

CHAPTER 6

ICE ISLANDS FROM THE ELLESMERE BREAKOFF: WAS COOK'S 'BRADLEY LAND' A SIGHTING?

Joseph O. Fletcher

Abstract

Cook's controversial report of what he determined to be "new land" at 84 degrees North latitude on his journey toward the Pole, and which he designated "Bradley Land" after his backer, has been but one of many issues debated about his expedition. The description prompted an Arctic historian Moira Dunbar, to write some 40 years ago, that Cook may well have observed one of the earliest sightings of an ice island in the Arctic Ocean. If so, it would go toward rehabilitating much of his account. Experience in the Arctic Ocean basin prompts a re-examination of Cook's claims. The ice islands of our time no doubt existed as other breakoffs from Ellesmere Island's glacier in 1908. Cook's account should be examined in light of our modern understanding of oceanic and atmospheric circulations.

High over the cold, vast Arctic Ocean, the radar officer in a converted B-29 Superfortress droning toward the North Pole stared unbelievably into his scope. There, outlined against the characteristic pattern of the ice pack, was radar's picture of land—an island rising from deep sea where no land should be.

Quickly the airman called the plane commander on the interphone and verified the position as 300 miles north of Point Barrow, Alaska. He sketched the discovery on his chart and marked the date—August 14, 1946. I think this marked chart and accompanying report turned in by the 72d Photo Reconnaissance Squadron at Ladd Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Alaska, should rank with the important documents of Arctic exploration.

This young American had not discovered new land, as he believed. But he had provided a key which was to unlock one of the Far North's old mysteries and give his country a valuable base closer to the Pole than men had ever lived in comfort and safety.

For me personally, that key opened the door to a white world of scientific discovery and adventure. I was first commander of America's northernmost outpost, and for a quarter of a year lived 150 miles and less from the very top of the world.

After the B-29's return other airmen roared over these northern wastes to confirm the existence of what was now termed "Target X." They looked down on the robin's-egg blue of lakes, the steely glint of rushing streams, and a coast 20 to 40 feet high rising from the tumbled sea ice of the polar pack.

Rocks, they reported, jutted from a wind-swept plain. Patches of earth showed darkly. In vain did the pack, destroyer of explorers' ships, attack the island's shores. Giant fragments piled under coastal cliffs attested the strength of this 200-square-mile mass.

But, mysteriously, it was several miles from where it had first been plotted. There could be only one answer. Target X was drifting island of ice!

"Ptarmigan" flights—planes sent regularly over the North Pole by Air Weather Service to observe conditions there—were alerted to watch for more ice islands. They found two other large ones drifting far from land in the central Arctic basin. Canadian flyers later discovered some 40 smaller fragments in the channels of their country's Arctic archipelago.

Gentle parallel swells, or waves of ice, from a few inches to 15 feet high and from 800 to 1,000 feet apart, crossed the islands' relatively flat surfaces. Imperviousness to the battering of the pack suggested frozen fresh water, harder and stronger than salt ice. Thicknesses of 200 feet or more, 20 times that of the sea ice, were deduced from their height above sea level.

Somewhere along an Arctic shore a giant glacier must be spawning these immensities. But where was such a glacier? Narratives of early explorers supplied an important clue.

Lt. Pelham Aldrich, member of the British Arctic expedition headed by Sir George Wares in 1875-6, and Rear Adm. Robert E. Peary 30 years later, had seen a unique ice foot, or shelf, fast to Ellesmere Island's north shore and extending far seaward. This was apparently a glacial remnant, part of the prehistoric ice that once covered Ellesmere and the surrounding sea as an icecap now covers the interior of Greenland (page 494).

A puzzled Peary wrote a description of the shelf that perfectly fits today's ice islands. Later we were to land on Ellesmere ourselves, and, by comparing corings, match islands to the glacial shelf still extending 10 miles to sea in places.

It is thus still true that there are no icebergs in the Arctic Ocean; bergs as we know them in the Atlantic break from "live," moving glaciers when they reach the sea. Arctic ice islands, much older and larger, have split off from the dead Ellesmere shelf. The process must have been rapid since the turn of the century, for Peary described a far more extensive ice foot than now exists - further evidence of a steady warming in the Arctic.

From a geographer's point of view, the most interesting result of recent ice island studies is a possible solution to mysteries of "new lands" never seen again after "discovery". Crocker Land, sighted by Peary in 1906 and marked on Arctic maps until Comdr. Donald B. MacMillan in 1914 disproved its existence, may well have been an ice island.

So might Keenan Land, President's Land, and Sannikov Land. Takpuk Island certainly was. Its discoverers, an Eskimo, Takpuk, and the crew of his sloop, landed there in 1931, photographed it, and left still thinking it was land, but their photographs show an ice island.

No discredit reflects upon the brave and experienced Arctic explorers of another day. Men of the Air Force, including that radar-man, can testify that ice islands closely resemble lar

particularly when the viewer is walking around on one on a summer day.

Discovery, history, old mystery are one thing; our Air Force missions of today and tomorrow another. What use could be made of ice islands in the Arctic, repository of vital secrets of ocean and weather?

For more than 2,000 years the unpredictable pack had denied man more than brief and hazardous visits to its domain. To this day, no ship can smash through it at will. Some have managed to buck and thread a way into the ice in summer. Winter locked them fast; the fortunate ones came out again, but many fine vessels perished.

Lt. Comdr. George Washington De Long's *Jeannette* was crushed in 1881, a mishap which cost the gallant naval officer his life. In the same year Leigh Smiths an intrepid Arctic explorer, lost *Eira*, a specially built steam yacht, which sank in two hours. Some seven years earlier *Tegetthoff*, under Lts. Karl Weyprecht and Julius Payer of the Austrian military forces, was crushed and abandoned.

The British have left many ships in the Arctic, among them the ill-fated Sir John Franklin's *Erebus* and *Terror*. Other casualties are *Karluk*, used by Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918, and the Russian icebreaker *Chelyuskin* smashed in 1933.

Sledges can move perilously across the pack, but they carry little. The men who first came by air had no stable platforms for their camps, supplies, and scientific instruments. But here, at last, in the form of ice islands, were the platforms.

In January, 1952, the Alaskan Air Command organized "Project Icicle." Its mission was twofold: to establish on an ice island a weather-reporting station for Air Weather Service and a geophysical research base for Air Research and Development Command. I was placed in charge.

A first consideration was selection of the island. Of the three in the polar sea, old Target X, now named T-1, had drifted back home to Ellesmere. T-2, which squarely crossed the geographical Pole, was leaving our field of action (page 497 and map, page 493).

We took T-3, about a quarter the size of T-1 and slightly more rugged of surface (pages 490, 495). By the time we were ready, it should be 120 miles from the Pole, although this was of no practical importance as long as the island stayed well at sea in an area where no weather data were being obtained.

Preparations kept us at Ladd Field during January and February. Then we flew to Thule, in Greenland, an Air Force base so new that we pioneered the supply route from Alaska.

About the Author

Colonel Joseph O. Fletcher has recently been a senior research associate at the University of Colorado in environmental sciences and until 1989 was assistant research administrator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He has degrees from the University of Oklahoma, MIT and the University of California and an honorary doctorate from the University of Alaska. As commander of the strategic reconnaissance squadron in the Arctic, he established the research station on T-3. Later Colonel Fletcher was a research scientist at the Rand Corporation and research professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington.

SECTION III

DID POLITICS SUBVERT HISTORY?

REVISITING THE CONTROVERSY



Dr. Frederick A. Cook, explorer, anthropologist, photographer (1865–1940) was at the center of the greatest exploration controversy of the Twentieth Century.

A Symposium on Frederick Albert Cook

OCTOBER 22—23, 1993

A Conference sponsored by the Frederick A. Cook Society at the Byrd Polar Research Center as "Cook Reconsidered: Discovering the Man and his Explorations."



DINNER SPEAKERS

Informal remarks following the Friday dinner at the Ohio Historical Society will include photographs of some of Cook's field expeditions and remarks by the daughter of one of America's best-known Polar explorers and by a leading authority on the Polar Eskimo:

Jean Malaurie, director of the French Center for Arctic Studies and explorer of northern Greenland, has authored the definitive work on the Polar Eskimos, *The Last Kings of Thule* which has been published in 23 languages. He is founder of the publishing series *Terre Humaine* whose authors include Margaret Mead and Claude Levi-Strauss. He is a consultant to the Greenlandic, French, Canadian, Russian and U.S. governments.

Mrs. Bolling Byrd Clarke is an environmentalist and retired special projects coordinator at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. A native of Boston and educated at Swarthmore College, she has lectured in recent years and is on the advisory board of the Byrd Polar Research Center Archival Program.

'REDISCOVERING' DR. COOK

Was he a "monumental geographical charlatan and imposter" or was he "The American Dreyfus of the Arctic"? Was he just a psychological study in Polar exploration or was he a greatly wronged pioneer whose achievements are only now being acknowledged?

Frederick Albert Cook (1865-1940) remains a riddle of late 19th and early 20th Century Polar Exploration. Physician, anthropologist, explorer, photographer, author and the object of speculation for three generations of writers and historians, Cook will finally be discussed objectively in an academic setting.

A two-day symposium at the site of one of America's leading Polar research centers, with scholars and explorers from six nations presenting papers, will seek to relate the life and work of this country's first explorer of both polar regions into a better perspective 53 years after his death.

Future Discoverers of the Poles, 1899? (Cook and Amundsen in Antarctica with the Belgica Expedition)



Speakers at the October 22-23, 1993 symposium on Frederick A. Cook at Wilkens Auditorium of Scott Hall in the Byrd Polar Research Center, (left to right) Ralph Myerson, Jean Malaurie, Brian Shoemaker, Ted Heckathorn (rear), Dennis Rawlins, Wally Herbert, Joseph Fletcher, Rolf Gilberg and Kenn Harper. Sheldon Cook-Dorough was missing from the photo.



FREDERICK A. COOK SYMPOSIUM PRESENTERS

Sheldon Cook-Dorough is an Atlanta, Ga. lawyer and historian who has studied the Cook-Peary controversy for some 30 years and has contributed to Polar journals on the subject.

Joseph O. Fletcher is a former Air Force colonel and commander of the original "ice island" research in the 1950s and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Administration official.

Rolf Gilberg is curator at the National Museum of Denmark and has done ethnographic field work among the Innuait (Polar Eskimo) in northwest Greenland.

Kenn Harper of Iqualuit, NWT, is a student of Innuait culture among the Baffin Island and Greenland Innuait and the author of *Give Me My Father's Body*, an account of Peary's Eskimos in the U.S.

Ted Heckathorn is a Seattle, WA. Polar historian and researcher and a consultant on Arctic history. He is coeditor of Frederick A. Cook's last unpublished manuscript, *Hell is a Cold Place*.

Wally Herbert, a Polar explorer for three decades, led the first crossing of the Arctic Ocean and followed Cook's Queen Elizabeth Islands route in 1967-68. He wrote *The Noose of Laurels* in 1991.

V.S. Koryakin is historian of the Department of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow and was editor of the Russian edition of Cook's *My Attainment of the Pole*.

Jean Malaurie is the director of the French Center for Arctic Studies, field explorer of Northern Greenland and author of *The Last Kings of Thule* and *Ultima Thule*.

Ralph Myerson is a Philadelphia, PA physician and writer who has contributed to several medical and Polar journals and is an associate dean at the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

Dennis Rawlins is an astronomer and professor at Loyola College of Maryland, the author of *Peary at the Pole: Fact or Fiction?* and a presenter at the 1991 Peary Symposium at the Naval Academy.

Brian Shoemaker is a retired captain of the U.S. Navy with service in both the Arctic and the Antarctic, is director of the Hero Foundation and has a degree in Polar Studies from Cambridge.

MODERATORS & COORDINATORS

John Bossler is Director of the Center for Mapping at The Ohio State University.

Warren Cook Sr. is president of the Frederick A. Cook Society and is the grand nephew of the explorer.

Raimund E. Goerler is Chief Archivist at the Byrd Polar Research Center Archival Program at The Ohio State University.

Russell W. Gibbons is Symposium Director and an editor and writer who has contributed to the Cook-Peary literature.

Kenneth Jezek is Director of the Byrd Polar Research Center and a research scientist.

Thomas Schwartz is a professor of the School Journalism at The Ohio State University.

Richard W. Yerkes is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at The Ohio State University.



