in The *Geographical Journal in London* under the title, "Project of a Danish Expedition to the Central Eskimo" (Rasmussen, 1910b). He had been formulating the project for some time prior to its publication.

I believe that Knud Rasmussen genuinely believed the testimony he heard from Inuit on the subject of Frederick Cook and his attainment of the North Pole. But I believe that Knud Rasmussen changed his mind on the wisdom of publicly supporting Cook's cause after he met with Peter Freuchen in Denmark in the fall of 1909. I believe that Freuchen convinced Rasmussen that it was unwise to support Cook, because Peary was quite clearly the favourite of the American monied establishment, the same establishment whom Rasmussen may have to call on for support for his grandiose plan to visit and study the Inuit of Arctic America. In the end, of

course, Rasmussen did not rely on American support, but in 1909 and 1910 this could not have been known. I propose that it was that simple, that Freuchen convinced Rasmussen of the folly of supporting Cook.

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I want here to pull together some thoughts that explorers and observers have made on the nature and reliability of Eskimo testimony.

I want to put this into the context of the observation published by Harry Whitney, a sport hunter who was in northern Greenland in 1909. When Borup, MacMillian and Bartlett questioned Ittukusuk and Aapilak on board the Roosevelt near Etah, Harry Whitney was not present at the questioning, but wrote that, after their interrogation, the two Eskimos had come to him and asked him "what Peary's men were trying to get them to say.' They said that they had been shown papers but declared that they did not understand the papers" (Whitney, *Outing*, **55,** December 1909, pages 258-80, quoted in Wright, 197D, 218). Here is the crux of the matter as regards the Eskimo testimony. It concerns the desire to please.

Frederick Cook himself wrote in *My Attainment of the Pole*:

> "*Among themselves the Eskimos have an intimate way of conveying things, a method of expression and meaning which an outsider never grasps. At most, white men can understand only a selected and more simple language with which the Eskimos convey their thoughts. This partly accounts for the unreliability of any testimony which a white man extracts from them. There is also to be considered an innate desire on the part of these simple people to answer any question in a manner which they think will please....this desire to please is notoriously stronger than a sense of truth*" (Cook, 1911, 452).

Amundsen said: "My experience with Eskimos is that they will give you the kind of answer you want" (*New York Times* 24 January 1926 quoted in Herbert, 1989, 332).

The Canadian explorer, Captain Joseph Bernier, was a supporter of Cook. A Report of Bernier's views on the case stated: "Capt. Bernier said he took no stock in Eskimo evidence. They desired to please and would tell any story which they thought would be agreeable to their listeners." A. P. Low, another Canadian explorer of the High Arctic, stated: "The Eskimos....are not quite truthful . When the source of a lie is traced, it is found to be due to a mistaken politeness, the native intention to please by answering in a manner which he thinks will be agreeable to the questioner" (Doubts Eskimo Evidence).

And so on. Northern literature is replete with similar comments on the nature of Eskimo testimony.

Wally Herbert, writing on the nature of Eskimo testimony, had a somewhat different view:

> "*Nor should the folklore of the Eskimos be ignored....to argue that their own story of what they did is invalid because they were uneducated is as insulting as it is absurd, for*

*unlike the white men who came to their country to seek fame and glory, they, the natives, had no need to lie*" (Herbert, 1989, 317).

Herbert concludes that "what Itukusuk and Aapilaq told their own people is therefore the story that needs to be told...."(Herbert, 1989, 332) but he hastens to add "....and I do not refer to the story given second-hand to Rasmussen which was published in the *New York Times* on 21 October 1909, but the story handed down by word of mouth among the polar Eskimos themselves" (Herbert, 1989, 332). He notes that "Stories are always retold exactly as heard, not deviating by a single phrase or word..." (Herbert, 1989, 332).

But if this is correct, why would the "second-hand" version told to Rasmussen differ in any way from the version handed down by word of mouth over the years? Would not the story told to Rasmussen. as one of the earliest retellings of the story, be as accurate as any later retelling? Herbert has not adequately explained why the initial version given to Rasmussen should be inaccurate while all later versions were considered to be accurate.

I would like to put forward a hypothesis on the nature of Eskimo folk memory. Eskimo or Inuit folk memory serves well in many instances. Indeed, it is phenomenally accurate over periods of centuries. In Greenland, folk memories of certain events which happened in the days when the ancient Norse inhabited areas of Greenland were preserved accurately until Rink wrote them down in the 1800s. In Baffin Island, Charles Francis Hall discovered in the 1860s that the Inuit of Frobisher Bay preserved accurate memories of the visit of Martin Frobisher to their shores almost three hundred years earlier. In the Thule District of Greenland, the Inuhhuit remembered in remarkable detail the events of the great migration led by the shaman Qitdlarssuaq in the 1860s. The three examples I have given share one element in common, they all deal with the arrival of, or activities of, a group of outsiders who had come into their midst. In the first two examples, these outsiders were white. In the last, the outsiders were from another group of Eskimos. These, and many other events, were folk memories of events significant to the Inuit who were affected by them. Their memories were preserved and passed down as part of the intellectual culture of the group. Yet, I can provide another list of things that Inuit believe strongly, which are erroneous or impossible. In 1930 the Krueger expedition, which included Inuit guides from the Thule District, disappeared on the ice near Axel Heiberg Island. None of the party was ever seen again. Yet I have had Eskimos in Qaanaaq tell me that Eskimos from their community, passing through Thule Air Base in the 1970s, saw an aging Inuk, one of Krueger's guides, working as a wage labourer at the base. Such a thing is, of course, impossible.

In the1940s the entire family of an Iglulik Eskimo named Kangualuk disappeared on the shores of Foxe Basin; Inuit who searched for them found their camp, their dogs and their sleds, indeed everything except the people. In the 1970s a rumor developed in Baffin Island that a descendant of Kangualuk had been discovered as an interpreter at an international conference in Europe and that he had said that the family had been abducted and taken away in a Russian submarine, and that they had continued to live in Russia, Russia being the bogey-man of the 1970s although the enemies of the 1940s were the Germans. Again, such a story is preposterous. In Qaanaaq, when I began my own research into the life of Minik Wallace, I was told by many elderly Eskimos that, after Minik had gone south in 1916, he had become a fighter aircraft pilot and died a hero's death in a fiery crash, or that he had collected his large inheritance that allegedly awaited him

there and lived a long and happy life as a gentleman, or that he had moved to the United States and become a dentist. One can see where each of these endings had its genesis. From the members of the Crocker Land Expedition, the Inuit knew there was a war in Europe; Minik himself had told them that a large inheritance awaited him; when he had come back to his people in 1909 one of his few possessions had been a set of dentist's tools.

How does this second set of stories differ from the first. The stories are riddled with confusion and uncertainty. The stories have no satisfactory endings. It is human nature to want an ending, and it is also human nature to fabricate one. In the case of the Krueger expedition, an ending was fabricated to explain the fate of one of their fellow tribesmen, Krueger himself being unimportant to them. In the case of the mysterious disappearance of the entire Kangualuk family, an external influence was brought in to explain what was inexplicable from within Inuit culture. In the case of Minik's departure south, tidbits of non-relevant information were ascribed larger significance. The result is the same in every case - a tale that is preposterous or contradictory.

I would sum up the differences in the two sets of stories in this way. When there is no controversy, when straightforward, unambiguous, and have a clear and well-defined ending, Eskimo folk memory will generally prove accurate. When there is controversy, confusion, or no clear-cut ending imagination will take over and folk memory will be more inclined to be inaccurate.

The case of the Eskimo memories of Dr. Cook's journey fit the latter category well. There was controversy of a type the Inuit were unaccustomed to. There was confusion. Itukusuk and Aapilaq had no way of knowing that two superb Arctic travelers, both known to the Inuit of the tribe, were locked in invective of a type heretofore unknown to Arctic exploration. But they did feel that it was incumbent upon them to produce answers to a number of questions posed by a team working for the more powerful of the two explorers. That is why the they asked Whitney what Peary's men were trying to get them to say.

At this point, it is appropriate to introduce an Inuit perspective to this subject. It is a concept which explains the Inuit desire to please, to give the answer one thinks is expected. The concept is that of "ilira," a verb stem in the Canadian Inuktitut language, and the concept has been elaborated in a Canadian content. Yet the concept is relevant Inuit groups. I will quote an explanation of the concept of "ilira" given recently by a Canadian Inuit political leader:

> *"....Inuit use ilira to refer to a great fear or awe, such as the awe a strong father inspires in his children or the fear of the Qallunaat white people previously held by Inuit."*
>
> *"This fear, or ilira, developed very early in our initial encounters with explorers, missionaries and traders. We quickly became subject to the overwhelming power and fabulous wealth of these Qallunaat. They possessed guns and all types of wonderful manufactured goods. They also engaged in new and supposedly better ways of doing things and urged us to forsake our traditional practices and beliefs in favor of a Christian, Gallant way of life. The origin of our relationship, therefore, was based on the erosion of Inuit culture, self-reliance and self-confidence."*

*"....As traditional subsistence patterns became impaired, Inuit increasingly relied upon the Qallunaat for many of their basic needs."*

*"This relationship, and the feeling of ilira to which it gave rise, meant that whatever the Qallunaat suggested or wanted was likely to be done. Qallunaat could make the difference between success and disaster, sustenance or hunger, and Inuit responded to their desires and requests as if they were commands. In this cultural setting, a challenge to the authority of the Qallunaat or defiance of their requests was almost unthinkable"* (Kuptana, 1993, 7).

