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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

HOME ONLY LONG ENOUGH: ARCTIC EXPLORER ROBERT E. PEARY, AMERICAN SCIENCE, NATIONALISM, AND PHILANTHROPY, 1886-1908

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

KELLY L. LANKFORD
Norman, Oklahoma
2003

UMI Number: 3082960



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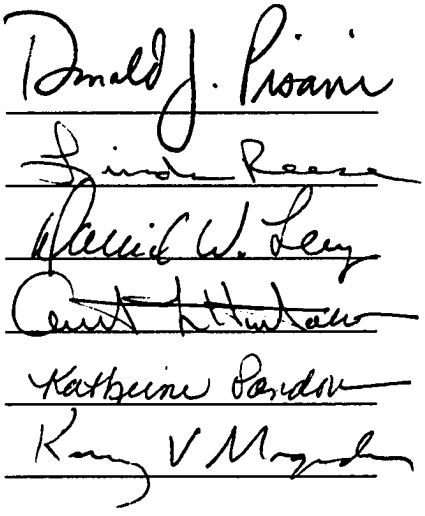
A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY



Acknowledgements

"Life is brief and very fragile. Do that which makes you happy."

My parents gave me a plaque with this uplifting phrase during a pivotal moment in my life. The completion of the dissertation became one of those "do that which" moments for me, many years later, and I dedicate it to my parents. They have remained my most constant cheerleaders and interested readers, and even learned finally to stop asking, "Are you finished yet?" I am ever grateful for all of it. Of course, a dissertation is never the work of one person, even one with a fantastically supportive family. I have many people to thank. My sister Susan offered counsel, cheer, and laughter at every turn. Everyone should be so lucky as to have a person in her life who demands that they laugh. My grandparents, Lula and Eugene Bryson, were unnervingly optimistic, but even better, they were as interested in stories about teaching and crazy dogs as they were in the dissertation. Perspective is everything, and they helped me keep it. True friend Suzi Goerlach believed in this story from the beginning, and reminded me at the end, when it mattered most, how to tell it. I will never forget. Jacki Rand pushed without being pushy, believed that I could do it, and had an uncanny knack for knowing when to offer advice or silent support. I found each tactic invaluable. Maria Paleologou finished her dissertation in Philosophy simultaneously, and it made all the difference to have a friend who understood the daily ups and downs, anxieties, small triumphs, and exasperations. It is especially meaningful that we are crossing the finish line together, considering all the trouble and help we have been to one another. Steve Martel tried teasing, prodding, and

outright bribery to speed the process along, but never despaired, and has been and always will be a remarkable friend. Brad Raley offered advice, astounding humor, and help at so many key moments I lost count. I consider him a trustworthy friend and an invaluable guide. Wonderful Rita and Bob Broyles opened their home to me and reminded me repeatedly of what really matters: love, laughter, good stories, ice cream, and someone you can always count on. Sylvia Patterson smiled, encouraged, and helped tremendously by never asking, "So, what is your thesis?" Thankfully, her happy outlook on life is contagious. CJ Metcalf clapped, cheered, and seemed so genuinely pleased by my progress that I may undertake another large project soon, in order to keep receiving her enthusiastic praise. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Marilyn Ogilvie, who offered her own good cheer and limitless support. More important, she allowed me to have full access to the History of Science Collections, which is a gift so much larger than access to the books and "where they live." It is an invitation to know and depend upon a beautiful assortment of people that included, while I was there, Nancy Larsen, Mrs. Goodman, Pat, Becky, Elin, Susy, Kim, Darcy, Melissa, Maureen, Liz, Lauren, Squire, and Sarah. It was a genuine pleasure to be there, and I loved my job at the Collections. Dr. Daniel Wren and Sydona Baroff of the Bass Collection also gave uninterrupted support for a project that took longer than any of us ever imagined, and I appreciate their help and good natures. Rhonda George and Barbara Million made the last stages of the dissertation much less stressful than they might otherwise have been. I will always remember their kindnesses. In addition, I must thank Thomas, Amelia, and Taryn for giving me reason to smile in moments of quiet solitude. Finally, thanks to Penny, Lucy, Kasey, Henry, and Coal for invaluable comfort.

I thank my committee as well: Drs. Donald Pisani, David Levy, Linda Reese, Al Hurtado, Katherine Pandora, and Kerry Magruder. Their comments and suggestions will be of great service to me as I continue to work on this project, and I appreciate the time they took to help and guide me. I thank two committee members for more specific contributions, however. Dr. Magruder asked me casually one day about the progress of the dissertation, and in a fit of frustration I said it was not going well. He asked me to describe my topic, and when I stopped talking one hour later he said simply, "That's a great idea." He changed my entire attitude about the project with this one question, this one reaction. He is still the only person who has ever asked me about the dissertation and then actually waited until I finished talking before asking questions, making suggestions, offering another angle, listing helpful sources, or asking why I chose to write about the North Pole rather than the South Pole. I can trace my ability to finish the dissertation to my renewed faith in it after that conversation. Dr. Magruder also digitized the maps in the Appendix for me. Dr. Pisani deserves a special thanks. He remained committed to me and to my work, listened patiently to new ideas, and seemed always to be able to rise above my writing and actually get the point. His advice and critical analysis strengthened the dissertation, and any future insight I have into this topic will be due to questions he insisted that I consider. I appreciate his full deliberation of my work.

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Abstract

American Arctic explorer Robert E. Peary tried for twenty-six years to be the first man to reach the North Pole. The dissertation focuses on Peary's stateside efforts to raise money for his multiple expeditions. During his first trips, Peary recruited individual scientists to pay passage in return for the opportunity to do fieldwork in the remote Arctic. By 1898, Peary's public affiliation with scientists and the organizations that funded them, such as universities/colleges, the National Geographic Society, the American Geographical Society, the Smithsonian Institution, and the American Museum of Natural History, changed the way he organized his expeditions. He attracted the attention of a small group of wealthy philanthropists and patrons of science who formed the Peary Arctic Club (PAC), an organization devoted to placing Peary at the pole. In part, the dissertation examines the connection between Peary's problems finding affordable rental ships and the United States' late nineteenth-century domination of the whaling industry. In 1905, the PAC raised enough money to build Peary the first powerful American ice-breaker ship, the *Roosevelt*. Peary's correspondences with various scientists, patrons, philanthropists, geographical organizations, book publishers, and zoo and museum officials receive close attention. Overall, the dissertation follows Peary's various money-raising campaigns and explains them within the context of American science, philanthropy, and nationalistic motives of exploration.

Introduction

"I shall find a way or make one." Navy Lieutenant Robert E. Peary scratched this phrase, in Latin, onto the wall of a makeshift dwelling in the Arctic after realizing he had failed to reach the North Pole in 1899. He would have to return a seventh time. Heartbroken, facing painful recuperation from frostbite and the recent amputation of most of his toes when he wrote this phrase, Peary nevertheless captured the enduring sentiment of exploration history. The lesson was simple: the quest is of value; keep trying. It turned out to be a good attitude for Peary, who required ten years more to claim his prize. Even then he could not rest, because American Frederick Cook announced that he had reached the pole days before Peary did, and the international fight for history's title of "First Man to the North Pole" lasted for years. Without the motto, the historian is left to consider the strange fate of a man who spent twenty-six years trying to reach a shifting, frozen, treacherous spot hosting some of the world's worst weather, merely to prove that it could be done. Emphasize the motto, and the drive required to believe it under the weight of personal failure and extreme physical hardship, and the historian has the enviable job of narrating the brave exploits of a dedicated explorer who risked all for self and nation. In either case, it is a good story. Exploration history demands more of its subjects, however. The relevant tale is not so much that Peary found a way, as is the one of *how* he found a way.

The "easy" part of Peary's Arctic career was the time he actually spent in the Arctic. There he endured months-long darkness, crippling cold, near-starvation, frostbite, exhaustion, and the constant threat of failure. Peary faced long odds and became a famous American hero. The commitment and energy required to create and maintain Peary's

image, however, almost rivaled the trials of his actual treks.

The histories of his expeditions and the debate over whether he or Cook (or neither) first reached the pole obscure the more significant story of American Arctic exploration. The United States was not well-equipped to enter the race for the North Pole. Placing a man at the top of the world was different from the nation's recent century-long exploration and settlement of the American West. The North Pole was a new kind of "frontier." Peary adapted part of America's fascination with the West to his own purposes. By the end of the nineteenth century, scientists had edged out explorers, settlers, and soldiers as the dominant public informants about the development of the West.[1] Peary capitalized on the scientists' interests, and turned the excitement of a fresh frontier to his advantage by entwining science with Arctic exploration. With that foundation, he built a network of alliances that helped him become the world's most famous Arctic adventurer, yet he did so without federal support, consistent money, or even reliable transportation. This dissertation will consider the stateside career of Peary and place his Arctic trips within the scope of national science, philanthropic organization, and a new, remote frontier. Peary turned a loner's quest into a thrilling contest that Americans longed to win because he learned how to sell Arctic exploration to his countrymen.

William H. Goetzmann, an historian of American exploration, explains that it is important to realize the difference between explorers and discoverers. Peary wanted to be a discoverer, but through necessity he became an outstanding explorer. The "discoverer" makes the first observation in a new setting. The explorer "seeks discoveries." The process, the seeking of discovery, is the foundation of exploration. The distinction

[1] William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972, 1966), 424, 429.

matters because explorers often move within spaces that were discovered long ago and explored several times over. Explorers want fresh information and ask new questions of previously distilled information. Each wave of exploration moves into a setting with preconceived ideas about what might be found. In this manner, argues Goetzmann, several different groups of people explored the American West. In each case, they brought with them existing knowledge of the history of the West, what it meant to the nation, and how their own observations might be fitted into these older ideas. In *Exploration and Empire*, Goetzmann follows the path from Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, into the homes and businesses of the settlers and farmers who followed behind them, considers the military sent to defend these people and map the land, and ends his study with the late nineteenth-century transition of science in the West from military to private, professionalized organizations. Goetzmann not only re-examines the impact of exploration in the American West; he also explains the significant effects of exploration on national culture. Each successive wave of explorers gave Americans a new way to explain the significance of the West, and in each case they saw their core cultural values reflected in the reinterpretation. In this manner, "the Western experience in the main appears not to have brought distinctiveness as such to bear on the country, but instead has offered a theater in which American patterns of culture could be endlessly mirrored."[2]

It is not surprising that a process so vast as settlement of the West should produce numerous accounts. Remarkable discoveries almost demand further exploration. Mankind is inquisitive, and the tales of grand discoveries serve also as the first set of maps for successive generations of explorers. As writer Barry Lopez observes, "The

[2]Goetzmann, *Exploration*, xi-xiii.

desire to understand what is unknown is great. And the wish to create some human benefit out of new knowledge, however misconstrued, is one of the graces of Western civilization."[3] The "goodness" of exploration can be for an individual, an organization, or for a nation. For exploration to have merit, however, the results must matter to non-explorers. There must be an audience to understand the novelty and allure of what is reported, to appreciate the sacrifice required to obtain the explorer's narrative. The most successful explorers are considered such because their target audiences absorb the full import of their reports. The results may be debatable, perhaps even overturned upon closer examination, but upon initial cultural consumption the top explorers report to receptive audiences.

In order to win society's appreciation, explorers cannot assume that their own exploration accounts will suffice. Sometimes, a third party needs to explain the magnitude of the news. Lewis and Clark embarked on an enormous expedition, one guaranteed to encompass so many adventures and discoveries that it hardly mattered that they failed to find their goal: a northwest passage between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean. Their narrative resonates today, perhaps even more than it did in their own day, because their mission was so large that their smaller successes and courageous decisions inspire on several levels. In addition, the news of Lewis and Clark held value even for those who could not appreciate the enormity of their task. Americans knew that the pair would be merely the first, not the only ones, to make the trip. As early as 1814, the first year of the journals' publication, the brief history of American settlement indicated that it was only a matter of time before other explorers and traders, if not

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[3] Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 319.

settlers, followed the pair.[4]

Peary, however, had a different media problem. Anybody who reaches the North Pole must immediately leave. It is a lonely spot in a frozen ocean, and nobody stays longer than it takes to plant a flag or snap a quick photo. Unlike almost every other phase of American exploration, there was no successive wave of settlement or commerce. It mattered to Americans only so long as it was still possible for someone to reach the spot first. Peary realized early in his career that too few people understood his objective. He became a relentless proponent of Arctic exploration, so that after several years of media exposure he made Americans think they could win the race to the North Pole. One recent study within the history of exploration considers the cultural significance of the cross-purposes of explorers and the media. Beau Riffenburgh explains that "the interplay between newspapermen and explorers not only reflects on the history of the press and the history of exploration, but relates to models of imperialism, modern nationalism, the growth of science, and the diffusion and incorporation of knowledge into society." He also posits that British and American papers engaged in sensationalism to such a degree over the exploits of late nineteenth-century explorers that they created heroic myths. Riffenburgh offers Peary's Arctic career as an ideal example of such purposeful imagery.[5]

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[4] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 480. Lewis and Clark's account sold poorly, and the next edition of their work did not appear for ninety years. It was a remarkable trip that failed to generate any enthusiasm from the American public.

[5] Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3, 5, 134-135, 166. American news editors of the late nineteenth century used the drama of exploration to sell papers. Two of the most sensationalistic papers, the New York *Herald* and the New York *Sun*, took full advantage of the perils of Arctic tales in headline-grabbing articles, and often removed or altered the explorers' perspectives to suit their audiences. A third paper, the New-York *Times* knowingly printed an erroneous headline in 1892 declaring that Peary had achieved a new Farthest North record. The accompanying article contained the truth, but the headline sold papers. Riffenburgh believes that such decisions also affected the explorers. Peary's journal marginalia during his last trip in 1909 show that he intended to rely upon his popular media image to buy patents and sell items like "Peary North Pole sledges" and "Peary North Pole snowshoes."

Peary certainly crafted his image as carefully as the press, in turn, used him. His power to dominate headlines took constant diligence and a team of helpers, though. Eye-popping exploratory feats were not enough.

Peary never compared his quest for the North Pole to the American West, but he likely would never have made more than one Arctic trip without reliance upon the successes of national frontier history.[6] He was making plans for his third expedition when historian Frederick Jackson Turner spoke at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and announced that America's frontier era had ended in 1890. Turner's thesis, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," eventually became the most persuasive explanation of American history. Historians today still grapple with Turner's idea that the process of conquering the West created special forms of American democracy and freedom and a unique national character.[7] The theory gained impetus during the course of Peary's Arctic career. It was a boon for Peary that Turner's thesis became popular and that most Americans believed that the first era of their history was over. The North Pole, a remote and poorly understood spot, could have become the first frontier of a new national era. Peary, however, initially spoke of himself as a discoverer, the man who could be the first to stand on 90° N. It was actually an old dream. Men from around the world had been trying for over four hundred years to find the Northwest Passage (a water route connecting Europe to Asia) and the North Pole. When Peary first tried to reach the pole during the 1890's, he was simply the latest in a long line of men who had failed while seeking the same dream.

Peary's obsession with the quest, and his chronic need to find the funding required

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[6] Peary first visited the Arctic in 1886 as a lieutenant on a US Navy cartographic mission. Each of his successive trips was undertaken while on military leave, using private financial backing.

[7] John Mack Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History and Other Essays"* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 1-3.

to try again and again, compelled him to broaden his perspective and to describe the Arctic as a whole region worthy of study. This focus made a difference. Professional scientists, the last group of people who explored the West even as Turner announced the end of the frontier era, recognized new opportunities in Peary's rhetoric. Peary capitalized on the chances for mutual collaboration, and showcased the Arctic as a vast laboratory in return for the scientists' paid passage. His connections to universities, museums, and other professional and philanthropic institutions gave Peary a larger community to whom he turned for support, prestige, and money. Together Peary, the scientists, philanthropists, and museum personnel made the race to the North Pole part of America's frontier legacy. In familiar, but distinctly different ways, Americans again found national value in exploration.

Americans of Peary's time believed they had inherited a remarkable frontier past. Peary used the cultural effects of this idea to explain to his countrymen the value of Arctic exploration. He argued that the Inuits who helped, guided, clothed, fed, and befriended him needed exposure to American civilization in order to prosper, just as explorers of the West argued that Native Americans needed to adopt American values and ways of living. The sentiment was familiar to an American public that had celebrated "American progress through time and space since 1492" at the same World's Fair at which Turner spoke. Countless exhibits at the fair showed Americans the disparity between themselves and the supposedly less evolved, racially distinct groups of American Indians.[8] Several fields of science, including anthropology, geography, and geology, became professionalized in the late nineteenth century, in part to organize and synthesize the overwhelming material

[8] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 46-47, 58.

gathered by scientists in the American West.[9] Scientists worked to understand and impart the full impact of "frontier" information. Their interests in comparative frontiers, as well as their eagerness to test their new systems of organization and classification, lent themselves to Peary's purposes. He counted on their excitement over doing fieldwork in a remote setting. The willingness of these individuals or their host institutions to pay for the opportunities he offered sustained the momentum of Arctic exploration during several years in which Peary operated virtually without public support on a quest of questionable merit.

Peary also benefited from the tendency of American scientists to channel their best information through institutions staffed by the first generation of professionals. His wife, Josephine, introduced him in 1895 to Morris K. Jesup, the millionaire curator of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York. Without Jesup's friendship, Peary likely would never have returned to the Arctic. Jesup had no formal scientific training, but he believed in giving scientists the tools to gather and organize their research so that it could be properly displayed and understood by everyone else. As president of the museum for twenty-nine years, he gave his curators significant freedom to collect their specimens, and he left the institution in excellent financial standing with his

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[9] Nathan Reingold, *Science, American Style* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 25; Sally Gregory Kohlstedt "Institutional Science," *Osiris* 1 (1985): 17-36. Reingold discusses scientists' efforts to professionalize and to banish amateurs from their organizations. As scientific knowledge became more complex during the late nineteenth century, scientists demanded higher standards for training, as well as respectable career opportunities. The scientists also determined to set and safeguard their mutually agreed-upon field-specific guidelines. Kohlstedt, another historian of science, believes that studies of professionalization do not go far enough to show how information was absorbed by scientists or by the larger public. She sees greater merit in considerations of the roles of institutions in the development of American science. Kohlstedt believes that understanding the money and kinds of men associated with the museums, universities, and academic societies that employed the scientists offers better glimpses into how or why American science changed over time. Institutions became "core networks through which recognized scientists coordinated with philanthropists, academics, entrepreneurs, and institutional builders." In addition, the most outstanding American scientific institutions are often best understood through biographical studies of their founders or curators.

one million dollar endowment. Peary was extraordinarily lucky to find a man like Jesup as curator of the AMNH. Jesup protected his own attraction to romantic quests. Late in his life, he noted that "from the beginning of my business life I made up my mind to engage in such religious and philanthropic matters as would excite my sympathy, so that my business should not entirely engross my mind and make me simply a business machine, although naturally my ambition, pride, and interest were alike enlisted in making my business a success."[10]

American professional scientists at institutions like the AMNH enjoyed their positions for more than the opportunities for uninterrupted research. By the late nineteenth century, in anthropology and geography, the top scientists were less often explorers as well. They sifted through the collections and donations of amateurs, younger professionals, and other people with less training. Matthew F. Maury, chief oceanographer of the US Navy Depot of Charts and Instruments during the 1840's and 1850's, was an example of an "American style" of science. He used anybody's data, be they other scientists, midshipmen, or civilian whalers. Maury was unusual in his obsession to collect *anyone's* data, but like other professional scientists he "saw as his primary duty the mobilization or mass production of practical information that could be put to the immediate service of the country." In American science of Maury's day, the results were seen as the handmaiden of "commercial and territorial expansion." Within a few decades, professional scientists affiliated with well-endowed institutions outnumbered men like Maury, who worked within the directives of the US Navy, where scientific enterprise ranked as a priority low.

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[10] William Adams Brown, *Morris Ketchum Jesup: A Character Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 42, 154, 186. Jesup oversaw the collection of over $450,000 from donors during his presidency, and in his will he left provisions for a Permanent Endowment Fund worth one million dollars.

By the 1880's, the science of exploration in the American West belonged to institutions like the Smithsonian, the AMNH, and the US Geological Survey (USGS). John Wesley Powell, director of the USGS, turned his agency into one of the top scientific institutions of the nation, and the American geologists who worked for or learned from the USGS were some of the world's best. Powell of the USGS and Jesup of the AMNH symbolize similar trends in the management of American science of the late nineteenth century.[11] Powell created a mission statement for scientific exploration of the West. According to Goetzmann, "Powell and his circle sought to put the explorer's experience to practical use in promoting the fair, efficient, and socially useful development of the West. And for every disappointment or failure, they left behind a record of large vision, new ideas, and concepts that would one day change the face of the land." Powell designed a systematic way to survey the West that did two things: divided vast tracts of open territory into measurable, mapped blocs, and accounted for the geologic potential (or lack thereof) of each plot. Powell's plan to organize and evaluate the land and water resources of the West worked well with the expectations of trained objectivity of the first generation of institutional scientists. As a result,

> though the United States Geological Survey continued to send expeditions into the West, they no longer had as their objective to discover the unknown, but rather concentrated on an assessment of the nation's resources. The formation of the Survey in 1879, therefore, marks the end of an era of American Western exploration—an era that began with Lewis and Clark's epic march to the Pacific at the opening of the nineteenth century and concluded with Powell['s]...institutional victory over the forces of frontier individualism.[12]

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[11] William H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery* (New York: Viking, 1986), 329-331, 400-401; Nathan Reingold, "Definitions and Speculations: The Professionalization of Science in America in the Nineteenth Century," in Alexadra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown, eds., *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 53. Reingold noted the same trend. Trained researchers, anxious for ways to set themselves apart from amateur collectors or "cultivators," established "research enclaves." In places like the Smithsonian Institution or the Coast Survey, professional scientists could work exclusively with people with similar training and motivations.

[12] Goetzmann, *Exploration*, 530, 534, 592.

Powell owed as much to Joseph Henry and Spencer Fullerton Baird of the Smithsonian as he did the USGS. Henry, the first secretary of the Smithsonian, snared funding for Powell's remarkable exploration of the Colorado River in 1869, and Powell delivered his results to the Smithsonian. Later in his career, Powell organized the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology, where he managed massive ethnological studies of American Indians. The government funded Powell's American Indian work for the Smithsonian. Powell also combined the USGS and the Bureau of Ethnology. More than any other person of his era, Powell linked the federal government to scientific exploration of the West.[13]

Despite clear connections to America's exploratory past, Peary faced unique problems. He understood that the allure of the Arctic as a region would fade upon discovery of the North Pole, especially if America lost the race. In addition, the complete lack of federal involvement in any aspect of Arctic research or exploration set it apart from the American West. America's Arctic frontier operated through the grace, selfish motivations, and fickle nature of private philanthropy. Peary's single greatest problem in over two decades of trying to reach the North Pole was funding. His salary as a Navy engineer was inadequate to fund an Arctic trip. Ship rental, the most expensive consideration, cost a minimum of ten thousand dollars, and the ships available for that cost fared poorly in the rough Arctic ice. Peary explained repeatedly that in order to have a good shot at the pole, he needed to be able to sail as far north as possible so that his

[13] Goetzmann, *Exploration*, 595. John Wesley Powell, *The Exploration of the Colorado River* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), v-vi; Powell, *Canyons of the Colorado* (Meadville, PA: Flood & Vincent, 1895), iii-iv. The scientific results of Powell's Colorado River study were disappointing, but the trek captured national attention. Powell's exploration of the Colorado River was so popular that in 1874, Congress refused to appropriate the funds Henry sought for more work by Powell until Powell wrote a popular account of his historic river journey.

overland journeys were minimal. For too long, the arguments for a solid icebreaker ship got lost in the larger context of exploration and the race for the pole. Too few people understood that sailing on smaller, weaker, cheaper ships undermined everyone's investment. The philanthropic community that supported Peary, even in the midst of a national economic depression, focused on the forest rather than the trees. It accepted Peary's vision of America's polar victory and dominance of Arctic science and information, and failed for too long to heed his simultaneous plea for attention to detail. He needed a ship unlike anything America had ever built. Only when his philanthropist-friends completely understood that point did Peary stand a chance at success.

It will likely never be known if Peary actually reached the North Pole. It does not matter. History has overlooked him. Arctic historians focus primarily on which man actually first set foot on the North Pole. This dissertation seeks not only to place Peary within a fuller context of American exploration, but to connect Arctic history to other aspects of turn-of-the-century America. Certainly those individuals and institutions that joined his mission saw Arctic exploration as a special moment in the nation's development. Peary's stateside career reveals that America's ability to claim the North Pole was more than an obscure aside to the nation's history.

Discovery is supposed to be obvious. Either a person is the first to recognize something, or not. Moments of discovery provide excellent marking points for history, which has few absolutes. The inability of historians to determine who discovered the North Pole has resulted in a narrow consideration of this subfield of exploration. Almost without exception, the ulterior motive in studies of American Arctic exploration has been to uncover the verity of Peary's and/or Cook's claims.

Peary's tale occurs toward the end of nearly four centuries of Arctic exploration,

during which different nations dominated, but none appreciated the true difficulty of the expeditions. Men first sailed from Europe across the North Atlantic during the late 1400's, looking for a Northwest Passage. For hundreds of years, ships sailed from ports in England, Sweden, Norway, Italy, and Russia looking for the route. They sailed in small ships that were easily damaged or froze in the unyielding Arctic ice. The search for a Northwest Passage prevailed, despite magnificent failures and gruesome tragedies. Most explorers assumed that the ship that found the elusive waterway would pass over the North Pole on the way to Asia. During the mid-nineteenth century, after an international frenzy over a lost English captain turned into a familiar tale of shipwreck, starvation, and brutal death, interest in finding the passage faded. The North Pole, however, topped all geographers' lists of remote spots on the planet as yet unclaimed by man. For example, in 1900 Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society (NGS), submitted the following to the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution:

> In 1800, the year that Jefferson was first elected President of the United States and Napoleon won the history-making battle of Marengo, about one-fifth of the earth's land surface was known. The physical features of the remaining four-fifths were partly supplied by imaginative map makers or left a blank on the charts given to the public. In all approximately ten-elevenths of the earth's land surface may be described as known and only one-eleventh as unexplored. In fact less than one-eleventh remains unknown, for the unknown areas are so distributed in both hemispheres that nowhere except at the North and South poles are there remaining large unexplored tracts...The eighteenth century had been noted for the explorers of the seas, as the nineteenth was preeminent in men who split open great continents and laid bare to the eyes of mankind their mountains, rivers, and seas.[14]

The North Pole took on an allure of its own, unattached to the Northwest Passage. Americans moved into this story just as the two spots' histories diverged. Viewed from this perspective, Peary's appearance as the United States' finest Arctic explorer simply

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[14] Gilbert H. Grosvenor, "The Geographic Conquests of the Nineteenth Century," in *Smithsonian Institution Annual Report* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1900), 417.

adds another name and nationality to a long list.

As a result, Peary is often reduced to being either a hero or a disgraceful liar. One of the earliest objective appraisals of Peary appeared in 1967, in John Edward Weems' *Peary: The Explorer and the Man*. Weems believed that Peary discovered the North Pole, but proving that was not his main objective.[15] He was the first historian with full access to the Peary family papers now found at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. Weems produced a thoughtful biography of Peary that revealed him to be a competitive man obsessed with the one goal that might bring him everlasting fame and glory. The author gave a human dimension to Peary that had been lost in debates about whether he reached the pole. Despite continual disappointments and the anxiety he caused his family, Peary remained devoted to his quest. Weems' study was the first balanced examination of Peary, but he also paid no attention to the larger history of Arctic exploration or how it became important to Americans. He assumed that the quest was of value mainly because it mattered to Peary, not because of its larger significance.

Writing over a decade after Weems, William R. Hunt adopted the most common angle of North Pole exploration. In *To Stand at the Pole*, Hunt examined the details of the Cook-Peary controversy, alternating between each of the explorer's accounts to consider the details. Hunt brought objectivity to a subject in which the usual tactic was to choose one explorer and either "prove" the veracity of his claim or dismantle the other man's case so completely that the chosen perspective was the only possible "truth." When the furor over North Pole rights broke out, Cook's quiet demeanor and comparative lack of media exposure barely withstood the onslaught from Peary's camp. Peary had spent years

[15] John Edward Weems, *Peary: The Explorer and the Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967). Weems defended Peary as discoverer of the North Pole in an earlier book, *Race for the Pole* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1960), xiv. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, famous Arctic explorer and two-time president of New York's Explorers Club, wrote the preface for Weems' first book and applauded it as "justice for Peary, clarity for Cook."

establishing media contacts to assure himself positive press, and the young National Geographic Society (NGS) and American Geographic Society (AGS) had supported him financially and professionally. In addition, Cook's lone millionaire patron could not sustain the sort of attention that the Peary Arctic Club (PAC) could muster. The PAC, an incorporated organization of millionaires devoted to seeing Peary reach the pole, ensured that their man's assorted contacts worked hard in his defense.

Peary's history of exemplary polar exploration eventually swung opinion in his favor, especially after news broke that Cook's claim of also being the first man to scale Mt. McKinley [in Alaska] was likely fraudulent. Cook claimed in 1906 that he was the first person to reach the peak of Mt. McKinley. Speculation that he fabricated his success broke in late 1909, in the middle of the public fight waged between Cook and Peary over the North Pole. The Mt. McKinley fiasco permanently damaged Cook's reputation. Hunt disliked the work of historians on both sides of the question. He thought little of one of Cooks' best defenders, Edwin Swift Balch (author of *North Pole and Bradley Land*, 1913), whose overblown efforts to defend the minutiae of Cook's claims rendered his conclusions ridiculous. Hugh Eames' biography of Cook, *Winner Lose All: Dr. Cook and the Theft of the Pole* (1973), excused Cook's inconsistencies too easily. Similarly, Hunt attacked Peary's strident supporters, like biographers William Herbert Hobbs (author of *Peary*, 1931) and Weems, both of whom labeled Cook a fraud, and Hunt regretted any historical attention given to Cook. Hobbs, in particular, believed that the debate crushed Peary and filled his last years with sorrow and disappointment. Hunt also downplayed the conclusions of Dennis Rawlins, author of *Peary at the North Pole: Fact or Fiction?* (1973) Rawlins attacked Peary's evidence, though not because he favored Cook. He believed that Peary never reached the North Pole, and lied about it upon return to the US.

Rawlins based much of his opinion on the fact that Peary never successfully proved scientifically that he had reached the pole. Peary's evidence was remarkably weak, especially considering his long history of Arctic exploration. Hunt expressed frustration that despite such observations, this strategy forces the historian into the realm of circumstantial evidence, where it can never be shown conclusively what happened.[16]

Hunt also stated the most probable reason for continuing intrigue about the polar controversy. Cook was continually described as the underdog, the weaker force fighting against overwhelming prestige, money, and advantage. Hunt attacked that perspective. The Mt. McKinley fraud case and the geographical organizations' favor helped Peary more than did the PAC, which did not spend its money in defense of Peary. Hunt argued that the "underdog" image that Cook himself tried to foster lost merit until historians of the 1960's revived it in poorly conceived attempts to reverse the reputations of people whom history had overlooked.[17] Hunt showed equal distaste for each explorer. Of Peary he wrote: "In 1897 Peary stole the Eskimos' only source of metal, a great meteor, and, in the name of science, robbed a poor people of their greatest spiritual and practical resource. Greed, cruel greed, drove Peary to this wretched act." Cook fared no better. Hunt believed that

> To understand Cook, we must consider his attack on his rival carefully, not for its truth—it contained a mixture of truth, lies, exaggerations, questionable inferences, and venom—but for its elucidation of Cook's psychological state. He was angry, unjustly injured in his own eyes, and he would show the world how the truth had been tarnished by Peary's diabolical conduct. Cook's scourging of Peary was vicious and defies the accuracy of Peter Freuchen's celebrated appraisal: "Cook was a liar and a gentleman, Peary was neither."[18]

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[16] William R. Hunt, *To Stand at the Pole: The Dr. Cook-Admiral Peary North Pole Controversy* (New York: Stein and Day, 1981), 207, 214-215, 242-245.
[17] Hunt, *To Stand*, 227.
[18] Hunt, *To Stand*, 153. Historian Peter Freuchen published an earlier account of the controversy, *Arctic Adventure* (1935).