HERBERT
UK



MALAURIE
France



HARPER
Canada/NWT



GILBERG
Denmark



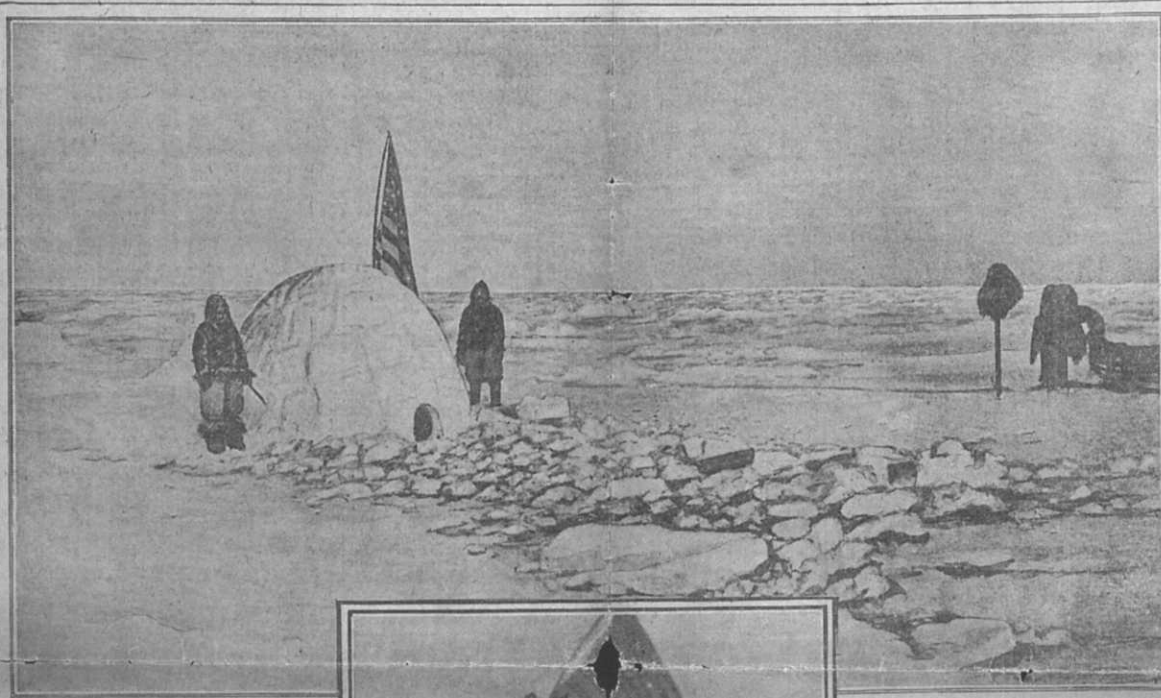
RAWLINS
USA

THE NEW YORK HERALD.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1900.—TWENTY-EIGHT PAGES.—AT THE NEW YORK HERALD COMPANY

DR. COOK IS WELCOMED HOME BY A HUNDRED THOUSAND VOICES AND A CLAMOR FROM THE WAR SHIPS OF MANY NATIONS

HERE IS THE NORTH POLE AS IT WAS PHOTOGRAPHED BY DR. COOK, ITS DISCOVERER—PROBABLY THE MOST REMARKABLE PICTURE EVER TAKEN



AT THE POLE APRIL 27, 1900, DR. COOK PHOTOGRAPHED HIS FELLOW COMPANIONS STANDING ON EITHER SIDE OF THE STARS AND STRIPES

Mighty Throng Shouts Its Belief in Achievement of Returning Explorer

Greeted First by His Wife and Children, Who Were Taken on a Special Tug to Meet the Steamship Oscar II.

LIFTED BY EAGER HANDS TO EXCURSION BOAT, WHERE HE IS FORMALLY WELCOMED

Progress Up the Bay to Pier in Williamsburg Marked by Deafening Greeting from Vessels and the Multitudes on Shore.

POLICE UNABLE TO HANDLE CROWD IN BROOKLYN

His tale is heard by the glow of the sun on the ice and the white snow beneath the sky which came and went. He was attired in a plain suit of black of a distinctive foreign cut and he wore a black derby hat.

His manner was easy and confident and so free from anything which even suggested the character that it is not until one sits to read how this man was the first to reach the pole in the history of the world.

His tale is heard by the glow of the sun on the ice and the white snow beneath the sky which came and went. He was attired in a plain suit of black of a distinctive foreign cut and he wore a black derby hat.

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OLD GLORY FARTHEST NORTH APRIL 21, 1900. RIGHTS RESERVED

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Brings Proof That Will Convince Every One of His Discovery, He Says

Data and Observations Will Be Submitted to the Scientific World as Soon as They Can Be Classified.

HOLDS HIMSELF READY TO REFUTE THE CHARGES OF COMMANDER PEARY AT ANY TIME

Was the Lion on Board Ship During the Voyage Home and Won All on Board by His Frank and Sincere Attitude.

MRS. COOK GETS HER SHARE OF THE CHEERS

As forward his efforts in obtaining a education. Here he had had a walk route which took his time in the early hours of the morning, and from his position he was able to pay for instruction which brought him his modest degree.

From medicine his attention was turned to other forms of science and then to exploration in strange lands and in polar seas.

And beyond, in Swedish arctic, was another mark in the life journey of Dr. Cook, the home where he lived and where he had his office as a physician. It was decorated with the national colors, and in front of it was a triumphal arch bearing upon it scenes from the polar regions and topped with a terrestrial globe. On it the legend "We believe in Cook" appeared in the letters which Brooklyn has always had in the explorer who for years has dwelt within her gates.

To bring to a close the crowded day was the reception at the Hudson River, surrounded at all hours by thousands of people in the evening, and at last the return to Dr. Cook's Manhattan headquarters, the Waldorf Astoria.

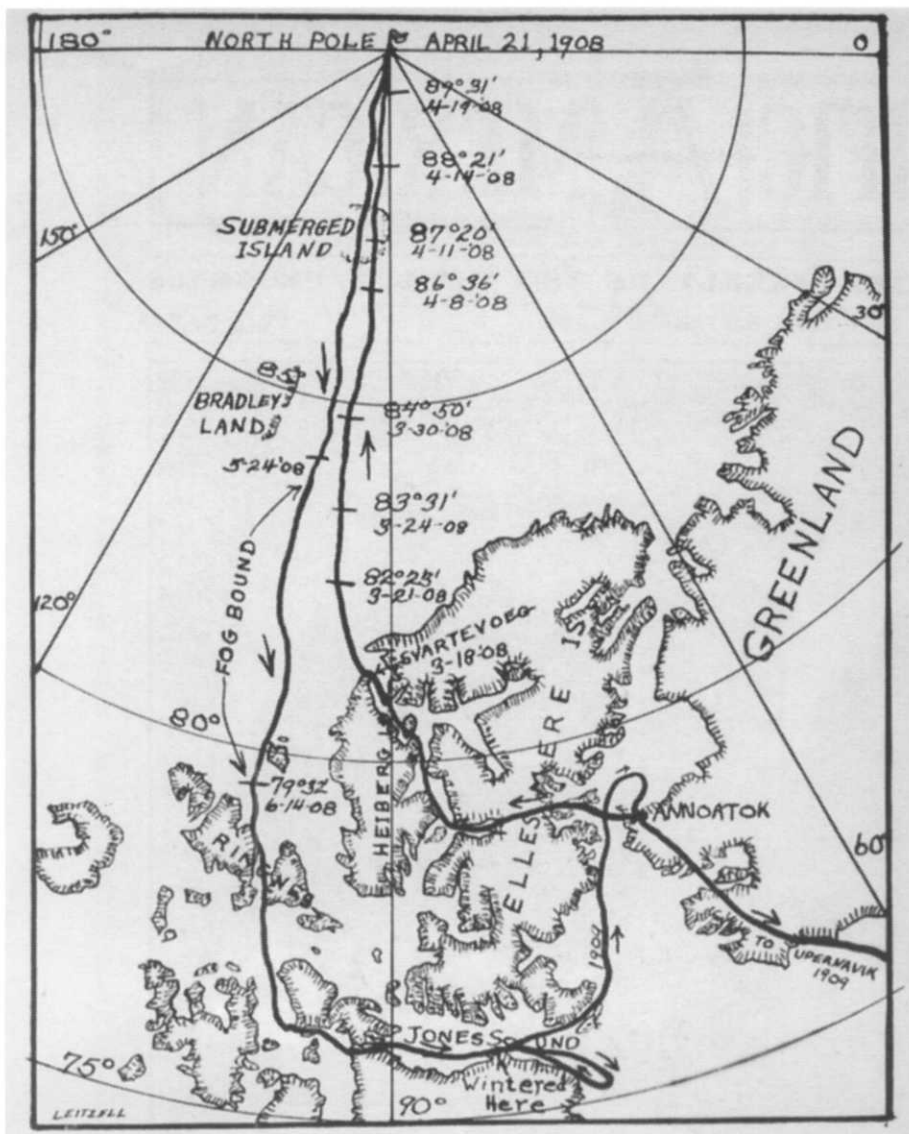
DR. COOK AMAZED AT STRENGTH OF THROTTLE WHICH WELCOMED HIM HOME

Two Hundred Thousand Persons Lined Route of Automobile Parade and the Change from Arctic Solitude to Almost Overwhelming Welcoming.

Yield impressions of the sight of him. Family were seated. Battered, blackened, and weary, he was surrounded by a throng of people, and the change was almost overwhelming, and painful, for the automobile which he had been so long in the Arctic was now in the city.

It is not often in this world that one is greeted by a throng of people, and the change was almost overwhelming, and painful, for the automobile which he had been so long in the Arctic was now in the city.

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Dr. Cook's route to the North Pole as shown in his book.

More than two years after he left for the Arctic, Cook is welcomed in Copenhagen in September 1909.



Order of Leopold, medals from European and American geographic and polar societies are with Dr. Cook's remains in the columbarium at Buffalo's Forest Lawn Cemetery.



(left) Peary with his Eskimo dogs, 1909.

(facing page) *The New York Herald*, September 22, 1909.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

[Entered at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter. Copyright, 1909, by Munn & Co., Inc.]

A POPULAR ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF THE WORLD'S PROGRESS

Vol. CL - No. 12 -
ESTABLISHED 1845

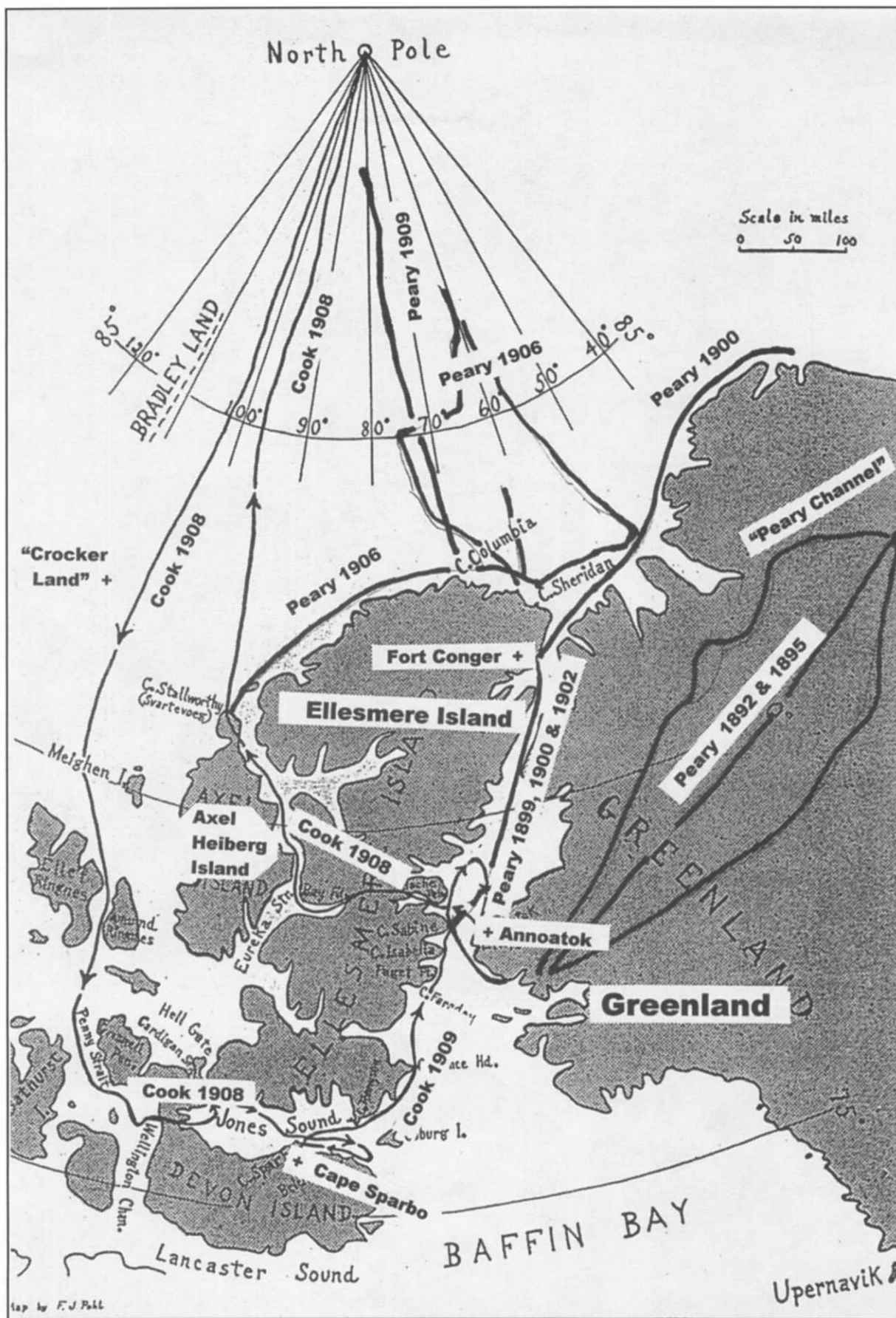
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 18, 1909.

10 CENTS A COPY
\$3.00 A YEAR.



OUR ARCTIC EXPLORERS.—[See page 196.]