The relationship of Peary to the entire tribe of Polar Eskimos is a textbook example of the circumstances necessary to create the feeling of ilira. Peary had controlled the supply of trade goods in the district since the decline of bowhead whaling. Malaurie wrote in 1982 that Peary accomplished his aims "by threats, coercion, and the power of his authority" (Malaurie, 1982, 235). Peary himself once wrote of the Eskimos that "these people are much like children, and should be treated as such" (Peary, 1910, 47). He wrote that "their feeling for me is one of gratitude and confidence" (Peary, 1910, 48) yet Imiina in Siorapaluk referred to him as "the great tormentor" and said that people were afraid of him...really afraid.... He was a great leader. You always had the feeling that if you didn't do what he wanted, he would condemn you to death" (Malaurie, 1982, 234). Rasmussen, perhaps attempting to be charitable, wrote of the Eskimos' feelings towards Peary that "their respect for the man was greater than their love (Rasmussen, 1910a, 8), but also, and more tellingly, quoted the Inuit of having said "He asked with so strong a will to gain his wish, that it was impossible to say no" (Rasmussen, 1910a, 6).

I believe that no one will ever know the truth of the Eskimo story of Dr. Cook's attempt on the Pole. I believe that, from the very first questioning of Ittukusuk and Aapilak by outsiders, by Peary's team of Borup, MacMillan and Bartlett, that the truth of their story became lost to posterity. It may certainly have been lost to the white men who were questioning them, for none of them was very capable in understanding Inuttut. But I believe that it was lost also to their own tribes people for uncertainty had been thrown into what might otherwise have become a simple folk tale. The strongest and best of the tribe had worked for Peary. There were rewards and prestige for those who worked for Peary. Itukusuk and Aapilaq had been poorly rewarded, for Cook was a poor man. There is no satisfactory explanation for the variances between the earlier Eskimo version of Cook's trip as told to Rasmussen, and the later versions of the story, unless one subscribes to the theory that Itukusuk and Aapilaq changed their story to suit their circumstances. There was certainly nothing to be gained for them by not giving the answers that were expected of them.

The version of the Eskimo story that has come to be accepted is that written by Inuuterssuaq Ulloriaq, the historian of the tribe, a few years before he died. That version has been substantially published as an appendix to Wally Herbert's *The Noose of Laurels*. Given the circumstances, is it any wonder that it contradicts Cook's own version and substantiates many of Peary's claims against Cook? Ironically, Inuuterssuaq is also the author of an excellent and unimpeachable story of the much earlier Qitdlarssuaq migration from Canada to the Thule District. But these are different types of stories. The story was unambiguous, the Cook story

riddled with controversy and, I propose, Ittukusuk's and Aapilak's desire to please. I knew Inuuterssuaq well - he was my former wife's uncle - and enjoyed the hospitality of his home in Siorapaluk many times. We talked of Cook and Peary often and I know that he had a tremendous respect for Cook's abilities on the land and sea and for his command of the Polar Eskimo language. But he didn't believe he had been at the North Pole. I trust that the foregoing may partly answer why.

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### About the Author

Kenn Harper, is the author of *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life of Minik, the New York Eskimo*, the last surviving member of the so-called "Peary Eskimos" brought to the United States in the late 1890s. Those who have been familiar with the Cook and Peary literature know that the role of the Inuit was critical to both of their Arctic explorations, yet has been largely untold from their experience. Mr. Harper has lived among the Inuit of Baffin Island and Greenland for 27 years. A free-lance writer and historian, who also owns Arctic Ventures Ltd. in Iqualit (formerly Frobisher Bay), he has also lectured before the annual meetings of the Arctic Circle and the Frederick A. Cook Society.

## *SECTION II*

# WAS IT POSSIBLE?

# RETRACING COOK'S ROUTE TO THE POLE

# CHAPTER 4

## OCEANOGRAPHIC CURRENTS IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN: DID COOK DISCOVER AN UNKNOWN DRIFT?

Brian Shoemaker

**Abstract**

Frederick Cook left the tip of Axel Heiberg Land, which he called Cape Svartevoeg- the Danish designation for Cape Stallworthy of today's maps of the Queen Elizabeth Islands- on March 18, 1908. Just 33 days later he said that he and his two Eskimo companions were "the only living creatures in a dead world of ice" standing at what he determined to be the geographical North Pole. All of the literature regarding the debate must be reduced to the central question- could Cook have made it to the Pole in that time frame, and what circumstantial evidence did he bring back which may contribute toward a case for vindication of his original reports of the polar sea in that region? Cook's return journey becomes significant if the assumption is granted that he was in the proximity of the Pole on April 21, 1908. The drift of ocean currents as we know them today- but unknown to Cook and other explorers in 1908, thus becomes important to this discussion.

### FREDERICK COOK'S CHALLENGE

The Great Controversy about who discovered the North Pole - Cook or Peary - has provided food for heated argument by polar enthusiasts for over three-quarters of a century. This paper provides more fuel for the debate.

The study attempts to deal with the question of whether Cook did travel north from Svartevoeg to the pole by examining modern sea ice drift data based on long term buoy studies conducted in the Arctic Ocean (Colony, 1990, 1991, 1993). The buoy data is compared to Cook's related observations and experiences during his journey to ascertain whether he discovered some environmental phenomena which can be confirmed by modern observation.

Admiral Charles Thomas has suggested that examination of the track of ice island T-3 (Fletcher's Ice Island) would be useful in determining the general drift of the sea ice in the area of the Arctic Ocean that Cook traversed on his trek to/from the North Pole (Thomas, undated). T-3 drifted through this region between 1952 and 1956 in a meandering course that gradually took the island southwest to Alaska (Fletcher, 1968, 1-13). In 1974, after several trips around the Beaufort Gyre, the author ordered the evacuation of T-3 since it was stalled in an eddy near Ellesmere Island in the vicinity of Dr Cooks track. T-3 later drifted to the southwest and exited the Arctic Ocean in the 1980's.

These two passes by T-3 are interesting because they suggest that there is very little current in the area. This clue is thought provoking, however, the author considers ice station drift not to be

representative of sea ice motion - ice stations do not always travel at the same speed and direction as sea ice which surrounds them and they can also run aground in areas or shallow water where sea ice is free to drift. Cook's journey was, for the most part, a journey across the sea ice to the pole and back although arguably, he may have crossed a tabular berg or two.

To obtain more definitive information one must turn to modern sea ice drift analysis. The University of Washington has conducted studies of sea-ice drift in the Arctic Ocean in a project spanning eleven years (Colony, 1990, 1931,1993). Note the strong easterly current north of 85°N in the vicinity of the 97th meridian and the weak variable currents south of 85°N.

Cook was familiar with the drift of the Jeannette in the Eastern Arctic and with the Fram expedition led by Fridjhoff Nansen. He was also familiar with the strong currents north of Cape Columbia reported by Peary (Wright, 1970, 128). Note the strong easterly ice drift to the north of Ellesmere Island in the vicinity of the 72nd meridian. He believed that a similar easterly drift existed from Svartevoeg the entire distance to the North Pole and planned to compensate for it from the very beginning (Cook, 1911, 327).

In examining Cook s travels through this ocean of moving ice, the author first examined his navigational data contained in his field papers (Cook, 1911, 569). According to this data Cook did not travel south on his return journey along the l00th meridian (as depicted by writers for over 80 years including Dr. Cook), but closer to the 97th meridian (Cook, 1911, 285; Wright, 1970, 152; Hobbs, 1936, 374; Hunt, 1881, 143; Freeman, 1961, 12; Cook, 1951, 2). Two of Cook's observations support this conclusion: the first on April 30th, 1908 at 88° 01'N, 97° 42'W and a second on May 24, 1908 at 84° 02'N, 97° 03'W. The only other observation that Cook was able to take during the return journey was at 79° 32'N, 101° 22'W. Cook had set a course along the 100th meridian while traveling south and the ice drift carried him eastward to the 97th meridian during the first half of his return journey.

From his position at 84° 02'N, 97° 03'W. Cook then marched south by dead reckoning in the fog and blowing snow arriving at 79° 32'N, 101° 22'W. How did he miss Cape Svartevoeg? How could he have traveled so far west? How did he end up so far south? An understanding of the currents in the region of Dr Cook's trek (or a lack of understanding by Cook) helps to explain.

Reading Dr. Cook's account he assumed a strong easterly drift of the sea-ice for the entire length of his journey to the North Pole and set a course to the west of north to accommodate it. On his journey northward, there was very little current between Svartevoeg and 84°N causing him to gradually angle westward to the 96th meridian. At this point the easterly drift became a factor with increasing intensity and his navigational correction kept him near the 96th meridian from here to the pole.

When returning from the pole Cook and his Eskimo companions attempted travel along the 100th meridian and again made a correction to the west to compensate for the easterly drift. On April 30th his observation placed him near the 38th meridian and he increased the correction - the current apparently was stronger than on his northbound leg. Cook then traveled for 24 days by dead reckoning and on the 24th of May positioned the party at 84° 02'N on the 97th meridian.

Again "a course was set somewhat west of Svartevoeg" - a near fatal error since the ice drift had now shifted to the south-southwest.

For the next 21 days the party traveled by dead reckoning not realizing that they were being swept to the south-southwest and that their course correction was compounding the error. By interpolating Colony's data, the eastward drift of the ice pack to the north of the 85th parallel averages 1.5 nautical miles per day (Colony, 1991). Cook's correction must have been worked out by trial and error to counteract this drift. This accommodation combined with a 0.33 nautical mile per day westward drift component south of the 84th parallel (Colony, 1991) would cause Cook and his party to deviate westward and miss Cape Svartevoeg by approximately 52 miles. To confirm this one can draw a direct line from 84° 02'S, 97° 03'W to Cook's next observation at 79° 32'N, 101° 22'W. Measuring the distance from Svartevoeg westerly shows that Cook actually missed the cape by 56 nautical miles.