The underdog theory is too simplistic for any decent consideration of Peary or Cook, but certainly it cannot be denied that Peary's powerful friends gave him some advantages. They were loyal over many years. The influential men who backed him during the controversy were not glory-seeking fair-weather friends looking for celebrity. Most had spent money on at least one of Peary's earlier expeditions, and had helped again either in response to Peary's personalized pleas for help or his well-directed fears that another explorer might win the prize.

Hunt showed the pitfalls of considering the legacies of Peary and Cook merely from the perspective of their race for the pole. Neither explorer kept credible records, so while it is possible to attack one man's explanations, it is virtually impossible to prove the other's claims. Moreover, too often the career of each explorer is measured by the events of 1909. Hunt's dissatisfaction with other historians' work springs from lopsided attention to this aspect of American polar exploration.

In recent years, scholars have paid more attention to the personalities of both men. Wally Herbert wrote an outstanding biography of Peary. Like Weems, Herbert used family documents to take a deeper look at Peary's obsessive quest, but Herbert covered Peary's entire life. Herbert, also an Arctic explorer, felt a special empathy for Peary and developed friendships with Peary's descendants. He connected personally with his subject, and his well-researched book was also an elaborate defense of Peary's claims of North Pole success. Despite this bias, however, Herbert also related more than any previous historian the extent to which Peary's image was created by Peary's close circle of friends and supporters.[19] Herbert focused on the expeditions and the psychological toll that each disappointment took on Peary. However, he also revealed how heavily the

[19] Wally Herbert *The Noose of Laurels: The Discovery of the North Pole* (London: Grafton Books, 1989), 107-109, 120.

expectations of his eager benefactors weighed on Peary's mind. As Peary grew older and the expeditions became more expensive, he felt increasing pressure to succeed not only for himself, but to reward the faith and investments of the PAC members. For example, when Peary returned with frost-bitten toes to Fort Conger in 1899, having failed to reach the pole, Herbert described the dual concerns of Peary. He was

> ...in Greely's tomb of a hut at Fort Conger, going through what he later described as the 'unrelieved blackness' of his ordeal—those forty days and nights of suffering in which he was fighting not only the pain and the horror of the amputations performed with primitive tools by Dr. Dedrick, but also the fear that he might never walk again. Nor had those friends of his in New York known at the time of their first meeting what sort of relief operation to mount when sending a ship in search of the *Windward*. Was it to be a re-supply mission, or were they to go north to bring Peary out? These were men who were accustomed to seeing results for their money, and yet here they were finding themselves sending out one ship to search for another.[20]

Herbert examines Peary's psyche more than any other historian. Within his historical narrative are countless musings about Peary's thoughts during undocumented moments. For example, heading home on the *Windward* after the trip recounted above, Peary began to recover: "What advice Jo had offered him during their six weeks' voyage home is not on record. We may, however, assume that she had warned him of the growing crisis within the Peary Arctic Club,... that the Club should be disbanded.... We may also assume that the healing privacy of those weeks with a soul mate who could share his burden had saved him on this, as on other occasions. Certainly by the time they reached Sydney, Peary had drawn enough strength from Jo at least to appear to be what the public expected a polar hero to be: an erect, weatherbeaten, courageous man."[21]

Alternating between biography and the "controversy" has prevented a comprehensive history of American Arctic exploration. In *Cook & Peary: The Polar*

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[20] Herbert, *The Noose*, 144.
[21] Herbert, *The Noose*, 148-149.

Controversy, Resolved (1997), librarian Robert M. Bryce combined biographies of both Cook and Peary as well as detailed study of each man's expeditionary history in one massive tome. Bryce stated the case:

> Some have seen Cook's claims of 1909 as a transparent fraud, carried off by a cheap faker—an unfortunate affair that took away the luster from Peary's richly deserved triumph. Others saw Cook as the ultimate victim and the story of his fall from hero to humbug as the tragic tale of the little man, helpless to resist a rich and powerful establishment bent on his destruction. In either case it was as plain as black or white. But life at its dullest is colored by at least shades of gray, and the truth often lies, inaccessible as the North Pole, somewhere in the deepest gray of the shadows that fill the inner recesses of the human mind.[22]

He concluded that neither man reached the pole, which enabled him to present Cook as a fraud without making him also an underdog. And Peary emerged as a man ruthlessly dedicated to his singular goal, who had risked other people's money, physical hardship, and rough Arctic trips for so many years that failure on his last trip was simply not an option. Bryce asserted that Peary knew he had failed to reach 90 N and that he lied out of necessity and desperation. Despite the remarkable scholarship of Bryce's book, his conclusion that neither man reached the pole is simply one further opinion about a question that likely can never be answered completely. The situation in which Cook and Peary found themselves in 1909 still looks like an exploratory anomaly, the last public gasp of the odd quest to find the North Pole. The impressive biographical information about each man is buried within the ultimate need to prove why each man lied about the same feat.

Scholarly consideration of the polar controversy inevitably narrows the history of American Arctic exploration. For this reason, the dissertation will end its consideration of Peary's career before his last expedition in 1908-09, the one on which he claimed victory.

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[22] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), xvi.

There is no need for another opinion about whether he reached the North Pole. The funding sources and rationale for this trip were no different from the previous one, with one exception. Jesup died before Peary had enough donations to cover the costs of ship repair, but his widow contributed enough money to finance an expedition nearly identical to the disappointing attempt of 1905-06. In addition, it seems necessary to explain why the dissertation focuses on Peary rather than Cook, since both men were involved equally in the debate over first claim of the North Pole. Unlike Peary, Cook was not singly devoted to Arctic exploration. He explored the Arctic several times, but he also tried Antarctic exploration, as well as a Mt. McKinley mountaineering trip. On most of these adventures, he was a member, not a leader. Also, millionaire John R. Bradley financed his supposedly successful 1907-09 trip, making it unnecessary for Cook to campaign for money. By the time Cook led his own expedition to the pole, Peary had done the hard work of making the nation care about the outcome. Finally, the obsessive drive that compelled Peary to return again and again to the Arctic set him apart. His goal crippled and almost killed him, ruined him financially, took him away from a wife he adored, and forced him to be a public persona. No other explorer came close to matching his dedication. Lopez speculates about the spell the Arctic wove on men like Peary:

> The initial trip into that far northern landscape is perceived by the explorer As something from which one might derive prestige, money, social advantage, or notable awards and adulation. Although these intentions are not lost sight of on subsequent trips, they are never so purely held or so highly regarded as they are before the first journey begins. They are tempered by a mounting sense of consternation and awe. It is as though the land slowly works its way into the man and by virtue of its character eclipses these motives. The land becomes large, alive like an animal; it humbles him in a way he cannot pronounce. It is not that the land is simply beautiful but that it is powerful. Its power derives from the tension between its obvious beauty and its capacity to take life. Its power flows into the mind from a realization of how darkness and light are bound

together within it, and the feeling that this is the floor of creation.[23]

My dissertation moves chronologically through American Arctic exploration, and Peary's stateside career. Chapter One provides an historical overview of Arctic exploration. It covers the history and international significance of the Northwest Passage. A nautical route from Europe to Asia appealed to different nations for over four hundred years. By the nineteenth century, England's maritime strength, as well as the success of its Arctic whaling fleet, made that nation dominant in the search for the Northwest Passage. Whalers' reports ensured current knowledge of unpredictable Arctic ice conditions, but the small wooden sailing ships could not handle the ice. Innumerable crews found themselves trapped or stranded in the uncomfortable darkness of an Arctic winter. Tragedy outweighed success in Arctic travel until well into the nineteenth century. In 1845, English captain John Franklin of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* disappeared while looking for the famed route, and dozens of crews searched for him for the next several years. Piecemeal evidence revealed that he and his men froze or starved to death after their ships sank and they left in search of rescue. After this disaster, England lost interest in concerted Arctic exploration. The international search for Franklin, however, resulted in significant cartographic advances regarding Arctic exploration.

Chapter Two discusses the passing of the Arctic exploration torch from England to the United States. The first American explorers had helped search for Franklin. The problems associated with searching for the Northwest Passage killed enthusiasm for its discovery. However, another locale still captured men's imaginations. The North Pole, which previously had been discussed merely as a place one passed by on the way to Asia, held its own allure. The North Pole became of value as a remote point that might

[23] Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 351-352.

guarantee historical fame for its claimant. Also, late nineteenth-century explorers embraced the erroneous Open Polar Sea Theory, which stated that an open ocean lay beyond the ring of ice that formed annually at approximately 80 N. Nobody yet realized that the North Pole lay in the middle of an ocean, and that most of it was frozen year-round. By the 1850's, most explorers believed that enough was known about Arctic travel that finding the North Pole was simply a matter of time, and it became a race. Americans, therefore, paid minimal attention to the Northwest Passage. Three men in particular paved the way in American Arctic exploration. Charles Francis Hall, Elisha Kent Kane, and Adolphus W. Greely each sailed to the Arctic in search of fame and international respect. None succeeded, and they left a weak legacy for Peary. Greely, the last of the three, commanded a US Navy-funded scientific expedition that ended with tales of starvation, cannibalism, and unimaginable suffering. Greely survived, but the tragedy compelled the federal government and the military to give up all formal interest in Arctic exploration. When Peary first saw Greenland five years after Greely's return, he planned immediately to look for the North Pole, and thus began his ceaseless efforts to replace the patrons that Greely had lost. The one overlapping point of interest between these earlier endeavors and the later efforts of Peary was the Americans' commitment to collection of scientific data. Clearly, in most cases, their excitement over new geographical observations, Inuit descriptions, or cartographic information was merely the most acceptable substitute for accomplishing their larger goals. But their habit of announcing that the Arctic was of unbounded scientific value helped Peary. The chapter concludes with an examination of Peary's first several trips, during which he learned how to maximize his time in the Arctic as well as expand his philanthropic network. In order to be able to devote his own time to exploration, he learned how to entice scientists to accompany him (as paying passengers),

and then use their institutional networks to his advantage upon return to the states.

Chapter Three focuses on one trip only, the expedition of 1897. Peary was famous by then, and he also improved upon his methods for asking scientists to join him. His massive summer fund-raising campaign of 1897 took place at a crucial point in his career. He had recently delivered the (then) three largest known meteorites in the world to the AMNH. In addition, he had left six live Inuits in the care of Franz Boas, chief anthropologist at the AMNH. These "donations" brought tremendous prestige to Peary, and in return Jesup, the president of the museum, became a significant money-raising force on Peary's behalf. Peary spent the summer organizing the sale and delivery of his top specimens as well as preparing for his next trip, during which he planned to spend four consecutive winters in the Arctic. He proposed each spring to try for the pole. Nobody had ever purposely spent four years in the Arctic, and the plan required more money and organization than earlier trips. The summer fund-raising campaign also showed clearly how much Peary's inability to secure a decent ship affected his goals. American shipyards made ships strong enough for Peary's needs, but because whaling was an important economic activity during the late nineteenth century, there were no ships available for sale or rent that could handle the ice. Peary rented other nations' ships, and inevitably the ships that he could afford were too small and weak to take him far enough North. Peary's ship woes receive close attention, since ship rental comprised the largest percentage of his expedition expenditures. Peary's summer of 1897 rush to make his usual scientific connections and to plan his most ambitious trip offers interesting insights into his methodology.

Chapter Four delves into the expedition of 1898-1902. Peary probably had his most solid, most enthusiastic support during these years, but each of his four spring

attempts on the pole ended in failure. His most dedicated backers formally organized into the Peary Arctic Club while he was away. Jesup, Herbert Bridgman (wealthy owner of the Brooklyn *Standard Union*), and Peary's wife Josephine used Peary's pre-established network to maintain his media attention and to keep Arctic exploration viable and newsworthy. The NGS and the AGS, organizations of importance to Peary's scientist acquaintances, each published any and all news of Peary's expedition in their respective societal journals. Bridgman, Jesup, and Josephine also maintained Peary's media contacts, so that they would be well prepared to write positively about anything Peary accomplished. During and after this expedition, Peary relied less on the actual presence and money of individual scientists, and more on their patron institutions. The change was as much about the increasing cost of his expeditions as it was the movement in American science toward sifting all scientific data through professional organizations.

Chapter Five, the last chapter of the dissertation, considers Peary's penultimate expedition. Once again, Peary subtly changed the way he sought funding. Peary had no personal interest in science, but he understood that without the support of scientific groups he could not continue to explore. However, his past failures forced him to be clear about his main concern: he needed a better ship. At the same time, the PAC underwent substantial membership turnover. Several men who believed in Peary refused to pour more money into the quest. Peary declared that if he had a big, steel-hulled, steam-powered ship, he could win the race. Peary completely bypassed individual scientists and went directly to better sources of money. Once more culling the ranks of top scientific institutions and wealthy philanthropists, Peary raised the hundred thousand dollars necessary to build America's first Arctic ice-breaker, the *Roosevelt*. Confident of success, Peary again sailed North. He failed, but there the story ends. The significance of the

story will be addressed in my conclusion.

Chapter One

The Open Polar Sea and the Northwest Passage: Pre-Peary Arctic Explorations

The Arctic region has been brutal to explorers and visitors. Until the late nineteenth century whalers, traders, navies, and others who traversed the Arctic Ocean had little familiarity with the region. It attracted northern whaling fleets, but it was so dangerous that only a few sailors dared travel further north than necessary. Men often achieved fame merely by taking their ships into the Arctic Ocean, especially if they never returned. It took time for even the best explorers to realize that successful Arctic sailing required different preparation and technology than did other oceans. Slowly, over hundreds of years, the Arctic became a destination of intrigue and scientific adventure for the individuals and nations that tried to claim it. People variously viewed the Arctic as a possible link to the other side of the world, an adventurous quest, a destination of scientific opportunity, or an intimidating environment hindering passage to the North Pole. Humans remained fascinated with the Arctic, despite changing explanations of the region's value.

The Arctic Ocean is, in fact, never completely ice-free. Sailing conditions were difficult, regardless of the season, because even slight damage to a ship could prevent its safe return. The Arctic Ocean was full of ice blocks, chunks, bergs, and sheets, and unpredictable tides made their presence a nightmare. The southern limits of the ice packs changed annually, which frustrated sailors who might reach a record Farthest North one year but encounter thick ice much further south on the same route the following year. As a result, Farthest North records often held for years.

Arctic exploration became a legitimate goal as early as the 16th century, and at first men considered the harsher sailing conditions an endurance test. Arctic history is a chronology of successive sailors of one country working to best the records of other nations' ablest seamen. Until the early 20th century, England, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Russia, and the United States took turns achieving Arctic records and trying to discover the easiest routes around or through the region. Thousands of sailors traveled the Arctic Ocean between 1500 and 1900. The majority did so during the nineteenth century in a climate of intense international competition over exploratory goals and whaling profits, but it was a destination of interest long before. For much of the time, not one ship's captain knew exactly where he was going after he passed approximately 80 N. This circle of latitude passes through the northern tip of Greenland and cuts across Spitzbergen, a familiar landmark for western European navigators. Most ships could not handle the severe ice above 80 N, and ship captains feared that falling temperatures would block escape routes with ice sheets that could reduce a ship to a pile of splintered wood. The Arctic Ocean was so difficult to navigate that every nautical degree or minute reached beyond 80 N won international admiration.

The Arctic Ocean envelops several small clusters of islands, and places like Spitzbergen and Franz Josef Land were early stopping points for the first Arctic explorers. (See Appendix, Figures 2-3.) The enduring question for Arctic travelers was land further north. Nobody knew where or if there was land beyond the few known islands, nor did they know where the Arctic Ocean ended. Land offered the possibility of harbor, hunting options, and trading opportunities with the native Arctic peoples. Early explorers speculated that one of the Arctic islands might extend northward over the North

Pole and extend to Asia. These were important considerations for crews which feared being trapped on ice-bound ships. Starvation and cold ended many explorers' dreams of finding safe harbor before winter arrived in the Arctic.

Farthest North records were usually consolation prizes. There were two greater achievements to claim in the Arctic. For the first 350 years of Arctic exploration, the main quest was the Northwest Passage, a nautical route between Europe and Asia that would allow travel to the Orient in less time than easterly paths.[1] Countless sailors edged around the southern coastline of Greenland, expecting thereafter to ease through open waters on the westward trip to Asia. They were faced, however, with such barriers as Baffin Island, Ellesmere Island, Hudson's Bay, Victoria Island, Lancaster Sound, and others. The men searching for the Northwest Passage wanted to avoid land and find the clearest, easiest path to the Pacific Ocean. The Arctic Ocean north of Canada holds dozens of islands, which made the Northwest Passage a difficult, elusive route. It was navigated in 1906 (by Norwegian Roald Amundsen), but by then the second great prize of the Arctic was in greater demand.

Interest in the North Pole resulted from the quest to find the Northwest Passage, and after the 1850's dreams of reaching the North Pole outweighed those of creeping through the passage. Until that time, the Arctic was little understood. Many explorers still believed in the "open polar sea theory," which entered popular debate during the 18th century, and was the mistaken impression that an open polar sea lay on the other side of the ring of ice that hovered around 80 N. If explorers could simply push their ships through the ice barriers, they could sail over the North Pole and on to Asia. Belief in the

[1] John Noble Wilford, *The Mapmakers: The Story of the Great Pioneers in Cartography-from Antiquity to the Space Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 140-143.

open polar sea theory occasionally revived when someone reached a new Farthest North and declared that there was less ice in front of him than behind. It fascinated humans for hundreds of years. Until the late nineteenth century, most uncommon geographic discoveries were made by sea, so overland Arctic exploration was not a consideration. Most explorers believed that it was possible to sail to the North Pole if only the proper route could be found.

Eric (the Red) Thorvaldsson sailed northwest out of Norway on a heavy Viking ship in 986, and in so doing earned the title of "first Arctic explorer." He established several short-lived colonies on Greenland, and his son Leif (the Lucky) Ericsson later became the first European to reach Baffin Island. They began a long tradition in which Europeans sailed into the Arctic, briefly stayed near or on coastline shores, and turned around without leaving much of a record of their presence.

England produced the first serious Arctic explorers. John Cabot, an experienced Genoese sailor, led the pack. Cabot first asked Portugal and Spain for patronage, but both nations believed they had better plans. Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella trusted their support of another Genoan, Christopher Columbus. In 1493, as Cabot began organizing his first western sailing trip, Columbus simultaneously toured Spain, showing off the Caribbean finds that he mistook for Asian trophies. Spain's monarchs were not interested in funding Columbus' potential competition. Portugal also ignored Cabot, choosing instead to send explorers around the coast of Africa in a different variation of eastern routes to India. Europeans used various overland routes, but they were lengthy and perilous due to illness, fatigue, and crime. Portugal chose to send its sailors East, but Cabot intended to try the other direction. Spain's daring investment in Columbus looked

lucrative in 1493, to Cabot's detriment. Columbus found land and exotic cultures exactly where current maps marked India. Nobody yet appreciated the degree to which cartographers who relied on Ptolemy's calculations had underestimated the size of Earth. Most fifteenth-century sailors agreed that it was spherical, but they did not realize its full circumference. In addition to believing that India lay closer to Europe than it does, these same thinkers never imagined that another continent separated Europe from the spice market.[2] Cabot asked England for financial support after Spain and Portugal refused aid.

England's King Henry VII realized that his nation might lose easy access to the Asian spice market if he did not fund exploration. Cabot intended to navigate a route further north than Columbus, exposing himself to the more severe weather of the North Atlantic as he sailed along a line of latitude unfamiliar to most Europeans. Cabot believed, however, that if he sailed further north the curvature of the earth at his chosen latitude might result in a shorter trip. King Henry gave Cabot permission to lead an English expedition westward, on the condition that he not sail south, possibly intruding upon the exploratory ventures of Spain or Portugal.[3]

Before departure, Cabot faced another problem, however. He needed a ship. The king gave no money, though he announced that Cabot could command as many as five ships. The reaction of local businessmen indicated a low level of enthusiasm for Cabot's quest. English merchants agreed to build only one ship.[4] Cabot became unusual in

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[2] Peter Firstbrook, *The Voyage of the Matthew: John Cabot & the Discovery of North America* (San Francisco: Bay Books & Tapes, 1997), 19, 36-37, 53. Second-century AD mathematician, geographer, and astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus produced the most popular theories about the relative size and shape of the planet until sailors of Columbus and Cabot's era demonstrated his cartographic errors. Before 1300, the overland haul of spices from Asia to Europe took years. The average sea voyage was also a lengthy three years, and only a fraction of merchant ships survived the trip. The spice trade was lucrative enough, however, that merchants risked the loss of four of every five ships.

[3] Firstbrook, *The Voyage*, 109, 112.

[4] Firstbrook, *The Voyage*, 112; Frank Rasky, *The Polar Voyagers: Explorers of the North* (Toronto:

Arctic history because he commanded a recently constructed ship. Most of his successors used any ship available for sale or rent, regardless of the vessel's initial purposes and strength. Nations that paid insufficient attention to their Arctic explorers' modes of transportation risked lives and money. The sailing ship of Cabot's era, "along with cathedrals and castles[,] was the most complex piece of construction of pre-industrial times. For thousands of years, the ship combined technical complexity with versatility in a way that was not matched until the development of the steam engine. Sailing ships were the top technologies of their time and were built to meet the needs of commerce or war."[5] Despite the ships' artistry, however, Arctic exploration tested most ships beyond their limits of endurance.

Bristol merchants secured the *Matthew*, a small 50-ton ship, for Cabot.[6] He and his three sons sailed from Bristol, England to Labrador, and so became the first documented Europeans to penetrate the Arctic Circle. Cabot reported little about the Arctic, though he was a fine cartographer. His maps were invaluable to those who followed him because fifteenth-century navigation in longitude was a dangerous, hit-or-miss activity.[7] Most sailors still relied upon stargazing, mariners' needles (to track the magnetic north pole), astrolabes, and dead reckoning.[8] It was risky to head into the North

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McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1976), 71. It is not clear why the merchants refused to give Cabot the four additional ships. He was a foreigner and favored an unknown route for the financially risky spice trade, so the English merchants may have been unwilling to gamble further.

[5] Firstbrook, *The Voyage*, 55.

[6] Firstbrook, *The Voyage*, 65. The tonnage of ships refers to the carrying capacity of a ship, not its weight. Seafaring tradition adapted the old English word "tunne," a reference to a barrel of liquid, into "ton." By common usage, a wine barrel holding 252 gallons weighed roughly 2500 pounds, slightly over one (modern) ton.

[7] Rasky, *The Polar Voyagers*, 76.

[8] Dava Sobel and William J. Andrews, *The Illustrated Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of his Time* (New York: Walker and Company, 1998), 18. Dead reckoning was very unreliable. The captain might throw a log tied to a rope overboard, record the speed at which the ship moved away, consult the stars or a compass for direction of travel, consider approximate wind speed and direction, and calculate the speed and longitude from this information.

Atlantic. Since the sailors had trouble determining how far west or east they were of any known location, they could never be sure where or if land might suddenly appear. The few maps of the oceans northwest of Europe were poorly drawn and often distorted relative distances. Cabot's maps were valuable assets under those conditions.

England's interest in the Northwest Passage increased in 1589 when geographer Richard Hakluyt suggested the presence of a northern route to the Orient in Principal Navigations. Hakluyt read about and mingled with England's leading explorers and travellers, and from these observations wrote about the Northwest Passage as the nation's next mercantile opportunity.[9] Russia was a constant presence in Siberia and eventually in western Canada, but England was the first leading Arctic exploratory nation, and Hakluyt's publications prompted the first well-funded expeditions to prove the existence of the Northwest Passage. In 1607, the Muscovy Company, a whaling business, commissioned Henry Hudson to find the shortest path to Asia. He got stuck in ice west of Greenland, and so gathered more information about the northernmost regions of North America than about the Northwest Passage. He found and named the Hudson River of New York, as well as Hudson's Bay, which he discovered was a major whale feeding ground. Unlike Cabot, Hudson never begged for funding. The Dutch East India Company offered him more money than the Muscovy Company after his first successes, and eventually he won the favor of King James I, who paid for his 1611 trip on the

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During the 1760's, English clockmaker John Harrison developed what became known as the chronometer, an instrument that enabled sailors to determine accurate time on the ship and compare it to the known time at zero degrees longitude (which runs through Greenwich). They could then determine longitude Longitude was measured by time, unlike latitude. Until then, mechanical compasses, which required special knowledge of the curvature of the earth to account for magnetic variations, were the most useful instruments.

[9] Clements Markham, *The Fifty Years' Work of the Royal Geographical Society* (London: John Murray, 1881), 5.

Discovery.[10] His information exemplified the problems of Arctic exploration west of Greenland. Hudson and his followers had little difficulty sailing around the southern tip of Greenland. He showed, however, that it would be difficult to continue straight west along that route past the southern tip of Baffin Island. It would be necessary to maneuver northward between the two islands before heading further west.[11] Hudson, in fact, found it impossible to find a northern exit from Hudson's Bay without running into impenetrable ice. He established a new Farthest North at 80 23', but in 1611, with his ship stuck in the bay, his crew mutinied and he was never seen again.[12]

The sailors' decisions about when to turn north were crucial. If a ship were damaged early or stuck in ice late in the season, there might be no hope of escape. Hudson's connection with the Muscovy Company, therefore, was not unusual. Explorers in search of the Northwest Passage depended upon reports from earlier discoverers as well as those of whaling fleets. Even by the early 17th century, it was clear that it would not be possible to head North anywhere between Svalbard and Greenland. Whalers repeatedly reported the solid ice conditions between the two islands. The region between these two landmasses contained many whales because where the cold Arctic waters mingled with the warmer Atlantic Ocean, conditions were ideal for plankton. Krill, the Greenland Right whales' favorite food, ate plankton. Whalers, therefore, hunted in the same areas that posed the most serious navigational concerns for explorers. The whalers knew that the ice between Svalbard and Greenland was deep and thick and that explorers

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[10] Peter C. Newman, *Empire of the Bay: The Company of Adventurers that Seized a Continent* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 30-31.

[11] It was not determined that Greenland was an island until Robert Edwin Peary walked across its northern tip in 1892. The northern part of Greenland lay too far North for most ships. It was impossible for them to sail around the northern point of the island partly because they did not know where that point lay, and also because no ship could handle the severe ice that far north.

[12] Clive Holland, *Farthest North: A History of North Polar Exploration in Eye-Witness Accounts* (New

would never be able to puncture it.[13] As a result, Hudson and those who followed him had to navigate west of Greenland before they tried to ram through the ice barrier.

Hudson tried to find both the Northeast Passage and the Northwest Passage.[14] The Northeast Passage was ideal for the same reasons as the opposite route, but few nations tried it. England, Italy, Norway, and later the United States all found it easier to head west and hope for clear passage. The Northeast Passage had thicker ice further south and the possibility of hitting land barriers was more obvious. Russia tried to send men through the Northeast Passage during the eighteenth century, but with no success. The Russian government funded Vasiliy Yakovlevich Chichagov in 1765 and 1766. He planned to sail from Svalbard to eastern Siberia in a straight line that would take him over or near the North Pole. He failed, but did beat Hudson's Farthest North when he reached 80 28' N. Russia gave up on serious Arctic exploration until the development of stronger ships during the twentieth century.[15]

Hudson's problems proved discouraging for England, despite the brief success of William Baffin on a similar route in 1616. Baffin hung close to the North American continent, like Hudson, but managed to turn his ship further North and chart what became for several decades the most recognizable landmarks of the Arctic. He saw Whale Sound, Smith Sound, Jones Sound, Lancaster Sound, and what became known as Baffin Bay. He did not fully explore any of these waterways, any one of which might

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York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1994), 13.

[13] Holland, *Farthest North*, 14-15.

[14] The Northeast Passage is the water lane extending east of Svalbard to Asia. In theory, the Northwest Passage and Northeast Passage might somehow have been connected, but since nobody knew exactly where more landmasses might be, or how far north they extended, few sailors assumed that navigating one passage meant passage through the other. Those attempting to find the Northeast Passage avoided the problems of the Northern Atlantic, but usually faced tougher ice conditions.

[15] Holland, *Farthest North*, 15.

potentially have led to the Northwest Passage, but he sighted and named them.[16]

The Russians made two failed attempts at the Northwest Passage and Britain tried again, but Arctic explorers accomplished little during the eighteenth century. The real problem was that the small converted whaling ships could not handle the ice.[17] Only bigger, heavier ships stood a chance of pushing beyond 80 N. Even when the English Admiralty agreed to convert a ship for Arctic travel, the ice was often overpowering. The best English sailors of the eighteenth century used ships of at least 200 tons, and more than one ship had to be abandoned in crushing ice.[18] Ship captains usually turned around when they encountered sizable ice chunks in the water or when the temperature dropped and more ice began to form. Occasionally, these ships stayed afloat under such conditions by using ice anchors (iron hooks) to pull the ships into ice floes, which prevented them from being hit by floating icebergs. The anchors also ensured that the ships would not scrape bottom, another serious concern.[19] Nevertheless, the ships were unable to withstand Arctic weather conditions.

Few dared to follow Hudson, but his reports proved beneficial to the Muscovy Company, one of his patrons. He saw large pods of whales near Spitsbergen, an area soon known as the Greenland fishery. Both the British and the Dutch turned their attention to Arctic whaling grounds, and soon whaling shore stations dotted the northern

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[16] M. J. Ross, *Polar Pioneers: John Ross and James Clark Ross* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 24.
[17] Holland, *Farthest North*, 14.
[18] Ernest S. Dodge, *The Polar Rosses: John and James Clark Ross and their Explorations* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 45. The English Navy sent two separate expeditions to the Arctic with two ships each in 1818. To prepare them for the Arctic, the whaling ships were double-planked, and extra timbers were added to the interiors to strengthen them to handle the ice pressures. The bows were reinforced with steel, then sharpened, so that they could push through the ice. These were routine improvements for Royal Navy Arctic expeditions. Even so, the ships were too light to handle substantial Arctic ice.
[19] Holland, *Farthest North*, 34.

Canadian coastlines.[20] After one spectacular exploratory failure, the Dutch focused on whaling rather than the Northwest Passage. In 1619, King Christian IV commissioned two ships for Jens Munk, and sent him to find a way through Hudson's Bay. Munk made it to Churchill River on the western side of the bay, but no further. His ships froze, and his crew suffered all winter from the effects of scurvy. The following summer, Munk and two other men left the bodies of their sixty-one shipmates behind, and somehow sailed home. Survival surprised Munk, who at one point scrawled into his journal: "Herewith, good-night to all the world—and my soul into the hands of God."[21]

The Dutch already had expertise in handling northern waters, having established themselves as the best herring fisherman around Europe. Dutch sailors also were more adventurous, willingly working outward toward Greenland and Davis Strait in order to kill more whales. English whalers, however, stuck close to Spitsbergen and sent out comparatively few expeditions.[22]

England's delayed entrance into the whale oil market partially explains why the eighteenth century produced few English Arctic explorers. Arctic interest revived again for two reasons. England's textile industry profited from a cycle of increased urbanization and population growth. Demand grew for whale oil for items like street lamps and textile instrumentation oil/grease. The national government recognized the situation and doubled the bounty paid to whaling ships.[23] The English whaling fleet became internationally competitive. In addition, England remained interested in the

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[20] Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Ballman, and Karin Gleiter, *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 31. The shore stations also helped the ship situation. With a more accessible home port, it was less of a disaster for a ship to face southern or early ice.
[21] Newman, *Empire*, 34-35.
[22] Davis, Ballman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 33.
[23] Davis, Ballman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 33.