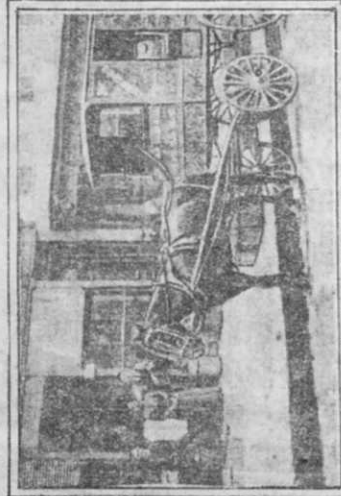
The greater length of time required by Cook to reach the Pole may be explained in part by comparing the Arctic steamer "Roosevelt" of the Peary expedition with the fishing schooner in which Cook reached the Arctic regions.



Cook's Route 1908-1909 and Peary's journeys, 1892 to 1909.

Map captions added by Ted Heckathorn, 1998.

DR. COOK'S BACKER GIVES PROOF OF AMPLE EQUIPMENT FOR DASH



DR. COOK'S MOTHER, SISTER AND AN EMPLOYEE IN FRONT OF HIS MILK DEPOT IN BROOKLYN. HIS FIRST MILK WAGON IN FOREGROUND. ALL PHOTOGRAPHED FOR NEW YORK HERALD.



DR. FREDERICK A. COOK AND MRS. COOK FATHER AND MOTHER OF DR. FREDERICK COOK.



EVELYN B. BALDWIN BELIEVES DR. COOK IS CONFIDENT THAT THE BROOKLYN PHYSICIAN REALLY ATTAINED THE HIGHEST POINT.

the first animals on our return—beast and all. We shot a bear.

And now our goal was the whalers at Lancaster Sound. We followed the drift ice to the south eight miles a day, but were stopped by pack ice in Wellington Channel, which was impassable either by boat or sledge. Here was lots of game, but we did not dare to shoot it. We had only taken a hundred bullets in the Pole and now only fifteen were left. We went into Jones Sound and shot a few more.

Up to this point we had been very successful, with which some of our polar wolves, with which some of our dogs and my friends had run away."

Night and Day in Open Boat.

We spent day and night in an open boat, two miles from shore. This was a very dangerous place, for we were very close to the ice. At last we got away from the ice, but we had no fuel, and we were very hungry. We had to eat uncooked food. Next day we had a feast of seal meat, which was very delicious. We had a very good dinner, and we were very happy. We had a very good dinner, and we were very happy. We had a very good dinner, and we were very happy.

Dr. Cook's mother, sister and an employee in front of his milk depot in Brooklyn. His first milk wagon in foreground. All photographed for New York Herald.



DR. COOK AT THE AGE OF 16 YEARS.



DR. COOK AT THE AGE OF 12 YEARS.



DR. COOK AT THE AGE OF 19 YEARS.



ARACENT PICTURE OF DR. COOK.



DR. COOK'S NEPHEWS AND NIECES IN COUNTRY WHERE HIS FIRST EXPLORATIONS WERE CONDUCTED IN HIS CHILDHOOD DAYS.



WHERE DR. COOK WENT TO SCHOOL UNTIL HE WAS 14 YEARS OF AGE. COOK'S BROTHER AT CALIFORNIA, N.Y.

John R. Bradley Tells of Outfit Costing \$50,000

Gives Documentary Evidence That Successful Expedition Was Equipped for Something More Than "a Fishing Excursion," as It Had Been Termed.

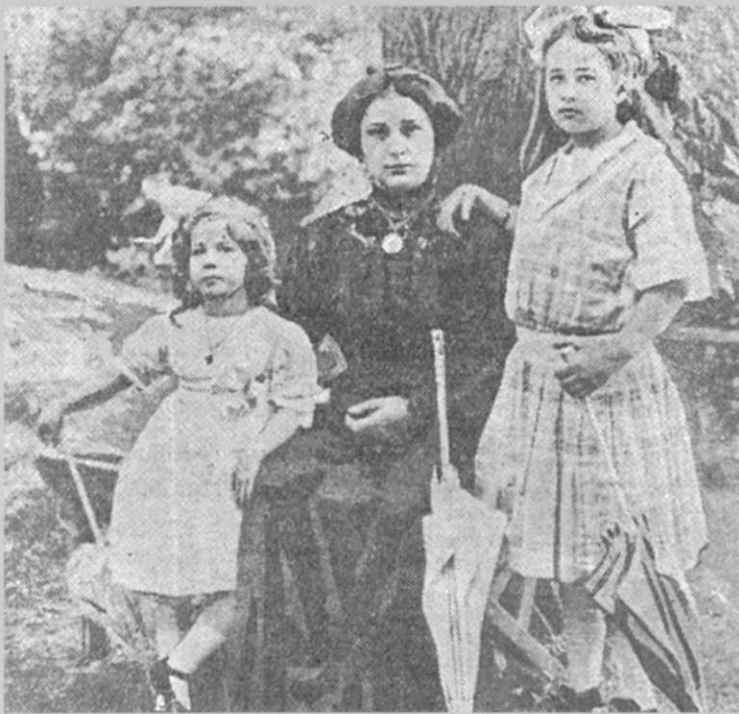
PLANS CAREFULLY LAID, ALTHOUGH SECRET



SHIP OF DR. FREDERICK A. COOK AT VORTONVILLE, SULLIVAN COUNTY, N.Y. PHOTOGRAPHED 1892-93. HERALD CO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

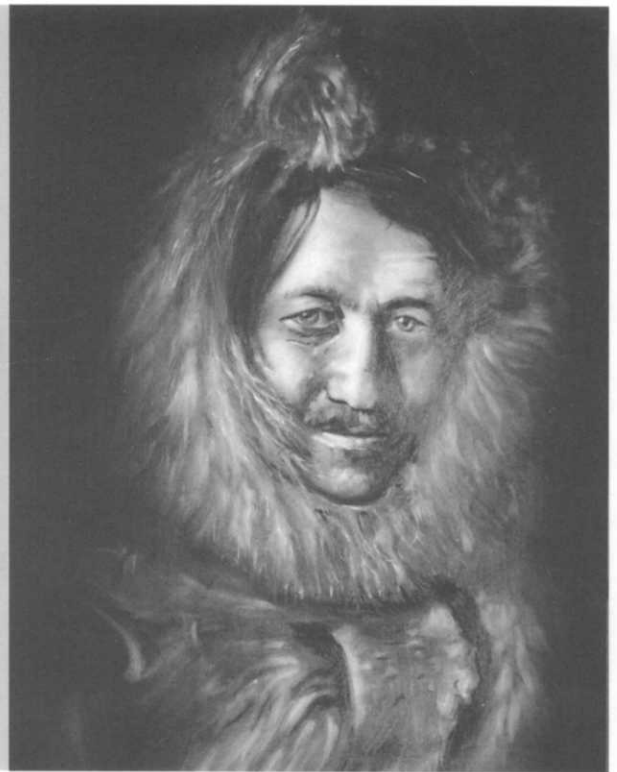
Milky Way

Study of Polar



The Cook family, wife Marie with Helene (left) and Ruth.

(facing page) From *The New York Herald*, Saturday, September 4, 1909, a pictorial view of the family life of Dr. Cook.



British polar explorer Wally Herbert, who followed the routes of both Cook and Peary became an accomplished artist with portraits of both explorers. See Peary on next page.

SPECIAL NOTICE—Dr. Cook's book "My Attainment of the Pole" contains over 650 finely illustrated pages. It is the kind of travel book that is usually sold for \$5.00. It can be had at the ticket office or from one of your local newspapers or will be sent post paid for \$1.00 to any address in the U. S., from The Polar Publishing Co., 601 Steinway Hall, Chicago.

In the interest of fair play—Dr. Cook requests his friends to use their influence to endeavor to bring about a National Investigation of the Polar Attainment; in line with this effort he suggests that you detach, sign and mail the card below to your congressman, or better still, write him a personal letter.

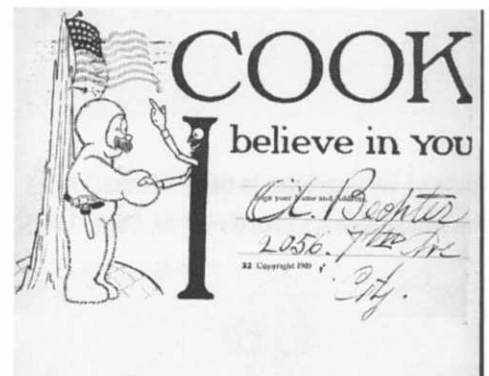
1913.

To Congressman
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:—The conquest of the North Pole has lifted the United States to a first position as a Nation of scientific pioneers. The controversy which followed is a blot on our Flag and it is a slur at our National Honor. From the Government purse and from private resources we have spent millions to reach the top of the Earth; it would appear therefore to be our duty as a nation to adjust the Polar contention in the eyes of the world.

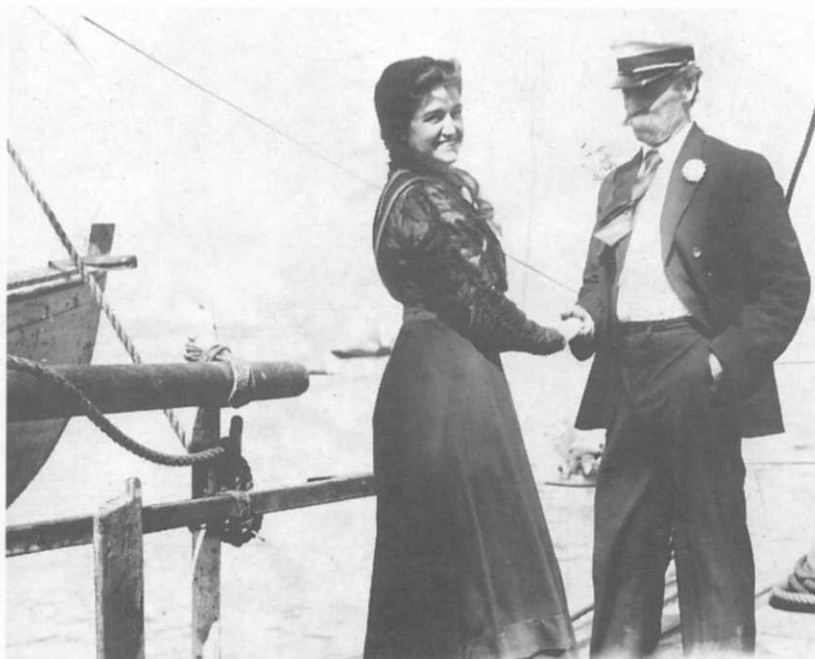
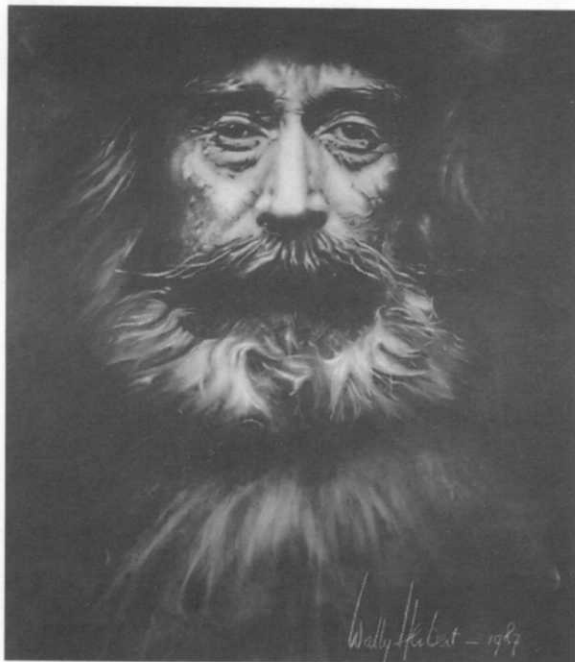
If Dr. Cook has reached the Pole, a year earlier than Peary, as most Arctic Explorers believe, then the seeming endorsement and the pension of the Naval Officer is an injustice to Dr. Cook and an imposition on the Public; if both have reached the Pole then there should be a suitable recognition and reward extended to each. As one of thousands of American Citizens I beg of you to forward a movement which will bring about a National Investigation into this problem, with a suitable provision for a proper recognition.

Respectfully,



(above) During the controversy of 1909-10, Cook partisans could show their support by mailing these cards.

(left) Printed 1913 postcard advertising Dr. Cook's book *My Attainment of the Pole* and a request that readers write their congressmen to bring about a "National Investigation of the Polar Attainment" by mailing this card.



Portrait of Robert Peary by Wally Herbert,
(right) Commander Peary and his wife Jo, 1910,
(below) Peary's North Pole photo.



(below) This cartoon is titled "Twins," from
the *Philadelphia Record Herald*, Sept. 1909.



In this Sept. 19, 1909 French version of the polar controversy,
unlikely Antarctic penguins view the North Pole combatants.



THIRTY YEARS AGO the world was electrified by the news that the North Pole had been discovered by Dr. Frederick A. Cook. A year later the counter-claims of Admiral Peary started a verbal battle which is still echoing down the corridors of time. The army of pre-Cook backers seems to be increasing as the years add perspective to the controversy. The Courier-Express today presents Dr. Cook's own story of his journey to the Pole, written by him for this paper and illustrated by photos taken by the author.

"In the middle of March, 1908, we drove out from the last known land on to the ice of the mid-polar sea and camped under a dome of snow. We were en route to the North Pole.