Comparing the westward drift data with the navigational data - 52 vice 56 nautical miles - is interesting since the figures are so close. However, one must realize that ice drift is an average mean based upon an 11-year buoy study and that there are anomalous years where the drift patterns vary. Whether the drift patterns were the same as when Dr. Cook said that he was traversing the area can only be speculated upon since we do not have observations from 1908. However one thing seems to be consistent - there is very little current between Svartevoeg and the 84th parallel.

However, Cooks data suggests that there may be a stronger current component to the south than Colony's data shows to the south of the 84th parallel. There is a 53 nautical mile difference between the distance that Cook traveled across the ice by dead reckoning from the 34th parallel, 217 nautical miles by the 14th of June, (Cook, 1911, 576-77) and his actual position of 79° 32'N, 101° 22'W on the 14 of June, 270 nautical miles south of the 84th parallel. This suggests a southerly component of 2.65 miles per day - much more than Colony's data depicts.

Cook notes that "As we crossed the eighty-third parallel we found ourselves to the west of a large lead, extending slightly west of south. Immense quantities of broken and pulverized ice lined the shores to a width of several miles.... Compelled to follow the line of least resistance, a southerly course was set along the ice division" (Cook, 1911, 327). This observation is consistent with observed shear zones between the edge of the Beaufort Gyre and shore fast ice on the outer edge of the gyre (personal observations). It leads the author to theorize that Cook's 'big lead' was not the 'big lead' reported by Peary to the north of Ellesmere Island, but a shear zone extending NNW/SSE. Cook crossed this zone on his way north thinking it was the 'big lead'. On his way south the shear zone opened up and he was compelled to travel along its western edge.

## CONCLUSIONS

The environmental evidence does support Cooks claim to have traveled from Svartevoeg to the North Pole - his drift correction from Svartevoeg to the 84th parallel carried him westward where there was no current; this same correction kept him on track north to the pole and back to the 84th parallel; and the westerly correction combined with a westerly drift took him farther to the west parallel to the expanding shear zone on the edge of the Beaufort Gyre. These environmental features were not known for many years after Cook's reported trip to the North Pole and indeed Cook never knew that he had discovered them. In light of this, the author believes that Cook did travel to the North Pole and back - he could not have falsified such a story that is so consistent with the environmental data without having been there. The only environmental inconsistency appears to be the speed of the southerly drift component deduced from his navigational data, however, this is an inconsistency of degree in speed rather than general pattern of the drift.

It is amazing that Cook did not realize that there was no drift east or west from Svartevoeg north to the 84th parallel - his observations confirm that his course correction was carrying him westward to the 96th meridian. When he returned to the 84th parallel a reversal of his outbound course would have taken him to Axel Heiberg Island. Instead he "set a course somewhat west of Svartevoeg" to accommodate "a steady easterly drift of the pack" (Cook, 1911, 327).

Cook's greatest mistake (if it can be called a mistake) was in not anticipating that the ice drift could have been different than predicted. His second was in not perceiving that his course was westerly while traveling north to the 84th parallel and in compensating for it on the way back. This was a major scientific discovery because it is the northeast end of the Beaufort Gyre. Unfortunately, he only recognized his discovery post facto when the fog lifted on June 14, 1908. Cook had run over that invisible point in the Arctic Ocean where currents change and he almost lost his life becoming educated to the fact.

## THE CHALLENGE

This controversy has raged for over 80 years. To this point, however, it has been purely academic. This paper tacitly raises the challenge to test Cook's claims to have discovered the North Pole and suggests a way to go about it - travel Cook's route at the right time of year as he did and see where one winds up.

Cook calls from the grave to all those erstwhile Polar Explorers:

*Come forth! Come north!*
*Travel in my footsteps.*
*Try my aim, test my claim!*
*Travel with me and discover.*

**About the Author**

Captain Brian Shoemaker, United States Navy Retired, has like Cook, experience in both polar regions. He made several research trips into the central Arctic ice pack in 1970-71 including ice island T-3 when it was to the north of Ellesmere Island. He was the commander of the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory from 1974-75 during the Arctic Ice Dynamics Joint Experiment, a multi-national study of the central Arctic Ocean. He was a science support pilot in Antarctica and later returned to the South Polar Regions as Commander of the Naval Support force Antarctica from 1982 to 1985. After retirement from the Navy in 1988 Captain Shoemaker spent a sabbatical at the Scott Polar Research Institute of the University of Cambridge where he was awarded a Master of Philosophy in Polar Affairs. In 1980 he became the Director of the HERO Foundation in Reedsport, OR, where he is developing the Richard E. Byrd National Antarctic Center, an interpretive exhibit of the South Polar Region. Captain Shoemaker has also revived the 59-year-old magazine of the American Polar Society, *The Polar Times*, which he publishes twice a year.

# CHAPTER 5

## COOK AS NONDISCOVERER: DEMOLISHING THE MYTHICAL POLAR JOURNEY OF 1908

Dennis Rawlins

**Abstract**

This paper will seek to make the case for the Cook- skeptics, who are sparsely represented at this symposium. I will seek to review the oddities and difficulties regarding the final two claims of Cook's career in geographical exploration- the alleged first ascent of Mount McKinley, the tallest peak in North America in September 1906 and his supposed journey over the Arctic Ocean to the geographical North Pole in March and April of 1908. I believe that the McKinley claim, while not directly a part of polar exploration, has a factor which Cook himself described as "the key to the controversy." With respect to the 1908 expedition, I will present the pros and cons of a novel speculation as to Cook's intent at the start of his last Arctic trip in 1907.

## COOK AS HOAXER

### Unreconstructing Cook

Frederick Cook is generally viewed as either an unjustly persecuted hero or a gentlemanly hoaxer. I regard him as a justly persecuted hoaxer. (He is also sometimes portrayed as a loner-outsider.[1] Actually, he was—up until his 1909 fall—an amiable, charming insider, the 2nd President of the eminent Explorers Club of New York.) Even some who disbelieve Cook regard him as a harmless jester. But, in truth, hoaxers harm both science and individuals.[2]

The 1993 Cook Symposium is attempting to rewrite history, massively—a quest I much sympathize with (having myself occasionally engaged in it, in other[3] arenas). But some history doesn't need essential rewriting, and Cook's current classification as a grand-scale exaggerator is a good example. [a] In 1906, he claimed (see his 1908 book, To the Top of the Continent) to have climbed the tallest mountain in North America, though (p.8) he had never previously climbed a mountain of any description. [b] In 1908, he reported (see his 1911 book, *My Attainment of the Pole*) reaching the North Pole, after an alleged dog-sledge journey that included roughly 1200 nmi[4] of sea-ice[5] travel, though his previous[6] sea-ice experience (on the 1897-1899 Belgique-Antarctic expedition, without dogs) was ordmag 1 percent of such a distance. No self-sustained dog-sledge sea-ice journey before or since has matched it. Or ever will.

There is no need for me to review Cook's early career, which has been well attended to by other contributors to this symposium. So, let's get right on to the fun parts of Cook's career: his alleged 1906 ascent of Mt. McKinley and his alleged 1908 attainment of the North Pole.

The controversy over Cook's 1906 expedition has generally centered on whether he did or didn't get to McKinley's top. Actually, the more serious question is: did Cook ever get to Mt. McKinley's bottom?

Likewise, for the controversy over whether Cook got to the North Pole. The real question ought rather to be: did he ever in his life get within 500 nmi of the North Pole?

The first explorer of a territory must [a] find his way along, and [b] map his discoveries. For long-distance sea-ice travel in Cook's day, both tasks required use of navigational math (spherical trig) and instruments (sextant or theodolite). However, in the entire Cook Papers (US Library of Congress), there is not a scrap of navigational spherical trig in Cook's hand.[7] Note: the records of Cook's arch-rival, Robert Peary, are brimming with competent sph trig-log calculations. (See Peary Papers, US National Archives. Note also the coincidence that, for Peary's two highly suspect Arctic Ocean journeys, 1906 and 1909, no sph trig calculations exist in the Peary Papers. See[8] *DIO I* +4 and *DIO 2* +5 and +8 §B. Also *Washington Post* 1993/6/1 p.3, and *Science* 260:1587, 1993/6/11.)

**Mt. McKinley: Getting to the Bottom of It**

Cook's 1906 trip was his 2nd venture into the McKinley region. His 1st McKinley expedition occurred in 1903. His companion then, Rob't Dunn, later wrote brutally (Dunn, 1907 p.93) that Cook "hasn't the least idea of Alaskan travel" and (1903/3/17 entry) ". . . just packs and unpacks his instruments.[9] I wonder if he can use a theodolite after all." Since a key element in the standard defense of Cook is the suggestion (pp. 4 and 17) that criticisms of him were inspired by Peary Arctic Club influence, Dunn's testimony is of particular significance: [a] It occurred before the Cook-Peary fracas. [b] It is confirmed by the entire lack of theodolite observations in the newly opened Cook Papers.