Northwest Passage, despite repeated failures, because Spain and Portugal dominated the other known routes to the Orient via the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans.[24]

England's Captain Constantine John Phipps took two ships, the HMS *Racehorse* and the HMS *Carcass* beyond the western edge of Greenland in 1773. Phipps agreed to the trip after Judge Daines Barrington convinced him of the open polar sea theory. Hudson's voyages hinted that the theory was wrong, but Barrington renewed interest in it. Unfortunately for Phipps, Barrington based his ideas on weak evidence using scattered evidence from various whalers and explorers. He hypothesized that the ice barrier at 80 N was not present every year, and he convinced the Board of Admiralty, through the Council of the Royal Society (of which he was a member), to approve an Arctic expedition.[25] Phipps led the trip and encountered the same problems as Hudson, though he stole the Farthest North record from the Russians by reaching 80 48'. At that point, he saw a wall of ice and returned to England convinced that the open polar sea theory was dead.

The expedition accomplished little, but the support of the Royal Society changed forever the pace of English exploration. The Royal Society first organized in 1665 as way for some of England's most devoted travellers, amateur and professional scientists, and would-be explorers to work together "'for the improvement of natural knowledge.'"[26] The Royal Society began publishing its collection of travellers' and explorers' accounts in its *Philosophical Transactions*. The organization also worked to involve the government in all types of exploration. Barrington misled Phipps, but through his Royal

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[24] Holland, *Farthest North*, 2

[25] Holland, *Farthest North*, 19.

[26] Markham, *The Fifty Years'*, 7. The Royal Society's earliest members looked back fondly at the efforts of Hakluyt and his attempts to push England ahead in quests for new mercantile partners and routes. Hakluyt,

Society connections he secured English government support for Arctic exploration. The government offered unwavering support for such endeavors for the next two hundred years, although its financial dedication proved less steady. The Royal Geographic Society later emerged from this early Council of the Royal Society and maintained the organization's oft-stated devotion to "'the desire of increasing—not wealth, but knowledge.'"[27] England's best explorers joined and promoted the Royal Society ever afterward, another factor in the nation's eventual placement as the world's top exploratory power.

Captain James Cook, another Englishman, searched for the Northwest Passage in 1776, but the expedition failed. Like Cabot, Cook was a skilled cartographer, but he was unable to get as close to the South Pole or the Northwest Passage as he had planned. Cook sailed south and east out of England, and in three expeditions during the 1760's and 1770's managed to explore and map an impressive number of the coastlines of the Pacific Ocean. The Royal Society gave Cook its fullest support, knowing that the organization would benefit from any navigational information he collected since it served already as England's official scientific repository. In 1768, Cook also took as passenger Joseph Banks, a young aristocrat naturalist and Fellow of the Royal Society.[28] Cook planned to mark the transit of planet Venus as he circumnavigated the globe.[29] England actually used the transit of Venus as a guise for sending Cook to discover whether a southern continent (Antarctica) existed. Also, intense mercantile competition prompted the English, French, and Dutch to look constantly for better and faster routes to Asia. The

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in fact, misled many explorers with his poorly researched *Principal Navigations*.

[27] Markham, *The Fifty Years'*, 8.

[28] Markham, *The Fifty Years'*, 11. Banks later served as president of the Royal Society (1778-1820), always maintaining a special interest in Arctic exploration. He also won the honor of knighthood, the first

Admiralty knew that sending Cook with orders to observe the transit of Venus, keeping the other purposes secret, would not arouse suspicion from jealous neighbors.[30]

The *Resolution*, Cook's famous ship, eventually encountered impenetrable ice near the western edge of Alaska, but this roundabout attempt to find the Northwest Passage grabbed England's attention.[31] During his third and last trip in 1776, Cook visited both the Antarctic and the Arctic, stopped in New Zealand and Australia, and died in Hawaii. He did not find a Northwest Passage, but he was one of the first Arctic explorers to describe the native peoples he saw.[32] It took several more years for Europeans to document and appreciate the Eskimos who met the ships upon landing. His predecessors, and most of his followers, rarely left their ships and carefully avoided extensive land exploration. Eric the Red, for example, was the last European to land on Greenland until the early nineteenth century.

The number of expeditions sent to the Arctic increased dramatically during the nineteenth century, despite few tangible results. The Northwest Passage remained elusive, and those who aimed for the North Pole had no hope of success. Several more Farthest North records were set and more attention was paid to the Inuits and their ability to live in the severe Arctic climate. The English continued to lead the efforts to find the Northwest Passage and the pole. They also, however, remained poorly prepared for the region and sent underweight ships full of large crews with lightweight winter clothing

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Englishman awarded the title for scientific efforts.

[29] Markham, *The Fifty Years'*, 8.

[30] Peter Aughton, *Endeavour: The Story of Captain Cook's First Great Epic Voyage* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1999), 7.

[31] Richard Hough, *Captain James Cook: A Biography* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 326-327. Wilford, *The Mapmakers*, 149. Cook also took an imitation of one of Harrison's chronometers with him on his last voyage, which helped him create impressively accurate maps that included longitude and latitude. His maps of the Pacific were unrivalled for decades.

[32] Hough, *Captain James*, 326.

and incomplete maps.

Nobody had yet found the Northwest Passage, so the British Parliament decided to stimulate exploration. In 1776, it offered twenty thousand pounds for the first ship to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific on a northern route.[33] It also promised five thousand pounds for the first ship to sail above 89 N, an impossibility for the small ships. The rewards were inadequate incentive. It took the excited observations of William Scoresby, Jr., the son of a famous English whaler, to revive serious interest in the Northwest Passage. In 1815, he read a paper entitled "On the Greenland or Polar Ice" before the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh. In it he announced that he believed that the North Pole could only be reached overland, using sledges and dogs. Nobody had tried that method, mostly because every other noted Arctic explorer believed it might still be possible to sail across the North Pole. The English refused to adopt the native Inuits' mode of travel by dog sled. Scoresby's plan was decades ahead of its time. He did not believe that the North Pole was ice-free. He believed that the Northwest Passage existed, but he had no faith in the open polar sea.[34]

These assertions by themselves meant nothing. Two years later, however, upon returning from a whaling expedition, he announced news that changed the course of English Arctic history. He said that he had sailed easily within sight of Greenland, a remarkable feat, and believed that the southern edge of the great ice pack was melting. Therefore, he suggested, interested explorers could now navigate around Greenland. He wrote to Sir Joseph Banks that "I found...the surface of the Greenland sea, between parallels of 74 and 80 N, perfectly void of ice, which is usually covered with it....I do

[33] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 26.
[34] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 26.

conceive there is sufficient interest attached to these remote regions to induce Government to fit out an expedition."[35] At the time, he did not realize that he sailed during an unusually warm summer. The southern ice pack simply loosened early that year.

Banks, now president of the Royal Society, was a close friend of John Barrow, the 2nd Secretary of the Admiralty. Banks told Barrow of Scoresby's news, which added to Barrow's interest in the Northwest Passage. He had read Barrington's book The Possibility of Approaching the North Pole Asserted (originally published 1775). In response to news of the disappearance of the southern ice barrier, a second edition of Barrington's book appeared in 1817. Barrington claimed in this error-laden book that the ocean was clear beyond Spitzbergen.[36] Barrow published his own account of the possibility of reaching the Northwest Passage in the *Quarterly Review*, a favorite choice for Arctic fans.[37] Barrow's enthusiasm had far-reaching effects. He helped convince Parliament that the monetary reward for securing the Northwest Passage was insufficient. In response, Parliament instituted a graduated scale of payment in 1818. The first ship to reach 110 W or the mouth of the Coppermine River would receive five thousand pounds, the first to find 130 W or the mouth of the Mackenzie River would get ten thousand pounds, and the ship that made it to 150 W would earn fifteen thousand pounds. Efforts to reach the North Pole would also be rewarded: one thousand pounds at 83 N, two thousand at 85 N, and still five thousand pounds at 89 N.[38] Barrow played a significant role in the events of English Arctic exploration. His position as the 2nd Secretary of the

[35] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 28.
[36] Dodge, *The Polar Rosses*, 37.
[37] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 30. The *Quarterly Review* was founded by London publisher John Murray as a foil to the *Edinburgh Review*. Many Arctic explorers and backers published in the *Quarterly Review* over the

Admiralty (1804-1845) gave him power over who should secure command of Arctic expeditions.[39] Banks forwarded a letter from Barrow to Lord Melville, 1st Lord of the Admiralty, asking for funds to look for the Northwest Passage; funding won approval.[40] English Arctic exploration escalated dramatically.

Barrow ushered in a new phase of English exploration. England had no competitors in the Arctic for the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. The French Revolution and monetary problems in Spain and Portugal kept them from manning ships for such a dangerous and expensive trip. England's Royal Navy, however, was powerful after the Napoleonic Wars, and had no more battles with which to occupy itself. The Navy accepted Barrow's proposal to use exploration as a worthwhile use of these men and ships. Barrow had previously sailed on a whaler and knew the challenges involved.[41] He wanted England to beat any competitors "'to accomplish almost the only interesting discovery that remains to be made in geography,' namely the North-West Passage."[42] During the next forty years, Britain sent over thirty expeditions into the Arctic. The Northwest Passage was still the primary goal, but the crews were also directed to chart and map the Arctic. Modern maps reflected these efforts. The Canadian Arctic looked less like a giant blank space, though the open polar sea theory still had backers.

Another factor kept Britain interested in the Arctic. A portion of the Royal

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years. All of the reviews were anonymous.

[38] Dodge, *The Polar Rosses*, 40.

[39] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 30. The Royal Navy operated under the lord high admiral, who had a Board of Lords Commissioners to manage his office and a Navy Board that was in charge of supplies. The lordship positions had two secretaries: the 1st Secretary of the Admiralty handled political issues, and the 2nd Secretary of the Admiralty oversaw the Admiralty Office and managed the correspondences between boards and naval officers internationally. The two secretaries had significant power and their patronage was heavily sought.

[40] Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 30.

[41] Holland, *Farthest North*, 27.

[42] Richard Vaughan, *The Arctic: A History* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1994), 144-145.

Society, dedicated to geographical discovery over other types of scientific achievement, established itself as the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in 1830. The RGS became the world's most prestigious geographical organization, and its evolution from elements of the Royal Society ensured a solid reputation from the beginning. Barrow, in addition to being an Admiralty officer, eventually became president of the RGS. Banks listed several exploratory goals for the Arctic, among them to "circumnavigate Greenland, to ascertain the existence of Baffin's Bay, to solve the question of the continuityof sea round the northern coast of America...."[43] He used his friendship with Barrow to pressure the navy to maintain this regional focus. It worked, and when Barrow assumed the RGS presidency he continued the momentum. Like Banks, Barrow had seen the Arctic. As a young man he had sailed on a whaler to Greenland, so personal experience again played a role in Arctic support.[44] Barrow also encouraged non-professionals to foster interests in geographical knowledge and promoted the RGS as a collection of all people dedicated to international geographical pursuits.[45] One additional decision on the part of the RGS heightened its international prestige. Members of the RGS believed that the information gathered by the navy, army, professional and amateur explorers should be collected in one area, but more importantly there should be a publication venue. In 1847, the Hakluyt Society organized "for the purpose of printing rare and unpublished voyages and travels," and the RGS worked closely with this group.[46] A strong navy and a dedicated, well-funded, reputable geographical organization propelled England unrivalled into the Arctic. The RGS had substantial funds at its disposal and often gave money

[43] Markham, *The Fifty Years*', 14.
[44] Markham, *The Fifty Years* 20.
[45] Markham, *The Fifty Years*, 25.
[46] Markham, *The Fifty Years* 46.

grants to non-federal expeditions. The RGS also began handing out two medals to honor geographical achievement: the Patron's Medal and the Founder's Medal. Each of them also attached a monetary award, but the medals themselves became the highest internationally prized symbols of exploration and/or leadership.[47]

The open polar sea theory was tested again in 1818. Scoresby was not a Navy man, so he was passed over. The Navy supplied two separate expeditions, one to aim for the North Pole, the other for the Northwest Passage. Captain David Buchan (*Dorothea*, 382 tons) and Lieutenant John Franklin (*Trent*, 249.5 tons) set sail for the North Pole. Buchan experienced ice problems and returned to England convinced that the open polar sea theory was wrong. He predicted that men would never reach the North Pole by ship.

Also in 1818, John Ross and William Edward Parry took the *Isabella* (385 tons) and the *Alexander* (252.5 tons) on a quest for the Northwest Passage. Both men became Arctic legends during their careers. It was a landmark trip for several reasons. One of the most remarkable occurrences was the ships' encounter with a small group of Inuits in Greenland, further North than any other native group had ever been seen. The Englishmen communicated with them to a limited degree thanks to the efforts of their native Inuit translator, John Sacheuse. Sacheuse was a famous Greenland Eskimo who learned English after being discovered as a stowaway on the English whaler *Thomas and Ann* two years earlier.[48] He became a Christian and traveled with Ross as an interpreter. Ross' orders were to sail into Davis Strait, travel as far north as possible, round the northeastern corner of the North American continent and sail on to the Pacific through the Bering Strait. Russia controlled Siberia and western Canada, so Ross was expected to

[47] Markham, *The Fifty Years*, 67.
[48] Dodge, *The Polar Rosses*,46. Pierre Berton, *The Arctic Grail: The Quest for the North West Passage and*

hand his orders and paperwork to the Russian governor at Kamchatka and ask that it be sent to London. He could then return to England via the route of his choice.[49] Ross stopped for the usual salutations with the Danish settlement on Whale Island, which consisted of a handful of Danish officers and a larger Inuit settlement.[50] Arctic explorers often met and traded with Inuits on the islands around 70 N, but it was unusual to see anyone, even familiar English whalers, much beyond that point.

On the western coast of Greenland, Ross met a new group of Inuits. He named them the "Arctic Highlanders," a name applied to most groups of Greenland Inuits for the next several decades.[51] Sacheuse had trouble understanding their dialect, but the two parties had a brief exchange. Ross and Parry apparently took remarkably little time to investigate the differences between their preparations for Arctic conditions and the lifestyles of the Inuits. They were so oblivious to the differences that they first tried to indicate their peaceful intentions to the Arctic Highlanders by painting an olive tree on a white flag, an image meaningless to the native group. Their only familiarity with wood came from occasional pieces of driftwood.[52]

Cook had seen Eskimos in western Canada, but this was one of the first meetings between Inuits and Europeans in Greenland. Ross also noticed that some of the Inuits had knives with iron blades, which was unexpected. The Inuits told Ross about the Iron Mountains, a group of several large masses approximately twenty-five miles away. The weather prohibited Ross from investigating the iron source, but he secured a few flakes of the metal and had them examined upon his return to England. A geologist determined

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the North Pole, 1818-1909 (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 15.

[49] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 49.

[50] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 54.

[51] This was also the same group of Inuits that Peary visited every time he returned to the Arctic and with

that they were of meteoric origin.[53] The Iron Mountains meant nothing more to Ross, though they did eventually secure a spot in Arctic history. Ross and his crew found the Inuits more intriguing than useful, an unfortunate oversight for him on later expeditions. He could have capitalized on the Inuits' familiarity with Arctic geography and climatic adaptations.

The expedition reached Baffin Island and moved into Lancaster Sound, a possible route to the Northwest Passage. Ross' ship was faster than Parry's, and due to a strange decision by Ross, Parry did not see much of Lancaster Sound. Ross claimed to have seen a mountain range blocking further westward travel and turned his ship around for home. He only reached 76 N. He met Parry at the mouth of Lancaster Sound and told him of the mountain range, which he named Croker Mountains after the 1st Secretary of the Admiralty, John Wilson Croker. Had Ross continued on, he might well have discovered a plausible entrance to the Northwest Passage, but he was convinced that the sound was blocked by land, and therefore actually a bay.[54] Parry did not challenge Ross.[55]

Back in England, Barrow fumed at Ross for turning back and the two fought each other publicly over this decision. Ross published his account of the trip, *Voyage of Discovery*, in 1819, in which he recounted his vision of the Croker Mountains and proclaimed that the sound had been blocked by ice. Parry knew nothing about ice in the sound. It was a surprisingly fast publication of such a memoir, and it was clearly meant as a means of pre-emptive self-defense.[56] Barrow wrote a review of the book in the

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whom he became so familiar.
[52] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 29. Ross eventually made his message clear with a bag of presents.
[53] Dodge, *The Polar*, 2-63.
[54] Dodge, *The Polar*, 62-63, 65.
[55] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 30-31. No mountain range exists where Ross claimed to have seen the Croker Mountains.
[56] Dodge, *The Polar*, 80.

Quarterly Review, in which he excused Buchan for his similar failure, but attacked Ross for cowardice and mocked many of his narrative descriptions.[57]

Parry also joined the fight. He finally broke his silence and responded angrily to Ross' assertions in an article in the *Quarterly Review*. Both he and Ross wanted badly to command further voyages to the Arctic, but did not agree on what occurred during the 1818 trip.[58] The Admiralty disliked having two of its own hurting each other publicly and so made a decision favoring one of the men. The Admiralty asked Ross to retire and offered him no more commands, and tapped Parry to lead another effort to find the Northwest Passage.

Parry returned to the Arctic in 1819 on the *Hecla* (375 tons) and proved Ross wrong. James Clark Ross, nephew of John Ross, sailed with Parry. He had also been with Parry and his uncle in 1818. He was not yet a commander, but these early trips helped his career. Parry found no land barriers as far as Lancaster Sound. His ship proceeded further west and won the five-thousand-pound prize when it passed 110 W. He and his men had to wait to claim the money, however, because the ship then got stuck in ice near Melville Island. They spent the winter trapped onboard, the first European crew to do so. Parry had to wait until August for the ice to release its grip on the ship, and even then ice frequently blocked the vessel for days. He did not find the Northwest Passage, yet he became a celebrated hero. As the expedition's leader, he was entitled to one-fifth of the prize from the British parliament, and he earned another one thousand pounds for the sale of his published account of the ordeal.[59] Barrow appreciated Parry's achievements and recommended him for more Arctic commands.

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[57] Dodge, *The Polar*, 80.
[58] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 33.

In 1821, Parry again set sail for the Northwest Passage. George Francis Lyon commanded with him and was in charge of the *Hecla*. Parry led the *Hecla*'s sister ship, the *Fury*. Parry went through the usual routine of equipping the ships for Arctic travel. For example, he increased the hulls' thickness to six inches and made the rudder-cases larger. He also broke with Navy tradition and took two ships of exactly the same size. Previously, the Navy recommended using one smaller ship for greater mobility in shallow water. Parry, however, argued for sister ships so that in case one ship had to be abandoned, the other could hold the entire expedition and supplies. He also took the new "Sylvester" stove with him for extra ship-board warmth and lined the decks of both ships with cork to trap heat. Even small considerations like switching from cots to hammocks on this trip made a difference. On previous trips, any sort of condensed moisture in the bedding froze, making the crews uncomfortable during the long Arctic winter. Parry also took extra precautions to prevent scurvy.[60] These were the extent of the accommodations that Europeans made to the Arctic during their long exploration of the area.

Parry equipped the ships for a three-year voyage, though he only intended to spend two winters in the Arctic. He also brought plenty of entertainment in the form of books, theatrical equipment, a piano, and writing equipment so that the crew could endure the dark, months-long Arctic winter. The men even had a ship newspaper, the *North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*. Parry intended to attempt the passage from further south, near Hudson's Bay. Part of his orders also addressed his behavior towards the Inuits. The admiralty expected him, with "every means within your power to

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[59] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 45.

[60] William Edward Parry, *Journal of a Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific: Performed in the Years 1821-1822-1823, in His Majesty's Ships Fury and Hecla, Under the Orders of Captain William Edward Parry, R.N. F.R.S., and Commander of the Expedition* (New

cultivate a friendship with them, by making them presents of such articles as you may be supplied with, and which may be useful or agreeable to them." He was also directed to be careful, however, lest the Inuits attack him.[61]

The first year, Parry ran into land at Melville Peninsula and could go no further. He spent another winter in the Arctic and planned to find a better, more northerly route to the Pacific the following spring. This winter was much like the previous one Parry spent in ice. About sixty Inuits, including women, visited the crew several times. Parry described them as "good-humored and ever-cheerful people," and the Englishmen seemed genuinely to enjoy their company. They especially appreciated the Inuits' imitation of the English habit of giving three cheers each time a ship landed. Parry did not fully understand the Inuits. He wrote in July, 1822, of his crews' excitement over another visit from the natives. The Inuits gathered to receive presents, which Parry was happy to see, though he worried that "they should go mad on account of them."[62] Apparently, the Inuit women's tendency to scream over each gift disturbed him. Indeed, on this trip he talked about little else than the Inuits.

During the spring of 1822, Parry sailed further up the coastline of Melville Peninsula, relying at one point on maps drawn by the same group of friendly Inuits who so appreciated his gifts. He believed that he saw a waterway that could be the Northwest Passage and named it the Fury and Hecla Strait. Parry decided to winter at the northern tip of Melville Peninsula at a camp called Igloolik, which required him to depend upon a large group of Inuits for support. Parry and Lyon each took extensive notes of the Inuits and their lifestyles, which were later published as parts of their accounts of the

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York: Greenwood Press, 1969; 1st printing London: John Murray, 1824), iii-v.
[61] Parry, *Journal*, xxv.

expedition. The Englishmen looked upon the Inuits as poor children of an unforgiving environment, however, and remarked upon them as little more than objects of curiosity. The explorers made virtually no attempt to copy the Inuits' clothing, diets, or modes of transportation, which would have helped them live more comfortably in the Arctic. Parry was unable to head into his special strait in 1823. The ice never cleared and he sailed back to England with no passage and a scurvy-ridden crew. He fared better than his future sailing companion John Franklin, who had also recently returned from a horrific trip to the Arctic.

Naval officer Franklin left England in 1819 with orders to explore the Coppermine River and either hook up with Parry (leading his first Arctic expedition), or make it to Repulse Bay, one of the few known areas on the western side of Hudson's Bay. He covered five thousand miles by canoe and foot, despite the fact that he had no canoeing experience and inadequate supplies.[63] It was a miserable assignment. His hired men and guides fought constantly with each other, Franklin could not maintain discipline, his health deteriorated, and his Cree hunters abandoned him out of fear of the Inuits and repercussions from an old battle.[64] Franklin managed to drag a small group as far North as Point Turnagain on the other side of Coronation Gulf, but waited too long to turn back and doomed his party to starvation and death. They ate shoes, lichens, and leather tatters as they walked back to the Coppermine River to canoe south to safety. Franklins' charges split into three parties, each looking for local Indians to help them survive the ordeal. One group met a local Iroquois Indian who offered them deer meat. The men

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[62] Parry, *Journal*, 234, 251.
[63] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 51-52, 59, 64-65.
[64] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 68-69. Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 25. The Hudson's Bay Company sent Samuel Hearne to explore the Coppermine River in 1769. He reached it on the third try, in 1770, but during the trip

thought that the meat tasted odd and when the Indian, Michel Teroahaute, behaved strangely upon questioning, the men realized that he had given them the remains of a dead member of their group.[65]

After another member of their group died mysteriously, John Richardson, the young leader of this branch of Franklin's group, convinced that Michel intended to murder all of them, killed him first. Richardson met Franklin at Fort Enterprise, though the men were still starving, and several more died. Eventually, Franklin made it home to England, and the awful story made him a hero. Despite the deaths of eleven of his men, he had successfully navigated the Coppermine River and charted that then poorly known part of the Arctic. He was promoted to post captain and, incredibly, immediately sought to return to search for the Northwest Passage.

In 1824, Parry again took the *Hecla* and the *Fury* to find the passage. The Navy knew that even if it were found, the route was too tortuous and would never be a profitable way to reach Asia. The passage remained of value as an adventurous quest, however. Parry never got close to his previous bases and had to abandon the *Fury* after it ran aground in Lancaster Sound, surrounded by bergs. The expedition lasted one year and was a total failure. Not surprisingly, Parry lost faith in the open polar sea theory.[66]

Franklin left again for the Arctic in 1825, knowing that his new wife Eleanor was dying of tuberculosis. The couple believed that he would lose the expedition, which was ready to sail with ship and supplies, if he delayed. She died six days after he left. Franklin thoroughly explored the Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River, a vast

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some Cree Indians traveling with him killed several Inuits. The massacre clearly affected both groups for several generations.

[65] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 71-72.

[66] Dodge, *The Polar*, 113.

expanse of previously unknown territory.[67] A large stretch of the northern coastline of North America was familiar to Europeans by the early nineteenth century, though no single explorer had yet connected the few known openings. Parry and Franklin believed that they could connect their routes and find the Northwest Passage, but more tragedies stopped this plan.

The 1820's were busy years for English Arctic explorers. By 1827, Parry believed that he could reach the North Pole. Despite their problems navigating the Canadian Arctic, many explorers of Parry's era considered the North Pole a more manageable goal. They assumed that sailing north required mere persistence. Theoretically, a dogged commander with a strong ship could easily find 90 N. Efforts to find the Northwest Passage, however, required superlative navigational skills, lest one sail into one of the countless bays, sounds, islands, channels, and straits that had already disrupted dozens of expeditions. The Royal Society, not yet the RGS, appreciated this new twist on Arctic exploration and offered Parry a money grant. Another future president of the RGS, William Beechey had traveled with Parry when he won the parliamentary prize for reaching 110 W.[68] The familiarity between England's explorers and benefactors created a confidence and preparation necessary for good exploration, and the lack of such ties later proved a problem for America's top explorers.

Parry experimented with overland travel to the pole. He designed two "sledge-boats" for ice travel. They were big and unwieldy: 20' long, 7' wide, with a flat bottom and two sledge runners underneath. Parry and James Clark Ross took the *Hecla* to Spitzbergen and tested the sledges. Parry planned to pick up several reindeer in Norway

[67] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 94-95.
[68] Markham, *The Fifty Years'*, 375.

to pull the two sledges.[69] In June 1827, Parry and Ross aimed the sledges, *Enterprise* and *Endeavor*, toward the North Pole. The reindeer proved impractical, so the men hauled the sledges themselves. It was a difficult trip. The sledges were too heavy and too rigid to handle the uneven terrain, and the steel runners froze to the ice. They also piled unnecessary equipment like books, clothes, and rum onto the sledges, which only added to the burden. Loaded, the sledges weighed 3753 pounds.[70] Parry returned convinced that reaching the pole or finding the Northwest Passage was more difficult than previously thought.

Reaching the North Pole was far beyond the capabilities of the expedition, but Parry did secure a new Farthest North of 82 45' N, which stood until 1875.[71] The trip was so exhausting and overwhelming, however, that the open polar sea theory lost all backers until the 1850's. Parry picked a bad spot to launch an overland expedition to the pole. He launched from Spitzbergen, which was covered with thick Arctic ice. The oceanic flow between Greenland and Spitzbergen carries abundant ice between the two islands each year. The southern drift of the ocean left heavy ice in the exact area where Parry began his overland trips.[72] Later pedestrian explorers chose different starting points with greater success. Nevertheless, Parry accumulated an impressive amount of information about the Arctic Ocean and its ice conditions. His accomplishments shook faith in the open polar sea theory and also discouraged the Royal Navy from sending more crews and ships into the North. English exploration dwindled until the 1850's.

It did not completely die, however. John Ross, humiliated over Parry's public

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[69] Dodge, *The Polar*, 107.
[70] Holland, *Farthest North*, 41.
[71] Dodge, *The Polar*, 107.
[72] Holland, *Farthest North*, 50.

attacks and proof that the Croker Mountains did not exist, ached to redeem himself. In 1829, after Parry and Franklin had returned with little to report, Ross proposed in *A Treatise on Navigation by Steam* to find the passage. The Navy refused to finance him, so he found a private backer, Felix Booth. Booth initially put up several thousand pounds but, worried that people would believe he only wanted the prize money for reaching the Pacific, soon withdrew his support. Ross again asked Parliament for help, but rather than support him it cancelled the prize money entirely. Booth no longer worried about the prize money, so once more he offered to help Ross sail into the Arctic. He put up eighteen thousand pounds and Ross contributed three thousand of his own.[73] Ross and his nephew, James Clark Ross, sailed the *Victory* past Lancaster Sound and across Baffin Bay with no trouble. Eventually, Ross sailed as far west as King William Island, further than Parry had reached on his best voyage. He also spent four consecutive winters in the Arctic, a new record. Nobody else had spent more than two consecutive winters that far North.[74]

The expedition achieved few of its goals, though in 1831 Ross discovered the North Magnetic Pole, the single most impressive feat of the trip. The *Victory* got hopelessly stuck in ice in late 1829 and the men spent the winter on the dying ship. Once again, friendly Inuits offered food, company, and cartographic aid.[75] After the third winter, Ross' crew limped onto Fury Beach, where Parry had once abandoned the *Fury*, and hunkered amid the ruins of that ship and their own supplies to survive a fourth winter.[76] That same spring, James Clark Ross rowed one of the smaller boats to the North

[73] Dodge, *The Polar*, 115.
[74] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*,, 110-111.
[75] Dodge, *The Polar*, 134-135.
[76] Dodge, *The Polar*, 147-148. The *Victory* was still trapped in ice, so the crew left her to drown and

Magnetic Pole. He claimed it in the name of King William IV on June 1, 1831.[77] In August of 1831, the Rosses and their crew rowed several small boats into the whaling lanes and, amazingly, the familiar *Isabella*, the first ship Ross commanded, picked them up. Ross lost only one man during the four-year ordeal, and he attributed his success to the use of Eskimo seal blubber to stave off scurvy, his smaller crew (a fraction of the size of usual Royal Navy expeditions), and his small store of supplies, easier to transport when the ship failed him.[78] The Navy did not follow his example, though these were exactly the sorts of decisions that brought American Robert Peary success several decades later. Ross did not prove conclusively that the routes of Parry and Franklin met somewhere, but he redeemed himself and returned home a hero.

The British Parliament finally acknowledged Ross' success. They paid Booth eighteen thousand pounds, his original investment, and awarded Ross five thousand.[79] Ross was a success, but his nephew brought negative publicity to him once again. The two Rosses contributed in this episode to another Arctic tradition: jealous possession of anything positive accomplished during the trip. The rift's cause was uncertain, but part of the problem lay in James Clark's paranoia over his claim for the North Magnetic Pole. In 1846, John Ross hinted that the cause went further back in time, to his relationship with his nephew. Both had been on the expedition of 1818, during which the uncle claimed to have seen the non-existent Croker Mountains. Ross' nephew was one of several crewmembers on the trip who signed a petition circulated by a science officer stating that nobody else saw the mountains. The petition was ammunition for Barrow,

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moved their supplies to Fury Beach. They planned to sail towards home on small boats from the Victory and hope that they ran into a whaling fleet to take them home to England the following spring.