"We had come from our base camp in Northwest Greenland, at Annoatok out of the passing Arctic night into gloom of the delayed daylight with blasting winds and drifting snows in temperatures from 30 to 83 degrees below zero.

"Ahead all was unknown. The last supporting party had been sent back. Henceforth, our destiny was to be ahead in a battle for life against famine and frost.

"I started to cover the last 460 miles with two Eskimos, Etukishook and Ahweiah and 26 dogs, moving two sleds with necessities to support life for 60 days. Nothing additional to sustain existence could be expected in the barren wastes before us.

"Day after day and week after week we walked into the moving desolation, averaging fifteen miles daily. When no longer able to set one foot ahead of the other, we sought camp in a bank of snow. There we built an igloo or set up a silk tent. Inside, the snow was levelled as a bed. Pieces of ice served as pillows. The sleeping bags were unrolled and soon we were at peace with ourselves away from the shivering tumult outside.

"After eating a slab of dried meat and tallow, followed by ice water, there followed a heavenly sleep. And sometimes we had a cup of tea and some extras. For breakfast we had the same.

"Long days of suffering followed, but at the end of each journey we were nearer the Pole.

"We arrived at the North Pole, April 21, 1908. The weather was fair with the temperature 41 degrees below zero. The sun was 12 degrees above the horizon. We were surrounded by an ice pack drifting toward Spitzbergen and Northeast Greenland. We remained at the Pole 48 hours to fix our position and to study and record the physical conditions about the earth's top. We found the Pole, and the visible area about covered with salty pack ice. There was no land ice—no icebergs—no land—no life. We were the only pulsating creatures in a dead world of ice.

"Thirty years have passed since. During that time, including the Russians, 50 men have been to the Pole and around it and all have reported the same physical conditions first reported by us in 1908."

FREDERICK A. COOK.

DR. COOK'S OWN STORY

Dr. Cook resides much of his time with his two married daughters, Mrs. Robert Hamilton of East Aurora and Mrs. E. J. Vetter of Snyder.

DR. FREDERICK A. COOK, from a recent camera study by Dr. Max Thorax of Chicago.



(Right) AT THE POLE. — "We were the only pulsating creatures in a dead world of moving ice."



DR. COOK IN HIS EXPLORING DAYS.—He spent fourteen years in the Polar wastes and has made invaluable investigations into the ethnological and anthropological aspects of primitive races.



(Left) INTO THE ICY WASTES of the Polar pack sweep the dog teams and their hardy drivers.

From the *Buffalo Courier-Express Pictorial*, June 5, 1938. Dr. Cook writes, "Thirty years have passed since (we arrived at the Pole). During that time, 50 men have been to the Pole and around it and all have reported the same physical conditions first reported by us in 1908."

U.S.S.R.

Franz Josef Land (Zemlya Frantsa Iosifa)

North Land (Severnaya Zemlya)

Arctic Ocean

T-3 ice island crew flew to the North Pole, May '52.

North Pole

First ice island plane landing was made here on T-3, Mar. '52.

Dec. '51 1900 miles

July '51 1700 miles

Jan. '51 400 miles

July '50 200 miles

T-2 July '50 - July '51

June '52 2200 miles

Cape Columbia

Alert

Cape Sheridan

Lady Franklin Bay

Challenger Mountains

Cape Sabine

Enderby

Thule

Smith Sound

North Star

North Magnetic Pole

Prince of Wales

Banks Island

Victoria Island

CANADA

Mackenzie River

Great Bear Lake

Ward Hunt Island

Jan. '53 2400 miles

T-3 first sighted April 1947

80°

ROUTE OF T-1

ROUTE OF T-3 (Fletcher's Ice Island)

T-1, first ice island identified as such, was found here by Air Force in 1946. As a result, T-3, discovered later, became the base of a polar-research camp supplied by air.

GREENLAND

Vest Spitsbergen

The North Pole, first reached by Peary in 1909 after a 37-day dog sled dash from Cape Columbia, is now the destination of scheduled weather planes which cover Peary's mileage in about two hours.

[illegible]

CHAPTER 7

ADMIRAL PEARY AND DOCTOR COOK: NEW INSIGHTS INTO AN OLD CONTROVERSY

Ted Heckathorn

PRELUDE TO WARFARE

Dr. Frederick Cook's 1907-1909 expedition has generated controversy for more than 80 years, due primarily to his conflict with Admiral Robert E. Peary over the discovery of the North Pole. In many ways this controversy resembled a modern political campaign, complete with dirty tricks and unrestricted media warfare. Victory in such situations requires a continuous barrage of charges to put the opponent on the defensive, and "defining" the opponent in the public eye.

During a three-month period in late 1909, the initial North Pole skirmish ended before Cook could mobilize his forces. Peary's blitzkrieg was so effective that it obscured many critical facts, and distorted other related issues for many decades. Certain critical data surfaced only during the past two years. If we wish to conduct an objective evaluation of this complex issue, we must examine Peary's motives, methods and objectives in his assault on Cook's claim.

Most historians never understood why Peary seemed so hostile when other explorers sought to explore Greenland and Ellesmere Island in Northern Canada. In fact, Peary guarded North Greenland like an enraged pit bull. Obviously Peary did not own this territory, but those who "trespassed" experienced either an icy reception or outright hostility. Peary's outrage over such intrusions caused even staunch supporters to express doubts about his mental condition. His critics had no doubts about Peary's emotional stability--obviously, he was paranoid.

After decades of speculation about Peary's bizarre behavior, we now have the answer. Peary was a ruthless competitor in the polar arena; vindictive--yes, but mentally unbalanced--no. Like the defensive pit bull, Peary buried juicy secrets in his yard and vigorously protected them. These embarrassing skeletons consisted of 15 years of exploring hoaxes and distortions designed to build Peary's reputation and to generate a steady cash flow from wealthy supporters.

Peary created his first polar skeleton on his initial trip to Greenland during the summer of 1886. His mother financed his venture, a journey into Central Greenland. After his return, he reported that he had gone 100 miles into the unknown interior. This success as an explorer served to establish Peary in American geographical and scientific circles. Two years later the Norwegian explorer, Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, completed the first crossing of Greenland's ice cap. Nansen's success not only frustrated Peary's future plans, but Nansen also raised an embarrassing question as to how far Peary really went on the inland ice (Herbert, 1989, 65). Since Nansen could not disprove Peary's claim, Peary's 1886 route appeared on Greenland maps.

CREATING A POLAR FRANKENSTEIN

Peary's next exaggeration grew into a Frankenstein-like monster that would haunt him for the rest of his life. In 1891, Peary led his first formal expedition to North Greenland seeking to cross the icecap north of Nansen's route. His party included Dr. Frederick Cook, Eivind Astrup, a Norwegian skier, Matt Henson, Peary's black servant, John Verhoeff, a scientist, Langdon Gibson, an ornithologist, and Peary's wife, Josephine. Today, this staffing pattern would merit a high rating for affirmative action, but in the close, cramped quarters of a polar expedition, it proved to be an explosive mix of personalities.

Peary's expectation that Greenland's ice cap would provide a land route to the North Pole had a rather tenuous basis. General Greely, Chief of the US Army Signal Corps, led a prior expedition that explored the northern coast of Greenland in 1882, almost to the northernmost cape of Greenland. This meant that any land bridge to the pole could exist only in northeastern corner of Greenland. Peary and Astrup crossed most of the icecap during the summer of 1892, reaching the head of a long fiord. The two men avoided starvation by killing a few musk oxen, but they did not continue an additional 100 miles to the eastern coast of Greenland (Peary, 1898, I-357).

Standing on a high point of land that he named Navy Cliff, Peary suggested that a channel cut through Greenland from the fiord to the West Coast, making Greely's northern land an archipelago (Peary, 1898, I-346, 347). Peary transformed his fiord into "Independence Bay," and mapped it as an arm of the East Greenland Sea. By using his discovery of the "Peary Channel," Peary could lay claim to the title of "Delineator of North Greenland." Since the islands lying to the north of the "Peary Channel" were separated from Greenland proper, they were renamed "Peary Land."

Needless to say, Peary's self-proclaimed title, "Delineator of North Greenland" did not sit well with the Chief of the US Army Signal Corps. Prior to 1896, Greely's men, Lockwood and Brainard, held the world's record for "Farthest North" based on their 1882 journey in North Greenland. In response to newspaper stories, Major General Greely wrote a blistering letter to "Civil Engineer" Peary, pointing out that Peary's farthest north position was south of Greely's base camp at Fort Conger. Greely bluntly delivered to upstart Peary a "cease and desist" order regarding the title "Delineator of North Greenland" (Peary Correspondence (PPC), 1896). Peary, as a junior, non-line officer in the navy, had to comply, but he never forgave Greely for the humiliation. Had Greely realized that the real story about the "Peary Channel," Peary would have suffered far more than a loss of ego.

While Peary was on the icecap in 1892, personality clashes at the main base provided a soap opera aspect to the expedition. John Verhoeff, the meteorologist, had paid \$2,000 to join the Greenland party. Although he faithfully performed his duties, he had developed a strong dislike for Peary, Mrs. Peary and Matt Henson. Several times fights nearly erupted, and Verhoeff angrily vowed that he would not return on the same ship with the Pearys. When Peary returned from his ice cap journey, and as the expedition prepared to depart, Verhoeff disappeared on a nearby glacier. A century later Verhoeff's demise remains an unsolved mystery. Only Verhoeff's bitter diary (and a posthumous Inuit daughter) document this unhappy episode. (Peary papers).

When Peary's expedition returned in the United States in 1892, the members were feted as heroes. Unfortunately, Peary had little time to enjoy his new honors. He knew he had to return to Greenland next year before someone discovered the truth about his "Peary Channel." Peary's only recourse was to return to North Greenland and personally correct the "mistake" himself. This put him on a collision course with his top associate, Dr. Cook.

Dr. Cook took great pride in the scientific work of the expedition, especially his medical research among the Inuit. As a young doctor, Cook naturally wanted to publish his findings to obtain recognition among his medical peers. Peary's priorities were totally different. He had to raise funds for the next expedition and to publish his own narrative. While Peary's publisher toyed with him, an unauthorized book about his expedition appeared. Realizing that his anticipated book royalties were slipping away, Peary refused permission for any of his men write about the expedition (PPC, 1893). When Peary extended his gag order to medical articles, Cook rebelled and withdrew from Peary's new 1893 expedition. This 1893 split between Peary and Cook subsequently changed the course of polar history and later contributed to a bitter controversy.

In June 1893, Peary again sailed north with Mrs. Peary, Henson and Astrup, but without Dr. Cook. Since Mrs. Peary was pregnant, Peary took physician, Dr. Vincent, and Enrikin, an engineer, became the new second-in-command. Evelyn Briggs Baldwin, a highly recommended young meteorologist, was one of the other new men. Overall, the prospects looked bright for Peary's new Arctic venture.

TWO VOYAGES ON THE ROCKS

Meanwhile, Cook chartered a small vessel to take students on a voyage to South Greenland. After his return, Cook launched an 1893 lecture tour to raise funds for an Antarctic expedition. Unable to secure financing for Antarctica, Cook took a much larger group of tourists to Greenland in 1894, on the "Miranda." An uncharted Greenland reef quickly punctured both the "Miranda" and Cook's plans for an Antarctic expedition (Cook Papers, 1894). About the only positive result of this voyage was that the members organized the Arctic Club, the ancestor of today's Explorers Club of New York.

A few hundred miles to the north, Peary experienced his own disaster. In March 1894, contaminated food disabled Astrup (Astrup, 44). Other men suffered injuries and frostbite while hauling supplies onto the Greenland ice cap. Peary aborted his 1894 trip and decided to cache most of his sledging supplies on the ice cap (Peary, 1898, II-113). More serious trouble arose because there was insufficient food at base camp to feed the party through the 1894-95 winter. Although his men volunteered to stay with him, Peary sent them, his wife and new infant daughter back to the United States on his relief ship. Only Henson and Hugh Lee remained as companions. The story leaked to the press implied that those who returned on the ship had deserted Peary in North Greenland (PPC, 1894). Although this information damaged the reputations of the returning men, it diverted attention from Peary's fiasco on the ice cap.

Early in 1895, Peary could not find his cached supplies on the ice cap. Rather than admit defeat, he used improvised supplies and equipment, and with Henson and Lee, crossed the ice cap to

Navy Cliff. They made no new discoveries and failed to resolve the "Peary Channel" affair. The three men developed scurvy and narrowly avoided the fate that befell Captain Scott in the Antarctic a few years later. British polar historian, J. Gordon Hayes commented, "No results could be obtained under the circumstances, and all the risk was run for nothing" (Hayes, 1929, 28). Hayes did not realize the ugly secret that compelled Peary to make such a desperate journey. Peary was stuck with his "Peary Channel" albatross, but his secret remained undetected.

THE VIKINGS' RETURN TO GREENLAND

After his disastrous 1893-1895 expedition, Peary could not secure leave from his naval engineering duties until 1898. This did not prevent him; however, from establishing the Peary Arctic Club composed of the wealthiest men in America. Each tycoon pledged thousands of dollars to finance Peary's explorations. With this financial backing, and Lord Northcliff's gift of a ship, "Windward," Peary commenced a bold, new five-year plan to reach the North Pole.