The maps appearing in Cook's two published accounts of his McKinley trip (Cook, 1907 p. 826 and Cook, 1908 pp.152-153) are nearly the same, though (contra the inaccurate implication of Rawlins, 1973 p.80) Cook attempted to draw his route upon the 1907 version (not the later 1908 one, curiously), which shows him coming in (toward McKinley's peak) from the northeast through a long non-glacial valley—a valley which is in fact the Harper Glacier. The actual path up Mt. McKinley's NE slope, Harper Glacier (which his chart shows him not taking) is instead mapped by Cook as angling past McKinley, missing it by several miles to the south. The fact that the Harper-Muldrow Glacier splits along this route (right where the Cook 1907 map puts him)—dividing around Karstens Ridge—is nowhere indicated on the Cook map.[10] (Note that Stuck's 1913 map of his route up McKinley, published in his 1914 book, is correct on all these points.)

During[11] the Cook-Peary controversy, another witness to Cook's 1906 difficulties with navigation was the expedition's co-leader, Columbia University's Prof. Herschel Parker (*NY Times* 1909/12/10:4:2): "In all the time I was with Dr. Cook, I never knew him to take an observation to determine our [geographical position]....he was evidently....little interested in [such....Cook] is not a scientific man at all and knows nothing about the requirements that scientific men look for in records." (See below at pp. l2-15.)

Parker and Belmore Browne (another 1906 expedition-member) gave detailed testimony on this point to the Explorers Club, as recorded in the minutes of the 1909/10/15 session of the Club's special committee for investigation of the McKinley controversy. Browne (p.14): "I never, on the whole McKinley trip, saw Dr. Cook make an aneroid reading, either of his own instrument or Dr. Parker's." Parker (pp.18 and 20): "To the best of my knowledge [Cook] would be unable to make an accurate [hypsometer] reading, as it requires practice and great delicacy of observation ....he never watched me [taking such readings], and I believe that he did not take any interest in observations. I may also add that he took no interest whatever in mountain equipment....[before the Mt McKinley attempt], Dr. Cook asked a few questions concerning hypsometers, which leads me to believe that he was not familiar with their use prior to the expedition of 1906."

Having failed to climb McKinley during the 1906 midsummer, Cook then learned[12] (upon his return to Tyonek, Alaska) that his prime backer, Henry Disston, had unexpectedly pulled out, leaving Cook drowning in red ink.

Though the prime season for climbing had passed, Cook suddenly departed his group, heading towards McKinley on 1906/9/9, accompanied only by a single guide, Edward Barrill. Before setting out, Cook told his people (Explorers Club minutes 1909/10/15 pp.6-8) that he merely intended to reconnoiter. (As properly noted in the Explorers Club 1909/12/24 report on the McKinley matter, item 6: "Dr. Cook's action in attempting the ascent....immediately upon the departure of the rest of the party, after entering into an agreement with them that no further attempt should be made for the [1906] season, was unfair to his associates.") But he slyly stuffed a (large) silk US flag[13] into his rucksack—a flag which next appears in his "Top" photograph (Cook, 1908 opposite p. 227), evidently[14] shot on 1906/9/12.

Cook and Barrill reappeared[15] about ten days later, and Cook claimed success—to the incredulity of the rest of the party, especially after Barrill acted noncommittal under the immediate private questioning[16] of Belmore Browne. (It was added in later testimony that Cook—while not overlooking to take along his flag—seems not to have taken climbing rope, axes, or hypsometer.)[17] Barrill later confessed in detail[18] that he and Cook never got close even to the base of Mt. McKinley.

By a generous interpretation, Cook had amazingly bad luck in choosing his exploring companions. All 3 of those persons (Barrill 1906 and two 1908 Eskimos), who accompanied him during the (equally generous) suspect portions of his two contended trips, later claimed that he had invented those portions. Cook and his Occam-defying believers have traditionally attributed this simple circumstance to a complex web of bribery and conspiracy[19] by the Peary Arctic Club. (Danish Admiral de Richeleau to Cook 1909/9/10: "Green-eyed envy and jealousy is doing its envenomed work, but we in Denmark believe in you absolutely.")[20] However, the Peary-power-clique issue (interesting though it indeed is, relative to [a] Peary's putting his own North Pole hoax over on the public, and [b] the stifling of dissent, including Cook's frequently accurate criticisms[21] of Peary's claims) becomes irrelevant to Cook's claims if the witnesses against Cook are independently verified. And they are.

Barrill testified that, instead of proceeding straight north, up Ruth Glacier towards McKinley, he and Cook turned eastward (more than 10 nmi short of McKinley, which is over 20,000 ft high)—and then climbed a nearby minor peak only 5300 ft high, a little over 15 nmi from McKinley's top. (A detailed B. Washburn photo[22] permits one to follow Cook's movements.) There the flag was unfurled, and Barrill was photographed holding it. Then, returning to Ruth Glacier, they went north a little again, into the Great Gorge—soon stopping (after Cook carefully examined McKinley's slopes), 1906/9/15, "on account of falling through crevasses"[23] These Barrill statements were publicly made in 1909, well before anyone had actually checked the matter by returning to the geographical region itself. But, next summer (1910), Browne and others went back and—following Bar ill's directions and map (again: openly published in 1909)[24]—swiftly located and photographed the Fake Peak. Over 40 years later, veteran mountaineer Bradford Washburn (longtime head of the Boston Science Museum) took Cook's 1908 book, *To the Top of the Continent*, into this region and identified[25] the location of every single vista photograph in the book.[26] (Washburn rightly regards Cook as a first-rate alpine photographer.) All were taken (contra Cook's lofty captions) at low altitudes and more than 10 miles from McKinley's top. This finding is consistent with Barrill's account, not Cook's. Washburn's approach was the ideal way to test Cook's 1906 claim. His achievement should have ended the McKinley controversy.

And, there is an elementary question which requires no detailed investigation: what was Cook doing near[27] and on this side peak in the first place?—climbing up to and photographing an insignificant point, with no relevance to his alleged goal.

In passing, note the curious fact that Cook's accounts include no photo of the unique vista visible from the top of McKinley, which would be impossible to fake. By contrast, the first actual climber, Hudson Stuck (1913), includes just such a photo opposite p.102 of his 1914 book, The Ascent of Denali, looking towards Mt. Foraker ("Denali's Wife").

Some pro-Cook accounts, e.g., H. Eames' *Winner Lose All* (Little-Brown 1973, on the *NY Times* exclusive "New and Recommended" list for 3 weeks), accept that Cook's 'Top" photo was taken on Fake Peak—but insist that this "slight slip" (p. 67) doesn't prove Cook didn't climb Mt. McKinley. If one believes in Cook's innocence, one must eventually adopt logical positions of this type.

The fraudulence of Cook's McKinley "Top" photo (Cook, 1908 opposite p. 227) is obvious, due to a fortunate bit of Cook carelessness: the peak of another (distant) mountain is visible in the lower right-hand corner (contra Cook's reported intent).[28] And one is clearly looking upward at it—which naturally isn't possible for a photograph taken from the highest mountain in N. America.... Moreover, this peak may be identified from another photo, opposite p.239: it's the same 8450 ft peak which is labeled "Mt. Grosvenor" in the photo opposite p. 192 of Cook 1908. The top of Mt. Grosvenor[29] in the photo opposite p.239 matches the lower-right-hand-comer peak in the infamous "Top" photo. Note: [a] This side of Mt. Grosvenor does not face Mt. McKinley. [b] It does face Fake Peak. A number of scholars, myself included, have discovered this independently. But the credit for first noting it should go to 1906 expedition-members Herschel Parker and Belmore Browne. It's all in their private 1909/10/17 testimony (pp.17-19) before the Explorers Club's committee investigating the McKinley affair.

Browne added (Explorers Club minutes 1909/10/17 p. 19) a revealing (and hitherto-unpublished) item: he had personally seen the full detailed original of the "Top" photo and recalled seeing Mt. Grosvenor more clearly there than in the published version. Therefore, on 1909/10/17 (minutes pp. 19-20, 23), Cook was formally requested (by the Explorers Club special committee) to produce[30] the original photo or negative. Cook promised (Explorers Club, 1909/10/17 minutes pp. 2, 12, 14, and 15) to "come back in a few days and take the matter up" and additionally to do everything in his power to assist the Club's investigation within a month. Instead, after the month had elapsed, Cook abruptly disappeared for a year.

His fleeing, instead of producing evidence, has been excused by pointing to the pressure he was under from de- tractors. (See, e.g., Freeman, 1961 pp. 197-201.) But it is circular to excuse Cook's nonproduction of evidence by complaining that scientists and press were so churlish as to press him for evidence....

Cook's sudden 1909 December departure was, of course, in the midst of not just the Mt. McKinley controversy. By that time, he had added to his notoriety by claiming yet another remarkable First: the North Pole.

**Frederick the Navigator**

Cook went north to Greenland in 1907 on the yacht of gambler John Bradley. In early 1908, Cook and a few companions dog sledged west across Ellesmere Land. The sole other non-Eskimo of the party, R. Franke, returned before the polar sea was reached. So Cook was without literate companionship well before he reached a point at about 81°1/2 N latitude, roughly a dozen nmi north of Cape Thos. Hubbard, the north tip of Axel Heiberg Land (the last northward position[31] which all scholars agree Cook reached). This was the takeoff point for an alleged 500 nmi sea-ice trip, with 2 young Eskimo companions, north to the Pole—where he reportedly arrived on 1908/4/21. However, according[32] to those of Peary's men who in 1909 interviewed these 2 Eskimos, the 3-man 1908 party instead went from this point (the beginning of rough[33] sea-ice north of C. Hubbard) more nearly southward, towards the Ringnes islands. So Cook says he went 500 nmi north of land, while his Eskimos claim he only went about 12 nmi north of land.