[77] Dodge, *The Polar*, 141. The North Magnetic Pole was located at 70 5' N in 1831. Today it is located near 75 5'N. It shifts unpredictably.

who had purposefully hindered the elder Ross' career. In addition, it upset Barrow that Ross's success occurred on a civilian voyage. To this date, the Royal Navy organized all English Arctic expeditions. Barrow scoffed at the idea of a private Arctic venture, and wondered how "'the real object that could have induced a captain of the navy to take the command of a merchant ship, without a commission, without official instructions, and without any authority but such as is given to the skipper of a trading vessel.'"[80]

Ross' nephew also upset him in 1834 by indelicately asking whether Ross intended to take part of the acclaim for having reached the North Magnetic Pole. He wished, he wrote, "to receive from you[John Ross] an explicit admission of that fact, as putting that question, if any there exists, to rest." James Clark wanted his uncle to state clearly that he did not intend to share the spotlight.[81] The two men corresponded over the years, but their close partnership was over. Each played a bit part in the next phase of English exploration, but they did so separately.

When England revived her interest in Arctic exploration during the 1850's, she was no longer alone. The rest of the world wondered what could be found in the Arctic, especially because an 1845 Northwest Passage expedition under Captain John Franklin disappeared.[82] It was not unusual for Arctic expeditions to be gone for over a year, but when Franklin failed to return after two years, people noticed.[83] The British Admiralty worried about the loss of 130 men, and Franklin's second wife, Lady Jane, grew

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[78] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 119.
[79] Dodge, *The Polar*, 163.
[80] Vaughan, *The Arctic*, 154.
[81] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 165-166, 169.
[82] John Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return Doubtful: The Heroic Age of Polar Exploration*. (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1988).
[83] John Ross, who had been in the Arctic for four years, 1829-1833, had been presumed dead by 1831 and rescue expeditions were looking for him when the whaler *Isabella* found him and his men and took them home.

desperate over his safety. Men aboard the whaler *Prince of Wales* last saw Franklin's ships in Disko Bay in 1845 tied to an iceberg. When he failed to return in 1846, there was hope that he had made it through the passage. By 1847, with no word from him or sightings from whalers, the Admiralty considered sending other ships in search of Franklin.

The Rosses were once again at the fore of English Arctic planning. John Ross was more convinced than anyone else that Franklin needed help. He appealed to the Admiralty in 1847 for permission to lead a relief expedition. He was turned down mostly because the nation's other explorers, including Ross's nephew, believed that Franklin could easily survive several winters in the Arctic. Ross, however, knew that the only reason his crews had survived four years in the Arctic was because they had found the abandoned *Fury* and her boats and supplies. Without them, they probably could not have made it through the fourth winter.[84] Even Lady Franklin ignored Ross' pleas, though she later became her husband's greatest advocate and personally financed several relief efforts. In 1848, with still no word from or about Franklin, the Admiralty outfitted three relief expeditions. Parliament offered twenty thousand pounds to anyone who could offer assistance to Franklin. One ship had orders to proceed through Lancaster Sound, another was sent through Bering Strait, and the third effort, a land party, was sent to search the Mackenzie River.[85] Lady Franklin believed that Commander Ross was too old to lead a rescue attempt, so the younger Ross returned to the Arctic alone. In 1848, he took the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, supplied for a three-year voyage, on a disastrous trip to find Franklin. He prepared poorly for scurvy, which killed six of his crew and weakened

[84] Dodge, *The Polar*, 227. Mick Conefrey and Tim Jordan, *Icemen* (New York: TV Books, 1998), 26-27.
[85] Conefrey and Jordan, *Icemen*, 27.

many others, mistook Franklin's probable course and searched too far north, and suffered through a hard winter.[86]

The Admiralty continued to ignore the elder Ross. Eventually, he appealed to the Hudson's Bay Company, which agreed in 1850 to sell him a small ship to search for Franklin. Finding nothing, he returned home and sold the *Felix* in 1851.[87] The Rosses ended their active Arctic careers with independent failures, but they were not alone in their frustrations with the Franklin mystery. Ross was one of six searchers that year.

The rest of the world was equally interested, and dozens of missions launched to find some trace of the two ships and the men onboard. All sorts of messages were left for Franklin throughout the Arctic, but still no word came.[88] Lady Franklin did not leave the matter solely to the Royal Navy. She sent letters to whalers in Shetland, won agreement from the Tsar of Russia to search the Siberian coastlines, and asked President Taylor of the United States to send expeditions in search of her husband.[89] The English media grew obsessed with the story. The entire country wanted to know what had happened to its Arctic hero.

No trace was found of Franklin's voyage until 1850, when American and English crews both found signs of Franklin's first winter home on Beechey Island. They discovered that by 1846 much of the meat for the expedition had already spoiled, and three of Franklin's men had died and were buried there.[90] These findings only made the

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[86] Dodge, *The Polar*, 233.
[87] Dodge, *The Polar*, 237, 241.
[88] Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return*, 4. Ships left message bottles throughout Lancaster Sound, balloons dropped flyers, crews attached notes to the collars of trapped and released foxes. Conefrey and Jordan, 28. The balloon flyers reported the coordinates of different rescue vessels. There was still the possibility that Franklin was alive.
[89] Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return*, 27.
[90] Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return*, 5; Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 179-180. American Edwin De Haven and two British commanders, John Ross and William Penny, found signs of Franklin's encampment on

disappearance more confusing, however, and more ships sailed to find him. The signs pointed to tragedy, but devoted followers postulated that perhaps Franklin had discovered the Northwest Passage and might still be alive, in need of aid or congratulations.[91]

The continuing searches did little more than fill in the Arctic map, however. Robert McClure won the offered twenty thousand pounds for discovering the Northwest Passage, though he did not actually sail it. He entered the passage from the Bering Strait, lost his ship, the *Investigator*, to ice in Mercy Bay, walked on land to Barrow Strait, and sailed the rest of the passage on a rescue whaler. He saw the Atlantic Ocean from the point at which he had abandoned his ship.[92] Thus, the search for Franklin indirectly led to the end of the search for the Northwest Passage. Norwegian Roald Amundsen was the first to sail the Northwest Passage in 1906 on the *Gjoa*.

News of what actually happened to Franklin did not reach the world until 1854. John Rae of the Hudson's Bay Company ran into a group of Inuits who reported an earlier encounter with forty white men heading south to hunt deer. The Inuits had seen them in 1850 near Boothia Peninsula, and through sign language had learned that the men's ships had been destroyed by ice, and they were heading elsewhere for food. The Inuits told Rae that a while later they came across many white men's bodies, presumably from this same group. The English newspapers reported the story, and apparently

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Beechey Island. The three captains were all there at the same time. They found several large meat canisters sitting on the beach, filled with gravel. Had the meat still been fresh or transportable, Franklin would have left it in the canisters.

[91] Roderick Impey Murchison, *Royal Geographical Society Addresses* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1857), 379, 471-475. Ten years later, after much more was known, members of the RGS petitioned the English Parliament asking for one more expedition to search for Franklin. The government refused. As a further example of the devotion Franklin's disappearance wrought, in his presidential address to the RGS in 1857, Murchison spoke at length about the qualities of a recently deceased RGS member, Lord Francis Egerton (Lord Ellesmere, for whom Ellesmere Island was named). Murchison fondly remembered Egerton's musings about the possibility that Franklin's ships might even now be "...working their way through Behring [sic] Strait into the Pacific."

[92] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 222-223.

included as much information as Rae had learned from the Inuits, including descriptions of the final death scene and signs of cannibalism.[93] Rae eventually received ten thousand pounds from Parliament for solving the Franklin case, but others refused to give up the search.

Lady Franklin continued the search for her husband. She became a national heroine, as well as an Arctic expert, due to the effort. Men from Franklin's crew were found further south than anyone in the Admiralty had looked, and his ships had still not been seen. The full story remained a puzzle. She believed that he may have indeed found the Northwest Passage via this more southerly route.[94] She corresponded with American philanthropist Henry Grinnell, who sympathized with her and outfitted an American search expedition under Edwin De Haven.[95] Grinnell became a fixture and repeat sponsor of American Arctic exploration. De Haven took the *Advance* and the *Rescue* too far north, just like his English predecessors. His ship surgeon, however, was Elisha Kent Kane, the most famous American Arctic explorer before Peary, who read Kane's narratives as a child. Kane's initial trip, the First Grinnell Expedition, was an eventful one. Most of the men caught scurvy, including Kane himself, and the ice-bound ship was released just in time for the men to sail home after one winter in the Arctic.[96] Kane returned again to the Arctic, and his efforts brought interest in the Arctic to America. As England's Arctic strength dwindled, the Americans' interest in Arctic prizes began.

Before the Americans became serious contenders in the Arctic, however, England managed to solve the great mystery. In 1857, Englishman Francis Leopold McClintock

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[94] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 30-31.
[95] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 173.
[96] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 182-184.

took the *Fox*, a ship purchased by Lady Franklin, to look for Franklin. She knew McClintock because he had sailed with James Clark Ross in 1848, during that failed Franklin search. McClintock found the same Inuits who had spoken to Rae, and they repeated the story. They saw one ship sink and watched the other break to pieces in the ice. The Inuits took the ship's wood for their own uses. They also saw the men walk away and reported that they "fell down and died as they walked along." McClintock's lieutenant found a cairn left by Franklin's expedition holding two messages, the only clues ever found to explain what happened. The first message reported that the first winter was spent on Beechey Island and that all was fine. The second reported that the ships had remained stuck in ice for another year and had never broken free. It also said that the ships were deserted in April, 1848. Franklin died June 11, 1847, and as of April 25, 1848, twenty-six men had died. In addition, the note stated that the men intended to walk south, presumably to hunt and look for help. Franklin had died before the Admiralty began looking for him. McClintock and Hobson also found two skeletons in a boat further south, which the men apparently intended to use to sail down the Back River if they reached it.[97] The story was clear. Ice trapped and crushed Franklin's ships, the men abandoned the ships and tried to walk south hauling a huge boat behind them for future use, and they died of starvation.

Yet by 1857, the Northwest Passage was no longer a viable goal, and Arctic maps were impressively full. There were few unknowns left in the Arctic, and there remained one great goal: the North Pole. America, Italy, and Norway engaged in Arctic exploration after the Franklin mystery, and English expeditions dwindled. It took time for explorers to abandon completely the idea of the open polar sea and to pay closer

[97] Conefrey and Jordan, 31-32.

attention to the invaluable aid of the Inuits. In addition, funding sources became as much a part of the story as the expeditions. England's Navy supported Arctic exploration during most of the nineteenth century as a way to occupy its large post-Napoleonic crews, and its most impressive scientific organization, the RGS, offered publication opportunities and occasional funding. The steady support, however, could not overcome a basic lack of climatic preparation, and insufficient sailing vessels. Future explorers took these encounters a step further and realized that adopting some Inuit customs made the Arctic easier to bear. The next phase of Arctic exploration was different, however. It was less romantic, more competitive, and more difficult to explain. The North Pole never had the initial significance that the Northwest Passage did, as a door to the other side of the world. It was simply a place to be found. Eventually, under pressure to justify a quest to the pole, explorers said that they intended to note, for scientific purposes, everything they saw on the way to this lone spot. The search for the Northwest Passage created a map of the Arctic. The search for the North Pole provided descriptions of the landscape and its inhabitants. Kane and Peary, two Americans, set the standards for another level of Arctic exploration.

Chapter Two

"Especially for Making Geographical Discoveries": Americans in the Arctic

The mystery of John Franklin's disappearance appealed to people the world over. England tried first and hardest to find her missing sailors. All clues indicated tragedy, but as the search progressed other nations and explorers jumped in. Americans became the next dominant Arctic presence. Unlike the English, however, the Americans did not simultaneously organize the information collected by their explorers and scientists. The Americans lacked a counterpart to the Royal Geographic Society (RGS), which led to years of disorganized stock-piling of random bits of Arctic material by several scientific institutions. The first Americans to explore the Arctic did so because it was historically significant and because there was federal, military, or private money at their disposal. The combination of ready money and interest in the Franklin saga launched several American Arctic expeditions. These explorers contributed to the debate over the open polar sea theory, learned to use the Inuits' climatic adaptations to their advantage, and mapped the Arctic, but the leaders, funding, and overall emphases in Arctic geography differed in each case. American explorers mobilized their national scientific organizations to fund and support Arctic exploration, a significant break from the historical pattern.

As interest in the Northwest Passage dwindled, American explorers groped for good reasons to follow Franklin into a region of so many tragedies and failures. Robert Edwin Peary began his polar career over thirty years after the first popular American endeavor. His predecessors tended to want either to find Franklin or to

reach the North Pole. Peary learned to cage his polar attempts within broader agendas of furthering science, helping the Inuits, and exploring a new frontier. Several Americans tried to find Franklin or the North Pole before Peary took over, but only three men left permanent legacies. Elisha Kent Kane, Charles Francis Hall, and Adolphus W. Greely each led men into the Arctic, and each one represented a new phase of American northern exploration. Their struggles to justify Arctic discovery gave him starting points when he looked for his own financial assistance. Their trips also affected the national mood regarding Arctic exploration, and it made a difference that Peary began his northern work soon after Greely's tragedy. Peary had to find support for sending men and money into a rough region that had claimed American lives in addition to countless international crews.

Americans began Arctic work at the height of the Franklin craze. In 1850, five years after Franklin left England, Lady Jane Franklin asked Americans to look for her husband, prompting wealthy American philanthropist and shipping tycoon Henry Grinnell to fund the First Grinnell Expedition. Nine British relief expeditions left the same year. Never before had the Canadian Arctic hosted so many Anglo visitors. Grinnell, with Lady Franklin's permission, bought two ships and gave them to the federal government so that the US Navy might control the search. Navy Lieutenant Edwin DeHaven led the *Advance* and the *Rescue* into the crowded region around Lancaster Sound, where most sailors erroneously believed Franklin might yet be found.[1] (See Appendix, Figures 3-4)

[1] Pierre Berton, *The Arctic Grail: The Quest for the Northwest Passage and the North Pole, 1818-1909* (New York: Penguin Book, 1988), 175. It was simply called The Grinnell Expedition until Elisha Kent Kane led the second one in 1853. Franklin's men and encampments were much further south, on King William Island. As will be seen, it was not uncommon for the Navy to allow an officer and a few men

DeHaven spent the winter of 1851 ice-locked in Wellington Channel. Most of the English vessels were trapped as well, but a separation of even a few miles made visiting impossible. It was too difficult to walk across iced ocean. The majority of the crew developed scurvy and all thirty-three of them spent several months huddled in one room on the *Advance* after the *Rescue* suffered ice damage. The only high point came when the Americans and two British commanders came upon what appeared to be the 1845-46 winter encampment of Franklin. Unfortunately, Franklin had left no sign of where he and his men went from there.[2] Clearly, the Americans' first foray was a disappointing one. It became remarkable in later years only because it was the first one for ship surgeon Elisha Kent Kane, who became an international hero.

Kane had a weak heart and seemed to know that he had to cram much adventure into a short time span. He was only thirty-seven years old when he died eight years after the DeHaven trip. In 1853, Kane commanded the Second Grinnell Expedition and in doing so became the most famous American Arctic explorer until 1909, the year Peary claimed success. Before Kane died, he published an incredibly popular account of the voyage he led into the Arctic. Kane also maintained contact with Grinnell after the trip and even printed an open letter to him in New York newspapers explaining where he thought Franklin could be found. Kane was a flashy, emotional writer and he drew the public into his dreams. His Arctic interests

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to obtain special leave for various Arctic quests. The Navy did not want the expense of supplying the expeditions, nor did it wish to put one of its own ships into jeopardy. However, the men who wanted to go were often already pursuing naval careers, and it was an easy matter to receive special permission for these first privately funded endeavors.

[2] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 179-184. DeHaven met and worked with British leaders William Penny and legendary John Ross before he got stuck in ice for the winter. They found three graves, several tents, and obvious remains of an encampment along the west coast of Beechey Island.

meshed perfectly with current public enthusiasm. In one plea for continued searches he wrote:

> I trust for the sake of the United States, for the sake of the noble-hearted woman, who has been the animating soul of all the Expedition, for the sake of this flag which has so triumphantly borne the battle and the breeze, for the sake of the humanity which makes us all kin, I trust that [the]search is not yet ended, that the rescue of Sir John Franklin is yet reserved to his nation and the world.[3]

This statement is revealing. Kane made it based on little more than the spirit of adventure and the hint of a tragic tale. Kane believed in the open polar sea theory and that Franklin might yet be alive.[4] His faith in the open polar sea theory gave him an edge in Arctic circles because wealthy patron Grinnell wwas willing to test it. Kane supported the assertions of famous American oceanographer Matthew Fountain Maury, the leading proponent of the idea. Maury explained that the open polar sea theory was possible based on water temperatures, directions and rates of oceanic flow, sightings of animal life moving further north at high latitudes, recordings of swimming birds like the eider duck around Baffin Island, whalers' tales of narwhals, seals, and walruses moving north from the ice edge, evidence that polar bears travelled beyond the supposed ring of ice, and historical uncertainties regarding where exactly the ice became impenetrable.[5]

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[3] Mark Horst Sawin "Raising Kane: The Making of a Hero, the Marketing of a Celebrity." M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1997. "The noble-hearted woman" is Lady Franklin.
[4] Sawin, "Raising Kane," 11-12.
[5] Silas Bent, *An Address Delivered Before the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association, January 6th, 1872, Upon the Thermal Paths to the Pole, the Currents of the Ocean, and the Influence of the Latter Upon the Climates of the World* (St. Louis: The R.P. Studley Co., 1872). Bent presented his paper as a defense against recent attacks on his ideas. In the paper, he neatly summarized the arguments of M.F. Maury, upon whose ideas he drew for his own proposal of a thermal route to the North Pole. Elisha Kent Kane, *Access to an Open Polar Sea in Connection with the Search After Sir John Franklin and His Companions*, read before the American Geographical and Statistical Society at its Regular Monthly Meeting, December 14, 1852, (New York: Baker, Godwin and Co., 1853),12-14.

Kane was a serious student of Arctic history. He knew that ice was a problem between 72 and 77 N and that ships never made it further than 82 N under the best conditions. He firmly believed that the ice around 80 N was a ring encircling the Polynya, the Iceless Sea. He won public and scientific support by combining the search for Franklin with the debate over the open polar sea theory. In a special address before the American Geographical and Statistical Society (AGS) in 1853, as he finished his fundraising lecture tour, he offered Americans the chance to find answers to both questions. He said that "the question of access to the Arctic pole- the penetration to this open sea-is noww brought again before us, not as in the days of Hudson and Scoresby and Parry, a curious problem for scientific inquiry, but as an object claiming philanthropic effort, and appealing thus to the sympathies of the whole civilized world-the rescue of Sir John Franklin and his followers."[6]

The open polar sea theory was still the key to other questions about the Arctic, such as whether there was land beyond 80 N, how far Greenland extended northward, and how the currents ran north of the ice barrier. As long as explorers believed that there was a thermal water route across the entire arctic region they would try to explore it by ship. Kane's interest in both the open polar sea theory and the search for Franklin was a new twist to familiar Arctic problems. He never mentioned the Northwest Passage; instead, he focused on England's lost crew.

The combination of Kane's faith in Maury's theory and his access to Grinnell's money placed him in an ideal spot at a key moment for American science and exploration. Navy lieutenant Maury's overwhelming "evidence" for the open polar sea theory won him international fame and brought welcome attention to a new

[6] Kane, *Access*, 16.

field of American science later known as oceanography. Maury, like England's Hakluyt a generation before him, collected information from all sources: trained scientists, amateurs, whalers, and explorers, and his enthusiasm for all opinions turned early oceanography into an interdisciplinary science. Many of his pet ideas, including the open polar sea theory, were later revised or corrected, but the sheer volume of his work moved him and his supporters into the scientific spotlight during the mid nineteenth century.[7]

Despite the relative flood of expeditions sent to look for Franklin, these crews' reports were only minor contributions to his calculations of oceanic currents. His steadiest data collectors were whalers. Their observations about the types of whales found seasonally in particular oceans helped Maury publish innumerable maps and charts. In addition, his most significant book *Physical Geography of the Sea* (1855) became a necessary handbook for all sailors and explorers. Maury promoted the open polar sea theory because he believed that the planet's water flowed through all of the oceans, and that the evidence of cold and warm water currents in different parts of the world proved that harmonic balance drifted with them. The cold polar waters, he thought, sank and drifted to the equator, while the equator's warmer waters moved toward the poles. The presence of an open polar sea was the most obvious way to account for the currents' circulation.[8] No explorer had yet sailed far enough north to disprove the idea.

Maury operated in an atmosphere in which the US Navy and scientists of several fields were all professionalizing. As director of the US Hydrographic Office

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[7] William H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery* (New York: Viking, 1986), 302-303.

for sixteen years (1844-181), Maury devoted his attention to making sailing directions easier to read and follow. He initiated the scientific study of hydrography and sailing directions, and sailors reported easier and shorter oceanic voyages as a result.[9] Maury benefitted from the navy's peacetime interests in this type of research. During the thirty years before the Civil War, the US Navy sometimes aided select commercial ventures. The US Coast Survey (1807) and the Depot of Charts and Instruments (1830) both began as means of protecting American merchants. The navy experimented early with using its crews on scientific enterprises. In 1836, Congress approved $300,000 for the US Exploring Expedition.[10] Commander Charles C. Wilkes oversaw a successful trip to map specific parts of the Pacific Ocean, but the cooperation between the navy men and the passenger "scientifics" was problematic. Wilkes (also working as expedition surveyor, astronomer, physicist, meteorologist, and historiographer) exerted strict control over the scientifics, assigning particular areas of observation to each one. Some of the scientists were trained so generally that they did not know how to adapt their skills to the particular needs of the expedition. For example, Wilkes often decided which among them would study mammals, which ones birds.[11] Wilkes' trip was successful, but the navy-science combination won little

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[8] Goetzmann, *New Lands*, 327.

[9] Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, and Karin Gleiter, *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 281.

[10] Elizabeth Green Musselman, "Science as a Landed Activity: Scientifics and Seamen Aboard the U.S. Exploring Expedition," in Edward C. Carter II, ed., *Surveying the Record: North American Scientific Exploration to 1930* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1999), 81-83. Wilkes led the expedition (1838-1842) with directions to chart the South Pacific for merchant traders, determine if the Great Southern Continent existed, establish the United States as international scientific force, and observe British Hudson's Bay activity in the northwestern United States. It was a massive undertaking that eventually involved six ships, a naval squadron, and nine passenger scientists/artists. Wilkes returned with hundreds of charts for the navy and countless physical specimens for the Smithsonian Institution.

[11] Musselman, "Science," 86-91. The navy men and the scientifics also disagreed over how to

support. Also, even though Maury made fast use of the maps and charts, the boatloads of specimens donated to the Smithsonian Institution sparked little public interest. Congress decided it had overspent on an unremarkable idea, and did nothing to further the collaboration.[12] In the future, civilian scientists would need to find other means of travel and money for their research.

With the navy and the nation's professional scientists operating separately, the United States found itself on the verge of a new methodology for scientific exploration. Maury successfully merged his naval career with his personal research interests, and his work brought new life to an old theory. The whalers and explorers upon whom he depended for information, however, operated within the worlds of commerce or philanthropy in order to secure their funding. Grinnell, Kane's patron, responded to the Franklin mystery, but expected scientific validation and a search for the open polar sea from his expedition.

Kane was genuinely interested in both questions. Grinnell had already promised him the use of the *Advance* for his trip. He needed more money for supplies, however, and he knew that Grinnell's acquaintances in the American Geographical Society (AGS) were his best chance for the funds. Kane introduced his quest to the AGS: "Gentlemen of the society:...the resources of those whose philanthropy has fitted out this expedition, must be scrupulously appropriated to the single object of search. But this search is not merely a voyage of rescue; it appeals to

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appropriate shipboard space. The scientifics wanted space to organize and label their collections, and the naval crew resented the inconvenience and hazards. Also, the scientifics were disappointed that the ship did not stop more often for terrestrial collection and observation opportunities. Eventually, Wilkes developed the habit of dropping off the scientifics at convenient locales, sailing further to make his own calculations, and returning to retrieve the passengers.

[12] Musselman, "Science," 100.

the highest interests of scientific inquiry; but to physical geography especially."[13] Everyone wanted to know if it were possible to sail all the way to the pole. Kane also announced that he would learn more about physical geography in his exploration of southern Greenland. He would benefit thermal science with his determination of "the distribution of heat upon the surface of the globe." And he would help the field of terrestrial magnetism with special attention paid to the magnetic force near the pole. The Smithsonian Institution offered him an advance for some necessary instruments, and John P. Kennedy, Secretary of the Navy, gave him special leave to make the trip.[14] Kane obtained his military leave, the ship, and the instruments all without revealing his proposed route. Arctic fundraisers paid attention to the route because most had theories about where Franklin might have travelled, wrecked, died, or awaited rescue. Kane withheld his plans until he stood before the AGS, where he announced that he would explore northern Greenland.[15]

Kane left in 1853 for a one-year trip. He hoped to prove Maury's open polar sea theory, but he was a complete amateur regarding ship leadership and scientific observation. Ice trapped the *Advance* for two winters, one thousand miles further north than the spot where Englishman John Rae, in 1854, found the best evidence of the Franklin disaster. Kane had no way of knowing that he was in the wrong place,

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[13] Kane, "Access," 23.
[14] Kane, "Access," 23- 24.
[15] Elisha Kent Kane, *Arctic Explorations: The Second Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin, 1853, '54, '55* (Philadelphia: Childs and Peterson, 1856), 1: 17. Kane stated that he would use a land base, which was a new idea by itself. Previous explorers only left their ships if forced to by extreme emergency. Nobody knew where the northern boundary of Greenland lay. Kane clung to the current belief that it was a peninsula, "nearer the Pole than any other known land." He planned to use the Inuits for help and to depend upon local animal populations for food. He explained that after he found the northern tip of Greenland, he could then easily travel east or west and search for Franklin without the usual geographical hindrances further south. He would proceed to the northern point of Baffin Bay by sledge and boat and explore the necessary coastlines for signs of Franklin. pp. 17-18.

so he maintained appearances and explored as much as possible. He kept a daily journal, used his scientific instruments, and let his feelings about the region flow into his observations. It was a completely unremarkable expedition, but it made him incredibly famous.

Upon his return to the United States, Kane and his publisher George W. Childs compromised on the content of Kane's forthcoming book about the Second Grinnell Expedition. His first book, an account of his trip with DeHaven, came out in 1854 during his absence, and was mildly popular. The second book, however, shot Kane into celebrity status. Kane insisted on the inclusion of sixty pages of scientific tables and charts to go along with his emotional narrative. The combination was a hit and the book became a bestseller.[16] He purposely wrote the book "for the general reader" and avoided the usual lengthy discussions of scientific records and precise numerical data. He also filled the book with several hundred engravings and sketches of the land, the Inuits, his men and the ships, the Inuits' tools and clothing, and images of routine activities the men performed to survive the almost unbearable conditions. Despite setbacks, he enjoyed the setting, as the following description indicates:

> It was saddening to our poor fellows, when we were forced to leave the ice-belt and push out into the open field, to look ahead at the salt ice-marshes, as they called them, studded with black pools, with only a white lump rising here and there through the lead-colored surface, like tussocks of grass or rushes struggling through a swamp. The labor would have been too much for us, weary and broken as we were, but for the occasional assistance we derived from the Esquimaux. I remember once a sledge went so far under, carrying with it several of the party, that the boat floated loose. Just then seven of the natives came up to us, --five sturdy men, and two almost as sturdy women,

[16] Sawin, "Raising Kane," 27, 30. Kane's first book was called *The U.S. Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin: A Personal Narrative*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854. Kane's second book sold over 135,000 copies during its first two years of publication.

> --and, without waiting to be called on, worked with us most efficiently for more than half a day, asking no reward.[17]

More important, Kane kept alive the idea of an open polar sea. He claimed that a member of his expedition saw open water further north than Smith Sound. Scientists and the public alike latched onto this idea. Maury published his landmark oceanographic book *The Physical Geography of the Sea* a few months after Kane's return, and he counted Kane's statements as further evidence that his ideas had merit. Armchair Arctic travellers debated what the news meant, and the New York *Times* printed editorials about the presence of an open polar sea and speculations about its form.[18] Kane contributed little of scientific or newsworthy merit, although he did amass a substantial collection of plants, which he donated to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science.[19] The open polar sea theory died within a few years of this trip when later explorers found better routes, travelled further north, and saw no hint of an open sea. Kane found no sign of Franklin and set no Farthest North records. Yet when he died in 1857 thousands of people lined up to view his body as it travelled from Havana (where he died) to Philadelphia by steamboat and train, and every major newspaper and journal in the nation covered his death.[20] England's prestigious RGS also mourned his passing and appreciated his search for their lost

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[17] Kane, *Arctic Explorations*, 1: 5; 2: 232-233.
[18] Sawin, "Raising Kane," 29.
[19] Berton, *The Arctic Grail*, 294. Kane's ship sailed further north than any previous ship. He explored a large water trail that today bears his name--Kane Basin. These were significant events but hardly seminal moments in Arctic history: Kane, Volume 2, *Arctic Explorations*, 442-467. Botanist Elias Durand studied and enumerated the plant specimens, trying to determine more precisely the different Arctic climate zones. One of the signs that the sub-Arctic region has turned into the Arctic region is a decrease of plant life. Botanists studied the plants to determine at which longitude certain plants ceased to exist, as well as how some lichens and moss survived on the Arctic tundra.
[20] Sawin, "Raising Kane," 33.

crew.[21] Kane made the Arctic popular and interesting in America, aside from the hysteria over the Franklin disaster.

The next significant American explorer of the Arctic had a few things in common with Kane. He was not a scientist and depended heavily upon Grinnell and the AGS. Initially, these desires created the same problems for him as they had for Kane. It was difficult to raise money, he operated almost completely alone even in the Arctic, and it still was not clear where to find Franklin or his men. Hall never achieved the level of fame of Kane, nor did he contribute longlasting ideas to the fields of physical geography or oceanography. He went to the Arctic three times, twice in search of Franklin and once to find the North Pole. He failed each time. He meant a great deal to American Arctic exploration, however, because he wrote extensively about the Inuits of Greenland and described their climatic adaptations. He intended these observations to be tools for his searches for Franklin or the pole, but instead they became his enduring legacies to Arctic travel. Hall started his northern exploits searching for Franklin but ended up looking for the pole. In doing so, he became the first American to explain reasons for going to the pole as a separate issue from the trips undertaken to find the Northwest Passage, the open polar sea, or Franklin.

In 1854, nine years after Franklin first left England, Englishman Dr. John Rae led a mapmaking expedition into the Arctic and accidentally found items from Franklin's ships that confirmed that the story ended in disaster. He encountered a

[21] Roderick Impey Murchison, *Royal Geographical Society Addresses* (London: Printed by William Clowes and Sons, 1857), 399. The RGS marveled at the American's extensive mourning rituals for Kane and expressed. The world's admiration for Kane's search for Franklin helped the RGS maintain its interest in the search.

group of Inuits who told Rae they remembered Franklin's group and that they had seen the men's dead bodies. He brought back a few items from the Inuits that could only have come from the personal stores of Franklin's crew, such as specially engraved silverware. Francis Leopold McClintock had the grim task of discovering whether Rae's story was true. Lady Franklin sent him in the *Fox* to King William Island in 1857. He confirmed that Franklin died early in the disaster, but many of his men survived long enough to haul sledges further south in hopes of finding help. They died of starvation, exposure, and scurvy as they walked.[22]

But as late as 1860 nobody had yet found the bodies of the last group of men from Franklin's original crew. McClintock found a cairn holding two notes, the first left in 1847 and the second a year later, indicating that the ship spent two consecutive winters frozen in near King William Island.. The second note said that Franklin had died on June 11, 1847, which became the total amount known about Franklin's death. In September 1848, Francis Crozier led the last survivors south towards Back's Fish River. McClintock followed the apparent trail of the men as far as he could, finding skeletons and discarded items along the way. He never found Crozier and the unknown numbers who made it further south than the river. He returned to England with these few answers in 1857.[23] Hall went North in 1860 despite full knowledge of these conclusions.