Although Peary's prospects once again appeared favorable, an ominous cloud appeared on the horizon. Captain Otto Sverdrup, Nansen's protégé, announced his plan to sail the "Fram" to Smith Sound in 1898, to circumnavigate Greenland by sledge and ship (Sverdrup, 1904, I-1). Ostensibly Peary's expedition targeted the North Pole not the exploration of North Greenland, but Peary could not afford to risk the Norwegians' discovery of his "Peary Channel" hoax.

Peary raced north in the "Windward" to Smith Sound before Sverdrup arrived. His objective was to reach Fort Conger, a base Greely built in 1881, at the northern end of Smith Sound. The sturdy building there could house a large scientific expedition such as Sverdrup's, or even both expeditions. Peary believed that he could exclude Sverdrup from the area if he reached Fort Conger first. He also publicly alleged that Sverdrup was a North Pole rival in order to justify his deviation from the normal practice of international cooperation in polar exploration. (PPC, 1898).

Harsh ice conditions in 1898 prevented both the "Fram" and "Windward" from reaching Fort Conger. Peary ultimately reached Fort Conger first by making a dangerous winter sledge journey, but he paid a terrible price. During the trip, he froze both feet so severely that he lost most of his toes, and was lucky to survive. As a result, his 1899 explorations accomplished less than nothing.

Meanwhile, Sverdrup revised his plans and sailed west into Jones Sound to explore the unknown islands of northernmost Canada (Sverdrup, 1904, I-202). Peary now was unchallenged in Greenland, but it proved to be a Pyrrhic victory. Sverdrup subsequently explored hundreds of miles of new islands, mountains and seas, while Peary made far lesser geographical discoveries. In order to protect the "Peary Channel" secret, Peary forfeited the last major geographical discoveries in North America. That is why the names of Scandinavians rather than those of the Peary Arctic Club now decorate the headlands of the Canadian Archipelago. Like Charles Dickens' ghost of Jacob Marley, Peary carried a heavy burden that he could not escape. In 1896,

his final effort to unyoke himself failed when the US Navy Hydrographic Office refused his request to remove his name from the accursed channel (PPC, 1896).

Later in 1899, Peary's fortunes improved. In November, his Inuit mistress, Allikasingwah, gave birth to his oldest son, Annowkah or "Sammy." During June of 1900, he explored the northern coast of Greenland, a few miles beyond Lockwood and Brainard's the farthest point. Although his geographical discoveries were rather insignificant compared to Sverdrup's accomplishments, Peary did discover the northernmost land in the world, Cape Morris Jesup (Peary, 1907, 326).

After returning from Cape Jesup, he spent the remainder of the summer demolishing Greely's building at Fort Conger. No future, rival expedition would be able to utilize Greely's old base. Peary, Henson and Dr. Thomas Dedrick used the lumber to build three small huts for their own needs. The three men and their Inuit companions prepared for a peaceful winter with ample supplies of Greely's old food. Henson and Dedrick generated the only real excitement when each sought the same Inuit woman for a bedroom companion. Dedrick won the contest (with Peary's blessing), but he later regretted his victory (Peary Papers, 1900).

TROUBLE IN THE SOUTH

While Peary was at Fort Conger, trouble was brewing in the south. Peary's wife, Jo, and daughter, Marie, had accompanied the relief ship north in 1899. When the relief ship was trapped in the ice, they had to remain for the winter in North Greenland. At about the time Peary discovered Cape Morris Jesup, Mrs. Peary unexpectedly encountered Peary's mistress and an Inuit stepson (Herbert, 138). Even more ominous, in the United States, some members of the Peary Arctic Club had second thoughts about Peary. So far they had a very small return for their large cash outlays. At last report their relief ship and Mrs. Peary were trapped in the ice and might be lost. The rumors about Peary's physical and mental condition created additional unrest.

The club's executive officer and Brooklyn newspaper publisher, Herbert L. Bridgman, led the 1901 Peary Relief Expedition to obtain answers. Bridgman selected Dr. Cook to serve as his second-in-command and medical officer. Cook, who had recently returned from the Antarctic, was directed to give Peary a physical examination to determine his condition. Bridgman, Cook, and others sailed north on the "Eric" to find Peary and his missing wife (Cook Papers).

When Bridgman and Cook reached Smith Sound, Peary had returned from Fort Conger. Peary experienced rather stressful confrontations with both his wife and Bridgman. Dr. Dedrick added to the unpleasantness by claiming that Peary was insane. Peary responded by firing Dedrick from the expedition. The consensus among the relief party was that both Dedrick and Peary were somewhat addled after three winters in the Arctic (Cook Papers).

Dr. Cook now found himself in a very delicate position, both personally and professionally. Peary was his former leader and a powerful person in the exploring community, and it was quite clear that he did not want any type of an examination. After considerable pressure from Bridgman and Mrs. Peary, the crippled explorer reluctantly agreed to a physical by Dr. Cook. Peary, who preferred canned food to fresh meat, had subsisted for several months on Greely's

old food. Cook diagnosed scurvy and recommended that Peary return to the United States for treatment of his damaged feet (Cook Manuscript, Chapter 5, 11).

Mrs. Peary and Bridgman concurred with Dr. Cook, but Peary strongly disagreed. He realized that his return at this time with such minor results would end his exploring career. Peary insisted that he had to make one more attempt to reach a higher latitude. Bridgman, Cook and Mrs. Peary all tried to dissuade him, but he was adamant. The relief party sailed south without Peary (Peary Papers).

After a horrible winter where many of his Inuit companions died, Peary headed north for the pole. He pushed across the icy Arctic Ocean to 84° 17' N, far south of the records of Nansen and Cagni, but still a respectable achievement. Now he could return home with two geographical prizes, Cape Morris Jesup and 84° 17', to bolster his exploring résumé (Peary, 1907, 349).

FARTHEST NORTH AND CROCKER LAND

Peary returned to the Arctic in 1905-1906, for supposedly his final attempt to reach the pole. This time he had a new, powerful ship that took him past Fort Conger, all the way to the shores of the Arctic Ocean. He had a strong group of men, Robert Bartlett, Henson, Ross Marvin, and a large contingent of Inuit, including Panikpa, Itukishook, Ootah, Egingwah, Ooblooyah, Peawato and many attractive women. Prospects for success once again appeared excellent.

Unfortunately the Arctic Ocean did not cooperate. Ice drift and faulty navigation carried them far off their course. Progress was disappointingly slow. After 21 days, they had averaged only 4.9 miles per day (Hayes, 58). Later a storm delayed them for another six days reducing their 38-day average to 3.6 miles per day. When the blizzard ended on April 12, Peary had seven men, his dog teams and very little food (Peary, 1907, 129).

From this position at 85° 12' N, with starving dogs, Peary suddenly began to make remarkable distances each day, arriving at 87° 6' before noon on April 21. In 9½ days he traveled 131 (114 nautical) miles not counting any detours or ice drift; an average of 13.8 miles per day. Even more remarkable, Wally Herbert found Peary documents indicating that open leads had stopped him at 86° 30' N. on April 20 (Herbert, 183). Peary alleged that he traveled from this camp to 87° 6' N. and returned on April 21, without resting. This meant that in one day he traveled 82.8 (72 nautical) miles without resting and with starving, exhausted dogs! This astounding distance did not include any allowances for detours or ice drift, a daily hazard for explorers traveling on the Arctic Ocean. During his 1968-69 Trans-Arctic journey, Herbert found that he had to travel an additional 75% to compensate for such detours and ice drift (US Naval Institute, 1991).

How far north did Peary go in 1906? Peary's diary for April 1906 disappeared before 1935, and none of his pertinent solar observations are in his papers, especially those allegedly taken at 86° 30' and 87° 6'. Herbert's findings indicated that Peary did not go beyond 86° 30' which meant that he did not break Caginess 1900 record. Some Peary analysts such as Captain Thomas Hall did not believe that Peary went beyond 85° 12' (Hall, 1917, 268). From whatever point Peary reached, his return journey did not go well. Trapped by a huge lead of open water, Peary and his

men were fortunate to reach the northern coast of Greenland in starving condition. On land they killed a few musk oxen to survive before they finally reached the "Roosevelt" on June 1.

After such an ordeal, one would expect Peary to relax and enjoy the acclaim of setting a new world's record. On the other hand, if Peary failed as Herbert, Hall and other experts concluded, then Peary had to make a major, new geographical discovery to perpetuate his exploring career. This type of pressure for new discoveries (or new records) is a vocational hazard for both polar explorers and those in academic pursuits.

Polar explorers traditionally have used their new discoveries to reward major contributors. Tycoons might see their name perpetuated on maps for future centuries if they contributed to a successful explorer. Peary clearly understood this principle, and named Cape Morris Jesup after his largest and most influential backer. Now that Jesup was dead, he had new stockholders to satisfy if he wanted their financial support. Unfortunately for Peary; Sverdrup, Greely and Nares (of the 1875-1876 British expedition) already had named most significant land features on Northern Ellesmere Island. Only a fifty-mile strip of coastline between the discoveries of Sverdrup and Nares remained unnamed. It was rather insignificant as a new discovery, but Peary had no other options available.

A few days after Peary's harrowing experience on the Arctic Ocean, he suddenly departed to explore this fifty-mile strip of coastline. As he feared, there were no significant features, just a few bays and unremarkable mountains. When he reached Sverdrup's zone of discovery, he named a small cape after one of his key backers, Thomas Hubbard (Peary, 1907, 198). Since Sverdrup had hundreds of features to name, he might not object to Peary's renaming one small cape.

The primary problem was that Peary found nothing of significance to name after his largest cash supporter, San Francisco banker, George Crocker. Several reputable scientists had theorized that undiscovered land existed in the Arctic Ocean north of Canada. Since the "Peary Channel" hoax remained undetected, Peary decided to gamble one more time. After his return to the United States, he wrote Crocker and confided that he had discovered new land in the Arctic Ocean, northwest of Cape Thomas Hubbard. Peary proposed naming the new land after Crocker, and suggested that Crocker make a generous donation for the next expedition (PPC, 1907). Confident that Crocker would jump at the bait, Peary publicly announced that he had discovered "Crocker Land" in the Arctic Ocean. Crocker's response devastated Peary. Crocker wrote that his 1906 San Francisco earthquake losses precluded a contribution to Peary's new 1907 expedition (PPC, 1907). Crocker's failure to contribute and other problems forced Peary to postpone his expedition until 1908.

Even after Peary's protégé, Donald MacMillan, erased Crocker Land from the map in 1914, Peary supporters suggested that "Crocker Land" was an honest mistake. Perhaps it was a mirage or an ice island? In 1991, astronomer Dennis Rawlins announced a startling find from a surviving segment of Peary's 1906 diary. Under the date for the discovery of Crocker Land, Peary wrote in his diary, "No land visible." During the following dates Peary made no mention of what would have been the greatest geographical discovery of his career. Peary announced "Crocker Land" only after he returned to the United States. (US Naval Institute, 1991).

DR. COOK ENTERS THE NORTH POLE RACE

While Peary's 1907 expedition languished, Dr. Cook organized a North Greenland hunting party for John R. Bradley, a wealthy Donald Trump-like character. Cook utilized the advice of Peary's top associate, Robert Bartlett to obtain a ship, crew and supplies. What Bartlett did not know was that Cook might attempt to reach the North Pole if conditions were favorable in North Greenland (Cook, 1913, 25). When Mr. Bradley returned to the United States in September 1907, he publicly announced that Cook would try for the North Pole in 1908. Peary and Bartlett fumed on the sidelines, but they could not sail north until 1908, and would not be in a position to try for the pole until 1909. Cook had a year's head start, considerable polar experience and a good knowledge of the Inuit. Peary's only hope was that Cook would fail or die in the Arctic.

Arriving in North Greenland in August 1908, Peary discovered that Dr. Cook left Smith Sound in February, and sent a letter dated March 18, 1908, from the vicinity of Cape Thomas Hubbard. Since Cook had not returned, Peary appropriated his hut and supplies, leaving two of his men and a hunter, named Harry Whitney to occupy the camp (Peary, 1910, 76). Peary then headed north in the Roosevelt to the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

Numerous scientists, historians and explorers have analyzed Peary's 1909 attempt to reach the North Pole. Initially most supported Peary's claim, but during the past twenty years the tide has shifted strongly in the opposite direction. Recently discovered diaries, manuscripts and documents from the Peary Papers and other archives present overwhelming evidence that Peary did not reach the pole. For those who wish to examine Peary's 1909 journey in detail, a number of sources are available. The 1909 diaries of Peary, Borup, MacMillan and Goodsell still exist. Part of Bartlett's 1909 journal is available, but the first volume is missing. The entire 1909 diaries are missing for both Henson and Marvin. Lewin, Hall, Hayes, Hobbs, Rawlins, Herbert and Davies all wrote detailed analyses of Peary's journey. Major Peary biographers include, Green, Hayes, Hobbs, Weems and Herbert.

INUIT TESTIMONY: WHO SAID WHAT TO WHOM?

When Peary returned to the Inuit settlements in August, 1909, he discovered that Dr. Cook had arrived three months earlier, then had sledged to South Greenland (Peary, 1910, 333). From Ross Marvin's questioning of the Inuit in August 1908, Peary knew that Cook reached the Arctic Ocean. How much further north did Cook go? Harry Whitney innocently reported that Cook had exceeded Peary's 1906 record (Cook Papers). This statement rattled Peary. Was Cook suggesting that he knew about Peary's 1906 hoaxes? From Peary's perspective, Cook's statement implied blackmail. If Cook had reached the North Pole why didn't he say so? In Peary's own case in 1909, he declined to tell his own men if he had reached the pole (Goodsell, 400). The Inuit did discuss Cook's journey with some of Peary's men. Koolootingwah, who had worked for both Peary and Cook, told Bartlett that Cook said he had reached the pole (Bartlett, August 19, 1909).