Questions in passing (p.1): what was Cook's previous experience in long-range sea-ice dog sledging? The same as his pre-McKinley experience in climbing tall mountains. None. He had never climbed a mountain—before suddenly claiming conquest of the tallest mountain in N. America (in one of the roughest mountain terrains anywhere), And, before 1908, Cook had never dog-sledged on sea-ice (a particularly hellish kind of traveling surface: high "pressure- ridge" ice-walls and wide open-water "leads")—before announcing in 1909 that he had in 1908 sped over nearly 1200 (beeline) nmi of sea-ice to the Pole and back. (He allegedly went over 500 nmi from C. Hubbard to the Pole and returned by a route that took him more than 650 nmi further, before he struck land at the Ringnes Islands.)

Mystery: why did Cook start by going west (across) rather than north on Ellesmere—thus necessitating so much more sea-ice distance than R. Peary's intended route? By contrast, Peary's 1909 near miss of the North Pole was launched from the north tip of Ellesmere, 413 nmi from his

object. (Note: sea-ice-veteran Peary genuinely tried to reach the Pole in 1909, going out roughly 350 nmi from land, to within ordmag 100 nmi of the N Pole—and back: in all, the longest self-sustained sea-ice journey in history.) Possible[34] solution: was Cook initially[35] hoping to be the first to reach Peary's "Crocker Land", an attainment which would not only bring glory (since it might turn out to be the most northern land-mass on Earth) but could also permit Cook to head for the Pole by land, not sea-ice—a reasonably nonsuicidal idea, since [a] Cook was not a navigator (pp. 2, 3, and 10-15), and [b] he could replenish food-supplies from the game presumed to inhabit Crocker Land (better than trying to live off the relatively barren polar sea). Against this theory: Cook couldn't survey; so, had there been a Crocker Land, he could have hunted and traveled north on it but couldn't map it. (Note: Peary's nonexistent Crocker Land—first reported by him in his 1907 publications—was long regarded as an innocent error. This writer has found that his diary entry of the alleged discovery date, 1906/6/24, states: "No land visible". Thus, Crocker Land constitutes the clumsiest of Peary's several exploration hoaxes. See DIO *1.1* t4 §B2, 1991.)

Cook's eventual story has him passing by Crocker Land (at speeds which, though occasionally rather high, are more reasonable[36] than some of Peary's ludicrous 1906 and 1909 claims in this regard)[37] and then discovering his own nonexistent land, "Bradley Land", farther north. Another mystery: since sledging along a land's ice-foot is much speedier and less wearing than sea-ice travel, and since land may have game,[38] why did Cook—by his own account and map (Cook, 1911 pp.244, 246, 285)—travel for scores of mile parallel to this alleged land while never going on board it?

Some Cook defenders regard his report of the direction of ice-drift north of Axel Heiberg Land as evidence for his attainment of the Pole. But such information is not astonishingly specific—and Cook could have seen this drift from Cape Hubbard's ice-foot. Let us compare the alleged vindication of Cook by drift to his definite non-vindication by Bradley Land.

Cook's 1911 book describes Bradley Land (pp. 243-247) and even displays a photograph of it (opposite p. 236). And his "Field Notes" (Cook, 1911 p. 571) report that it has a table of 1000 ft, with height up to 1800 ft. Had such land later been found, Cook would be confirmed to this point in his story. But no such land exists. Question: if it is said that Cook is vindicated because he reported a rough direction for drift (and, e.g., he correctly said that N. Pole ice can look purplish),[39] then why isn't he disconfirmed when he reports in detail—and photographs—a wholly mythical land? As a measure of verifiability, this is as solid as can be. Most researchers, when encountering such a black and white crucial-experiment, correctly gauge the value of the Cook claim—and then move[40] on to other, more fruitful fields of endeavor. Using a double standard for positive and negative evidence is not science but advocacy. (A believer will accept an ice-drift report as happy pro-Cook evidence; but, then, when faced with the Bradley Land disaster, will resort to supposing that Cook must have seen an ice island—though, no ice island is anything like 1800 ft high.) Again: a neutral investigator will not [a] treat vague alleged positive evidences as vindicating Cook, while [b] treating all negative evidences as mere Problems or Paradoxes that prove nothing but the need for increased effort at dedicated Re-explaining.

The next "discovery" on Cook's imaginary journey was his alleged "land ice" at 87°-88°N. He stated in the *NY Herald* (1909/9/2 p. 1, Cook, 1909 10/3 p.4) and in his book (Cook, 1911 p.265) that there was no elevation to the land ice, yet his photo of it (Cook, 1911 opposite p. 236) shows a dramatic rise in altitude as one approaches it. Moreover, Cook describes it as like a glacial surface and says in the *NYH* 9/2 p. 1 that he found "no positive sign of land or sea." (See also Cook, 1909 10/3 p. 4 and Cook, 1911 p. 266.) Yet, Wally Herbert (1989 p.319) made the remarkable discovery that the original plate of Cook's "land ice" photo survives—and examination of the whole photo (made public for the first time at p. 288b of Herbert 1989) shows that, when publishing the picture, Cook had simply (like endnote 28) cropped off an inconvenient feature: a substantial hunk of land (near the photo's right edge), in order to make the scene look like the pure ice he reported it as.

Finally, Cook's story arrives at the Pole. His first alleged sextant observation appears at p.292 of Cook 1911. Its computation of refraction contains an oddity discovered by the present writer (designer of the first accurate compact zenith-to-horizon refraction-correction format).[41] For the alleged 1908/4/21 noon solar altitude, 12°, the correct[42] refraction (at the reported temperature and atmospheric pressure) would have been 5'—but Cook 1911 (pp. 292 and 302) instead copied[43] a refraction of 9' from the observation reproduced in Peary's 1910 book *The North Pole* at p.362 (allegedly 1909/4/6 noon), for solar altitude 7°. (Cook obviously didn't even know that refraction is a function of altitude, and thus that a value which is valid for one altitude isn't apt to a different altitude.)[44] Moreover, Cook (1911 p. 302) claims that he applied the same 9' refraction-correction to 7 pairs of such sextant observations (endnote 53) spread over 36 hours, from noon of 1908/4/21 to midnight of 4/22-23. Thus, all 7 of the "Pole" observation-pairs, correctly computed (using the appropriate 5' instead of 9' for refraction-correction), actually placed him 4 nmi off the N. Pole, towards the Sun. As noted at p.86 of Rawlins 1973 (*Peary at the North Pole, Fact or Fiction?*), a passage quoted from an earlier Oslo University paper (Rawlins, 1972 p. 135), these 14 data "demand that [Cook] must have hovered for [over 24 hours straight] four miles[45] sunward of the Pole, while the Earth spun just beneath his feet. The indication that Cook was riding a flying saucer is not to be taken lightly—e.g., his only [published] double-limb solar altitudes (April 8 and 14) make the Sun's apparent diameter 1/4 degree (not 1/2 degree, as it appears from the Earth), thus placing him about two astronomical units from the Sun, presumably on the planet Vesta!"

The 1908/4/8 and14 alleged observational data (both double-limb sextant altitudes) appear on pp. 257 and 274 of Cook 1911. In the original 1911 edition, the upper-limb record is 1/2 degree higher than thc lower-limb. However, since these are altitudes supposedly taken with an artificial horizon,[46] the differences ought to be a full degree. (Rawlins, 1973 p. 87: "No one who had ever used a sextant and artificial horizon once—anywhere—could have made the [blunder] responsible for this.")[47]

Moreover, Cook later discovered this slip and "corrected" it (without ever mentioning the alterations) in subsequent editions. (See endnote 53.) Indeed, in the 1912 edition, at p.274, BOTH (necessarily contradictory) versions of the 1908/4/14 data (before AND after doctoring) are included and (the ultimate oddity) equated: "22°12'05"=22°02'05" and "22°46'20" = 22°56'20". (The appearance of this amazing 1912 simultaneous double-version was probably caused by a printer's misunderstanding of orders scribbled by Cook on the galleys, indicating

replacement of the former data by the latter.) By the time the 1913 edition appeared, he had completely suppressed the original version, having enhanced both upper limb values by 10' while shaving 10' off both lower limb values—which keeps both pairs' critical averages the same as before (necessary for holding-fixed the already-published latitudes "deduced" from the data), but simultaneously requires the believer to accept that Cook was the victim of two misprints which perfectly cancelled. Twice. (I.e., four misprints in all.)

To a scientist, it has always been obvious (Rawlins, 1973, e.g., p. 89) that Cook was not a navigator. (And he said he wasn't: p. 15.) Returning to the question (p. 7) of whether Cook's 1908 trip was c.12 nmi (Eskimos) or 500 nmi (Cook) north of land, we find that we need not debate whether (endnote 19) the Eskimos were coerced or bribed or misunderstood when they testified that Cook went only about 12 nmi north—because we have (as in the case of Barrill's testimony) independent confirmation of the witnesses: if Cook couldn't navigate, it would have been suicide for him to go out of sight of land. (The Eskimos specifically testified[48] that the Cook party never left sight of land at any time on the trip.) Further Cook navigational oddities follow.

At several places in his 1911 book, Cook assumes that, at the N. Pole, the compass pointed to the N. Magnetic Pole. Since the Earth is not a simple magnet, this assumption was wrong by about 30°. (See Cook, 1911 pp. 288-292, 573; also Rawlins, 1973 pp. 91 and 234.) According to August Loose, Cook privately claimed[49] that the key to his alleged 1908 navigation was steering compass-south along the 95°W meridian from land to the Pole—a method squarely based upon the same naive simple-magnet assumption (*NY Times*,1909/12/9 p. 3, col. 4.) Such a mistake could not be made by a genuine attainer of the Pole.