Hall was a successful newspaperman and seal engraver in Cincinnati when he decided to become an Arctic explorer. Little is known about what finally prompted him to sell his paper and journey to the North, but in 1860 he undertook the first of

[22] Chauncey Loomis, *Weird and Tragic Shores: The Story of Charles Francis Hall, Explorer* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 17, 19.

three rigorous Arctic trips. Hall filled voluminous notebooks with information about Arctic current events, history, geography, and biography. He "believed that God had destined him to find Franklin survivors or at least to solve the mystery of the expedition's fate."[24]

When Hall decided in 1860 to pursue the Franklin mystery, he approached a particular group of people in the East. He insinuated himself within the small circle of American Arctic experts. Hall was unknown in the whaling and sailing industries, so it took him awhile to track down his best resources. He persuaded several important Ohio men, including Governor Salmon Chase, to sign a petition in support of his quest. He also published a circular to explain himself, which almost thirty influential Cincinnati citizens signed. He listed three goals: to find any Franklin survivors, to resolve lingering questions about the mens' final fates, and "to promote and benefit the cause of Geography, Navigation, Natural History and Science."[25] Science, again, had a place in Arctic work, but it served as a safety net. If the mision failed, he would of course have some scientific observations to trumpet. He was not a scientist, nor did he have any volunteers or paid crew to offer as helpmates in these endeavors.

Grinnell was a pivotal character in Hall's decision to command Arctic expeditions. He introduced Hall to the insiders of the private sailing industry: ships' captains, financiers, and members of the AGS. Grinnell was the first president of the AGS when it organized in 1851. Geography was not yet a professionally organized

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[23] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 19.
[24] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 41.
[25] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 43-44.

field, so the name was a bit misleading. Most of the members of the club were wealthy men like Grinnell with philanthropic interests and tastes for adventure. They liked to know and sponsor the men or groups who explored and mapped exotic places around the world. The scientific information gathered interested them, but few of them were actually geographers.

Grinnell arranged for Hall to attend a lecture before the organization members given by Isaac Hayes, another American heading into the Arctic that year. Hayes and Hall had many of the same parties interested in their northern dreams, but Hayes was already prepared. The American Arctic community was small and Grinnell was the most consistent financier. He helped both Hayes and Hall leave for the north in 1860.[26]

Grinnell hired a ship and a few private donors supplied Hall with food and basic supplies. Hall attached himself to a larger whaling venture, which agreed to drop him off at a specified location while it continued on to whaling grounds, then retrieve him and his ship on its way back. Unfortunately, Hall's whaler the *George Henry* got stuck in ice in late September of 1860. Her companion ship, the *Rescue*, was smashed to pieces during a storm, as was Hall's small expedition ship.[27] He could not look for Franklin without an independent craft, so he salvaged the trip by

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[26] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 46-47, 52. Grinnell funded most of Hall's trip, but also served as treasurer of Hayes' expedition. Grinnell was a wealthy humanitarian shipping magnate who seemed to have no ulterior motives regarding the various commands he funded in the Arctic. Several geographical points bear his name as a result of the numbers of men he helped, and he certainly made no money in return for his aid. The American Geographical Society was officially the American Geographical and Statistical Society for its first years. Hall and Kane referred to it as the Geographical Society of New York in their respective books.
Dennis Rawlins, *Peary at the North Pole: Fact or Fiction?* (Washington: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1973), 23-25. Hayes was the ship's surgeon on Kane's 1853-55 trip, so he was already a familiar name to Grinnell and the AGS. He left on the *United States* in 1860, hoping to reach the North Pole. Thick ice turned him back and he spent only one winter in the Arctic.
[27] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 76.

switching his focus.

He spent the winter studying and getting to know the local Eskimos on Baffin Island. The whalers remained on the stranded *George Henry*, but Hall left the ship and lived with the Inuits. He became especially attached to an Inuit couple named Ebierbing (Joe) and Tookoolito (Hannah) who had spent several years in England during the 1850's. A whaling crew had taken them to England, where they learned to speak English and were guests of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Inuit couple intrigued Hall. He gave Hannah reading and writing lessons, presented her with a Bible, and dreamed that their civilized ways would someday spread throughout the Eskimo settlements of Greenland. Hall hypothesized that in order to understand what became of Franklin he needed to reflect upon the Inuits' lifestyles. He spent over one month away from the ship, living with the Inuits and depending completely upon them for his survival and tutelage.[28]

Hall returned to New York to raise money as fast as possible. Grinnell arranged for him to present his results before the AGS. Hall was excited about some relics he had found from what he believed to be Martin Frobisher's 1576 Arctic expedition. The trophies that received the most attention, however, were Joe, Hannah, and their baby son Tukerliktu (the Butterfly). Hall's ship captain Sidney O. Budington brought them to the AGS for Hall's talk, after which Hall arranged for the Inuits to spend a week on display at Barnum's Museum.[29] He also allowed Boston's Cotting and Guay's Aquarial Gardens to showcase the family for two weeks, upon the

[28] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 79, 93.
[29] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 137. Audiences liked the Inuits so much that they stayed on with Barnum for an additional week.

recommendation of famed scientist Louis Agassiz.[30] The Inuits were so popular that without them he might never have maintained patronage.

Nevertheless, Hall had a terrible time garnering finacial aid for his next trip. He started a lecture tour, but still lacked enough for the several thousand dollars it cost to rent a ship, hire a crew, and outfit an Arctic exploration team. All serious politicians were focused on the Civil War, and Hall faced a complete lack of government interest in the North Pole.[31] He turned again to the AGS, which formed a joint committee with the New York Chamber of Commerce to raise the approximately fifteen thousand dollars necessary to outfit a ship.

Hall secured one ship, but circumstances forced him to sell it to support himself and his two Inuit charges. He refused to give up, though, and arranged for passage on a whaler, the *Monticello*. He had no crew, no money, and no means of independent transport aside from the whaler. The men who believed in him tried to enlist public enthusiasm for his continued quest to find Franklin. Grinnell, Brevoort, and a few others published a direct appeal in several New York newspapers. In it, they stated that "Our countrymen have won an honorable fame by their courage and endurance in Arctic research. It is, therefore, not fit that one who has already shown such perserverance, fortitude, and ingenuity in his previous voyage as Captain Hall

[30] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 137-39. Agassiz wrote a letter to Hall saying that the Boston showmen would take good care of their charges. Hall had a bad experience with Cotting and Guay's, who never paid him for the full expenses for transport of the Inuits. Hall also decided after this event that the shows were too hard on the Inuits, who often got overheated from appearing in full Arctic gear in close quarters indoors. They tended to return ill to their temporary home with the Budingtons. He refused to hire them out anymore, but did continue to take them with him on personal lecture tours.

[31] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 142-144. Richard Chappell, a wealthy whaling agent, believed in Hall and led him to believe that the government would help him. Chappell knew several important government figures, including the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and he wrote to them on Hall's behalf. Hall planned a trip to Washington to push his cause, but got so little positive response from war-weary politicians that he never went.

has done, shall be permitted to leave our shores lacking anything which can further his laudable object." They further asked that their "public-spiritied citizens" help him with the additional three thousand dollars he needed for a small ship and supplies. The request worked. Hall received enough money to have a small expedition ship (the *Sylvia*) built and to buy supplies and food. He outfitted himself for a three-year voyage.[32] Arctic fervor had changed since the days of Kane. The same small circle of people looked forward to positive returns, but without the Franklin mystery as fuel it took greater efforts to get an American into the North.

Hall left in 1864 and spent five winters in the Arctic. Joe and Hannah returned with him, but besides these two and a German he hired from the whaling crew, he was alone. Once again he lived among the Inuits, adopting their style of dress, learning their language, observing their cultures and habits. He also secured the last details about what probably happened to Franklin's men. A group of Inuits pointed out the exact location where either the *Erebus* or the *Terror* sank and a spot near there where several of the men died in a big tent, surrounded by tools, clothing, weapons, and bedding. He met other Inuits who described seeing Crozier and the last few Franklin men, clearly starving, asking for help from the Inuits. The natives, also searching for food, did not stop to help the men and later found skeletons near this scene.[33] Thus, Hall confirmed that none of Franklin's men survived the sixteen-year-old ordeal. His interest in the Arctic remained strong, however, and as soon as he returned to the United States he began asking for money to try for the North Pole.

Hall's third trip had funds from both federal and private interests. He shifted

[32] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 156-57.
[33] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 200-201.

from a primary focus on Franklin to a desire to find the North Pole, which partially explains the need to expand his financial base. The Civil War was over, so Hall expected the national government to take an active role in polar exploration. Grinnell and Brevoort again pledged money to Hall, but federal aid was not forthcoming. Grinnell and Brevoort especially applauded Hall's scientific interests, even though these were vague and only broadly stated. In the end, a government institution retained the rights to the scientific information. In a letter sent to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in March 1870, Hall tried to explain his new plan:

> For years I have had it in my mind that when I should complete the mission relative to Sir John Franklin's expedition-that is, should recover some of Franklin's companions, or should become satisfied that none existed- I would return to my country and prepare for making a third voyage to the Arctic regions, especially for making geographical discoveries, even up to the north extremity of the axis of our globe. Neither glory nor money has caused me to devote my very life and soul to Arctic exploration.[34]

Hall expected the federal government to support his switch from the Franklin search to the discovery of the North Pole, an interesting belief given that his specific goals still seemed unclear. In 1870, Hall asked for money based on the highpoints of previous Franklin searching expeditions and the novelty of contact with the Inuits. He had not yet formulated a strong reason for attempting to reach the North Pole. He wanted the United States to be the first to the pole, but he downplayed the history of the search for the Northwest Passage and other Arctic goals. The horrors of Franklin's fate still resonated. Nobody had yet reached the North Pole and many of the most famous stories of Arctic travel involved spectacular failures and horrific

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[34] C.H. Davis, ed., *Narrative of the North Polar Expedition, US Ship Polaris, Captain Charles Francis Hall Commanding* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), 20. Letter dated March 29, 1870. The Committee on Foreign Relations was the Senate counterpart to the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. Both committees determined the fate of a resolution written to

deaths.

Still, however, the combination of slight geographical progress and the thrill of the unknown kept Hall's dreams relevant. On one occasion in 1869, Hall accepted an invitation to speak at the Teachers' Institute of Hamilton County, Ohio, and in a letter to A.B. Johnson, president of the college, he tried to explain why the North Pole mattered. Hall wrote that "there is a great sad blot upon the present age, which ought to be wiped out, and this is the blank on our maps and artificial globes, from about the parallel of 80 North up to the North Pole...Shortly, I expect to apply to our Government for its aid, feeling that the day has come when the great problem of ages on ages must be solved under the stars and stripes." In another attempt to broaden his appeal, Hall insisted that the information would matter for three reasons: geographical discovery, science, and commerce. He planned to discover the North Pole, provide scientific observations to the National Academy of Sciences (a patron), and to report any whale sightings for the whaling industry.[35]

Hall's overblown attempts to appear relevant to the scientific community reflected an awkward moment in American science. Many fields of science (geography, geology, oceanography) still wrestled with the organization and management problems of early professionalization. The National Academy of Sciences and the AGS struggled to raise funds, as Hall discovered. More than that, however, the United States still lacked a central organizing influence for scientific explorations. The US Coast Survey (USCS), the organization ideally suited to help

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guarantee funds for Arctic work.

[35] Davis, *Narrative*, 19, 39-40. In a letter to Judge Charles P. Daly on April 9, 1871, Hall wrote about a known though unseen bay (Admiralty Inlet) that he expected to find. The whalebone and whale oil industry generated $15 million for English and American whalers annually, so a positive identification

maritime explorers, was also so preoccupied with internal management issues that it could not assume a stronger role. Alexander Dallas Bache, director of the USCS (1843-1867), worked "to set the most rigorous scientific standards to provide research opportunities for American scientists, and to influence or 'professionalize,' if not control, other scientific institutions, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Academy of Sciences."[36] In order to achieve these standards, Bache negotiated compromises between the army officers who operated the USCS and the civilian scientists who collected the data. He explained as delicately as possible why these highly trained scientists deserved positions over the ships' officers and military crews. Also, he spent considerable time winning public support for the work of the USCS, and he looked for ways to popularize the results. By the end of his term, Bache oversaw a government-funded, centralized organization with regional programs in development across the country. The focus of the USCS, however, lay in projects of immediate, pragmatic import to the American public. Even though the USCS had the largest budget ($500,000/year) of any scientific institution in the United States by the 1850's, Arctic exploration offered too little return for serious consideration.[37] Bache's efforts benefitted scientists generally because he made marked distinctions between their training and expertise and the outdated methodologies of military crews. Senator

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of this bay would be significant. Earlier sailors had reported that smooth back whales, narwhals, and seals were known to frequent the bay (located around 73 43' N).

[36] Hugh Richard Slotten, "The Dilemmas of Science in the United States: Alexander Dallas Bache and the U.S. Coast Survey," in Ronald L. Numbers and Charles E. Rosenberg, eds., *The Scientific Enterprise in America: Readings from Isis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 38.

[37] Loomis, *Weird and Tragic*, 151, 157. The US Coast Survey did give some instruments to Hall on his earlier expeditions. Also, the USCS, like the rest of the country, was preoccupied with the Civil War during Hall's early Arctic career.

Thomas Hart Benton (Missouri) attacked Bache for his use of civilian scientists as the major force for survey expeditions. Benton wanted the Navy more heavily involved, believing that the USCS offered the perfect peacetime activity to keep the crews viable. Senators Jefferson Davis (Mississippi) and James Pearce (Maryland) defended Bache and explained that there was a big difference between the "nautical knowledge" of the sailors and the current, technical, mathematically based experiments of the scientists. The arguments smacked of elitism, but Bache and his supporters wanted clearly to define the difference between professional scientists and the outdated practices of data accumulation aboard navy ships.[38] Still, however, it remained too risky and expensive to jeopardize the USCS reputation for Arctic work.

The Hydrographic Office, another possible federal accomplice for Arctic explorers, likewise turned its attention elsewhere. In 1866, Congress created this agency, part of the Bureau of Navigation, to handle the creation and maintenance of charts of all non-American coasts. The Hydrographic Office operated essentially as "a maritime publishing company," and Maury continued his post-war cartographic pursuits in this organization. Until the 1880's, administrators of the Hydrographic Office favored charts of the Pacific Ocean, believing that the results would benefit American commerce with Asia.[39] Both the USCS and the Hydrographic Office considered commercial interests the ultimate beneficiaries of their work. Arctic exploration promised adventure and scientific worth, but it could not guarantee financial gains worth sending surveying crews into the brutal climate. Thus, even

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[38] Slotten, "The Dilemmas," 38, 45, 51-57.

[39] Thomas G. Manning, *U.S. Coast Survey vs. Naval Hydrographic Office: A 19th-Century Rivalry in Science and Politics* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 28-29, 31, 33. By contrast, the USCS never published its own work; instead, it used private publishers, which sold the reports for their own profit.

though the federal government organized its scientists better than the private organizations, Hall had trouble attracting help. As a result, when he tried to look useful to the scientific community, he still addressed a disparate array of interests. Also, no single organization could afford to send a team of scientists with him.

In July 1870, after pressure from Hall's most influential friends, Congress approved a resolution giving the president power to outfit a polar expedition. Hall received $50,000 and the guarantee of a ship (the original bill asked for $100,000; Congress halved the amount in its final form).[40] Hall had lobbied hard for this command. Earlier in the year, he spoke privately to President Ulysses S. Grant upon request. Hall told the president about the Inuits and Arctic life, knowing that Grant was interested in further Arctic exploration. Several months later, Hall accepted an invitation from the vice-president, several cabinet members, senators, representatives, and a few influentual local citizens to speak in Lincoln Hall. President Grant also attended the lecture, entitled "Arctic Explorations, Past and Prospective." Hall knew what would best capture their attention. He spoke about Franklin and his men, as well as the Inuits, whom he spoke of as close friends from his previous two Arctic trips. He also brought three Inuits to the lecture so that the politicians could feel closer to the project.[41]

The US Navy, which oversaw Hall's trip and eventually bought his papers and letters from his widow, was specific about how he should conduct himself in the

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[40] Davis, *Narrative*, 27, 28-29. The resolution passed July 12, 1870. The government paid to refit the steamer USS *Periwinkle* into the ship that became the *Polaris*. The ship was strengthened and refitted with heavier wood. The *Polaris* weighed 400 tons, 3 tons more than it had under its former frame.
[41] Davis, *Narrative*, 26. Hall brought his Inuit interpreters, Ebierbing (Joe) and his wife Tookoolitoo (Hannah), and their child Punny (Sylvia). Hannah had given birth to a second child, named King William, soon after Hall returned to the Arctic in 1864. The infant died. Punny was the couple's third child and first daughter. Hall continued his practice of bringing this family to public lectures and they

Arctic. George Robeson, Secretary of the Navy, wrote a long letter to Hall in 1871 explaining the Navy's expectations of the trip. First, he expected Hall to donate all of his records, as well as the journals of his crew, to the Navy. The Smithsonian Institution, however, expected to receive the observations of the Chief of Corps and head scientific officer, Emil Brussels (a surgeon). Robeson explained that the science department of Hall's expedition, under Brussels' leadership, operated under the guidelines of the National Academy of Sciences. Brussels was the main science officer, but it was permitted for any member of the crew to collect "objects of natural history, ethnology, etc."[42]

It is significant that the US Navy allowed the Smithsonian to control Hall's scientific data. No serious American explorer ever again left for the Arctic without money, directives, or actual men from some sort of scientific institution. The commanders' and/or scientists' results, however, were never systematically organized by one institution or under one program of study. It became the explorers' or their scientific institutions' decisions about how and where to place their collected information. Hall, dependent upon his federal assistance, had clear instructions that the Smithsonian owned all scientific property associated with this expedition.[43] In fact, the Smithsonian was responsible for choosing and organizing the scientific personnel for the expedition. The Navy focused on the prestige of funding and outfitting an expedition to the North Pole; subsidiary scientific observations paled in comparison.

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continued to be crowd-pleasers.

[42] Davis, *Narrative*, 32, 35. The Navy had the rights to Hall's records since the money came from the federal government.

[43] Davis, *Narrative*, 33.

The emphasis on the expedition's scientific goals caught the public's attention. A New York *Times* article commented on the modernity of the voyage:

> A great deal of satisfaction is expressed by those interested in the expedition at the thorough manner in which all the preparations for the exploration have been made, which is due to the liberal appropriation of $100,000 made by Congress...This expedition starts under better auspices, on account of more perfect equipment and advantages gained from past experience, than any expedition for Arctic exploration ever before fitted out, and Capt. Hall and his associates are most hopeful of achieving satisfactory results. Mr. Morton, who is third officer, and who is the only living explorer who ever saw the open Polar Sea, has the utmost confidence that the Polaris will find a route by which to enter it. Among the visitors to the vessel today was Senator Sumner, who appeared greatly interested in what he saw.[44]

Judge Charles P. Daly, the new president of the AGS, presented Hall with a flag of the organization that his predecessors DeHaven, Kane, and Hayes had also carried north. Most AGS members were Arctic enthusiasts. Kane, Hall, and Hayes had each spoken before the organization, received money from it, and benefitted from its significance to philanthropist Grinnell. The early affiliation between the AGS and Arctic explorers set important precedents. The ties mattered decades later when professional scientists accompanied the expedition leaders and needed funding in addition to the needs of the commanders.

Hall believed that he was destined to find the North Pole. He imagined his success: "'Suppose there is an island at the North Pole; around it the sea. I see a star upon the horizon. If I were to remain a thousand years at the Pole, that star will remain on the horizon without varying one iota in height...The phenomena displayed there will be deeply interesting, provided there is land there, and I am satisfied that I will find land there. From what I have heard from the Eskimos, I am satisfied that I

[44] The New York *Times*, May 30, 1871.

will find people living there, too.'"[45]

Unfortunately for the members of this first American expedition to the North Pole, Hall died on November 8, 1871, during the first winter of a trip equipped for two and a half years. They reached 82 11'N in the *Polaris*, spent the winter in the Arctic, and returned in 1873.[46] Hall's death made it impossible for a run to the pole, though the crew diligently recorded all relevant geographical information and took careful observations of the Inuits who visited and traveled with them. Sailing master Budington took command upon Hall's death. It was an unsuccessful trip, yet there remained enough general interest in Hall's goal that the Navy purchased his records from his widow and published them as a narrative of this federally supported trip.

By 1872, American Arctic history had a questionable record. Hall wrote about the landscape and the Inuits, ended all doubts about Franklin's crew, and achieved a Farthest North record. Kane accomplished almost nothing of lasting value but became a legend. Each of them tested the latest theories of his day, but the sorts of information that they gathered could not match the previous excitement of searching for a Northwest Passage or a vanished expedition. The next American to leave a mark in the Arctic initiated a new role for the region. It seemed clear that men could survive and maneuver safely within certain areas of the Arctic and that much remained to be learned about these bounds.

The next phase was one characterized by "big science," in which many of the new wave of explorers worked for the federal government or large bureaus. John

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[45] Bruce Henderson, *Fatal Survival: Adventure and Survival Aboard USS Polaris, the First U.S. Expedition to the North Pole* (New York: American Library, 2001), 23.

[46] The *Polaris* was frozen in for the winter by August. The expedition members were already prepared for the winter season when Hall died.

Wesley Powell and his work for the US Geological Survey surveying the American West characterized this period. Individual men or leaders still brought fame and recognition, but large organizations masterminded the plans and worked mainly to inform themselves. The United States only organized one more large federally funded Arctic endeavor. More significantly for Arctic explorers, newly professionalized scientists strengthened or created new organizations with special emphases on data collection of all sorts. The National Geographic Society (NGS), for example, established in 1888, welcomed professional and amateur geographers, but also counted government men such as John Wesley Powell and Henry Gannett (U.S. Geological Survey topographer) as two of its founding members.[47] The NGS and the AGS both became so successful at promoting scientist-explorers all over the world that funding remained problematic for individual explorers. Neither group sponsored early Arctic expeditions independently, and the NGS celebrated its first debt-free year as late as 1905.[48] Each organization tended to give smaller sums to numerous data collectors than large amounts to a few. Their financial contributions paled in significance to the prestige of affiliation with them. By the late nineteenth century, these groups controlled American geographical achievement.

Before this happened, however, the United States government sponsored one more large Arctic expedition. The tremendous amounts of data collected by Arctic crews since the disappearance of Franklin fascinated scientists across the world in meteorology, oceanography, geology, geography, hydrography, and astronomy. After

[47] Goetzmann, *New Lands*, 399, 419-20.
[48] C.D.B. Bryan, *The National Geographic Society: 100 Years of Adventure and Discovery* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 94. The NGS boasted a surplus of $3500 in 1905. The society's money came from membership dues and magazine subscriptions.

Hall's exploits, the United States lost interest in Arctic travel until Lieutenant Charles (Karl) Weyprecht of Austria offered Americans a place in an unusual international experiment. Weyprecht had explored parts of the Arctic and was frustrated by the competition, deaths, mistakes, and tragedies that accompanied each new quest. He saw greater potential in international scientific cooperation.[49] In 1875, Weyprecht and Count Wilczek suggested to the International Meteorological Congress that the Arctic should become a massive area for "continuous, cooperative, and simultaneous" field research. The idea led to the organization of the International Polar Conference in Hamburg on October 1, 1879. Conference attendees offered the following plan: invited nations would simultaneously build scientific stations throughout the polar regions and collect all relevant data. In this manner, with the entire arctic and parts of the antarctic under study at the same time, scientists could answer enduring questions about the poles. Eventually, eleven nations joined and set up several dozen observatories.[50]

America responded slowly to Weyprecht's plan. Shortly before the conference in Hamburg, Weyprecht wrote to General Albert J. Myer, the head of the Army Signal Corps (the meteorology specialty branch of the Army) and asked him to join the international coalition. Myer declined to join the conference, but in a separate exchange with Weyprecht he indicated interest in seeing the well-equipped United States involved. The other countries proceeded with their cooperative plans

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[49] Leonard F. Guttridge, *Ghosts of Cape Sabine: The Harrowing True Story of the Greely Expedition* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2000), 12.

[50] Adolphus W. Greely, *The Polar Regions in the Twentieth Century: Their Discovery and Industrial Evolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1928), 208-210. The nations that joined were: Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. Most of the stations were established between 66 and 78 N. Ships could navigate within this area but Arctic conditions prevailed.

without the Americans. The involved nations held a Second International Polar Conference in Berne in 1880, having struggled during the first year to set up only seven stations. At this meeting, they named the twelve months between 1881 and 1882 the International Polar Year and renewed their commitments to the enterprise.[51] The United States kept abreast of this progress. Eventually, Congress approved the plan to join the international scientists, and the Army tapped Army Lieutenant Adolphus Washington Greely to command one of two American posts.

In 1881, Lieutenant P.A. Ray organized one station at Point Barrow, along the western Canadian Arctic, and Greely established the most northerly based locale, at Lady Franklin Bay, 81 44' N. Much like the observers at the other international centers, Greely paid attention to "auroras, arctic ice, gravity, tides and other oceanic conditions. Collections were made relative to fauna, flora, geology, and ethnography." The military and federal government supplied Greely with the necessary tools, and despite equipment failures Greely's data proved useful. Nobody yet knew that Greenland was an island, but Greely's tidal data confirmed that the landmass ended within the latitude of 84 N.[52] Greely also set a new Farthest North record. These positive notes were important in retrospect. In all other regards, the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition was a complete disaster that stained American Arctic history for years afterwards.

The expedition sailed under the control of the US Army Signal Corps. Greely took with him eighteen Army men, three civilians, two Inuit guides/hunters, and one doctor/naturalist. Only one of them knew anything about sailing. None of the

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[51] Guttridge, *Ghosts*, 13.
[52] Guttridge, *Ghosts*, 215.

military men had any Arctic experience. This lack of preparation and knowledge might not have been a problem had not everything else gone wrong.

Greely set up his station at Fort Conger, in Discovery Bay, with the expectation that a relief ship would resupply him the following year. He and his men fought constantly, and most of his instruments were unusable. The men passed the first winter in unhappy conditions that worsened when an expected relief ship never appeared in 1882. John Lockwood, Greely's second in command, took a small crew northward by foot and established a new Farthest North at 83 23'N, the first new one since 1876. Lockwood's record was the only bright spot in an increasingly desperate situation. They spent their second winter at Fort Conger, only to face another summer with no new supplies. Thick ice had formed further south than usual during these years, making passage of Kennedy Channel, and resupply, impossible. One of the two relief ships had been crushed, and her commander left two poorly marked caches with a fraction of the rescued goods and then turned home.[53]

Greely moved his men further south in 1893, hoping to run into rescue, whalers, or a supply ship. They found nothing but ice. This scenario had been testing men's nerves since the beginning of Arctic exploration. Even when crews planned to winter in the Arctic, men often dreaded the situation. The sun disappeared for months, leaving crews in darkness, unrelenting cold, and cramped quarters, with little to do. The cold and darkness prohibited hunting, so unless the men camped within walking distance of an Inuit settlement the winter brought extreme solitude, monotony, and discomfort. Most crews learned to watch each other closely for signs

[53] John Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return Doubtful: The Heroic Age of Polar Exploration* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1988), 89-95.

of delirium. Men occasionally went mad under these conditions. To make matters worse, crews stuck on ice-trapped ships often endured the distressing sounds of the wooden vessels popping, creaking, and grinding against the ice, knowing that if the ship splintered and rescue failed, they faced another winter without even a ship's shelter for comfort.

Stranded on an iceberg with only a hut and overturned boats as protection, Greely and his men awaited a third Arctic winter near Cape Sabine. Seventeen of them survived the winter. The suffering continued, however, as the men struggled through the spring and early summer until the ice melted enough for a relief ship to find them. They ate boiled clothes, lichens, sleeping bags, tea bags, and mouldy dog biscuits. The doctor, Octave Pavy, amputated the hands and feet of one man who contracted gangrene from severe frostbite. Greely had the rare support of his men when he ordered the execution of a man who stole food. Pavy committed suicide. A strong wind blew a tent pole over, pinning three men to the ground for days because none of them was strong enough to lift it. When help finally arrived, only Greely and six others were alive. The amputee died on the way home. The news of what happened to Greely and his men horrified the nation, especially when it became apparent that the survivors had resorted to cannibalism.[54] It was the worst story yet told by explorers of the Arctic. Two years after Greely's return, Peary visited Greenland and began a new phase of exploration.

Peary dominated American Arctic exploration for twenty-six years, discovered the northern tip of Greenland, set new standards for overland sledge travel, turned polar dashes into a science of preparation, and perhaps even discovered

the North Pole. He travelled seven times to the Arctic. Nobody before or since has equalled the quantity of information that Peary and his crews collected. Yet he never came close to the celebrity of Kane. He had to work even harder than Hall did to find money, even at the end of his career when he had years of success behind him. And he began his Arctic adventures in the shadow of the Greely disaster. Peary's career has obvious roots in the legacies of his predecessors. The insider struggles for money and acclaim were familiar, even if his arguments and goals differed.

Peary first saw Greenland in 1886, and his life changed forever. He spent only one summer in the Arctic during this initial trip, but he planned to return as soon as possible. He had to create this next opportunity, however. He was an engineer and a Naval officer and Arctic exploration remained tied to Greely's expensive disaster.[55]

Peary had begun a solid Navy career as an engineer when he decided to pursue his Arctic interests. He never left the Navy, but this federal connection had nothing to do with his exploratory career. He was the only child of Mary Webster Wiley and Charles Nutter Peary. Pneumonia killed his father in 1858 when Peary was only two years old, and his mother moved from Philadelphia to Maine upon her husband's death, to be closer to family. Peary lived with his mother in various Maine towns during his childhood. He was so close to his mother that when he left for college, the two roomed together off campus. He did well academically at Bowdoin College (Brunswick, Maine), where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1877 as a civil engineer. After a brief period as a surveyor in Fryeburg, Maine, he moved to

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[54] Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return*, 101-105.
[55] U.S. Congress. House. *Claims of Owners and Crews of Certain American Whaling Vessels*. H.R. 10267. *Congressional Record*, 51-1, no. 9 (1889, 1890) : 2842. The US government spent $750,000 to rescue Greely.

Washington, D.C. to work for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Office.[56]

Surveying work bored Peary, so on a whim he took and passed an exam that qualified him to enter the Navy's Corps of Civil Engineers with the rank of lieutenant. The job went well, but his life changed direction in 1885 when he chanced upon a book about Greenland. He already knew about Kane's exploits, and Greely's disaster was still fresh news. He decided to see the Arctic, and he went for the first time in 1886.[57] Thereafter, he became as Kane and Hall before him, anxious to return and desperate for the money and means to do so.