Peary instigated his own inquiry into Cook's northern trip. Apparently Peary assigned Henson, MacMillan and Borup to question Etukishook, Ahwelah and Panikpa. At the same time he

denied Dr. Goodsell permission to question the Inuit about Dr. Cook's trip. The good doctor was most irate about his exclusion. In view of his study of the Inuit language, Goodsell did not understand his exclusion in favor of less qualified MacMillan and Borup (Goodsell, 534-535).

In addition to excluding Goodsell, Peary made conflicting statements about his own personal participation in these Inuit interrogations. In material Peary sent to General Thomas Hubbard on October 12, 1909, he wrote, "...I talked with the Eskimos there and with the two boys and asked them to describe Dr. Cook's journey to members of my party and to myself" (PPC, 1909). In the same Hubbard file, Peary included an account of the questioning which stated, "The bulk of the boys' testimony was not taken by Commander Peary, nor in his presence...."

After extensive research, this writer has not located the full transcript of Peary's interrogation of the Inuit. In Peary's 1909 Hubbard correspondence file, a typewritten narrative outlines the questioning of the three Inuit. Borup's diary contains nearly a full blank page for the date of the interrogation. Borup's notes in the Peary Papers show:

Ittookishoo says he did not see Crocker Land...From Cape Hubbard they went Northwest. They did not go out of sight of land. Ittookishoo who knows the sea ice from his experiences in Matt Ryan's party says they did not go as far as Ryan went (*Ryan went to about 84° 17' in 1906*). States that Cook said he went a long way but he lost ("*he lost*" changed to "*that*") he lied. They went for a short distance and made poor progress....

Aukpillar's Statement: Says they saw no land out on the sea ice. Dr. Cook "shag la-hutee shutee shutee" They only built two igloos on the ice...Aukpillar said they met a lead of open water and turned back. This was at the edge of the glacial fringe....

Both boys say they saw cairn built by Peary (*in 1906*). Cook says they did not see it. Said Peary had never been there.

These last three sentences suggest that Borup wrote some or all of these entries after he returned to civilization and read about Cook's failure to see Peary's 1906 cairn. If the Inuit did say this, then why did Etukishook and MacMillan have so much trouble finding the same Peary cairn in 1915?

The diaries of Peary's other men shed little light on the subject. The Bartlett and MacMillan diaries provide few details about what the Inuit said. Bartlett obliterated part of one page of his diary relating to Dr. Cook (Bartlett, August 25, 1909). The Henson diary, if it existed, disappeared after 1912, but in an October 7, 1909 letter to Bridgman, a worried Peary wrote, "If Henson's version of the Eskimo narrative is kept absolutely quiet until our statement is out there is no harm, but every person who becomes familiar with the substance of that statement, increases the chance of either the Herald or Cook's friends getting hold of it and making it public." (PPC, 1909). Will we ever learn what disturbing information Henson knew about the Inuit narrative, and what data Bartlett deleted from his own journal?

Captain Hall pointed out major discrepancies between the Peary Arctic Club's 1909 version of the Inuit testimony and the "new evidence" that MacMillan supplied in 1918 (Hall, 1920, 5-26).

Had Hall known about Borup's field notes in Peary's files and Goodsell's comments, he might have exploded the Inuit Testimony argument 70 years ago. Other than Hall, few polar historians made the effort to investigate or analyze Peary's version of the Inuit testimony. As a result, many historians naïvely discounted Cook's claim without checking what the Inuit really said, and ignored the self-serving aspect of the information that Peary provided.

Polar historians also seemed oblivious to the fact that at least two independent observers reported that Etukishook and Awelah supported Cook's North Pole claim. They were Mene (Minik) Wallace, a North Greenland Inuit who was educated in New York, and Edward S. Brooke of MacMillan's Crocker Land Expedition (Cook Papers). Wallace wrote:

"No one up here believes that Peary got much farther than when he left his (Bartlett) party. His name up here is hated for his cruelty. Cook made a great trip North. He has nothing in the way of proofs here that I can find. I believe that he went as near as anyone, but the pole has yet to be found" (Harper, 159).

PEARY DECLARES WAR

If Peary's own North Pole claim were to survive, Peary had to discredit Cook's claim. Peary vigorously rejected Cook's position that there was glory enough for both at the pole, and launched an immediate "Gold Brick" assault. Peary's initial attack using his "Eskimo Testimony" weapon backfired and created a public backlash. Newspaper polls indicated strong support for Cook.

At this point, General Thomas Hubbard, president of the Peary Arctic Club assumed leadership of Peary's strategy. In a masterful three-month campaign Hubbard and his allies established Peary's North Pole claim and drove Cook from the field. Hubbard simply used proven political campaign tactics to destroy Cook's public popularity and isolate him from institutional support. While surrogates such as George Kennan attacked Cook's North Pole claim, Peary and Hubbard focused on Cook's 1906 Mount McKinley claim. During that expedition, Cook ran out of money, and could not pay his men. In 1909, Hubbard supplied \$5,000 to obtain an affidavit from Cook's 1906 companion that they had not climbed the mountain (PPC, 1909).

With the Mount McKinley affidavits in hand, Peary launched a media campaign that forced Cook out of the Explorers Club and seriously weakened his support by the New York Herald. Peary supporters also instigated a barrage of letters to discourage the University of Copenhagen from making a favorable ruling about Cook's North Pole claim (PPC, 1909). By late 1909, Peary devised a scheme to force Cook into an "insanity plea" (PPC, 1909). These daily personal smears soon created a media feeding frenzy that demoralized Cook. He did not know that Peary and his supporters orchestrated nearly every one of them (PPC, 1909). Overwhelmed by these daily media attacks, Cook disappeared from the United States in December of 1909.

DR. COOK'S COUNTERATTACK

After Dr. Cook recovered his composure a few months later, he planned a triumphant return home bolstered by the publication of his story in *Hampton's Magazine* and his new book. Unfortunately for Cook, Peary's forces sabotaged the magazine articles in such a fashion as to make Cook appear mentally unbalanced (Cook, 1911). Cook experienced better success with his book and his public lectures. Soon he regained sufficient public political support to seek congressional recognition of his North Pole claim.

At this point Peary resumed the offensive by using private investigators and saboteurs to torment and disrupt Cook lectures (PPC, 1914). Rather than present his case against Cook in Congress, Peary used his political agents and a professional congressional lobbyist to block legislation to honor Cook (PPC, 1914, 1915).

Peary's old skeletons continued to haunt his retirement. After thwarting Cook's initiatives, he had to dodge deadly friendly fire from loyal supporters. One particular advocate, Donald MacMillan was the most dangerous in this regard. The ardent MacMillan led a 1913-1917 Arctic expedition to explore Peary's "Crocker Land," and was shocked to find that it did not exist (MacMillan, 1918a). Additionally, one of MacMillan's associates murdered the stepfather of Peary's two Inuit sons (MacMillan, 1915). Meanwhile in Greenland, Danish explorers inadvertently uncovered the Peary "Channel hoax," and the US Navy removed his Arctic Ocean soundings for lack of navigational documentation.

To atone for his sin of exposing the truth about Crocker Land, MacMillan proposed bringing Cook's two Inuit companions to the United States to testify against Cook. Peary quickly quashed MacMillan's fatuous idea by responding, "Who knows what they might say?" (PPC, 1915). This left MacMillan virtually nothing to show for his four-year expedition, so he elected to create further Inuit testimony about Cook. Carelessly, he did not compare his "new testimony" with the 1909 version. Elderly Thomas Hall made a devastating analysis that highlighted numerous material discrepancies between the two versions (Hall, 1920, 9-13).

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY

Over eighty years have passed since the Peary-Cook Controversy first erupted in headlines. Now that Admiral Peary's North Pole claim has been discredited (US Naval Institute, 1991), scientists, explorers and historians can make an objective examination of Dr. Cook's polar claim without the distraction of a controversy. An objective examination should have been done decades ago when additional data and key witnesses were available. Some important items are now missing and all of the key witnesses are dead. Our major advantage today is that both the Cook and Peary Papers are open and available to provide revealing documents and personal insights about the rivals. Perhaps this symposium will stimulate further interest in finding the remaining missing pieces of evidence to resolve Dr. Cook's North Pole claim.

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About the Author

Ted Heckathorn, a Nebraska native, graduated from Menlo College and the University of Utah. His primary academic interests were geology, mathematics and history, and he also played football and was a distance runner in both high school and college. After graduation he served in military counterintelligence and with the Social Security Administration, retiring as the Chief of the Special Studies and Analysis Branch.

Beginning in 1953, he developed a strong interest in polar expeditions, especially those of R.E. Peary and F.A. Cook. Over the years he has collected several thousand polar books. His polar articles have appeared in *Proceedings of the US Naval Institute*, *Polar Priorities*, *Western Viking* and various other periodicals. Among the publications that have featured his polar research findings are *Science*, *Alaska* and *The Washington Post*.

In 1978, he traveled to the Arctic Ocean and locations such as Teller, Alaska where Amundsen's dirigible landed in 1926. He organized and led the 1994 Ruth Glacier Expedition to investigate Dr. Cook's 1906 ascent of Mt. McKinley and currently serves as a North Pole guide. He resides in Woodinville, Washington with his wife, Claire, who is a national and world power champion powerlifter.

CHAPTER 8

A RUSSIAN VIEW OF THE COOK-PEARY DISPUTE, 1909-1993

Vladislav S. Koryakin

Abstract

Although the history of the discovery of the North Pole is part of the history of the Twentieth Century, it is anything but simple. Cook's story of his attainment is not merely one of the most remarkable descriptions of a polar adventure, but a document describing the socio-political conditions of that time in the United States. Those conditions would affect the outcome of the subsequent controversy. Cook's descriptions of the conditions in the Central Arctic in no way contradict the modern scientific data which has been assembled in recent years. The response of the press and informed polar opinion in the old Russia prior to 1917 and the position of Soviet polar historians and geographers in the decades subsequent to the Revolution will be examined. A review of the historical data in Russia will be presented.

THE COOK-PEARY CONTROVERSY IN RUSSIA

Two books, *The Discovery of the Mysterious Pole* and *The Secret of the Pole*, concerning the respective expeditions of Dr. Frederick A. Cook and R.E. Peary toward the North Pole were published in Moscow in 1910.

The bulk of the former book features Dr. Cook's early reports from various American sources with a preface by V. R. Rozov-Tsvetkov, written in September 1909. All the events described in this edition and other information set forth in it are in agreement with Dr. Cook's book, *My Attainment of the Pole* published in 1911. This fact is noteworthy because we had no Russian translation of Dr. Cook's book before 1987 and Russian readers were unable to get first-hand information, Cook's complete account in their own language, until that date. In his preface, Rozov-Tsvetkov recorded the beginning of the bitter discussions about the prior attainment of the North Pole but for him the success of Dr. Cook is unquestioned. Rozov-Tsvetkov did not agree with criticism of the scientific results of Cook's expedition because "Dr. Cook's numerous scientific observations were made with great care, though difficult to accomplish, and the most important and mysterious goal of the effort of three centuries has been accomplished now" (Rozov-Tsvetkov, in *The Discovery of the Mysterious Pole*, 1910, 39).

The latter book, *The Secret of the Pole. Peary and Cook: Who Discovered the North Pole?* was published by Titan Publishers in 1910 (Titan Book Publisher, 1910). It is a typical review of the various press materials with an attempt to analyze the events and to understand the reasons for them.

On the basis of the Western, largely American sources these books reflected the atmosphere of the conflict for the Russian readers quite well. The attempts of the press to use scientific information failed because this data was still scarce. It should be noted that the tone of the foreign press put the Russian publisher on the alert. The Russian sources commented on the Cook-Pearry controversy as follows: "The events look like a detective story where the truth is lost in various intrigues" (*The Secret of the Pole*, 1910, 18). "American explorers think that the tone of the Polar Controversy is below a scientist's dignity. How sad it is that these explorers on returning to civilization attack each other with such fury" (*The Secret of the Pole*, 1910, 76). It would be better if the Americans waited for the evidence to be presented by each claimant and for the 2 opinion of scientific experts who would know which version is true" (*The Secret of the Pole*, 1910, 81). Both Russian books of 1910 were accompanied by a detailed and objective commentary. The attention given by the public in Russia to foreign polar expeditions is explained by traditional interest in the problem of the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage). For this reason, the events of both polar expeditions, that of 1907-1909 (Dr. Cook) and of 1908-1909 (Peary), since they did not take place in this area of the Arctic, received less attention than would otherwise have been the case. The efforts of Russian sailors and scientists at this time were focused on the solving of their Northern Sea Route problem and any foreign polar experience could be useful to them.