Cook frequently gives longitudes precisely to the arcminute even while closely approaching the Pole, though all navigators know the folly of this.[50] E.g., at latitude 89°31'N, Cook says (1911 p.279, contra the dead-reckoning claim of p. 573) that his longitude calculations (performed before the noon latitude, a feat that will further astonish navigators) gave 95°03'W. However, just 29 nmi from the Pole, an arcminute of longitude is (in great-circle angle) less than an arcsecond: a distance of just 16 meters. Dead reckoning (Cook, 1911 p. 573) to such precision after many miles of compass-course marching is superhuman. Nothing like it in the history of exploration (except Peary's pole-in-one 1909 alleged aiming: Rawlins, 1973 p. 145). Only someone completely unversed in the relevant math would make such errors. (For an equally astonishing similar slip by a prominent current professor in the University of Chicago's Astronomy Dept, see *DIO 2.3* t8 endnote 31.)

In his first account (*NY Herald,* 1909/9/2:1:4), Cook reports his arrival at the Pole, "On April 21 the first correct altitude of the sun gave 89 deg. 59 min. 46 sec. The pole therefore was in sight. We advanced the fourteen seconds...." His next account (Cook, 1909 10/5:4: 1) is, "The observation gave latitude 89 deg. 59 min. 45 sec.... We advanced the fifteen seconds ...." By 1911, Cook had been informed by amused scientists that such precision is meaningless, so the Pole-arrival account at Cook, 1911 pp. 288-289 was substantially rewritten: "Several sextant observations gave a latitude a few seconds below 90°, which, because of unknown refraction and uncertain accuracy of time,[51] was placed at 90°."

Cook, 1911 p. 580 equates a timeminute with a nautical mile. Since the latter equals one arcminute (endnote 4), this is simply a confusion of timemin with arcmin, a distinction which ranks as chapter-one navigational material. No one familiar with navigation makes such mistakes.

Where are the data for Cook's alleged 1908 steering and longitudes? (See endnote 53.) A common excuse is the claim that Peary's people stole[52] the data. (Contra this, see Rawlins, 1973 p. 87.) However, we recall that Cook claimed he took a "round of [theodolite] angles" atop Mt. McKinley in 1906—and these data are (as I predicted long ago to Cook's daughter, e.g., 1974/1/19; see also Rawlins, 1973 p. 80, years before the Cook Papers' unsealing) no more to be found than Cook's alleged N. Pole navigational[53] data. Nowhere in the Cook Papers or in the scientific materials of Cook's several expeditions (1892, 1894, 1897, 1903, 1906, 1908) are there records showing that Cook had ability with a sextant—or had the ability to compute geographical position from sextant data.

This matter goes to the heart of the Cook claim, and it ought to be faced by his defenders. I quoted Dunn and Parker earlier (§B3-§B4), on Cook's navigational disabilities. Let us now turn to the testimony of the man who offered to act as Cook's secret navigational double: ship's captain August Loose, a figure unknown[54] to Cook's friends (including even his lawyer, Henry Wellington Wack, who saw Cook frequently at this time). Loose reported in a 1909/12/7 affidavit—gleefully page-one-displayed by the *NY Times* (1909/12/9)—that he was hired by Cook to manufacture celestial data proving navigation of a 500 nmi trip to the N. Pole, data computed indoors (in NY city) for the specific places and dates Cook had already published. From Loose's story, "How to Discover the North Pole without Leaving New York" (*NY Times* 1909/12/9 p. 3, col. 3, partially quoted in Rawlins, 1973 p. 86):

> It took me only about three minutes on my first acquaintance with Dr .Cook to get the idea into my head that he had never found the north pole. I found that he was entirely ignorant on many points of the method of taking observations. It amazed me that a man who needed so much enlightenment would have the nerve to come out and say he had discovered the north pole.... He could not answer simple questions on matters that he should have been intimately familiar with .... Of course, I have no way of knowing that the doctor did actually copy my "observations" and send them in [to the Univ. Copenhagen scientists preparing to judge Cook, but] .... if he used the stuff he had before I started in to help him, he would never convince those Danish scientists.

(In fact, Cook did not[55] send Loose's fakes to his Copenhagen judges. And he didn't convince them.)

As previously, when we must choose which party to believe (Cook vs. one of the succession of witnesses against him), we may look for independent confirmation. In this case, consultation of the several giveaway slips (§C12-§C15) in Cook's own account of his trip is powerfully consistent with Loose's often-hilarious account of Cook as a non-navigator.[56] (To a navigationally-trained reader, Loose's account is that of one conversant with the math and practice of navigation. Cook's account is not.) When Loose's credibility was attacked in 1909, he

countered by publicly challenging Cook to demonstrate that he could use a sextant. (See Rawlins, 1973 p. 86.) Cook did not pick up the challenge.

Cook couldn't deny his meetings with Loose, since the *NY Times* of 1909/12/9 had page-one-published a facsimile of his 1909/11/4 handwritten note to Loose, describing his needs: "Svartevoeg [sic], start March 17-18. Strong wind—Haze. March 30—obs. Lat. and Long. daily observations to April 23." Though the incident is highly suspicious[57]—no matter what the precise details—Cook tried to pass it off as just a misunderstanding (Cook, 1911 pp. 537-538):

> he [Loose] made the audacious suggestion that I let him go over my material. I flatly refused. He pointed out what I myself had been thinking about, that all observations were subject to extreme inaccuracy. He suggested his working mine out backward to verify them. As I regarded him as an experienced navigator, I though this of interest. I was not a navigator [!!], and, moreover, had had no chance of checking my figures. So, desiring an independent view, and thinking that another man's method might satisfy any doubts, I told him to go ahead, using the figures published in my story in the New York Herald.

Comments: [i] If one isn't a navigator (which Cook admits), then one can't find the N. Pole, especially when travelling over moving ice-floes. [ii] Working "backward" (from geographical position to data, not vice-versa as for real navigation) equals faking data. (Mathematically, faking celestial altitudes is easier than using real data to find position. See Rawlins 1973 p. 154, which also adds the little-known item that: the easiest places on Earth to fake such data for are the N. Pole and S. Pole.) [iii] What about observations after April 23? Cook, not returning on his outward sledge-track, would have had to navigate back to land, just as he allegedly navigated to the Pole. [iv] When Cook claims he asked Loose to work "back yard" (fake data) from his newspaper account, he reveals more than he knows. The hitherto unnoted blunder here: the detailed *Herald* accounts[58] provide no times for the longitude observations, so there is no basis for computing anything (forwards or backwards)—and, needless to add, one must have longitudes in order to steer. (See Rawlins, 1973 p. 87; also, Ted Heckathorn's and Wm. Rawlins' recovery of the long lost longitude observations of Roald Amundsen 's legendary 1911 trip to the S. Pole: *DIO 2.2*, 1992, *Wash Post* 1993/6/1and *Science*,1993/6/11.)

**Journey Ends, Controversy Doesn't**

After disappearing in early 1908, Cook reappeared in Greenland over a year later. To explain his nonproduction of celestial observations, he usually said he'd preserved at least some (but see en 60) of his original records in a box which, as Pearyite Prof. Hobbs temperately puts it,[59] Cook had left "in the keeping of a wandering sportsman [H. Whitney] in Greenland"—whom Cook expected (Rawlins, 1973 p. l66) back in civilization no earlier than mid-October (about the end of Cook's highly lucrative whirlwind lecture series). When Whitney instead returned at virtually the moment of Cook's first US lecture (Carnegie Hall) without any knowledge of such records, Cook (Rawlins *loc cit*) "thereupon said that he wasn't sure he'd told Whitney the papers were in the box; besides, he reassured believers, he'd kept copies with him all along." (For the evolution[60] of Cook's story regarding what data he allegedly left with Whitney, see Rawlins, 1973 p.87 and corresponding citations in notes at p.298.)

As Peary rightly noted,[61] such records add but a "featherweight" to one's burden. Is it not slightly nervy to come out of the Arctic, claiming one of the greatest exploring triumphs in history (and asking thousands of dollars for the story: Freeman, 1961 p. l 37)—while simultaneously treating the crucial supporting data-records as of little import? (See Cook, 1911 pp. 244-245n and Rawlins, 1973 p. 83.)

Cook claims[62] Peary caused the burial of some of his data, but this alibi avoids the key issue: why did Cook ever let such data out of his possession? (Peary noted that he himself never did; explorer G. deLong froze to death in north Siberia with his records in his hands.) Had Cook done so, there would be no Cook Controversy. Thus, the responsibility for his inability to prove his claim is his own. We must not forget that, in science, the burden of proof is on the claimant, not the skeptic. That is why, though it's certain that the Controversy will never die, there is another, equally-solid Never: the Cook claim will not & cannot be accepted in scientific circles.

Applying normal philosophy of science to the options here (innocence or guilt), we ask the Occam's-Razor question: which theory is simpler? The classic astronomical-history comparison (for the planets' motion) is geocentrism vs. heliocentrism: the former requires a complex, neatly-rigged set of epicycles. (See D. Rawlins American Journal of Physics 55:235, 1987; p.238. Or see *DIO 1.1* t7 "Figleaf Salad".) By contrast, the latter is spare and simple. In the Cook case, we have on the one side the believers' theory: [a] Cook innocently left his precious original records in the Arctic. [b] Peary hid, destroyed, or stole them.[63] [c] All Cook's companions (1906 and 1908) were intimidated, misquoted, or bribed[64] by Peary money to testify that Cook never went anywhere near the top of Mt. McKinley or the N. Pole. [d] Peary forces bribed Loose to lie. Etc, etc. A lot of epicycles.