It took Peary five years to return to the Arctic. The inadequacy of Greely's trip and the horrors of the ordeal still filled newspapers. Greely had not even been a part of the historical competitive "firsts" of the Arctic. He had led a peaceful, science-oriented trip and barely lived to tell about it. Peary had a more specific goal than Greely, however, and eventually he won support. He could not afford the trip on his own (he earned less than $3000/year), so it was necessary that he find other funds. Once again, the AGS played a part in the hopes of a prospective young Arctic explorer. In 1890, the organization invited him to speak before its members, as did the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Peary outlined his plan to cross the northern tip of Greenland and explained that he only needed six thousand dollars (a very low estimate). The request was cheap by Arctic standards, though it still proved difficult to raise the money.[58]

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[56] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 15-17.

[57] Bryce, *Cook and Peary*, 19-21. Peary's mother loaned him the money for his first trip to the Arctic. He booked passage on a whaler, the *Eagle*, in 1886, and spent the summer investigating a well-known part of southern Greenland.

[58] Bryce, *Cook and Peary*, 23-24. Peary rushed to return to Greenland. He knew that Norway's Fridtjof Nansen had crossed Greenland from east to west in 1888. Nansen did not find the northern part of

Peary eventually raised the money. No single contribution (from non-crew members) exceeded one thousand dollars, and he received no federal money, facts that Peary emphasized in his first book. Several of the men who funded Peary went with him to the Arctic. Professor Angelo Heilprin, F. W. Putnam, and John Verhoeff each gave money for the privilege of travelling with the explorer. Heilprin, curator of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, was excited about the possibilities of retrieving Arctic artifacts, and several members of the Academy donated the remaining funds. Heilprin went along as a scientist, not as somebody interested in Peary's personal goals. Putnam, also a professor, had similar intentions through his association with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He hoped to use some of his finds as pieces "for an ethnological exhibit for the Columbian Exposition." Verhoeff, however, had read the press releases about Peary's proposed trip and was one of many men who wrote Peary to ask that he be allowed to join the crew. Peary considered each request carefully. If chosen, each man paid three hundred dollars to outfit himself. Verhoeff was so eager to go that he offered Peary two thousand dollars. Peary also received money and support from the Portland Society of Natural History, the National Geographic Society, the AGS, the New York *Sun*, "various friends," and Bowdoin College. In addition, he put in several thousand of his own money.[59] By 1891, the contributions enabled Peary to

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Greenland, but he was the first to attempt such an extensive overland exploration of the island's interior. It still was not clear where exactly Greenland ended, but Nansen's trip showed that another cartographic prize was about to fall. Peary proposed a similar overland crossing of the island, except he planned to travel west to east on a more northerly route.

[59] Robert Peary, *Northward Over the "Great Ice:" A Narrative of Life and Work Along the Shores and Upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891-1897*, 2 volumes (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1898), 1: xxxix, xli-xlii, lvii. The National Geographic Society gave Peary a flag to plant at his "farthest north." Also, Commodore Farquhar, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, where Peary worked, supported the trip. The AGS gave Peary one thousand dollars, as did

charter the *Kite,* an old whaling ship. A few years later, when Peary considered Greenland a supply stop, rather than his ultimate destination, both the *Kite* and the few thousand dollars he raised after one round of entreaties would be quite insufficient. In 1891, however, these conditions sufficed. Several contributors also helped Peary secure military leave for the trip. Peary asked for and received eighteen months' leave after Daly (president of the AGS) , Cyrus C. Adams (owner of the New York *Sun*) and Putnam each wrote letters to Secretary Tracy on behalf of Peary, explaining the importance of his mission.[60]

Peary sailed for the Arctic in 1891 with sixteen people, nine of whom were members of the large scientific party organized through the Academy of Natural Sciences. He split his expedition into two groups—the West Greenland Expedition and the North Greenland Expedition. Scientists comprised most of the former group, and they wintered further south than Peary's hand-picked seven-person crew. Peary's smaller North Greenland Expedition wintered near Whale Sound in order to prepare for his s cross-island trek during early spring.[61] The *Kite* deposited Peary's group at McCormick Bay in late summer, before the ice froze. The members of the West Greenland Expedition left with the ship and spent the winter observing and collecting what they needed near Cape Robertson. The following spring, Peary and Astrup

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the *Sun* and Putnam. These were the largest donations, aside from that of Verhoeff. The *Sun* paid for first rights to any letters that Peary sent to correspondents in the US from Greenland.
Robert N. Keely, Jr. and Gwilyn George Davis *In Arctic Seas: The Voyage of the "Kite" with the Peary Expedition, Together with a Transcript of the Log of the "Kite"* (Philadelphia: Rufus C. Hartranft, 1893, c1892), 478. Verhoeff and Peary had a series of exchanges after Verhoeff read about Peary's trip in the Tacoma *Weekly News*. Peary let Verhoeff join with the understanding that he would get no control and that Peary was the lone expedition leader.

[60] Peary, *Northward,* 1: xxxix.

[61] Peary, *Northward,* 1: 44-45, 48. The North Greenland Expedition included Peary, Matthew Henson, Frederick A. Cook (surgeon), Langdon Gibson (ornithologist/hunter), Eivind Astrup, Verhoeff, and Peary's wife, Josephine Diebitsch Peary.

together accomplished Peary's goal and walked across the interior of Greenland, west to east, and confirmed that it was indeed an island. The only serious setback during the trip was the death of Verhoeff, who accidentally fell into a crevasse and died during the spring of 1892.[62]

When Peary returned to the United States, he planned another trip immediately. Already he had plans for exploration beyond Greenland, but he continued to explain the need to know the island better. He saw it as the ideal launching point for overland runs to the pole. He began to speak as if a purposeful gathering of Arctic information had multiple benefits. Like Hall, he emphasized scientific benefits along with the nationalistic incentives. Peary was torn between the rough allure of the region and the need to find a use for it. In his first book, he acknowledged that Arctic exploration "must, like anything else, be made a business and carried on from year to year, profitting by each added item of experience, taking advantage of every occurring opportunity." At the same time, however, he offered the following: "suppose we admit that Arctic exploration is only a matter of sentiment, with no money return; no increase of commerce; no fruit of colonisation, no harvest of great good for many men. Let it stand as a sentiment; it has good company. Love and patriotism and religion are all matters of sentiment, and we ask no money return for them."[63]

Peary never successfully divorced money concerns from his Arctic career, however. In one strange twist, American commercial interests worked in Peary's

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[62] Bryce, *Cook & Peary*, 81-84. Peary, *Northward*, 1: 414. Successful negotiation of Arctic ice required careful maneuvering and constant attention. The ice often formed in jagged heaps, and temperature vacillations, severe winds, or slight glacial movements could open wide leads of open water, new ice peaks, or invisible crevasses. Nobody saw Verhoeff disappear, but equipment found

favor. Operating briefly under Commander John Russell Bartlett (1883-1888), the Hydrographic Office switched its focus from the Pacific to the North Atlantic Ocean. One of the highpoints for 19th-century American science was the cooperative and tactical effort required to lay a submarine telegraph cable between the United States and England. Also, the increasingly heavy use of steamships increased commercial opportunities for the United States. Bartlett's office rushed to supply ships' captains with useful charts and maps of the North Atlantic. His men also republished an older circumpolar chart, as well as new maps created from information gathered during the Greely rescue. Peary requested copies of this material.[64] As it had for the past several decades, the federal government preferred to use its own scientists and cartographers to aid commercial interests. Especially after Greely's experience, there seemed little reason to target the Arctic.

Peary went on a whirlwind money-raising tour so that he could charter a ship quickly and return to the Arctic. He brought back the five dogs who survived the trek across Greenland (fifteen died) and took them with him on a lecture circuit. Once again, his friends wrote to the Navy on his behalf and he won three years' leave. By the time he returned from the Arctic in late 1892, he had six months to raise the money, obtain leave, find another crew, and organize in time to leave in early summer of 1893. He raised thirteen thousand dollars by delivering 168 lectures within that span. His wife Josephine, who accompanied him on the trip, published an account of her year in the Arctic and donated the book's proceeds to the next expedition. The AGS gave him another thousand dollars. The New York *Sun* made the same deal for

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near a crevasse told the story.

[63] Peary, *Northward*, 1: xxvi, lxxix.

first rights to his letters home and promised him two thousand dollars. Friends gave him another three thousand dollars. Even with twenty thousand dollars, however, he could not afford to charter a ship and order supplies for the scientists who again planned to accompany him. He earned the rest of the necessary money by putting his new ship, the *Falcon*, on display in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Portland.[65]

This time, Peary planned for two years in the Arctic. He took another crew of scientists as members of the Auxiliary Expedition. His wife's brother, Emil Diebitsch, was part of this group, mostly because he donated money to Peary. Josephine stayed with Peary during the winter at Anniversary Lodge, as did Matthew Henson, Hugh Lee (volunteer crewman), six scientists, and several Inuits. Josephine became internationally famous because she gave birth to the couple's first child, Marie Ahnighito Peary (the "Snow Baby") September 12, 1893.[66] She was born further north than any known white person, and both mother and daughter were famous upon their return to the states in 1894.

When the ice broke in August, 1894, the *Falcon* took all expedition members back to the United States except Peary, Henson, Lee, and a few Inuits. Peary expected the *Falcon* to return in late summer 1895 to pick him up after he travelled to Melville Bay to look for the famous iron source first reported by Englishmen decades earlier.[67] Peary spent the winter preparing to explore more of Greenland the next spring. He

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[64] Manning, *U.S. Coast*, 31-32, 36.

[65] Peary, *Northward*, 1: xliii-xlv, 4. He had the five dogs and burros and carrier pigeons on board the ship (in preparation for the next trip) as added attractions.

[66] Peary, *Northward*, 2: 69.

[67] Peary, *Northward*, 2: 126. Extremely harsh weather and the deaths of most of his dogs ruined Peary's expedition across Greenland in 1894. Peary stayed in Greenland for another year in order to search for the fabled "Iron Mountain" that John Ross had reported over one hundred years earlier. He enlisted an Inuit guide and found the world's three largest known meteorites. On May 27, 1894, Peary left a record at the meteorites' site indicating that he, Lee, and their Inuit guide had found them.

did not know it, but the *Falcon* wrecked after depositing his wife safely in Philadelphia and she began a mad scramble to secure funds to send another ship to find him.

Josephine knew that her husband was not prepared for another year in the Arctic. He had enough supplies to last him until the spring of 1895, and all Americans knew from Greely's tale what could happen to a crew expecting relief that never came. She had only a few months in which to raise enough money to find a replacement ship for the *Falcon*. She enlisted the aid of Peary's familiar circle of friends and begged for help. She received pledges from the AGS, the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the Geographical Club of Philadelphia (Heilprin was president), and Daly (president of the AGS). She was far short of the necessary amount, so the National Geographic Society asked her to give a public lecture and promised to give her the proceeds. She agreed and received four hundred dollars for her first public appearance. The ship still cost thousands more, so she wrote to Morris K. Jesup, president of the AMNH, and convinced him to make up the necessary difference to charter a ship.[68]

The meeting between Jesup and Josephine was remarkable for two reasons. Their connection and mutual devotion to Peary evolved into the Peary Arctic Club (PAC) several years later. Also, Jesup had never before met her or Peary, but he admired Arctic work and realized that it was a desperate move on her part. Upon Daly's suggestion, Josephine boarded a train with her daughter and her "nurse," and traveled from Washington, D.C. to New York to seek funding, despite thinking that

[68] Peary, *Northward*, 2: xlvii. Jesup gave several thousand dollars to the cause, which was the one exception to Peary's declaration that nobody gave him more than one thousand dollars to send him to

"every mile that the train progressed I wished were a mile in the other direction." Jesup tried to ease her anxiety, and arranged before the meeting for his wife to be present so that Josephine would not be the only woman present. He initiated a lifelong friendship when he told her: "I believe that you are doing all you can to raise this money, and I don't want you to do any less, but if you do not succeed in raising it all, come back to me again. You must understand that while I am interested in the scientific aspects of your expedition, my chief interest is that I want you to get your husband back." Despite the money from Daly and the promise from Jesup, Josephine needed seven thousand dollars. One scientist, a college professor, had died unexpectedly, and his host institution withdrew its funding. Josephine delivered two public lectures to make up some of the difference, and Jesup delivered on his promise. She rented the familiar (and cheap) *Kite* for Peary.[69]

Peary, meanwhile, found the meteorites and returned to Anniversary Lodge to await the *Falcon*. He received news about the fate of that ship, but claimed that he did not worry because he "knew the brave woman would send a ship for us."[70]

Peary probably spent more time dealing with ship rentals than any other preparatory task for the duration of his career. For his last two trips, he commanded a special, huge icebreaker built especially for him. Every other expedition, however, hinged upon his ability to find a tough ship, negotiate a reasonable price, and then raise enough money (usually at least $20,000) to cover this one cost. The choice of

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the Arctic.

[69] William Adams Brown, *Morris Ketchum Jesup: A Character Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 189-192. Josephine's "nurse" was a young Inuit girl named "Miss Bill." She went to New York with Josephine after the birth of Marie, and she stayed with the Peary family until Peary's next Arctic trip. Josephine, Maria, and "Miss Bill" lived in an apartment in DC on $75/month at the time.

[70] Peary, *Northward*, 2: 535. Whalers, Inuits, and the large Danish settlements in southern Greenland ensured that news travelled well along the southwestern coast of Greenland.

available ships was discouraging. It was too costly to build ships especially for Arctic navigation, so ambitious explorers usually picked sturdy whalers, refitted them with extra wood/steel, and hoped that the northern ice did not crush their transportation. Therefore, American Arctic explorers often found their ship choices tied in unusual ways to the fate of the whaling industry.

Until the 1850's, most whaling companies converted older merchant vessels to their own uses. As a result, when Kane and Hall rented used whalers for the Arctic, they revived ships that probably originally had been designed for commerce. American shipbuilders of the mid-nineteenth century specialized in designs of the medium clipper ship. These ships were meant to have shallow drafts and to carry large amounts of cargo. They were sailing ships meant to be "light" on the water, and speed was of little significance. When whaling companies refitted the clippers, they routinely added more weight to the vessels' hulls, so that the rougher conditions of the Northern Atlantic would not crush them too easily. Explorers, in turn, added more weight when they later used the same ships.[71]

Ship construction changed during the 1870's, however, because America became the world's best whaling nation. The United States dominated this industry from 1820 to 1880 for several reasons. In 1840, whaling crews discovered Cumberland Inlet, a bay at the southeastern corner of Baffin Island, a previously unknown whale fishery. In addition, American sailors began wintering over in the Arctic after 1851. The familiarity established between the whaling crews and the Inuits created a successful fur trading network that added more money to the whaling industry. Also, a few whaling companies set up shore stations in the Canadian Arctic

that provided supplies, support, and a home base for these crews. Another positive turn for American whalers was the discovery in 1860 of one of the last great eastern Arctic whaling grounds in Roes Welcome Sound, near Hudson's Bay.

In response to the sizable profits generated by the whaling industry, American shipbuilders began after 1870 to design specialized whaling vessels.[72] The new whaling vessels were built much like the medium clippers, except they were shorter in length, bark-rigged, and had finer underwater lines, so that they might slip above quickly forming ice. Ice constricted and crushed flat-bottomed ships more easily than these narrow-bottomed whalers. These alterations also made the ships faster and easier to maneuver, important considerations for crews trying to harpoon and haul aboard whales. During the 1870's, the American shipbuilding industry grew as a result of the demand for these specialized whaling ships.[73]

Peary missed the peak of the American whaling industry, however. The whaling fleet started outfitting its ships for steam during the 1880's, almost thirty years behind Britain. Steam power, of course, made ships faster and more maneuverable, but the costs were prohibitive. A steam bark cost triple the amount of a wind vessel.[74] The steam-powered ships used in the eastern Arctic were not cost productive. Decades of intensive whaling had decreased the profits, and the high cost

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[71] Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 267-268.

[72] Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 38-39; *Claimes of Owners and Crews of Certain American Whaling Vessels*, Congressional Record, 51st Cong., 1st sess., 1889, 1890. Between 1868 and 1888, the US whaling industry averaged two million dollars per year in revenue.

[73] Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 10, 268, 270. A bark is a vessel with three masts, square-rigged on foremost and main mast, fore- and aft-rigged on the mizzen, meaning that this class of vessel has more masts than smaller classes. The masts helped the barks sail faster, but also required many men to haul them up and down as needed. Whaling crews were usually fairly large, since different skills were required for each phase of harpooning, hauling, cutting, and preserving the whales.

[74] Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 45. Coal was expensive, as were the salaries for the skilled mechanics who worked with the new technology. Also, not all steamers were "new." Some steam whalers were older sailing ships that had steam equipment attached.

of the new ships made them unpopular choices. Many eastern whaling companies established West coast operations, however, and sent their steamers to freshly discovered hunting grounds in the Pacific Ocean. These same companies often reverted to smaller ships for their North Atlantic expeditions, which kept that part of the industry profitable.[75]

During the 1890's, just as Peary announced long-term plans for Arctic exploration, the American eastern whaling industry fizzled, and the most local, accessible, active ships were smaller, technologically outdated ships. As a result, it was a crisis of some import when Peary's wife realized that she had only a few months to find and rent a ship to retrieve him during the spring of 1895. It was difficult to find ships because most whaling companies pared their fleets to reduce costs. Also, not all of these smaller ships could not handle Arctic ice, even during the summer. Finally, ship rental was expensive, and possible refitting costs compounded the situation.

Josephine's scramble to rent an old whaler exemplified the core of Peary's frustrations as an Arctic explorer. The United States was unprepared for his needs. Peary spent months looking all over the world for decent ships each time he planned a trip. He also remained desperate for money. He wanted the North Pole after 1898, which would be even more expensive (and difficult to explain) than his earlier quests. Arctic exploration still had the reputation of being an expensive undertaking with little to show in return. After 1893, Peary found one solution. He became adept at

[75] Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 46. Steamers made it possible for whaling crews to winter over in the Western Arctic, and profits stayed high. Also, by the 1890's, whaling companies all over the world realized that the Antarctic was probably the last large hunting ground, and steamers definitely made that trek possible. The North Atlantic whaling industry died slowly.

honoring, gifting, and cajoling a select audience of scientific men and organizations into supporting him. He directly benefitted from the trails that Kane, Hall, and Greely blazed within the American Arctic community. As Peary became more focused on the North Pole, he got better at making these men and institutions dependent upon him, as they had not been with his predecessors. The complexities of these relationships deepened after 1898, though he set his patterns during these first trips. He returned home only long enough to rekindle the fires of support and to rejuvenate an increasingly well-informed, well-organized American Arctic community.

During the 19th century, the United States moved through several phases of scientific Arctic exploration. England dominated the region for two hundred years, but as its enthusiasm dwindled in response to Franklin's mysterious tragedy, the United States took greater notice of the region. Kane's dual interests in England's hero and the romance of so much uncharted, difficult terrain captured Americans' imagination. American scientists, equally as excited but poorly organized, could do little more than appreciate any new information retrieved by the explorers. The federal government alternately funded Arctic exploration and withdrew its support in favor of more practical commercial endeavors. Hall familiarized his countrymen with the idea of trying to reach the North Pole. He also began a tradition, later exploited by Peary, of observing and mimicking some of the Inuit adaptations to the foreign climate. He relied upon old methodologies, however, and never fully considered the radical organizational and leadership tactics required to reach 90 N. Greely, with the full force of the US Navy behind him, had an opportunity to tie federal money to

Arctic exploration and a large, organized scientific community. His spectacular failure convinced the government and most Americans that the Arctic posed too many hazards for its scientists and explorers. Peary committed himself to Arctic exploration, and he spent over two decades raising money, getting a select group of scientists professionally invested in his work, and turning his dream of finding the North Pole into a national obsession.

With his first two trips, Peary encountered several problems that he learned to handle as he became the nation's top Arctic explorer. He knew that several scientific organizations wanted to help him because their members believed that they could direct the legacy of an exploratory frontier. Out of necessity, Peary paid attention to how the scientists organized themselves, and he learned how to help them find money for new kinds of fieldwork. His motives were selfish, but his needs coincided with the creation of a new assembly of professional, field-specific scientists, and it worked to his benefit. Through the researchers, he contacted wealthy philanthropists who enjoyed affiliation with modern scientific achievement. But that was yet to happen. By 1895, he had learned only that scientists liked his work and that they had barely enough money within their various organizations to fund an uninspired exploration of Greenland. He also realized, though probably not deeply enough, that finding transportation to the Arctic was no easy task. This particular detail of expedition planning too often got buried amid sweeping proclamations about the greater good of the trip. As his next large endeavor indicates, Peary learned the lesson but was forced to be selective in explanations about the goals and needs of Arctic exploration.

Chapter 3

"A Common Carrier": Scientists, Money, and Peary--1897

Robert E. Peary needed money to return to the Arctic in 1897. His engineer's salary barely covered his family's living expenses, and he had no personal fortune. His employer, the US Navy, wished him luck and awarded him extended military leave, but gave him no extra consideration for Arctic exploration. The US Navy had never involved itself in the Arctic to the same degree as had England's military a few decades earlier, especially after the Adolphus W. Greely disaster in 1884. England used the Arctic as a vast peacetime training area for its naval crews. Until Captain John Franklin disappeared, the British government supported its navy's search for the Northwest Passage. America's first Arctic explorers needed aid just as England withdrew its interest. Fully aware of England's problems, the United States government never made Arctic exploration a national imperative. Also, given the relatively small size of the American navy, the government could not risk its ships or men on such a questionable quest. Peary's only real option was private funding. Upon each post-expeditionary return to the United States, he embarked upon a serious financial campaign. He almost always had plans for the next trip ready before the previous one ended. He had several months, occasionally one full year, to raise several thousand dollars, make the necessary preparations for another large, extended venture, and leave again for the North.

The events of the summer of 1897 produced the same fervor as so many of Peary's previous money-raising efforts. He had limited time and many expenses, and he needed to contact the people who could help him quickly. This campaign was slightly

easier, however, because his name and his association with the Arctic were better known than in previous years. More important, he was familiar by that time with the work of many different scientists, so that when he began to formulate long-term goals he had knowledgeable audiences. He still petitioned scientists to join him, but already he envisioned a future in which he could ignore the scientific management of his trips and focus exclusively on the best route to the pole. The summer of 1897 was a turning point, because afterward Peary did not need individual scientists to fund him. Thereafter, he was able to win the financial support of powerful financiers.

No single institution, university, museum, office, organization, or individual financier oversaw Peary's plans or controlled his information and artifacts upon his stateside returns. The United States lacked a national plan, so when Peary drafted one he took Arctic exploration in a new direction. Until Peary explained his vision, national Arctic exploration changed dramatically with each individual explorer. Peary became America's most famous northern explorer long before he got within reach of the North Pole because he turned other men's scientific pursuits into his most powerful tools. The American Geographical Society (AGS) the National Geographic Society (NGS), and the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the largest scientific associations in the nation, donated money to Peary in exchange for Arctic artifacts, news, and descriptions.

Peary asked and even pressured individual professional scientists to accompany him on each of his early (pre-1898) trips. In return for paid passage, Peary transported them to safe spots in northwest Greenland where they conducted fieldwork. These scientists had the rare opportunity to make their observations in a remote locale. Their research added professional merit and prestige to Peary's trips and provided a public,

reliable connection between his polar dreams and his institutional backers. Thus, Peary created a new sort of American Arctic exploration that bore only a passing resemblance to the methods of Elisha Kent Kane, Charles Francis Hall, and Greely. He did not use the Northwest Passage, the John Franklin mystery, or the open polar sea to recruit audiences. Instead, he focused on the North Pole, and in the process utilized the organization and finances of America's leading scientists. Moreover, Peary's plan also differed significantly from the model of the British, the world's Arctic leader at the beginning of Peary's career.

England dominated Arctic exploration until shortly before Peary's first trip. Britain gave more money to Arctic explorers than did any other nation. In addition, in England scientists had professional incentive to collect data about non-European peoples and places that might become domains for British subjugation. Victorian-era Britain experienced a wave of imperialism and a flood of scientific information during the most successful exploratory phase of the nation's history. Multiple scientific societies and clubs also contributed to the science of imperialism. During the nineteenth century, the Royal Geographic Society (RGS), became the most prestigious and well-respected group of scientists in the world. The American copycats, the NGS and the AGS, imitated the RGS by combining explorers, cartographers, linguists, ethnographers, surveyors, instrument makers, engineers, diplomats, military officers, and politicians within one organization.[1] Roderick Murchison, a professional geologist and talented administrator, helped direct the early RGS, which sought to further the careers of explorer-scientists and simultaneously provide useful data to Britain's government. This was the era of Livingston's travels to Africa, and a time when Britain sent teams of scientists to Latin

America, Australia, and Canada to secure a dominant colonial presence.[2]

Under Murchison's direction, the RGS became the world's leading geographical organization. Within a few years, the "RGS gold medal emerged as one of the most coveted decorations in the world."[3] In 1854, Murchison created the Geographical Club, an exclusive dining group designed to allow explorers to mix with RGS officers. The private information shared between the scientists and politicians or elites often influenced public opinion. The RGS is one example of the organizations that propelled Britain through its last uncontested phase of imperialistic exploration. It worked because "while the scientists won access to widening career options and new data, the imperial government gained accurate information for administering and developing its sprawling possessions."[4] Even more important, the RGS operated as a national repository for its scientists' collective observations and as a location for public discussions about overseas scientific expeditions.[5]

American Arctic explorers operated under much different circumstances than their English counterparts. English interest in Arctic exploration dwindled along with the fervor to find Franklin. Greely and Kane drew Americans into the setting, with modest success. Peary's need to find private backing limited his means and often delayed his plans. When he started making independent trips in 1891 (his first trip to Greenland in

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[1] The RGS was founded in 1830, the AGS in 1852, and the NGS in 1888.
[2] Robert A. Stafford, *Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration, and Victorian Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 22.
[3] Stafford, *Scientist*, 22.
[4] Stafford, *Scientist*, 189. See also Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters: Their Museums and Their Influence* (Nashville, TN: The American Association for State and Local History, 1983), 134-136. The Kew Gardens, under attack from a bitter governemnt minister in the late nineteenth century, defended itself as a tool of both science and government. The garden's director, William Jackson Hooker, and his colleagues stayed afloat by depending upon the many ways that the garden's herbarium aided British colonial advancement around the globe. Kew became famous for its close ties with the British empire.
[5] Alexander, *Museum Masters*, 22.

1886 was under the direction of the US Navy), the only reliable sources for money were scientists interested in Arctic fieldwork.

Peary slowly, carefully built a circle of professional scientists who depended upon him. He wrote to researchers at various universities, colleges, and institutions and listed the benefits of travel with him. In return for paid passage on one of his trips, Peary left the scientists in Greenland with provisions to last several weeks or months and picked them up after he returned from regions further north.[6] Peary consistently received money from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the NGS, and the AGS, and it is doubtful that he could have won their continual and increasing support during his first years as an explorer without his success at getting individual, hand-picked scientists to accompany him. Peary himself was not a scientist, nor did he fully understand the data collected by his teams of specialists. The scientists' presence made it possible for Peary to showcase the Arctic as a vast expanse of fieldwork awaiting data collectors. The public regarded the quest for the North Pole as a national conquest, but the history of Arctic exploration proved that the cost in lives and money was often too much. The AMNH, the NGS, the AGS, the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and the other relatively large groups that helped Peary did so out of more than interest in the race to the pole.

Peary often attracted scientists by emphasizing the publication opportunities that awaited them upon return from the Arctic. He pointed out how signing with him would work to the benefit of both individuals and their home institutions. Most scientists who

[6] Peary usually left the scientists near Melville Bay, along the northwest coast of Greenland. He then took his smaller exploration crew further north, through Smith Sound and Kennedy Channel, before leaving the ship to set up a strategic winter camp. Depending upon the strength of the ship and unforeseen weather conditions, he then sent the ship back towards Melville Bay, back to the US for supplies, or stuck in ice

travelled with Peary eventually published their findings after withholding their data for a time so that Peary could publish first. Because Peary was not a trained scientist, there was little chance that he would trump a scientists' results, but as the organizer of the party he demanded first rights to public access.

Peary was a remarkably successful explorer even though it took him twenty-six years to claim the pole. Yet he considered himself a personal failure because the pole eluded him until 1909. No other explorer, however, operated at such a high level of productivity for such an extended length of time. Each trip yielded results: cartography, the world's largest known meteorites, live animals, bird and animal skins, a farthest north record, and in one bizarre case, actual Inuit "specimens." The scientists who accompanied him never failed to reach their destination, and they had plenty of time for research, observation, or collection. Between 1891 and 1909, a staggering amount of Arctic information, artifacts, flora, and fauna entered the United States via Peary and his scientific associates.[7] Most of it filtered through America's scientists and museums and became public exhibits, articles, or lectures. For example, the AMNH expanded its floor space by over 100,000 square feet through a combination of funds from the city of New York ($75,000), the Endowment Fund ($65,000), and the Trustees ($8,000). A member of the Peary Relief Party (of 1895) donated "numerous specimens...to the Department of Mammals and Birds." The museum had enough material to open two new halls, and

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near his camp until the following spring.

[7] "The Opening of the East Wing of the American Museum of Natural History," *Science* New Series, 4 (1896), 849-853; "The American Museum of Natural History," *Science* New Series, 17 (May 29, 1903), 874-876. Peary maintained his affiliation with the AMNH. The museum received an unusually large number of mammals during the year 1902: "The gift from the Peary Arctic Club of about one hundred mammals, collected by Commander Peary on his last arctic expedition, is especially noteworthy, and the museum is now doubtless by far the richest in the world in mammals from arctic America." The museum also received many animals from the New York Zoological Society and the Central Park Menagerie. It is not clear if all of these animals came from Peary, but he frequently left Eskimo dogs and other animals with

Peary had special influence upon one, the Ethnological Hall. The museum was especially proud of this section: "The importance of the Peary collection, a gift of Mr. Morris K. Jesup, President of the Museum, lies in the fact that the tribe whose culture it represents has had very little contact with the whites, so that it is more primitive than most material that has recently found its way into museums. The costumes, industries and utensils of this tribe are represented exhaustively."[8]

However brief, Peary had a unique control over Arctic scientific research. Men like geologist Ralph Tarr, glacialist T. C. Chamberlin, and geologist George Barton traveled with Peary and published worthwhile articles. Peary controlled what people thought about the Arctic through the sheer volume of his personal Arctic collections and how he chose to use, sell, store, or donate the information to various organizations. By 1909, the most famous and wealthiest organizations (like the AMNH) received most of his donations. These groups, in turn, depended upon Peary's inclusion of professional scientists as a proviso for their continued support of his quest to reach the North Pole. In the end, Peary was a master at turning scientific information into professional currency.

Peary did not organize a polar expedition again until 1898, but after his disappointing 1893-1895 trip, he made two successive summer trips to Greenland. In 1894, Peary saw the three huge meteorites first mentioned by England's John Ross in 1818. Ross noticed the natives' use of iron but could not discern their source. Peary convinced his Inuit guides to take him to the Iron Mountain, where he found three meteorites, known individually as "the dog (1/2 ton)," "the woman (3 tons)," and "the tent (100 tons)." Peary returned to Cape York in 1896 and took home the smaller two

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the New York City Zoo. It is possible that some of them ended up at the AMNH.
[8] "The American Museum," 876.

meteorites. He planned to return in 1897 to retrieve the largest one. He also briefly stated that the Inuits were delighted to watch him haul away their major source of iron and expressed disappointment that he could not take all three aboard ship in 1896. He wrote that the Inuits received so many iron goods from whalers and explorers that they no longer depended upon the meteorites.[9]

As Peary made plans for his last Cape York meteorite trip, he enjoyed short-lived financial security. During the early spring of 1897, he wrote to Evelyn Briggs Baldwin, a meteorologist at the Weather Bureau who had accompanied him on the 1894 expedition. Baldwin knew that Peary planned to return north that summer to retrieve the last of the three meteorites, and he offered to pay Peary for the privilege of accompanying him. Peary informed Baldwin that he need not worry about payment, since the AGS had supplied sufficient money. Peary still wanted Baldwin to remain committed to the Arctic, however, and stressed that "your training and experience would add weight to your application."[10] Peary hoped to force the scientists into competition, giving those who had been with him before an edge, but no guarantee. Baldwin did not join the trip of 1897.