On the other hand, Russian scientists, in the belief that the discussion about the priority of the discovery of the North Pole was becoming increasingly non-academic, preferred to refrain from participation in it. Though at the session of the Russian Geographic Society Y.M. Shokalsky noted that both American explorers had got a censer amount of physical and geographical information, the proceedings at the session concluded as follows: ". so neither Cook nor Peary will be honored as having reached the North Pole" (*Russian Geographic Society News*, 1909, 44). The same point of view was shared by the famous Russian geographer D.N. Anuchin (Anuchin, 1909, Book 3). I met the last evidence of attention given by Russian scientists to the Cook-Pearry Controversy before the Soviet period in N.K. Lebedev's supplement to the famous J. Verne's book, *History of the Great Journeys*. This Russian publisher recorded "Most of the experts concluded that Cook's observations were occasionally inexact and erroneous and hence his determination of the position of the Pole is not correct" (Lebedev in Verne, 1916, 511). In spite of this conclusion, N.K. Lebedev had no doubt about the main result of Dr. Cook's 1908 expedition to the North Pole.

The temporizing position of the Russian scientists (and not Russian only!) is explained by the fact that the conflict had touched upon too many things and, foremost upon the reputation of the polar explorers, by their ability to prefer the truth to recognition by the world of their success. In order to arrive at the truth concerning the attainment of the Pole by either explorers, experts in many fields of study needed extensive information about natural conditions in the Central Arctic basin but in the early years of the Cook-Pearry Controversy this information was extremely source

This situation in the Russian polar literature persisted for a long time until 1960, with some preference being shown for R.E. Peary's claim because Peary was seen as a member of the privileged Federal governmental organization, the U.S. Navy. During this historical period when

the official point of view was decisive in any case, this circumstance became most important for Soviet readers.

Regrettably, this point of view became dominant after publication of R.E. Peary's book in the U.S.S.R in 1936. This happened owing to the effect of the Preface to Peary's book written by V.I. Vize. This famous polar explorer and man of merit reached his conclusion on the basis of the supposed evidence of Dr. Cook's Eskimo companions, Etukishook and Ahwelah. V.I. Vize states that Dr. Cook's book "...was written with great talent in spite of the fact that it was a sheer invention of the author" (Vize, in preface to Peary, 1936, 9). As a result, Soviet readers did not get a true picture of the evidence concerning the discovery of the North Pole and the events surrounding it for many years.

After 1960, a number of Soviet scientists, mainly from the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) noticed a strange correspondence of Dr. Cook's information concerning natural conditions in the North Polar Region and recent scientific data from that area—the reason for this consistency of Cook's reports of physical conditions at the North Pole with the information coming from modern exploration and science seemed obvious! In Russia, the first steps toward making clear the fact that Cook's descriptions of polar conditions had been corroborated by later exploration and science and that this, in turn, provided strong confirmation for Cook's claim to the discovery of the North Pole was taken by A.F. Laktionov in his book, *The North Pole* (Laktionov, 1960). He quoted J. Fletcher's words: "I find it impossible to believe that Dr. Cook lied. The descriptions of his expedition are honest and factually consistent. It would have been impossible for him to fabricate his reports based upon his knowledge of ice conditions and ice movement in the Arctic basin." A.F. Laktionov in his book compared the recent scientific information with Dr. Cook's descriptions and his readers saw the old controversy in the new light. A.F. Laktionov's verdict: "Facts and Proofs" of Dr. Cook's critics cannot be considered impartial or trustworthy" (Laktionov, 1960, 178). No comment is needed.

Later in 1982 in the famous work by D.M. Pinkenson, *The History of the Discovery and Exploration of the Northern Sea Route*, v. II, this author paid tribute to the results of research at the Institute of Polar Geography in Italy. As the result of the work of Silvio Zavatti, D.M. Pinkenson shared his point of view and reached the following conclusion: "Dr. Cook's achievements as a polar explorer are being presented anew. Obviously, the historical information regarding priority in reaching the North Pole must be clarified (Pinkenson, 1962, 508).

In 1972, the well-known Soviet polar explorer and Academician, A.F. Treshnikov came to the same conclusion: "It's impossible to imagine that a man who had never been to the Central Arctic could have invented many phenomena typical of this region and described them (Treshnikov, 1972, 248).

In the early 1970's, I decided to clear up Dr. Cook's case for myself. The main results of this investigation were published in 1976 (Koryakin, 1975) and in 1987 and are known to American readers. Instead of simply referring to the foregoing sources I decided to compare the physical conditions which have in recent times been discovered to exist at the North Pole and along Dr. Cook's route towards the Pole and back with Dr. Cook's own report of the conditions encountered

by him during his expedition to the Pole as set forth in his book, *My Attainment of the Pole* (Cook (1911) 1913). My main conclusions are given herein below:

1. *Position of the ice shelf on the northern coast of Axel Heiberg Island.* Setting out for the North Pole, Dr. Cook left land on March 18, 1908 and noticed "heavy, wavy ice" (Cook, (1911, 193) 1913, 569) typical of the ice which borders the northern coast of Ellesmere Island and Axel Heiberg Island. This kind of surface of the special "wavy" ice is a typical feature of this type of glacier. The Northern seaside limit of the ice shelf was described by Dr Cook very clearly "glacier-like ice giving way to floes of moderate size of troublesome crushed ice" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 203).

2. *General character of the sea ice.* On March 19, the ice became smaller and when crossing the troublesome places the next day, he wrote: "ice worse" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 570) and so on until March 22 when he approached the Big Lead, Dr. Cook managed to describe its nature correctly even from the modern point of view. According to modern photographs from space satellites, the Big Lead has the same coordinates as those determined by Dr. Cook. The morphology of the sea ice depends on the ice drift and other processes in the Arctic Ocean. These two features are considered jointly on the basis of Dr. Cook's data.

3. *The circulation system of the ice drift in the Arctic Ocean is the most important argument for the correctness of Dr. Cook's reports and the truthfulness of his Claim to have reached the North Pole,* and I want to devote special attention to this aspect of the subject. After crossing the big Lead, Dr. Cook went through two events: at first, the considerable westward drift, then, second, the collapse of the igloo, where the travelers spent March 25-March 28. At this time, according to the Atlas of the Arctic Ocean (Soviet Navy, Publishers), Dr. Cook and his companions crossed the southern part of the vast clockwise circulation of the Arctic pack, with drift direction from the northeast to the southwest.

On March 24, Dr. Cook's party was 60 kilometers westward of the starting median. It is known that R.E. Peary had observed an eastward drift at that latitude on an earlier expedition and that Cook had relied on Peary's reported experience. Therefore, taking into account the unjustified correction made by Dr. Cook to counteract the effect of the supposed prevailing eastward drift, it is possible to calculate the speed of the drift as having been 25 kilometers in six days, approximately four kilometers over a twenty-four hour period. According to the Atlas of the Arctic Ocean, the westward drift is only 1.2 kilometers per day and as reported by recent American data is 1.8 kilometers per day.

My experts from the Ice Forecast Department of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) believe that the speed of the drift could change considerably for short periods of time, depending on the specific situation. For example, in September 1970, the mean speed of the drift to the west of the area in question equaled 2.7 kilometers per day, sometimes reaching the speed of 19 kilometers per day. Obviously, the rate of drift reported by Dr. Cook was possible.

Dr. Cook was confronted with active processes in the ocean which caused the collapse of the igloo on March 25 and March 28. Some experts emphasize that "the high speed of the westward

movement could be caused by a cyclone from somewhere in the south." In fact, Dr. Cook wrote in his field notes from March 24: "...camp in coming storm" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 570). Of course, the situation on the Arctic Ocean in that area on those days was special as there were no other occasions when Cook reported that ice motion had destroyed igloos. Therefore, these events which took place on the way to the top of the world can be easily explained in terms of information known at the present day.

During the return from the Pole, Dr. Cook and his companions found themselves again in this part of the system circulation drift. This allows me to make the following observation. Dr. Cook's party was unable to return to his depot at Cape Svartevoeg (Stallworthy) as he had planned but this fact does not disparage his mastery of the art of navigation. (See below.) He relied upon R.E. Peary's "observation" that an eastward drift existed at this latitude and did not suspect the existence of the west (south-west) drift when he departed from land headed north for the Pole. In this case it was impossible to return to a pre-planned point and if he had come to it, we could accuse him of faking his data.

Having crossed the area of the active drift, Dr. Cook and his party were likely to find themselves in a relatively quiet, stagnant zone of the anti-cyclonal oceanic circulation with less active ice. The field notes of Dr. Cook-April 2 ("ice smooth"), April 5 ("ice larger"), April 6 ("ice flat") (Cook, (1911) 1913, 571), April 11 ("old floes less irregular") (Cook, (1911) 1913, 572) and so on. Notwithstanding complaints of obstacles by Dr. Cook from time to time, the change of the form and dynamics of the drifting ice in this part of his route are without a doubt as he reported them to be and they were caused by the general dynamics of this part of the Arctic Ocean.

The crossing of the northern part of the anti-cyclonic drift zone was marked by another event-somewhere in that area the ice drifted eastward which justified Cook's field notes referring to an easterly drift in this area. Cook and his party crossed an ice island on April 14 then: "...off the big field, ice smaller. Some open leads. Little sign of pressure" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 572). In terms of the nature of the ice in the area of ice division of the main systems of the oceanic circulation-American (clockwise anti-cyclonal) and Eurasian general drift from the Bering Strait to the passage between Greenland and Spitsbergen, the pack resembled the central stagnant zone of the American circulation system where even ice surfaces alternated with open water, though without considerable movement. At the North Pole April 21, 1908, Dr. Cook briefly noted the signs of the more active Eurasian circulation: "ice more active, new cracks" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 573).

4. *The drifting ice islands.* Probably, Dr. Cook's party faced difficulties while crossing the northern part of the anti-cyclonal circulation but they were lucky. According to the field notes for April 12 there was "very heavy ice. Much like land ice" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 572). The next day Dr. Cook made the similar note: "The same heavy glacier-like ice" (Cook, (1911) 1913, 572).

It is worthy of note that Dr. Cook crossed a drifting ice island almost in the same place where the first American station T-3 drifted fifty years later. It was the huge island that saved Cook and his party from ice motion, the possible collapse of an igloo and enabled them to move quietly for at least two days which was important in the conditions of extreme exhaustion.

It is important that the very thing they had seen while going north was also found on the way back. Let us consider the drifting ice island at 87 degrees-88degrees North. According to the field notes of May 1 "Much very heavy, smooth ice-undulating, not hummocky like S") (Cook, (1911) 1813, 574). Dr. Cook's party crossed the ice island again on the way back. One wonders whether it is possible that the drifting ice island might have drifted away. In order to answer this question one must know the size of the ice island and its drifting speed, which we assume to be somewhat higher than the present-day speed. So, since Dr Cook left it on April 14 heading north for the Pole, the ice island must have drifted 60 kilometers, according to approximate calculations. On the way to the North Pole, Dr. Cook covered 35 miles across its surface from April 12 to April 14-that amounted to 65 kilometers. The ice island encountered on the return was not smaller as the first hummocks seen on the horizon were mentioned on May 4. Although the ice island was larger than the ones found today, all estimates of its size are within the limits of reality.

One can identify the known peculiarities of the physical conditions of the Central Arctic from the descriptions in Dr. Cook's book but for this it is important to know how Dr. Cook took his coordinates or determined his position it is a difficult task as we do not have either the instruments he used or his field material.

5. *The problem of Meighen Island.* Let us try to estimate Cook's navigation skills on the way back to land in the most difficult circumstances when, because of continuous heavy fog, he was unable to make any observations of the sun for 500 kilometers-from May 24 to June 13, 1908.

On June 13, according to the coordinates mentioned in his book, Dr. Cook was 50 kilometers west of Meighen Island unaware of its existence as the island was only discovered in 1916 by V. Stefansson. If one traces On Cook's route south from the Pole to land on a modern map, one can see that on June 11, two days before his last observation of the sun, he and his party wee situated on the sea ice only 15 kilometers from the island. Though it was foggy, Cook noticed a smooth shore ice. It has been proven that his stated route corresponds to modern maps. However, the fact that Cook did not discover Meighen Island for a time seemed a very serious argument against him because V. Stefansson insisted that if Cook was where he said he was he would have had to come across it. But it was Stefansson who was in error! Stefansson determined the position of his discovery by astronomical observations from Cape Isaksen, Ellef Ringnes Island which is situated only 120 kilometers from it and was mistaken by 30 kilometers. The coordinates of Meighen Island on a modern map show us that Dr. Cook, who was unable to take any observations for a long time, reflected his position much more precisely.

In general, these facts set forth in Dr. Cook's book form a system of proofs of his correctness because the conditions described by Dr. Cook are completely explained by the natural processes In that part of the Arctic. These facts prove his honesty and unprejudiced approach. These processes of the Arctic in their complex interrelation account both for the successes and failures of the American polar explorer and for all the events on his way to the Pole and back. In his notes, one cannot find many facts contradicting the modern information concerning the part of the Arctic Ocean through which he traveled. There are inaccuracies and certain subjectivism in Dr. Cook's descriptions but there is no question of "deliberate lie" or "falsification."

So, Cook's descriptions of natural conditions in the Central Arctic do not contradict modern scientific views, meaning they are authentic. Therefore, there is no ground to question the validity of Dr. Cook's assertion that he reached the North Pole with certain reservations which he himself stated concerning the absolute, pinpoint accuracy of his position at the Pole. This was the main conclusion which I reached after my study of Dr. Cook's book, *My Attainment of the Pole* (Cook, (1911) 1913). Most of the other Russian investigators of the polar problem prefer to deal with the foregoing references.