But there is a much simpler theory, which easily explains an otherwise ultra-complex[65] saga. This elementary theory is that: Cook was a liar—even though Peary said he was.

**Endnotes**

1. E g, Eames, 1973 p l 86 Cook was "not one of the boys " Contra this, see Rawlins, 1973 pp. 79-80, Hunt, 1981 pp. 228-230.
2. In 1978, I interviewed astronomer Bengt Stromgren (1908-1987),illustrious son of Elis Stromgren, the well-known astronomer whose overswift 1909/9/5 interview-certification of Cook had led the Danes into national embarrassment. B. Stromgren told me that his father never permitted family discussion of the affair, because he felt ashamed for the rest of his life that he had been responsible for disgracing the king. There is an oft-cited 2nd-hand report (*NY Times* 1909/9/7 5:3) that E. Stromgren had "put an exhaustive series of mathematical, technical, natural, and scientific questions to Dr Cook" (Incomplete text at Andrew Freeman 's invaluable *The Case for Doctor Cook* 1961 p. l50, copied by Eames, 1973 p. ll9, though p. 319 cites it to *NYT* not Freeman). In response to my suspicion as to whether his father was comfortable with English, B Stromgren emphatically confirmed that he was not.
3. My own historical revisionism's have involved such figures as, e g, Aristarchos, Aristyllos, Eratosthenes, Hipparchos, Ptolemy, Tycho, Lemonnier, Leverrier-Adams, Peary, Byrd, Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile, Schmidt-Papanin, Plaisted, Herbert.

4. We use "nmi" throughout for nautical mile, which is 1' on the Earth's surface. One nmi is slightly more than 15% larger than the familiar statute mile.
5. Most polar sea-ice is a budded, fissured horror for travelers. The accounts of Peary, Plaisted, and Herbert are unanimous on that point.
6. Rawlins, 1973 p. 92.
7. My certainty (p.12) of Cook's inability to navigate is such that I have not wasted time searching the Cook Papers for his nonexistent sph trig navigational calculations. (Others' searches have, naturally, found none. )
8. The thrice~yearly journal *DIO* (and its occasional supplement, *The Journal for Hysterical Astronomy*) is available from *DIO*, Box 19935,Baltimore, MD 21211- 0935 (phone 410-889-1414; answering machine always on).
9. Cook's pretense of using instruments did not cease in 1903. Barrill describes Cook "using instruments for the purpose of taking....elevations, and the like." See Washburn, 1989 p. 119.
10. Belmore Browne reports on one of his post-expedition encounters with Cook (Explorers Club minutes 1909/10/15 p. 17): 'anyone having made an ascent of a peak is thoroughly familiar with the topographical features of that peak indelibly imprinted [however even] with [his own] photographs before him Dr. Cook was unable to draw an accurate map of his route over the glaciers to the top of the Northeastern ridge in response to a question from me.' I thank Janet Baldwin, archivist of the Explorers Club of New York, for transmitting (1993/10/4) copies of the Clubs 1909/10/15 and 10/17 minutes, H. Wack's 1909/10/15 Statement, and the Club's 1909/12/24. "Conclusion" against Cook (Note: 1909/12/24 is the date on which Cook was dropped from Expl Club membership: Freeman, 1961 p. 205. See also below at endnote 30.) These four records were made during the 1909/10/12-12/24 Explorers Club investigation of the McKinley matter, carried out by a special committee of the Club. (It is plain from the minutes that some of the committee's members were initially friendly towards Cook, who had recently been elected President of the Club, on the crest of his McKinley fame: Freeman, 1961 p. 92.) It should be noted that the semi-popular Explorers Club and National Geographic were the only US societies that had the decency to officially condemn either of Cook's false claims (though see Rawlins, 1973 p. 291)—while the purely academic US societies said nothing whatever on the record The University of Copenhagen eventually rejected Cook, but it is [a] not a geographical society (a point explicitly noted at the Peary Hearings), and [b] foreign.
11. But see Freeman, 1961 p. 91-93, Rawlins, 1973 pp. 81 and 291. And the Explorers Club 1909/12/24 report's item 12 states: "the so-called Cook controversy of the present year would not have arisen had Prof. Parker and Mr. Browne presented to the Board of Governors of the Club in 1907 the same evidence which they have recently presented to this committee. These gentleman preferred, however, to await the appearance Dr. Cook's book." (By which time, Cook had departed civilization, to launch his trip north to Cape Thos. Hubbard.) Freeman, 1961 p. 183 quotes item 12 (from *NYT* 1909/12/25 3:1), except for the last sentence.
12. See Cook, 1908 pp. 180-181, Expl Club minutes 1909/10/15 pp. 8 and 15, Cook, 1911 p. 523, Freeman, 1961 p. 89, Rawlins,1973 p. 80.
13. Rawlins, 1973 p. 80. H. Parker reported (Explorers Club Minutes 1909/10/15 p. 6) that Cook was challenged (from the audience) at one of his lectures: why take along a flag if he (according to his own story, e.g., Cook, 1907 p. 824, Cook, 1908 p. 181) merely intended to reconnoiter? Cook replied that the flag was packed by accident.
14. See Washburn, 1989 pp. 118-119.

15. B. Browne notes the absence (in Cook's accounts) of dates on the climb and return Expl Club minutes 1909/10/15 p. 15. According to Barrill he and Cook left their boat 1906/9/8, and were alone from 1906/9/9 to 9/19. See Washburn, 1989 pp. 118-120.
16. Rawlins, 1973 p. 81.
17. See p. 3 and 1909/10/15 Explorers Club minutes pp. 9-10, 12, 17-20. See also items 4 and 9 of the Club's 1909/12124 negative "Conclusion" on Cook's 1906 claim. Cook (e. g.,1907 pp. 832 and 836) speaks of using ice-axes, though Parker certifies that Cook and Barrill had none during their 1906/9 foray.
18. Affidavit 1909/10/4, published *NY Globe* 1909/10/14 (diary 10/15) (Summary at Freeman, 1961 p. 179 ) See affidavit text's reprinting in Washburn,1989 1 am grateful for Janet Baldwin's transmission (1993/10/4) of a photocopy of this article, as well as of the testimony of E. Barrill's daughter, Marjorie (Barrill, 1988).
19. See p. 17 (also p. 12) and e g, Eames, 1973 pp. 67, 176f, and 229f (well evaluated at Hunt, 1981 p. 227) The $350,000 Peary Arctic Club war-chest (*ibid* pp. 177 and 283), allegedly devoted to "see [Peary] through" the Cook Controversy, is a fantasy based upon the oral recollection of octogenarian Cook-believer Clark Brown. (Cited *ibid* p. 321 n. 3.) This vision of vast sums subscribed to ruin Cork is merely a misunderstanding of the $350,000 the Club put up before 1909 to see Peary through to the Pole. (See *NYT*s 1909/9/15 2:1. And note the common sense remarks at Hunt, 1981 pp. 227-228.) As Ted Heckathorn has found, the prime party that was hell-bent on destroying Cook was not the Club but Peary himself (through Peary's well-paid personal lobbyist, L. Alexander Rawlins, 1973 p. 248)—who was understandably anxious to divert attention from his own exploration-claims shortcomings, taking every possible opportunity to spotlight Cook's instead.
20. As quoted by Eames, 1973 p. 132. Incompletely quoted by Rawlins, 1973 p. 90.
21. See *DIO l.1* t4 §B4.
22. Sec Barrill, 1988 p. 81, where the Fake Peak is clearly marked with an arrow (Arrow also at Washburn, 1989 p. 112. And see map of route at *ibid* p. 117.
23. Washburn, 1989 p. 116 map in Barrill's hand. (See also p. 120.)
24. Barrill's hand-drawn sketch map locating Fake Peak (right where it was later found and photographed by Browne, Washburn, and Carter: endnote 29) was published in the 1909/10/15 *New York Globe*. This page of the Globe is photographically reproduced at Washburn, 1989 p. 116.
25. The interested scholar is urged to consult Washburn's full, highly detailed unpublished ms (which is buttressed by numerous charts and photos), copies of which are preserved at the American Alpine Club (NYC) and at the University of Alaska.
26. No photo found in the newly opened Cook Papers has altered the situation.
27. The photo opposite p. 239 of Cook 1908 proves positively that Cook was near the Fake Peak, which is prominent on the left side of this photo.
28. From Barrill's affidavit at Washburn, 1989 p. 119 (which also reports at p. 118 that Cook ordered Barrill to forge his diary entries for 1906/9/12-18), "I made the remark [to Cook] that the eight peaks [including Mt. Grosvenor] on the other side of this point where I had been photographed ["Top" photo] would probably show in the picture, and he said that he had taken the picture at such an angle that those peaks would not show". (Note that, according to Cook's two 1908 Eskimos, he was looking out to avoid tell-tale background topography when faking his arctic photos, too: Rawlins, 1973 p. 90.) The version of the "Top" photo published in Cook 1907

was cropped (For similar case, see p. 10.) But the 1908 version inadvertently got published with the summit of Mt. Grosvenor showing at the lower-right comer of the picture.

29. Hunt, 1981 pp. l42b-c reproduces various photos of Fake Peak: Cook, 1906; Browne, 1910; Washburn, 1956; Adams Carter, 1957.

30. Hunt, 1981 p. lll. (Date at p. 271 is a misprint, perhaps for 1909/12/29?)

31. Cook calls C. Hubbard by Sverdrup's name, Svartevoeg. See Cook, 1911 pp. 200-201n, which suggests (since he found no Peary cache) that Peary did not reach C. Hubbard in 1906. Actually, Peary, not Sverdrup reached the north tip of Axel Heiberg Land. (The reason Cook found no record is that Peary's published reports of the 1906 journey do not guide the searcher to such. For why, see p. 8 and Rawlins, 1973 p. 75.)