Peary also asked Baldwin to edit his report from the earlier trip so that it could be included it as part of his forthcoming Arctic volume, and he offered to send a copy of Baldwin's previous work back to him, with Peary's editorial suggestions. Peary wanted the style of the book to be "uniform throughout," which required Baldwin to popularize

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[9] Robert E. Peary, "The Cape York Iron Stone," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 26 (1894), 447-488. See also Robert E. Peary, *Northward Over the "Great Ice:" A Narrative of Life and Work along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891-1897*, 2 volumes (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1898), 2: 561, 574.

[10] Robert E. Peary to Evelyn Briggs Baldwin, March 29, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, RG 401: National Archives Gift Collection of Materials Relating to Polar Regions, (1) RADM. Robert E. Peary Family Collection (A) Robert E. Peary Papers. Referred to hereafter by PFC and Specific Box and

his scientific manuscript for a broad audience.[11] Peary hinted, however, that a more complete revision of Baldwin's work would appear later as part of the explorer's planned second volume of Arctic travel, which would "contain the scientific results of my expeditions and in which shall be gathered together all the scientific papers originating from my various main and auxiliary expeditions."[12]

Peary's soon faced disappointment. During the spring and early summer of 1897, he had to prepare for his last summer meteorite run and secure as many donors as possible for the trip to the North Pole he envisioned for 1898. However, Peary had assumed significant personal debt for the 1896 trip to retrieve the smaller two Cape York meteorites, and he refused to repeat the experience. Peary knew that the best way to secure reliable money was through the scientific community.

As usual, the most expensive item was ship rental. It cost between twenty and thirty thousand dollars to rent and insure a whaler. This aspect of Peary's stateside career was enormously time-consuming. He had one advantage, however. Throughout his campaign history, the captains of each of his ships all came from the same family—the Bartletts, a large Newfoundland-based sealing family with substantial Arctic expertise. Several different Bartletts took Peary and his passengers to the Arctic in old, refitted whalers, and they also scouted for suitable ships between trips. Harry Bartlett sailed north with Peary in 1891 and 1893 and brought Josephine and baby Marie back to the United States in 1894. Harry's brothers John and Samuel also served Peary.[13] When

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Folder.

[11] Peary, *Northward*, 2: 177-203. One chapter of the second volume is Baldwin's work, entitled "Meteorological and Auroral Notes." The chapter is included in the form of reports from Baldwin to Peary listing meteorological data and tables, mixed with Baldwin's narrative descriptions of the weather and the landscape. There is no indication from Peary if this comprises all of Baldwin's work or correspondences.

[12] Peary to Baldwin, March 29, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.

[13] Robert A. Bartlett, *The Log of Bob Bartlett: The True Story of Forty Years of Seafaring and Exploration*

Peary finally secured the *Windward* for his 1898 trip, John was captain and his nephew, Robert ("Bob"), sailed as a mate. John liked Peary, and suggested to Bob that he join the explorer. As Bob remembered, John told him that "if I could become attached to the staff of a man like Peary it would no doubt help me later on to land a ship of my own."[14] Bob watched and realized that Peary's observations of ice and tidal conditions along his chosen route gave him a crucial advantage over later competition. Bartlett stated flatly that Peary's later successes happened because "...he spent nearly twenty-five years...eliminating the obstacles that had prevented other explorers for four centuries from doing what he was trying to do. I think the main thing that made possible the discovery of the North Pole was the placing of a ship at the north end of Grant Land on the shores of the Polar Sea. In this way both dogs and men could set out early in the spring of the year and travel directly across the polar ice, without any preliminary struggle." On each trip, despite other failures, Peary studied the ice between Cape Sabine and Cape Sheridan, a distance of several hundred miles, and learned better than anyone else how to navigate a ship further north through Kane Basin, a notoriously tricky path

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(New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 57-59, 101-103, 141-143. Newfoundland enjoyed brief prosperity from the sealing industry. During the early nineteenth century, sealers often brought in over one million dollars each spring. By the early twentieth century, the entire Newfoundland fleet rarely earned more than $200,000. Years of over-hunting decreased the seal population, and the introduction of steam ended the older sailing sealers' runs. Declining profits made it too expensive to convert to steam. The Newfoundland sealing leaders did not reinvest in newer markets like boot and shoe factories, real estate, or copper and steel operations, like New England whaling magnates did when the American whaling industry experienced the same problems at the end of the nineteenth century. John Bartlett was one of the first Newfoundlanders to obtain the difficult British mariner's certificate. Bob Bartlett also became a master mariner several years later. The test required intensive study and expert knowledge of astronomical instrumentation. Bartlett's skills may have been one reason why Peary did not take him on the final leg of his 1909 trip, on which Peary claimed to have reached the North Pole. None of the other men with Peary at the pole knew how to take these measurements. Samuel's great-uncle Isaac captained the whaler that rescued Hall and his crew in 1872. Harry disappeared on his way home after returning Josephine and Marie in Philadelphia.

[14] Bartlett, *The Log*, 145. His uncle was correct. Bob had a long, distinguished career as an Arctic captain long after Peary claimed to reach the North Pole in 1909.

that occasionally froze over unexpectedly far south.[15] (See Appendix, Figures 5-6)

Bob Bartlett appreciated Peary's attention to detail, and the trip of 1898 marked the beginning of a twenty-year association with the explorer. During the fall and winter of 1897, however, Peary still relied mainly upon Bob's uncle, John, for advice on ships. John returned to Labrador after making inquiries about several vessels, knowing that Burchell would help Peary find a suitable craft.[16] Peary contacted H.J. Bull in Norway and asked him to assess the possibility of renting "second hand Norwegian Whalers." Peary wanted a list and description of available ships and what it would cost to insure them, in order to compare the cost of Norwegian and Newfoundland sealers.[17] The news from Burchell, however, was disappointing. The ship owners demanded high rates for the ships' use alone, and the insurance costs would make them too expensive. Peary shot an angry letter to Burchell, asking him to remind the Newfoundland sealer companies that despite newspaper accounts that he had enough money for his trip, he did not have unlimited funds. He could spend no more than thirty thousand dollars for the ship and insurance. Twenty thousand would come from the scientists, and the rest from his own efforts. Peary made the problem clear to Burchell: "The expenses of this summer I shall have to meet entirely with money received from scientific expeditions which will take passage on the ship. Last summer I ran myself several thousand dollars in debt by the voyage, and am but now free of my obligations after unremitting efforts....I see my way clear to raise ... about Twelve thousand dollars; but anything beyond that is out of the question." Peary hoped to profit from the sealing industry's disastrous 1896 spring

[15] Bartlett, *The Log*, 146-147.
[16] Peary to Herbert Bridgman, June 2, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98.PFC. Peary told Bridgman that Bartlett had sent a telegraph with this information.
[17] Peary to H.J. Bull, March 31, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.

season, expecting that ship owners would be grateful to rent him a craft for less money than usual. He directed Burchell to remind the sealers that the next sealing year looked no more promising, and that they should be happy with less.[18]

Peary's woes continued throughout the winter. Another shipbuilding company offered him three ships, the *Diana*, the *Esquimaux*, and the *Terra Nova*. Peary especially liked the *Terra Nova*, but considered the cost too high because he would have to refit the whaler to make it more manageable, which increased the expense. Peary suggested that Bruce turn the ship into a commercial vessel, which might yield a faster profit, "even in spite of her unquestioned fitness for Arctic work."[19] Peary's inability to find suitable transportation only heightened his anxieties about fund-raising.

He became increasingly direct in his pleas for money, and the sheer remoteness of the Arctic helped Peary. He exercised undisputed control over placement of the researchers who accompanied him, imposing strict rules about where he would leave them to do their work. Peary dropped them in a safe region that also promised easy delivery and pick-up with his ships, although he knew that the most dedicated scientists would value access to lesser-known areas. As a result, Peary occasionally offered to take an observer further north than other expedition members. As he prepared to leave in 1897, he tried to lure Chamberlin of the University of Chicago into accepting his invitation by pledging that "the restriction in regard to passage north of Melville would be omitted and I should be very glad to have you make the entire round trip with the

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[18] Peary to H. Burchell, June 8, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC. Burchell also looked for a whaler for Peary to rent for the 1898 trip. Even if Peary got $20,000 from the scientists, enough possibly for a ship, he still had to cover crew salaries, supplies, dog expenses, and trading goods for the Inuits. The ship costs determined all else. For example, the owners of the *Hope* wanted $8,000 before insurance. Insurance costs ran $20,000-30,000. At that price, Peary could afford the ship but nothing else.
[19] Peary to David Bruce, December 16, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC. Peary eventually rented the *Diana* as a supply steamer.

ship."[20] It was a bit of a bribe, meant to win Chamberlin's assent for a return northward. Chamberlin was the rare scientist given the opportunity to stay with Peary and not be dropped off in Greenland.

Peary was proud of Chamberlin's attachment to his 1894 expedition. In his two-volume work about his first five Arctic trips, Peary singled out Chamberlin, and concurrently applauded himself for the positive effect he had made on the glacialist's work.[21] Partially as a result of his Arctic work, Chamberlin became the first person to identify the different periods of American glacial movement.[22]

Peary made more deals like the one he offered Chamberlin as his desperation grew. Two days after he wrote to Chamberlin, Peary contacted Henry W. Cannon, president of Chase National Bank and a personal friend, and asked for an extension on his debt to the bank. He enclosed partial payment, but explained that the rest would be delayed until he received money from the scientists who would accompany his next voyage.[23] Cannon was Peary's banker; and Peary wisely kept Cannon apprised of his successes. As soon as Peary had the last meteorite aboard his ship he cabled Cannon with the news. He also reassured Cannon that "My Eskimos eager for next summer," implying that Peary's favorite group of Inuits expected and welcomed his next return.[24] This was not random information. Peary already had planned his next trip and he also knew that a select few of his wealthiest benefactors, Cannon among them, were

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[20] Peary to T.C. Chamberlin, May 30, 1897, Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[21] Peary, *Northward*, I: lxviii.
[22] In addition, he wrote a famous paper that put him at the forefront of geology. "The Method of Multiple Working Hypotheses," published in both *Science* (1890) and the *Journal of Geology* (1897) argued that scientists should develop several leading hypotheses so that the researcher would not be predisposed to believe or disbelieve only one main idea.
[23] Peary to Henry Cannon, June 1, 1897, Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[24] Peary to Cannon, Telegram, 1897, Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.

considering increasing their aid.[25]

Peary's mention of the Inuits struck at another favorite theme of the explorer. He often emphasized his importance to the Cape York Inuits. During his career, Peary experimented with different winter headquarters from which to launch his spring polar efforts, but each year he saw the same group of Inuits. He came to rely upon them for food, lodging, clothing, dogs, information, companionship, transportation, and guidance. He mentioned to Cannon that the Inuits were looking forward to his return, which was a calculated phrasing. Peary always acknowledged the many ways he benefitted from the Inuits' help, but he also played upon the Inuits' interest in him.

Peary believed that America's Arctic exploration benefitted the Inuits. He argued that his frequent trips raised their standard of living. In his view, the trade goods that he brought made the hunters better providers and helped them support more dogs (the major transportation source of the region). The hunters' greater success helped groups endure the climate better nourished, and so the birth rates rose and death rates dropped – all apparently due to Peary's presence.[26] He offered no evidence and never took an anthropologist with him to study these trends, but it was one of his pet defenses of Arctic work. Peary believed that he had raised "those children of the North...to a condition of affluence" through his gifts of knives, kayaks, needles, guns, wood, harpoons, awls, and sledges.[27] Peary's note to Cannon about "my Eskimos" insinuated the familiarity that he bragged about and also reminded Cannon that the North Pole awaited Peary's next big trip. He did not want Cannon to focus on momentary financial lapses.

Peary leaned heavily upon his circle of scientific acquaintances as time grew short

[25] The PAC officially organized in 1898.
[26] Peary, *Northward*, 1: lx.

for his quick metorite run. He wanted to plan the trip of 1898 but first had to secure the ironstone. He did what he felt was necessary in order to entice the scientists. He told Professor George Barton of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for example, that Professor Chamberlain of Colby College had already committed to him and that "the character and extent of the interest evinced in this summer voyage has surprised even me."[28] Peary obviously saw no harm in creating some competition for the few open spots on his voyages.

Other times, as in the case of Alfred Burton, Peary used personal connections to advantage. He offered Burton free round-trip passage, but asked Burton to keep the deal a secret from the other passengers. Peary followed this gift with a plea: "I am going to ask your assistance in the matter of getting up a party. Can't you raise another one in Boston as you did last year? The terms this year I shall be obliged to make $450 per head or $2500 for a party of six."[29]

Peary became adept at stroking the scientists' egos. The secret deal he struck with Burton was one of several similar bargains he negotiated. Barton of MIT received a letter much like the ones sent to Burton and Chamberlin. Peary went one step further, however, and presented Barton with a chance to do specialized fieldwork. Peary was direct:

> It has not been my intention to take anyone north of Melville Bay this summer and I would not take a stranger under any circumstances, but knowing you I have this proposition to make; if you will raise a party of five or six persons (outside of yourself) to be landed somewhere in Greenland and pay $2500 for their transportation, I should be glad to have you remain on the ship with me as my

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[27] Peary, *Northward*, 1: lix.
[28] Peary to George Barton, May 24, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.
[29] Peary to Alfred Burton, May 24, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC. Peary needed thousands of dollars for the trip, but in this letter he enclosed one dollar he owed Burton from the previous year.

> guest and make the round trip without expense, with this clear understanding as to the regions and that portion of the voyage north of Melville Bay, namely, that while the geographical and mineralogical features of the country should be entirely at your disposal and you have the utmost freedom to write concerning them yet that you shall confine yourself strictly to these and not touch upon the scenery, the people and the products of the country or the movements of the ship or party.[30]

Barton had a solid national reputation that he used to Peary's advantage. He had been with Peary in Greenland in 1896 when Peary loaded the smaller two meteorites, and upon his return, Barton published his research in *American Geologist*.[31] He did not return in 1897, despite Peary's special offer, but wrote a letter to *Science* in 1897 that reminded the magazine's readers that Peary would soon be leaving again for the Arctic, creating a tremendous opportunity for anyone interested in glacial phenomena. He suggested that American scientists should appreciate the chance because the Danish government (which had a dominant colonial presence in Greenland) supported research on glaciers, and comparative American science trailed the Danes.

According to Barton, an interested party would have four uninterrupted weeks of research. He especially emphasized Peary's favorite point, that it might be possible for scientists to make annual returns. Peary had already been to Greenland six times and had plans for more trips, making such a scenario highly likely.[32] Barton knew that Peary preferred to take teams of scientists and that a note in *Science* magazine might reach the ideal target audience.

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[30] Peary to Barton, May 24, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC. Peary's correspondence with Baldwin suggests that Peary did not remain completely removed from the scientists' work, however. He did not want to be forced to include information of limited appeal to the general public.

[31] George Barton in *American Geologist*, 18 (1896), 379-384.

[32] George Barton, "Discussion and Correspondence. Lieutenant Peary's Expedition," *Science* 5 (1897), 308-310. Peary often asked his selected scientists to organize teams of five or six that included different professions. Barton suggested a team composed of a glacialist, zoologist, botanist, meteorologist, ethnologist, and a physician (who could also be trained as one of the above). Peary did not seem particularly to care which fields of science were represented, but the team concept eliminated the need for

With the letter to Barton, Peary laid bare several ideas. He knew that any dedicated scientist would be anxious to work new territory. The explorer stated as clearly as possible the topics Barton could cover in publication. Peary left the science to the experts (his directions to Baldwin notwithstanding), but insisted that he should cover anything of general interest, such as descriptions of the native peoples or their environment, in his own work. Peary never allowed his passengers or crew to keep navigational or publish technical accounts of their specific geographic locations. Peary could not afford to let others discuss these aspects of his trips. He knew by then that narratives of Arctic exploration needed information beyond grandiose nationalistic declarations in order to see publication. The general, non-scientific areas that he asked Barton and others to avoid were ones that he could include as part of his chronological accounts of each trip. Even as he wrote to Barton, he had already sent his first manuscript to several publishers and was awaiting word on its acceptance.[33]

Some of the people that Peary enlisted had only the loosest connections to academic institutions. This hardly mattered to Peary, however, so long as the large groups that monitored and sponsored him took sufficient interest to provide funds. Peary began to sell the Arctic. He informed J.D. Figgins, an interested taxidermist, that for five hundred dollars he would allow Figgins to collect as many birds or bird skins as possible during the brief summer voyage. Peary knew the price might be too steep, so he offered to "give...passage aboard the ship, pay all your expenses, and give...as your commission thirty-three and one-third percent of the sum obtained by the sale of such specimens, viz.

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further organization on his part and also gave him a large, dependable sum of money from one source.

[33] From Charles Scribner's Sons to Peary, June 23, 1897, Folder "S," Box 17, Letters Received 1897, PFC. Charles Scribner's Sons rejected his book one month later, explaining that "the great expense connected with such a work would be hardly justified by its probable demand." Frederick Stokes, however, did

bird skins, walrus skins and skins of narwhal, bear skins, sealskins, Eskimo costumes, kayaks, tents, etc.... as you can obtain orders for from various museums and private parties between now and the time of departure...providing that the total amount of such orders that you may obtain will not be less than one thousand dollars." The offer must not have been too unusual, because Peary offered to send Figgins a list of specimens with prices attached.[34]

The explorer also solicited at colleges and universities. For example, in May 1897, Peary wrote Professor Hill of Colby College (Waterville, Maine) that he planned to visit Colby soon to help Hill promote an Arctic trip among the students. An expert lecturer, Peary assured Hill that it would be a good one, punctuated by the use of "over one hundred views [slides], many of them beautifully colored."[35] Ever the salesman, Peary encouraged Hill to organize a scientific party for the summer endeavor. The results of taking one student group to the Arctic, he noted, had "already been recognized as an extremely effective and thoroughly legitimate means of advertising a college and bringing it prominently to public notice as a progressive, up to date institution."[36] He promised also that the Maine and New England papers would cover the event before and during the group's absence. Peary suggested that media attention would increase the school's candidates for admission to Colby and that members of the party would continue the exposure with their inevitable fall and winter publications. Peary reassured Hill that

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publish the two-volume work in 1898.

[34] Peary to J.D. Figgins, April 22, 1897, Folder "F," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.

[35] Peary to Hill, May 24, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC. Peary was proud of his dozens of lantern slides of the Arctic. He relied on them to remain at the top of the lecture circuit. He was, however, constantly in debt to the company that manufactured the slides for him. William H. Rau of the Bromide, Enlargements, Lantern Slides, Half-Time Engraving, Platinotype Company wrote to Peary several times during early 1897 asking for payment of his overdue bills; Folder "Rau," Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.

[36] Peary to Hill, May 24, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.

his (Peary's) control over the group's research would be minimal. He noted that "the party would be entirely independent as to the methods and character of its work and the party's results and scientific material would be entirely its own without reservation: I simply act as a common carrier..."[37] Peary, a well-respected and successful explorer, shifted readily into the rhetoric of deference regarding potential passengers' work In closing, he mentioned that newspapers often bought stories from Arctic travelers for $100-$150 and that lectures secured $250-$500, "depending entirely upon the man."[38].

Peary knew how profitable the lecture circuit could be, having spent virtually all of his spare time since 1892 lecturing around the country. In 1897, he wrote to his tour manager, Major James B. Pond, and demanded several key changes. He wanted no less than $500 per week and all expenses paid. For this amount, he agreed to deliver six evening lectures and one "matinee." In those cases where Peary could not secure booking for an entire week, he offered to lecture once a week for $100, stating flatly to Pond that "you know as well as I do that if I wish to I can do this."[39] The letter was stern and indicated that Peary realized this would put him at the high end of the payscale on the lecture circuit. As a result, he would have fewer opportunities. Peary, however, refused to keep the grueling schedule of the past and his reputation was strong enough that he could place the demand.

The lecture circuit helped Peary, but it was not an option for low-profile academics. Some of the scientists who wanted to accompany Peary had trouble raising passage money. Robert Stein of the US Geological Survey, for example, begged Peary to

[37] Peary to Hill, May 24, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.
[38] Peary to Hill, May 24, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.
[39] Peary to James Pond, April 17, 1897, Folder "P," Box 6, Letters Sent, 1897-98, PFC.

take him in 1897.[40] Stein had no money, however, and eventually Peary agreed to let Stein pay for part of the trip upon his return. Stein's appeal reflects some of the problems encountered by the scientists poorly connected to larger patronage networks. He initially planned to raise $1000 to secure passage for himself and a Swedish accomplice.[41] He outlined his research agenda, indicating where he wished to travel and that he intended at all times to be safe and not push too far beyond Peary's usual boundaries, lest he upset Peary's time constraints. He wanted so badly to go that he asked Peary to "please let no one know of this proposal, for fear somebody might cut me out."[42] Stein pleaded, believing that if he could not go he would lose several years' worth of research. Of course, he also promised to keep secret any assurances of post-trip payment. Knowing that Peary expected some guarantee of financial return, Stein listed several possible ways to get the money. He thought he might receive some money from the New York *Tribune* in exchange for a report of his work, and he suggested that he might sell a recently acquired house for another $300.[43]

Stein eventually had to forego his Swedish aide, though he did expect to "have some Eskimos with me to handle the boat among the islands."[44] By June, Stein still did not have enough money to secure passage. He concocted a list of thirty people he thought might have the money to sponsor him. Two weeks later, after almost thirty

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[40] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 112. Stein had led an expedition to Ellesmere Land in 1894 and was anxious to continue his research.

[41] Robert Stein to Peary, May 19, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.

[42] Robert Stein to Peary, May 19, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC. Stein wanted to explore Jones Sound and slightly westward.

[43] Robert Stein to Peary, May 11, May 30, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.

[44] Robert Stein to Peary, May 13, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC. Stein knew that Peary often promised passengers that he would secure Inuit boats and/or guides for them, to make transportation and residence in Greenland easier during their research term.

rejections, Stein dusted off another plan. The Smithsonian Institution had agreed to pay for "the collection of Eskimo remains."[45] Peary eventually accepted Stein, though he still owed Peary for the balance of the cost in late November, several months after their return from Greenland.[46]

Peary spent months in exchanges with people like Stein, Burton, Barton, Chamberlin, as well as zoos, the Smithsonian, the AMNH, and his rich friends. He realized that part of his problem lay in the fact that nobody had taken charge of the information and artifacts gathered each year, and the scientists were not in close communication with each other. The meetings and publications of the NGS and the AGS were the primary means for these people to meet and talk to each other.[47] Peary dreamed of overseeing a grand scientific enterprise. Not surprisingly, his model looked much like the RGS in London. Peary admired the RGS and knew how much the organization helped its national explorers. He confided to Barton that he planned to present a idea before the American Geological Congress in late 1897 that involved formation of a permanent committee to coordinate collection of all northern scientific work. Ideally, each year the committee would take over the time-consuming task of finding scientists interested in Arctic field research. He envisioned that the committee might "present the matter each year to four or five leading Colleges with a view to their sending out parties

[45] Robert Stein to Peary, June 17, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.
[46] Robert Stein to Peary, November 24, 1897, Folder "Robert Stein," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.
[47] Philip J. Pauly, "The World and All That is In It: The National Geographic Society, 1888-1918," *American Quarterly* 31 (Autumn 1979), 517-532. Both organizations initially attracted amateurs interested in armchair exploration. The NGS tried early to establish two groups within its ranks -professional scientists and the masses of general readers. However, the directors of the NGS and the editors of its major publication, the *National Geographic Magazine*, rarely agreed on how and where to blur the line between popularization and stiff scientific reporting. The infighting became so extreme that in 1904 some members of the NGS left and formed the Association of American Geographers, in which membership was restricted to those who had done primary work in geography.

to cover some particular region of those northern coasts."[48]

The committee was part of a long-term plan. Peary expected to go north "every summer for the next five years," and his vision hinged on the scientists' belief in his personal involvement in the Arctic. Under Peary's plan, each scientific group would operate independently of the others, but after five years, with good organization and communication, they would have "a systematic, scientific, accurate 'ubersicht' of the entire American Arctic coasts from the Straits of Belle Isle to Cape Sabine and Littleton Islands and perhaps even farther north."[49]

Confident that his plan would generate enthusiasm for his polar quest, Peary hit the lecture circuit again. Peary had greater control over his own schedule; he could pick well-informed and potentially lucrative audiences, rather than grub for money. In public discussions of the Arctic he emphasized two things, first that Arctic exploration was safe and had a glorious payoff – the United States flag planted first at the pole –and, second, that many fields of science directly benefitted from his work. The information gathered under his direction led to deeper understanding of the earth, its weather, movement, and formation. These topics deserved long-term commitment, Peary argued, and his sterling leadership record proved that he could continue to help the nation pioneer them. He wanted Americans to believe that it would be a resounding loss for the nation if his work ended.

One of Peary's best explanations of his work appeared in 1897 when he received the Cullum Medal. The AGS chose Peary as the award's first recipient, a shining example of someone who had proven himself "by geographical discoveries, or in the

[48] Peary to Barton, May 24, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[49] Peary to Barton, May 24, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.

advancement of geographical science." Peary was a unanimous choice for the award, "with one exception, and that exception was – Mrs. Peary." [50] His discovery that Greenland was in fact an island, and his successful charting of the previously unknown coast of Inglefield Gulf, changed perceptions of the Arctic. The unknown, and therefore dangerous, parts of the Arctic were fast disappearing due to Peary's consistent efforts. It now seemed possible to reach the North Pole. Peary's explorations of Greenland killed one of the last myths of serious pole seekers, that Greenland extended northward over the pole. Daly summarized Peary's work as he presented the medal:

> Dr. Petermann, the founder, proprietor, and editor of the great German geographical journal that bears his name, maintained for years...that Greenland was a large continent extending over and beyond the pole. I never believed in this theory...for the reason that three-fourths of the polar circle as then known was an archipelago of islands and if, in the absence of knowledge, we were to indulge in conjecture it was more reasonable to suppose that the remaining fourth would prove to be the same; and this...you have established to be the fact.[51]

The acceptance of the award put Peary in a prime position to unveil his cooperative plan. Peary pointed out that he alone, of four recent international figures endeavoring to find the North Pole, had returned with legitimate hopes for future success. Frederick Jackson of England, America's Walter Wellman, and Norway's Fridtjof Nansen had explored different parts of the Arctic. Jackson and Nansen demonstrated that two relatively well-traveled areas were probably poor for serious polar launches.[52] Peary

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[50] *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 29 (1897), 116. The mention of Josephine Peary reflected their appreciation for her work on Peary's behalf in 1894. One of the first people she approached for financial aid in her relief effort was Judge Charles P. Daly, president of the AGS.

[51] *Bulletin of the American Geographical*, 116.

[52] Pierre Berton, *The Arctic Grail: The Quest for the North West Passage and the North Pole, 1818-1909* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 496-498; Bryce, 268; *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 29 (1897), 118. Jackson tried for the North Pole from Franz Josef Land and failed. On his way home, he rescued Nansen's expedition by chance, which had reached a new Farthest North at 86 13' in the Siberian Arctic but had a rough return and was near starvation and death when Jackson found them. Wellman was still in the Arctic, trying to reach the pole from Spitzbergen, but there was news from him (passed along by whalers) indicating that he would not make it.

had already identified the best way to reach the North Pole: moving northward through Smith Sound and Kane Basin, hugging the northwest coast of Greenland.[53] The ice pack was further north along this edge of the Arctic Ocean. The large number of small islands, bays, and channels wreaked havoc on ships, but Peary learned early to travel overland rather than look for open waters.

Peary's willingness to explore Greenland on foot gave him advantages. His base camp could be located further north than any ship could travel. It forced him to consider Inuit adaptations seriously and to make intercultural communication a necessary part of polar work. And while other explorers stayed on their ships or set up poorly situated camps, Peary used his spare time to investigate as much land as possible. Thus, his familiarity with the Arctic's people and conditions was unrivaled, and his determination inspired loyalty. Bob Bartlett, for example, who admitted that he had no taste for exploration, stayed with Peary even after the terrible ordeals of the 1898-1902 trip. When Bob's father told him that he would never make money guiding an explorer, Bob replied: "But I don't want my own expedition,...as long as I can go with Peary." He explained the decision simply, as "That was the grip the man's personality got on me."[54]

Peary used the AGS award as a platform for his plans. He told the audience that "The conquest of the North Pole, the complete delimitation of the Greenland Archipelago, the last of the circumpolar island groups, and the elimination from our maps of the unknown area between the 84th parallel and the Pole, are important geographical desiderata. The work can be accomplished without risk of life or health. It can be done at a comparatively small cost. The time for this work is favorable, the probabilities of

[53] *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 29 (1897), 118.
[54] Bartlett, *The Log*, 159.

success flattering, the requisite experience and inclination to undertake it available. The one element lacking is the necessary funds. My plan in fewest words is to raise a fund sufficient to insure the continuation of the work of exploration for ten years, if necessary, say $150,000...."[55]

Peary then laid out his most ambitious dream. He wanted to buy a ship, an important consideration that took another eight years to be realized. Bob Bartlett, Peary's devoted ship captain, realized that Peary's insistence on wintering as far north as possible made all the difference in trying for the pole. He resented time spent fund-raising and looking for whalers to rent, and wanted to focus on the details of exploration instead. The rest of Peary's long explanation of his plans to the AGS delved into the details of preparation and how he would spend his time in the Arctic. Moreover, Peary, unlike his contemporaries, had public, long-term goals regarding Arctic work. No one else made such grand commitments to the region.