It should be noted that natural conditions were very different from those found along St route traveled by Cook. Dr. Cook's route crossed the clockwise anti-cyclonic drift, while Peary's path was situated along the main stream of this ice drift system. We cannot therefore expect that exactly the same physical features would have been encountered by Peary as were described by Dr. Cook.

In this connection I should like to add that R.E. Peary's book, *The North Pole*, which I came to know in the Russian editions of 1936 and 1948, is inferior to Dr. Cook's book, *My Attainment of the Pole*, with regard to both the amount and the detail of natural conditions described and the clarity with which the events of the expedition are recited. Therefore, I did not try to compare the natural information from both sources—it is an independent scientific problem which can be solved in the future. At the same time, one doubts the possibility of R.E. Peary's having returned to Cape Columbia by his outward tracks and this doubt remains. Perhaps this puzzle would have been solved by N. Uemura during his 1978 expedition but he preferred to return from the Pole by air. It is obvious that this opportunity may occur again in the future and might be utilized then as an experiment to determine the effect of actual Arctic conditions.

However, to return to Russia, after publication of the first analysis of the events and the observations of natural conditions along Dr. Cook's route to the North Pole and his return to land as set forth in his book (Koryakin, 1975) the attitude in Russia (USSR) to Cook's claim to have reached the North Pole began to change as can be seen in the Soviet official publications.

For example, in 1962 *The Short Geographic Encyclopedia* stated "There is no trustworthy information either in favor of or against Cook's claims to having reached the North Pole." (*The Short Geographic Encyclopedia*, 1962, 456) But, as early as 1987 *The Soviet Encyclopedia Dictionary* interprets the situation differently: "The first to reach the area of the North Pole were the Americans, F. Cook (1908) and R. Peary (1909)." (*The Soviet Encyclopedia Dictionary*, 1987, 1184) These words were repeated by *The Geographic Encyclopedic Dictionary* in 1988. The words "the area of the North Pole" should not alarm the American reader because the same cliché was used in Soviet sources in relation to the Soviet Expedition of 1937.

The first Russian edition of Dr. Cook's book, *Attainment of the Pole*, of which I had the honor to be scientific editor, aroused great interest in Russian readers (Cook, (1911) 1913, 1987). Despite its fairly large issue, 70,000 copies were printed, this book is now to be acquired only with difficulty in Russia.

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About the Author

Academician V. S. Koryakin is both a glaciologist with many years in the polar regions and is also the polar historian in the Department of Geography at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He began researching the separate accounts of Peary and Cook in the 1970s, and assisted in the translation and editing of the works of Amundsen and Freuchen as well as Peary's 1910 *The North Pole* and Cook's *My Attainment of the Pole*, both of which were published in Russian in that period. In 1975 he presented a dissenting view on the question of polar priority in the Russian journal *Priroda* (Nature), calling for a re-examination of Cook's claims.

CHAPTER 9

FREDERICK ALBERT COOK: THE DISCOVERER AS DEFENDANT IN THE COURT OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY

Sheldon Cook-Dorough

Abstract

There is a body of literature both supporting and debunking Frederick A. Cook, spanning fully eight decades of this century. The books that have been written and the articles that have been published constitute one of the greatest assortments of conflicting conclusions in the history of exploration and discovery. It is not difficult to separate the Peary partisans and the Cook supporters. Yet throughout the years, there have been only a few dispassionate, objective scholars who have entered this field of intense controversy without preconceived bias. "Untruthful in one, untruthful in all" has been an allegation used against Cook, involving different phases of his life, including the Patagonian dictionary, Mt. McKinley and the Texas oil trial and conviction. This presentation will respond to these separate but interrelated issues of controversy and the sustaining evidence that has supported Cook's claims since his announcement in 1909.

FREDERICK ALBERT COOK: THE DISCOVERER IN THE COURT OF HISTORICAL INQUIRY

The evidence which supports Dr. Cook's claim to the discovery of the North Pole has always been substantial and convincing but with the accumulation of a vast array of additional data of the greatest significance during the last six decades which further confirm the reality and historicity of his achievement, the supporting evidence has become overwhelming and has established the validity of his claim to the first attainment of the North Pole.

Three bodies of evidence in the aggregate constitute the proof of Cook's first attainment of the North Pole on 21 April 1908: the verification of Cook's first descriptions of physical conditions at the North Pole by later exploration and modern science, the first testimony of the polar Eskimos to the Danes, to Harry Whitney and others in Northwestern Greenland in the Spring and Summer of 1909, which confirmed in great detail Cook's long sledge journey over the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean to the Pole, and Cook's North Pole Diary, five field papers containing astronomical observations as he progressed north across the Arctic pack ice to the Pole and at the North Pole itself and his book, *My Attainment of the Pole*, which give together a detailed account of his expedition to the Pole.

When Cook returned to civilization from the North Pole in 1909, the first Eskimo testimony which confirmed his journey to the North Pole and Cook's field papers and North Pole Diary existed and soon became known. Perhaps the most significant and decisive evidence supporting

his claim to have reached the North Pole, the verification of his first descriptions, necessarily had to await later exploration at the North Pole and in the region of the Arctic through which he traveled.

Historically, the final confirmation of an explorer's claim to discovery has lain in the verification of his original descriptions of the geographical area first seen and reached by him. This verification, of course, forms a part of the whole body of evidence which comprises the proof of an explorer's claim to discovery and this verification must be consistent and harmonious with other important and significant evidence which supports the claim to discovery.

Three important and significant bodies of evidence support the reality of Cook's first attainment of the North Pole in April 1908 and, cumulatively, constitute the proof of his achievement: 1) the first testimony of the polar Eskimos to the Danes, to Harry Whitney and to the members of the Stolberg-de Quervain Expedition in Northwestern Greenland in the Spring and Summer of 1909 which confirmed Cook's sledge march across the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean to the North Pole in great detail, Cook having gone on to South Greenland and Peary not yet having returned to Greenland from his last foray towards the Pole at the time this Eskimo testimony was elicited; 2) Cook's North Pole Diary containing skeletal descriptions of polar conditions encountered on his march to the North Pole, at the Pole, and during the return to land, reductions for the seven astronomical observations which he made as he journeyed north across the Arctic pack to the North Pole, including the first full observation at the Pole, and for two of the three celestial observations which he made as he returned south across the pack to land, the temperature, pack ice conditions, cloud formations, wind direction and velocity, the drift and the mileage accomplished each day and five surviving field papers from Cook's North Pole Expedition which reflect fully worked-out astronomical observations for positions on the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean for four locations as he progressed north across the pack to the Pole, including his first full observation at the North Pole at Noon on 21 April 1908, the fifth field paper showing seven altitudes of the sun at the North Pole from Noon on 21 April 1908 - Midnight 22/23 April 1908; and the verification of Cook's first descriptions of natural conditions at the North Pole itself and in the region of the Arctic through which he sledged by modern exploration and the sciences of glaciology and oceanography; and (3) the verification of Cook's first descriptions of physical conditions at the North Pole and in the region of the High Arctic through which he sledged by modern exploration and the sciences of glaciology, oceanography and geography.

The first testimony of the polar Eskimos which had been adduced by Knud Rasmussen in northwestern Greenland in July 1909 in the presence of other Danes and which had confirmed Cook's attainment of the North Pole in April 1908 in great detail was committed to writing by Rasmussen on 25 September 1909 and was published in *The New York Times* and in *Politiken*, a Copenhagen journal, on 21 October 1909, and in the *Rosary Magazine*, November 1909. Comments by Professor Steensby and Captain Schoubye, who had witnessed the interrogation of the polar Eskimos and had heard their corroboration of Cook's account of his conquest of the North Pole, were published in the Danish and world press during the period September - November 1909.

On his return from northwestern Greenland near the close of September 1909, Harry Whitney informed the press that the two Eskimos who had accompanied Cook throughout his great Arctic

sledge journey of 1908-1909 had told him during the period April 1909-August 1909 in northwestern Greenland that Cook had reached the North Pole in April 1908, that they had sledged with him to the Great Nail, and Whitney further stated his full conviction that Cook had attained the North Pole. Whitney's accounts of the Eskimo testimony, which confirmed Cook's success, were published in the American press in the last days of September and the early days of October 1909.

In connection with Cook's first descriptions of physical conditions at the North Pole, and in the North Pole region, there must also be taken into account not only the first newspaper accounts, but the later account in the following weeks in *The New York Herald* in September and October 1909, continuing for several weeks. Now, these three bodies of evidence, together, cumulatively, constitute the confirmation of Cook's discovery of the North Pole. Each single body of evidence alone, perhaps, would not. The three have to be construed and read together. Each stands as very important evidence in its own right, but would not in itself be conclusive. The three bodies of evidence, together, each supports the other, and the whole, together, in the aggregate, constitutes, in my opinion, the confirmation of Dr. Cook's attainment of the North Pole.

We might proceed to discuss here the components of the verifications of his first descriptions. I'll not begin with the beginning of the journey north from Cape Svartevoeg, I'll come back to that. I'll begin with the North Pole, itself.

Upon his return from the North Pole, Cook stated that at the North Pole there is sea covered by the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean in constant movement and turbulence. He also noted that the ocean drift at the North Pole flows from across the Pole toward Greenland. That the drift encountered by him as he sledged north flowed southeasterly across his route of march north to the Pole between the 94th and 97th Meridians West, in the immediate vicinity of the Pole, from the 88th degree of Latitude North to the Pole.

In his first reports, Cook also stated that the force of the drift at the North Pole is greater, and the pack ice more active there than 2 or 3 degrees south of the Pole. Further that the surface of the pack is much less irregular and uneven at the North Pole and in its immediate vicinity than below 88 degrees Latitude North. That is the condition which he found and reported. There were pressure ridges and there were hummocks, but he found that there were fewer and they were much smaller at the Pole than they were far to the south. On his expedition, that's what he encountered.

Cook's reports of physical conditions at the North Pole were the first given to the world, and they have been confirmed in detail in modern times by exploration and the sciences of glaciology and oceanography.

Nansen in 1895, and Cagni of the Duke of the Abruzzi's Expedition in 1900, and Peary in 1906 reported that the surface of the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean was extremely difficult, covered with huge pressure ridges and hummocks and that as far north as could be seen from their respective positions furthest north, this condition of the pack persisted. As far as to the north as Nansen and Cagni and Peary could see, from their most advanced locations, the pack was a mass of huge obstructions of ice. When Cook left the United States, bound for the Arctic, on 3 July

1907, all the information available to him strongly indicated that the pack was severely disturbed all the way to the North Pole; that the enormous obstructions of ice, the extreme unevenness and irregularity of the surface of the pack, continued to the North Pole itself without diminution and variation.

Cook found that the reality was different, and so reported to the world. Cook stated that north of approximately 87.5 degrees Latitude North, the surface of the pack was much less cluttered with huge obstructions of ice, pressure ridges and hummocks, than south of that location. He encountered them, but he found them less frequently and he found that they were smaller. He further pointed out that on his journey, this condition became more pronounced the further north he went, and that in the immediate vicinity of the Pole, the pack was much less disturbed, having far fewer pressure ridges and hummocks than south of 87.5 degrees.

It would appear from descriptions of explorers in that area, in modern times, that this is, indeed, the case. Steiger, in 1986 reported that the pack ice at the North Pole and above 88 degrees Latitude North is much less irregular and uneven than south of that point; his report of that condition was precisely the same as Cook reported in 1909 when he returned from the Pole.

Wally Herbert will give his own opinion as to what he encountered because we have with us one of the greatest polar explorers in history. He has been there and he will speak from his own experience. According to Wally's book, as I understand it, it does seem that the ice conditions at and near the North Pole were not as bad as further south. The dogs traveled faster. The sledges moved with greater speed than they had at lower latitudes. So, apparently, the surface of the pack is not as irregular and uneven at the North Pole and in its vicinity as it is south of 87.5 degrees.

Steiger certainly said that he found that to be the case, and of course, Steiger supports Peary's claim to the North Pole, and he deduced from the condition of the pack that Peary's speeds were possible, even though they were extraordinary, unheard of, never duplicated; that they were, nevertheless, possible because of the flat nature of the surface of the pack at the Pole when he was there, with relatively few pressure ridges, and relatively few hummocks to disturb his course. However, this paper is not about Admiral Peary, who was a great figure in the exploration of the Arctic. It does seem difficult to imagine travel at 30, 40, and 50, and 60, and 70 geographical miles a day, even over a very smooth surface. Cook was travelling, at the time he reached the North Pole, 14 or 15 geographical miles a day, and this is feasible and practicable. I believe Steiger reached 18.5 miles per day, himself, in that area. Peary's speeds, of course, would have had to average close to 30 miles a day for the last six days of the march north, and then for the march south two consecutive days would have had to have been at over 75 geographical miles per day, in that area, for the first three or four marches south in order to have arrived at his landfall when he did. The surface of the pack is indeed less uneven and irregular at the North Pole than south of 88 degrees Latitude North, as Cook first announced to the world, but it seems unlikely that speeds of 30 geographical miles per day would be thus rendered possible.

The surface of the ice, apparently, is less irregular, less uneven, has fewer pressure ridges, fewer hummocks, and those that are there appear to be generally smaller, than those farther south, as Cook first reported. Cook, with those optimum conditions, was not able to travel faster than