32. I should add that, on 1972/11/6, I personally phoned RCMP explorer Harry Stallworthy (not a member of the Peary clique), and learned that he had long ago heard the same account directly from Cook's two 1908 Eskimos.

33. I suspect that the photos opp Cook 1911 pp. l72 and 332 were taken at this plate. Note that none of the photos in Cook 1911 show his party weaving through rubble ice, going up and over pressure-ridges, or negotiating leads of open water. (Similarly, Barrill reports that all the 1906/9/9-18 camps were on pretty level ice. See p. l22 of Washburn, 1989 ) Compare to Peary's efforts during his hard fought 1909 drive to get as far north as possible, as shown in Peary 1910 via photos opp pp. 216, 224, 240, 306, 308, 309.

34. Alternate explanation: Cook hoped to travel 500 nmi over sea-ice to the Pole along a nonexistent "magnetic meridian". See Hall, 1917 pp. 243, 389, 451-454 and diagrams on pp. 244-245. And see below at p. l2 This still does not explain why, when (in his story) short of food throughout the return trip, Cook did not immediately (upon leaving the Pole) veer to the east of his outward track, aiming to come down upon north Ellesmere Land's game (and relatively smooth ice-foot).

35. However, he had been warmed, by the Eskimos who had accompanied Peary at the time of Peary's fraudulent "Crocker Land" sightings, that there was no such land: *DIO 1.1* t4 §B4.

36. See just irony at Freeman, 1961 p. 138.

37. See, e.g., Rawlins, 1973 pp. 144-145 and Herbert, 1989 pp. 184 and 261f.

38. Cook, 1911 p. 244 (emph added:) "delay was jeopardous, and, moreover, *our food supply* did not permit our taking time to inspect the new land". Cook continues later in a footnote on the same page: 'Whether animal life existed then, I do not know, for the impetus of my quest left us no tune to investigate I passed the last game at Heiberg Land".

39. Cook, 1911 p. 598; Hunt, l981 pp. l64 and 225.

40. After my own dreadful 1988 error Peary's Betelgeux Document (*DIO 1.1* t1 §C3; 1991), I am not pretending to omniscience. But, when mounting evidence goes against one's theories, one should openly and frankly alter one's opinion to accord with new data. (See *ibid* end note 14). This is not only the decent thing to do—unwillingness to face one's errors dooms one to a lifetime of ducking and-or alibiing evidential challenges (Anyone supposing that such behavior does not occur at the heights of academe is advised to examine the sad behavior pattern discussed at *DIO 1.2* §D4).

41. Now found in most of the world 's navigational manuals, this simple format, for computing refraction r as a function of altitude h, is r = a cot[h + b / ( h + c)]. It was first published by Rawlins *Publ Astr Soc Pacific* 94, 359 (1982/4) p. 363 eq. 8a. New professional-level Rawlins formulae for refraction (including corrections for temperature and pressure) recently published at *DIO 2.1* (1992) t4 end note 17.

42. By the 1992 Rawlins refraction formulae cited at endnote 41, refraction r = 5'4.
43. Note that Cook, 1911 p. 292 (and p. 245) also copies Peary's minor error (1910 p. 362) of applying refraction-correction after (not before) semi-diameter-correction.
44. As pseudo-explained at Cook, 1911 246n, he applied 9' of refraction not only to his 7 "Pole" sextant shots (Cook, 1911 pp. 292, 302) but to all the others (Cook, 1911 pp. 245, 257, 274): 10 observations in all. The 9' refraction-figure used by Cook was wrong in every case: 10 for 10.
45. Cook may have been warned of this error Cook, 1911 (pp. 289, 296, 302, 573) says he moved camp 4 nmi "magnetic south" between the 2nd and 3rd pair of observations. However, since the last 5 observation-pairs were all allegedly taken at the same spot, the hovering-saucer hypothesis is solid for the 24 hr period over which these 5 observations were allegedly taken.
46. Cook's sextant was later recovered (and publicly displayed in Copenhagen), but no artificial horizon was found with it.
47. The discovery of this Cook slip was made by Congressman Henry Helgesen. (See his astute analysis in the *Congressional Record 54* Appendix p. 56 1916.) The refraction error (p.10) was discovered by Rawlins, as was the 1912 double-printing (p. 12) of both versions of the 1908/4/14 data.
48. Cook, 1911 p. 206n; Freeman, 1961 pp. 105, 157-158; Rawlins, 1973 p. 89; Hunt, 1981 p. l42o (reproduction of 1909/9/8 *NY Evening Telegram* p. 1).
49. See above at en 34.
50. Cook, 1911 p. 502 says this was just due to automatic computational routine. However, no other polar explorer exhibits such naivete about longitude.
51. Nonetheless, when allegedly only a quarter of a nmi from the Pole, he estimates his longitude as 97°W (Cook, 1911 p. 292 "ORIGINAL" data sheet photo opp p. 364)-i.e. , an implicit longitude precision of $\pm$4 meters ($\pm$1°/2)!
52. See below at end note 63. Conversely, the *NY Herald* (1909/9/23 p. 5 col. 3) reports a theft of documents al Peary's ship, shortly after his return from the North.
53. The sextant data Cook (eventually) published have no relation to steering, being merely latitude-sight arithmetic. (There exist no Cook observations for longitude, real or fake: see Rawlins, 1973 p. 87.) Howard Abramson has sent me (1988/12/13) photocopies of these meridian-arithmetic Cook "original observations" (Cook Papers, Library of Congress) for 1908/3/30, 4/8, 4/14, and 4/21-23, the same figures appearing at Cook, 1911 pp. 245, 257, 274, 292, and 302. The data sheets are conveniently smudged at the suspect (pp. 11-12) spots. Nonetheless, the 1908/4/8 first sight is unambiguously discernable as 21°49'30", not 21°59'30" (as later "corrected" in the 1912 & 1913 editions of Cook, 1911.)
54. As first uncovered in1935 by grammarian C. Henshaw Ward , Peary also got clandestine navigational advice from an expert, Hudson B. Hastings (Bowdoin College), who secretly stayed at Peary's home during the crucial weeks before the belated 1909/11/1 presentation of Peary's N. Pole "data" to his friendly National Geographic judges. Full details at Rawlins, 1973 pp. 285-290.
55. Cook, 1911 p. 502; Freeman ,1961 p. 206; and Eames 1973 p. 235 a11 understandably have some fun with this point.
56. Three more navigational peculiarities: [a] Cook mimics Peary's habit of shooting the Sun only at quarter-day intervals – which renders faking the data a matter of mere arithmetic. (Rawlins, 1970 p. 35; or Rawlins, 1973 p. 154.) [b] Why deal with solar semi-diameter if using observation-pairs: (Actually, Cook, 911 p. 289 says he took "Several" – not two – observations on arrival at the Pole.) After all if one merely pairs upper and lower limbs, as Cook states he

usually did, then the semi-diameter will virtually cancel out of the math; though , see en 3. [c] If, as claimed by Cook, 1911 p. 302, all the "Pole" observations were doubled, then how did the single-limb observation of Cook, 1911 p. 292 agree to 2" with the mean cited at Cook, 1911 p. 302?

57. Hunt, 1981 p. ll6 cuts past details to the main point (which also applies to Peary 's needlessly long-secret dealings with Hastings, en 54): "Cook knew where to go for reputable verification of his data if that was really all he wished to have done. Among his acquaintances at the Explorers Club and Arctic Club, there were several men whom he might have contacted, including Captain Lewis Nixon. He could have asked the help of respectable academic or government scientists skilled in navigation; instead, he allowed the approach of two dishonest men".

58. *NYH* 1909/9/2.

59. W. Hobbs *Peary* 1936 p. 372, quoted Rawlins, 1973 p. 85.

60. In one early version of Cook's gelatinous account of the disposition of his records, he told Danish astronomer E. Stromgren that he had left all of his original "data" and diaries with Whitney. (See P. Gibb *NYT* 1909/9/7: 5:1-2; Freeman, 1961 p.150.)

61. Freeman, 1961 p. l71 Confirmed (evidently inadvertently) at Cook, 1911 p. 499.

62. Cook, 1911 pp. 244-245n, pp499-500.

63. See p. 16, Freeman, 1961 pp. l68, 170-173.

64. See p. 4, Cook, 1911 p. 528; Eames, 1973 p. 67. A difficulty with this theory is that Barrill (and Parker) had, years before Cook's fight with Peary, claimed that Cook never climbed McKinley. See, e.g., Explorers Club minutes 1909/10/15 p. l6 (also pp.1-2), Freeman, 1961 pp. l77-178, Rawlins 1973 p. 89, Hunt 1981 p.30.

65. See above at pp. 4 and 17.

**About the Author**

Professor Dennis Rawlins has little patience for scientific orthodoxy, and were he a practitioner of his sort of outspoken assaults on conventional wisdom a few centuries ago would no doubt have been summoned by the Inquisition. Two years ago he took the occasion to argue for Peary's non-discovery at a Peary Symposium sponsored by the U. S. Naval Institute at Annapolis. It was 20 years ago that his book *Peary at the North Pole: Fact or Fiction?* was published. His contributions include such professional journals as Nature, the American Journal of Physics and other astronomical and geographical proceedings. An astronomer and professor of physics at Loyola College of Maryland, he has published an alternative journal called *DIO*, whose subtitle reflects its approach: *The Journal of Hysterical Astronomy.*