Peary understood the value of entertainment. He knew that the public wanted to be able to see, touch, feel, and somehow experience the Arctic without leaving home. Peary used the lure of exotic Arctic animals to his advantage when he returned from Greenland in 1897, inviting the biggest national zoos and the Ringling Brothers to buy some of his best finds, including a pair of polar bear cubs. The Smithsonian Institution Zoological Park kept the cubs in the meantime. Eventually, after several exchanges, the Ringling Brothers Circus agreed to buy the cubs for five hundred dollars. The circus saw more than exotic animals; it enjoyed the idea of a public association with Peary. In a letter to him, the circus representative stated that "we would appreciate the fact greatly if you would cause the Associated Press to publish that you had disposed of the Polar Bears

[55] Bartlett, The Log, 119.

captured last October and shipped them to Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Show. Coming from one so prominently noticed as yourself in the leading papers might be highly beneficial to us and we assume you would be highly appreciated."[56]

Even the unique animals of the Arctic took time and persistence for Peary to place, however. The Cincinnati Zoo and the Smithsonian Zoo each expressed mild interest in the cubs, but were unwilling to pay Peary's asking price.[57] Peary used whatever means he could to curry favor with the public-friendly zoos. He sent an Eskimo dog to the Smithsonian's zoo in early 1897, though the dog died of distemper soon after arrival. The Smithsonian was not dismayed, however. Frank Baker, superintendent of the zoo, offered Peary use of a set of steel traps for the capture of more cubs when Peary returned north. Meanwhile, Baker decided, the zoo should focus on buying buffaloes, which were fast disappearing. The purchase of polar bears would have to wait.[58]

The Eskimo dogs that Peary relied upon so heavily in the Arctic also served him well in the United States. The dogs were easier to transport than animals like polar bears, walruses, or musk ox, all of which he donated to different institutions during his career. In one instance, he sold several Eskimo dogs to the Bronx Zoo. The director accepted them due to their association with Peary, going against his usual rule against accepting domestic animals. In fact, the zoo eventually ended up with so many of Peary's dogs that

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[56] Ringling Brothers Circus to Peary, February 16, 1897, Folder "R," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.
[57] Cincinnati Zoo to Peary, Janueary 27, 1897, Folder "C," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC; Smithsonian Institution to Peary, June 11, 1897 Folder "S," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC.
[58] Frank Baker to Peary, June 5, 1897; Folder "S," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897 (R-Y), PFC; *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution to July, 1897* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 22-23. The zoo had little money and only temporary lodging for its animals, and its directors wanted to collect specimens of Great Plains bison.

they refused to accept any more and sold them cheaply to anyone who would take them.[59] Peary also employed a dog show manager, who travelled with the animals and put them on display for paying audiences. Peary shuffled some dogs between the dog show and the Smithsonian zoo, as needed.[60]

Peary took only a small number of scientists with him to the Arctic. He knew, however, that there was a larger network of people interested in the region who did not have the opportunity, means, or desire to accompany him. They were not forgotten. Upon each return, Peary worked hard finding appropriate scientific "homes" for his various Arctic artifacts, much as he did for the cubs and the dogs. During the spring and summer of 1897, he contacted scientists to give away or sell his best specimens from the year before. He wrote to the Carnegie Museum in Pennsylvania, for example, agreeing to sell them three walrus skins for $250. The walrus bodies had been shipped directly to the AMNH and Peary invited the Carnegie Museum to send its own expert to inspect the skins. Peary's connection with the AMNH was strong enough that he asked it to hold Arctic specimens while he searched for the best means to use them.[61]

Peary used the Inuits much as he did Arctic flora and fauna – as object of

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[59] William Bridges, *Gathering of Animals: An Unconventional History of the New York Zoological Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 151-152. The zoo also sold the dogs to a farm in New England, where Peary bred them to use on later expeditions. The zoo animals were sometimes used as models for artists, and Peary's Eskimo dogs were used by Paul Bransom for his illustrations of Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. See also Frank Baker, "The National Zoological Park," in *The Smithsonian Institution, 1846-1896: The History of its First Half Century*, ed. George Brown Goode, (City of Washington: n.p., 1897), 450-458. The Smithsonian also formulated an argument for acceptance of domestic animals. When Mrs. Peary gave the zoo two teams of dogs in 1897, Baker explained that "A collection of domestic dogs, intended to show the great variation of that species by typical example of well recognized breeds, has been commenced." Baker also noted that if any zoo animals died in good condition, their skins and skeletons could be donated to the Smithsonian.

[60] Frank Baker to Peary, February 18, 1897; March 9, 1897, Folder "S," Box 17, Letters Received, 1897, (R-Y), PFC. Baker agreed to loan two Eskimo dogs to the Dog Show. He wrote again later to inform Peary that the manager had not prepaid the shipping charges when he returned the dogs to the zoo. Baker forwarded the charges to Peary.

[61] Peary to Carnegie Museum, April 7, 1897, Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.

scientific study. As stated previously, he considered himself a civilized benefactor and father figure to the Cape York Inuits. His attitude and his connection with the AMNH combined to give him a strange idea. Anthropologist Franz Boas worked at the AMNH when Peary knew him in the 1890's. Boas had spent a winter studying the Inuits of Baffin Island in 1883 and eventually published the results in the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society.*[62] He built his reputation on the study of various native groups in North America, particularly along the Pacific Northwest coast. By the time Peary was an accomplished polar traveler, Boas was an influential researcher at the AMNH. Boas was Peary's ally and he gave him as much information as possible. In 1896, Peary began using his Inuit aides as subjects for the anthropologist. He convinced two young Inuits, ages twelve and eight, to allow Albert Operti, a passenger artist, to create "full-length casts" of them, and he sent photos of the work to Boas. Operti enticed several Cape York Inuits to model for him when they were not making fur clothing for the crew. The ship's motion through the ice floes tended to break the casts, so only a few survived the process. Peary helped Operti convince the Inuits to disrobe and be bathed before the plaster applications. Operti asked the models to lie perfectly still as he cast their faces, hands, feet, and occasionally a full figure. It was difficult work because the heated plaster often blistered the Inuits' skin as it dried, and it was a lengthy process. In one case, working outdoors in order to create a rare full-length standing cast, Operti covered his Inuit model in clay, vaseline, and plaster. After the cast dried, it took the artist almost two hours to chip the mold off the man. For his troubles, "the chattering Eskimo was promised a gun

[62] Franz Boas, "A Year Among the Eskimo," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 19 (1887), 383-402.

to stand this dose."[63]

Peary caught Boas in the midst of a rushed study of native peoples of the United States and Canada. Boas, like most anthropologists of the late nineteenth century, believed that native civilizations hovered on the edge of extinction and that focused research was necessary before they disappeared forever.[64] These ideas helped Peary regarding the Inuits, but had previously been a problem. The Smithsonian passed on purchase of his polar bear cubs in order to buy buffalo, believing that the buffalo, like the Plains Indians, were on the verge of extinction. The polar bear cubs were exotic, but not yet rare.

Peary's Arctic artifacts attracted attention for only slightly different reasons. Anthropology's fascination with disappearing peoples and cultures also fed a curiosity about the differences between savagery and civilization. The AMNH celebrated Peary's collections in its new wing because they showcased the "primitive" lifestyles of the Inuits. The curators arranged the new Ethnological Hall displays in geographical order, with each collection operating as a unit. In each case, the displays showcased: "physical types of the people, the relations of man to nature; manufactures and industries; household furnishings; dress and ornament; travel; methods of obtaining food supply by hunting, fishing, stock raising or agriculture; warfare; trade and barter; games[;] music; plastic art; social organization; religion."[65] Peary's donations from the remote Inuits fit perfectly.

The museum's curators operated within a scientific culture that demanded

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[63] Peary to Franz Boas, February 21, 1897, Folder "B," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC. See also Rudolf Kersting, ed., *The White World: Life and Adventures Within the Arctic Circle Portrayed by Famous Living Explorers* (New York: Lewis, Scribner's & Co., 1902), 293-304.

[64] Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence, KS:

attention to the difference between civilized and subjugated peoples. Many curators learned how to display, arrange, and talk about native peoples and/or cultures at the world's fairs of the late nineteenth century. Boas was a major force behind the anthropological displays at the Chicago world's fair in 1893. As fair operators prepared for the world's fair of Omaha in 1898, a primary concern was the context for various American Indian attractions. The Bureau of Indian Affairs sent word to agents across the country explaining that the upcoming display should be "'as thoroughly aboriginal in every respect as practicable, and that the primitive traits and characteristics of the several tribes should be distinctly set forth.'"[66] The Omaha fair boasted a popular sham battle between "hostile" Indians and a collection of cowboys and "friendly" Indians that ended with the defeated "hostiles" being led away to a reservation, a mock Ghost Dance, and footraces meant to showcase Indian stamina. James Mooney, ethnologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology, praised the scientific value of such events and the benefits for anthropology. The scientists believed they had moved past a mere Wild West show into "'a serious ethnological exhibit.'" One writer summed up the lesson behind the fair's presentation of the American Indians: "'The object lesson of the Congress of American Indians in connection with the Trans-Mississippi Exposition is that of progress.'"[67] The anthropologists considered the Indians a dying race, and the fair offered a fleeting chance for scientists and the public alike to remark upon the dramatic differences between the Indians' cultures and their own. The world's fair set the standards for display of native cultures throughout the country. Peary's timely deposit of several Inuits at the AMNH

University Press of Kansas, 1982), 232-233.

[65] "Opening of the East Wing," 850.

[66] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 64, 113.

gave the museum an ideal opportunity to explore the latest ethnological trends.

The AMNH was a relatively young institution but the ideas behind its organization created an ideal situation for Boas and, indirectly, Peary. Several wealthy anthropologists created the AMNH in 1869. Many of them, Morris K. Jesup, William E. Dodge, J. Pierpont Morgan, and Isaac N. Phelps counted the museum as merely one of several ways to distribute wealth for general social benefit. Jesup, for example, later a founder of the Peary Arctic Club, was an early organizer of the YMCA and also founded both the Society for the Suppression of Vice and the Society for the Relief of Half Orphan and Destitute Children. The organizers had few clear goals for the AMNH; it functioned to please the public. The museum bought and created huge collections of plants and animals, but had no direction or organizing principle. As a result, it "was a testament to the wonders of creation," and little else. The trustees, several of whom were avid private collectors of art or other rarities, valued the collecting process itself.[68]

The museum foundered under lack of direction until 1881, when Jesup became president. Jesup hired two skilled, veteran curators, Joel Asaph Alden and Frank M. Chapman, who systematically organized, labelled, and showcased the museum's vast holdings. The AMNH then entered a new phase of popularity. Not only did the institution have outstanding exhibits, but Allen and Chapman pushed it to embrace scientific research as the basis for its existence. Allen, especially, vocalized the need for money for research, appropriate facilities, and study collections for students and

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[67] Rydell, *All the World's*, 117-118.
[68] Ron Rainger, *An Agenda for Antiquity: Henry Fairfield Osborn & Vertebrate Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, 1890-1935* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), 56-57.

scientists.[69] Jesup, not a man of science, appreciated Allen's interests mostly for the final result of improved exhibits.

Jesup's attention to such details explains why the AMNH claimed as much scientific prestige as older American museums and academies. He began immediately to make the AMNH a center for both advanced education as well as useful public scientific information. Earlier attempts at ethnological collection and organization had damaged the reputation of American science. For example, Charles Wilson Peale, curator and founder of the Philadelphia Museum, designed his early nineteenth-century displays to impress, rather than inform, visitors. In one instance, "the museum included a bloody exhibition of a wolf devouring the head of a mule deer. The deer's skin had arrived in such poor condition that only the head could be used – as a snack for the wolf." Peale emphasized nationalistic lessons, showcasing minerals donated by Thomas Jefferson from Lewis and Clark's trek, as well as a mastodon bone found in the United States. He used the bone to disparage the theory that all New World animals were "degenerate forms of European animals." Peale received international condemnation. One Englishman sneered that "it has remained for our American cousins to drag the term Museum down to a very low level. On the other side of the Atlantic no good-sized town would be considered complete without its 'Dime Museum,' where every description of monstrosity, natural and otherwise—usually otherwise—can be seen for a modest fivepence."[70]

Peale's displays discouraged academics, but his attempt to use his curatorship to gain respect among scientists was not unusual. It was "a ladder for ambitious scientists to

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[69] Rainger, *An Agenda*, 58.
[70] Carla Yanni, *Nature's Museums: Victorian Science & the Architecture of Display* (Baltimore: Johns

climb: these men wanted attention for collecting the best and biggest specimens, and such self-aggrandizement necessarily conflicted with their claim for creating typical displays." The showmanship of Peale's collection later caught the attention of P.T. Barnum, who bought it in 1850 for his circus.[71]

Peale's odd collection fascinated spectators, yet failed to keep pace with changes within American science. The next generation of American scientists looked for deeper value in their studies of animals and expeditionary finds. William Maclure, president of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences (1817-1840), witnessed a new era of American science. Early in his presidency, Maclure determined to maintain the amateur appeal of his institution. The Academy refused to ally itself with other scientific groups, the government, or its host city. For example, in 1819 the group's members refused to reply to the government's request for advice on the proposed western exploratory trip of Major Stephen Long. However, the Academy struggled with its decision to support "the diffusion of knowledge rather than its advancement." Member scientists squabbled over the increasing split between trained professionals and the devoted amateurs whose interests had founded the Academy. Then, in 1836, the organization responded to the US Navy's request for nominations for a naturalist to accompany Charles Wilkes on his Antarctic exploring expedition (1838-42). Eventually, three Academy members sailed south with Wilkes, and others recommended scientific guidelines for specimen collection. And in 1846, when Congress announced plans to publish only one hundred copies of Wilkes' results, the Academy joined the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in formal complaints about the need for more copies if the trip were to be of lasting

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Hopkins Press, 1999), 28-29.
[71] Yanni, *Nature's Museums*, 30.

scientific value.[72] Eventually the Academy, like the Smithsonian and later the AMNH, drew distinct lines between the professional scientists who collected and studied its material, and the larger untrained and amateur public.

In 1834, Joseph Henry visited Peale's Philadelphia Museum and watched a man float over an excited crowd in a hot air balloon. He told a friend that "the whole exhibition was to me one of the most exciting I have ever witnessed."[73] Twelve years later, as the first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Henry focused on collecting over informing, but for different reasons than Peale. Henry believed that "'the increase of knowledge is much more difficult, and in reference to the bearing of this institution on the character of our country and the welfare of mankind, much more important than the diffusion of knowledge.'"[74] Henry supported original scientific fieldwork, and he viewed the Smithsonian as an ideal repository for collectors who placed academic value on their finds.

Henry and his assistant secretary of Natural History, Spencer Fullerton Baird, identified several research areas that needed particular attention. Arctic and sub-Arctic collection had occurred haphazardly since the 1840's. Hudson's Bay factors occasionally sent artifacts to opportunistic institutions, as did a few individual explorers, but England's long dominance of Arctic exploration benefited the RGS more than any US collector. Henry created specific instructions for the expeditionary teams that he sent north, and for the first decade of his management, he depended heavily upon the US government and

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[72] Patsy A. Gerstner, "The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 1812-1850," in *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic: American Scientific and Learned Societies from Colonial Times to the Civil War*, Alexandra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown, eds., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 183, 185, 187-89.
[73] Albert E. Moyer, *Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American Scientist* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 188.
[74] Moyer, *Joseph Henry*, 249.

the military for funding and personnel. As a result, "the majority of the specimens deposited at the Smithsonian Institution during the 1850s were collected by employees of the War Department, the Department of the Interior, the army, the navy, the Topographical Bureau, and various state surveys." Henry, however, wanted collections that represented more than the mid-western and southwestern parts of the country, where the military sent most of its men (to handle American Indians affairs). He designed a more comprehensive exploration program that relied upon volunteers and trained scientific fieldworkers. When the Civil War began and the military withdrew its services, Henry initiated his plan and never again sought military manpower.

The Smithsonian's accessions more than doubled under the civilian program. In particular, the organization's sub-Arctic collection became world-class, largely through the work of naturalist Robert Kennicott. He managed an area of the Hudson's Bay Company (around Mackenzie River), skillfully organizing local traders and trappers, explaining the Smithsonian's needs, and using the local native population as collectors. Within six years, Kennicott oversaw the collection of one of the Smithsonian's largest nineteenth-century exhibitions—its sub-Arctic material.[75]

The Smithsonian, therefore, was the first large, well-funded American organization interested in international fieldwork. The Hudson's Bay Company was a cooperative partner in Henry and Baird's collection of northern specimens, giving them

[75] Debra Lindsay, *Science in the Subarctic: Trappers, Traders, and the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 6-7, 9, 88. Before the Civil War, the Smithsonian had 55, 389 accessions. By 1866, it had over 119,000 accessions. During his six years, Kennicott and his team sent over 1,700 specimens per year to Washington, DC. Kennicott paid close attention to his fieldworkers' organization skills as well, making sure that they abided by the guideline standards "being developed by a scientific community that was as concerned with rigor and replicability as it was with rarities." The most dedicated traders and trappers in this collection system worked with specific directives and clear instructions about the value of their work for anthropologists and other scientists. As a result, these northern collectors "fell midway between those of the professional anthropologists and those of the pre-

an impressive assortment of artifacts from the peoples and land in the eastern Canadian sub-Arctic around 60 N. Substantial Arctic collections from areas further north where only whalers, explorers, and small groups of Inuits visited took longer to develop. By the time Americans were seriously interested in the area, the Smithsonian had competition. Its fieldworkers set a standard that other institutions followed, however. Jesup's management of the AMNH built on the directives begun by researchers at the Smithsonian. Peary's obvious favoritism toward the AMNH was based more on his friendship with Jesup than anything else. Jesup's careful selection of his departmental curators, therefore, affected the manner in which Peary's donations became both public information and anthropological specimens.

Jesup, like Maclure of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, was a businessman. He was interested in his scientists' work because he believed in their potential to discover the world's secrets, pinpoint future resources, and bring fame and glory to everyone connected to the museum. He saw special value in a connection with Peary, because no American institution boasted a significant Arctic exhibition.[76] He explained Peary's value to the AMNH in a letter he wrote to the Navy on Peary's behalf in 1897 to explain how detrimental it would be if the Navy continued its plan to transfer Peary to California. Jesup wrote that the move would

> detract from the educational value of the collections so far as it relates to the public, but it would result in the loss of many data, valuable alike to the scientist and the country. I will cite but one instance of the many in mind. It is proposed to set up a winter and summer representation of the Eskimo camp, with life-size groups and complete accessories; those groups will possess extreme interest for every visitor to the building. Without the advice and the knowledge of Mr. Peary, we would be very much hampered in its preparation. Beyond this,

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ethnographers who collected data only sporadically for reasons quite irrelevant to anthropological studies."

[76] Douglas J. Preston, *Dinosaurs in the Attic: An Excursion into the American Museum of Natural History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 24, 35.

> there is the valuable information he has acquired, which is needed in the formation of labels for the objects. I feel convinced that you will appreciate the position I take in the matter, without going into more detail, and you will pardon me, I hope, in conclusion, for earnestly urging upon you the wish of my associate trustees (whose names are attached) that if a change is contemplated for Mr. Peary, you will consider favorably our appeal to retain him at least for the present in the assignment to duty in Brooklyn. I believe that the Navy Department is deeply interested in everything that pertains to science, or that which will conduce to the public good, and I beg to assure you that your kindly aid and co-operation in our present needs will be gratefully appreciated.[77]

In 1891, Jesup oversaw the placement of Henry Fairfield Osborn as curator of vertebrate paleontology at the AMNH. The museum was in solid financial shape and had a fine reputation. Osborn, however, helped usher in another phase of the AMNH that had special bearing on Boas and Peary. Osborn saw the potential to fund scientific expeditions through the AMNH.[78]

It took time (and a wealthy benefactor, Morgan) to establish a committed network of fieldworkers, but within a few years the AMNH became a routine financier of all sorts of scientific/collection expeditions. Jesup's willingness to let his curators turn the museum in new directions created a marvelous situation for Peary. Boas served as director of the anthropology department during these key changes at the AMNH. Peary, still anxious for positive press, did all that he could to give Boas specimens of interest. The casts of the two young Inuits were only the beginning.

Peary not only brought back polar bear cubs, walrus skins, and meteorites in 1897. He also delivered six Inuit people, four adults and two children, to the care of Boas at the AMNH. Explorers had removed native peoples from their homelands for tours and royal exhibitions for generations. Peary delivered his group to an anthropologist at a

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[77] William Adams Brown, *Morris Ketchum Jesup: A Character Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 195.
[78] Rainger, *An Agenda*, 62.

famous museum, however, and clearly meant them for further study. The explorer left them there and had no further contact with them until the following year, when he took one of them back to the Arctic. Peary had not warned Boas of their arrival, so the museum was ill-prepared to care for them. The small group lived in the museum's basement and was taken out daily for public display where Matthew Henson, Peary's African-American assistant, translated for the crowds.[79] Four of them died of pneumonia or tuberculosis within a few months. Boas wrote to Peary, explaining the illnesses and the steps he took to save them, but Peary was busy preparing for his next journey and did not visit his charges.[80] The Inuits were eventually moved into a private residence, although they continued to be of use to Boas. One of his students, Alfred Kroeber, who later became famous for his work with Ishi, last of the Yahi tribe, visited the Inuits and studied their mourning rituals as individual members of the group sickened and died.[81]

Boas and his superiors at the AMNH realized that the Inuits were suffering in New York, but they were helpless to return the group home again until Peary went north in 1898. No other ships were known to be going far enough north until that time. By the

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[79] Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life of Minik, the New York Eskimo* (South Royalton, Vermont: Steerforth Press, 2000) 27-28. Boas had earlier written to Peary and asked him to bring an Inuit for the museum's use for one year. Peary apparently never formally agreed, and certainly did not mention that he would bring back more than one person.

[80] Boas to Peary, February 24, 1898; March 2, 1898, Folder "A," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC. Boas expressed surprise that the Inuits fell ill. He wrote to Peary that "I am exceedingly sorry that the poor Eskimos are suffering so much; but of course nobody could foresee such events. So many Eskimos have been brought to this country by whalers and have safely returned, that it was justifiable to presume that with due precautions they would spend the winter here without serious effects." In March, Boas wrote again to Peary, who was lecturing in North Dakota, to tell him that the female Inuit would be dead before Boas mailed the letter, and that the others were near death. He wanted Peary to know that "We have hired in turn various doctors, given these people every care; had them at the hospital...and settled them in a cottage," all to no avail.

[81] Harper, *Give Me*, 37-38. See also Shari M. Huhndorf, "Nanook and his Contemporaries: Imagining Eskimos in American Culture, 1897-1922," *Critical Inquiry* 27 (Autumn 2000), 122-148. Huhndorf sees Peary and Boas' use of the Inuits as reflections of America's nineteenth-century colonialism. She states that Americans used the supposed objectivity of science to explain the differences between themselves and colonized or subjugated groups. The anthropologist, through his studies of the group, and Peary, via his narratives, presented the Arctic peoples as members of a past civilization, specimens of historical study that

time Peary attempted to reach the North Pole in 1898, only two of the six remained alive. He took Uisaakassak with him aboard the *Windward* and returned him safely home. Minik, a young boy whose father had died earlier in the year, stayed in New York and was adopted into the home of William Wallace, a director of the AMNH.[82] Minik caused a publicity problem for Peary a few years later, when he demanded to see his father's bones and museum directors told him that they could not find them amongst their substantial skeleton collection.

This was a tragic incident to conclude Peary's otherwise successful year. Strangely, the Inuits' problems had minimal effect on Peary. He received credit for delivering another interesting display for the museum, and the truth about what happened to these people never hurt Peary's career. The explorer spent the winter of 1897-98 planning a large, multi-year expedition to the North Pole, and the successes of 1897 made this job remarkably easier.

Peary was at the top of his form in 1897. He had found the elusive link between professional field researchers and the larger insitutions who depended upon their labor. He realized that the two groups often had trouble locating each other and that he could benefit from their mutual interests. Peary won the attention of larger, well-endowed (or at least well organized) groups who appreciated the scientists' work. These museums, organizations, and zoos rewarded his efforts financially, when possible, ensuring that

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had no present or future in modern America.

[82] Harper, *Give Me*, 40-42. Harper argues that Peary brought the Inuits to the AMNH to please Jesup and thus guarantee a closer affiliation with the man's wealth. Harper is forced to admit, however, that Jesup had no prior knowledge of Peary's plans. Peary by this point had a long-established habit of using museums to garner positive press and scientific credit, knowing that the museums also wanted his Arctic goods. The Inuits fit within this pattern. Peary only used the results as needed, however. Harper points out that in the appendix to *Northward Over the "Great Ice"*, Peary wrote about these Inuits as if they were still alive and played up his personal acquaintances with him, even though he knew as he wrote the book that two of them had already died and the rest were seriously ill.

Peary could maintain plans to reach the North Pole.

In the years between 1891 and 1897, Peary established the reputation upon which the rest of his career rested. The PAC, an organization of millionaires, made sure after 1898 that Peary had enough funds to return to the Arctic each time he developed a new plan. The most influential members of this group, however, were men who had contributed to his trips for years, or who had in some way benefitted from an alliance with him. In most cases, the connection could be traced to membership in the AGS or the NGS or to avid interest in the AMNH. These institutions had remained committed to Peary during his early years because he included scientists and ensured that they had a willing audience for their results. The quest for the North Pole became more of a business for Peary after 1897. This change had as much to do with the increasing costs of Peary's trips and the refinement of his goals as with these scientific organizations' subtle shift away from the promotion of active field research. The next chapter will explain the roots of the new trend in Peary's career.

Chapter Four

"In a Permanent and Lasting Manner:" The PAC, Peary, and the Pole, 1898-1902

Peary's decision to seek the North Pole in 1897 outmoded his old methods of Arctic exploration. He had proven himself to be a resilient explorer and a savvy collector of Arctic souvenirs, but the North Pole posed new challenges. He spent the winter and spring of 1898 organizing a four-year expedition to the Arctic. For his new endeavor, he built on the interest of the philanthropic businessmen who had supported his earlier ventures, expanded this network, and began to plan Arctic work that bypassed his former reliance on the research funding and companionship of scientists. Before 1897, Peary approached college professors, museum personnel, and independent researchers, explained their collection opportunities, and required pre-payment from willing groups and individuals. The bargain worked because Peary received enough money to rent a ship and organize each expedition, and the ambitious scientists earned professional prestige and benefits for themselves and their home institutions.

With the businessmen's money, all this changed. The philanthropists wanted the pole, as Peary did, and were satisfied with his promise to donate most items of scientific or cultural intrigue to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). Peary's favorite collector. No longer was scientific study the first priority. The new source of patronage caused new problems, however. The men most interested in funding Peary had their own businesses to run and could not devote full attention to his cause. It took months to contact enough people to raise the kind of money that Peary needed.[1] At the same time, Peary feared losing the pole to legitimate, strong competition from both home

and abroad. Norwegian and other American explorers crowded into Peary's Arctic dreams.

Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen had stunned the world with his risky plan for finding the North Pole in 1893. Arctic explorers knew that the polar ice pack drifted in a generally northwesterly direction. Nansen proposed to ram a ship into the ice in Siberia and drift across the North Pole. Nansen and his "drift theory" enjoyed the full support of the Norwegian government. The federal government and the King of Norway pledged two-thirds of his money. Within six months, he raised the rest of the funds from private subscription.[2] Nansen built a remarkable, strong ship, the *Fram*, jammed her into the ice north of Norway, and spent eighteen months drifting slowly towards the pole. (See Appendix, Figure 2) In 1895 he knew he would never reach the pole aboard ship; the ice was too thick. He and a companion, Hjalmar Johansen, tried and failed to ski to the North Pole. They achieved a new Farthest North at 86 14', though, and Nansen suddenly had as much Arctic prestige as Peary.[3] Nansen operated under different circumstances, however. He had plenty of money, and he never once allied himself with science. He wanted only the North Pole, and grew terse with reporters who tried to give his quest a more pragmatic scope. Nansen had scientific training, and the soundings he took above Siberia proved that the Arctic was indeed an ocean, not a shallow sea. It therefore seemed unlikely that anyone would discover any landmasses further north; only frozen ocean lay ahead. Despite this realization, Nansen never made the observations an integral part of his goal. Norwegians embraced their new hero, who tried for the pole for

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[1] Each trip cost at least $30 000.
[2] Fridtjof Nansen, *Farthest North*, Edited by Jon Krakauer (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), 25.
[3] Peter Stark, ed., *Ring of Ice: True Tales of Adventure, Exploration, and Arctic Life*, (New York: The Lyons Press, 2000), 185-191.

the adventure of it.[4]

The North Pole seemed destined to be seen after hundreds of years of effort, yet for Peary it continued to take massive effort simply to come within walking distance. Peary's multi-year effort required more managerial attention, but the details or organization remained of secondary importance. An even larger project unfolded simultaneously. A group of men interested in seeing Peary win the pole formed an organization dedicated to that one goal. Peary's old friend Herbert Bridgman started the campaign and asked other wealthy men to donate at least one thousand dollars per year for four years to the cause. One year earlier, at an award ceremony at the AGS, Peary had spoken of a long-range plan that required significant funding, and he immediately attracted a small corps of donors. Bridgman and Morris K. Jesup of the AMNH each pledged money for several years, hoping to underwrite Peary's most recent scheme. Jesup hosted the first meeting of the PAC in his New York office.[5] In 1898, nobody imagined that it would take another eleven years for Peary to claim success.

By early spring, the Peary Arctic Club (PAC) had a clear agenda and several thousand dollars at its command. There were problems, however. Americans anticipated war with Spain over Cuba during the spring of 1898, which made businessmen edgy about promising long-term money to a risky North Pole venture. In addition, the national economy remained unpredictable after an extended depression.[6] The PAC petitioned

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[4] Nansen, *Farthest North*, xvii-xviii.
[5] William Adams Brown, *Morris Ketchum Jesup: A Character Sketch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 195.
[6] David Traxel, *1898: The Birth of the American Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 13. The United States plunged into a serious financial collapse in 1893. The depression spared no sector of the economy – banking, business, and agriculture all suffered tremendous losses. Millions of people faced unemployment. A brief respite ensued with the Klondike gold strike in Alaska in 1898, which helped bankers especially. Credit increased, but the rest of the nation realized slower recovery.

men they knew, most of whom lived in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, areas hit hard by the continuing effects of the depression. The PAC faced a difficult task: to raise thousands of dollars from businessmen facing uncertain recovery and the threat of war, so that the United States could claim the North Pole. The Spanish-American War began even before Peary left, in the midst of his preparatory campaign.

Charles A. Moore, president of Manning, Maxwell & Moore, Railway and Machinists' Tools and Supplies, pledged himself to the PAC but also recognized problems. Both Henry Cannon of Chase National Bank and Jesup had contacted him about the PAC. During the organization's early stages, the men had problems deciding how to divide the work of contacting other philanthropists, promoting Peary, and structuring the club. As they recruited more members, they also had to handle increasing correspondence with men who lived all over the country, many of whom did not know any other members aside from the one who initially contacted them. The PAC operated via mail; the men met together only as chance permitted (until 1899) and relied upon newspaper reports for most of their Arctic news. Moore recognized the huge time commitment involved in such an endeavor and politely removed himself from handling such details. He told Peary that "whoever assumes the laboring oar in this matter of getting the organization together and interesting them must be a gentleman of comparative leisure who is willing to throw himself into the work earnestly and constantly until the organization is perfected. You know that the demands upon my time in my business will not permit this on my part. While my interest in your success is earnest and constant, yet I cannot tie myself to undertake a work that I could not feel

certain of being able to carry out successfully."[7]

Moore gave money, if not time. His membership was a significant coup for the young organization, and Peary took full advantage. When a man named Hoppins offered Peary a sailboat for his upcoming trip, Peary recognized a golden opportunity. He thanked Hoppins for the offer, explained why he could not use the gift, and suggested that Hoppins examine an alternative way of helping him reach the North Pole. He named the most prominent contributors, Moore among them, emphasizing the glory involved. The explorer noted that joining the PAC would be a way to "identify yourself with my work in a permanent and lasting manner, a way in which the future will give you the pleasurable pride of knowing that you helped directly in securing for the stars and stripes the last great geographical prize which the world has to offer." Peary explained that the "present war" had made his original fund-raising campaign difficult. As a result, an "exclusive club" organized as the Peary Club, "to be composed of twenty-five gentlemen who will pledge themselves to contribute one thousand dollars per year for not to exceed four years. In other words the maximum cost of the work will not be over $100, 000. If I have good luck it may be less than $50, 000 or less than $2,000 a piece (sic)." Furthermore, wrote Peary, "It is not proposed that the Club shall be dissolved upon the completion of my work but continue in existence ready to extend courtesies to any distinguished scientists or geographer who may visit this country." Peary informed Hoppins that he would turn over all relevant materials to the AMNH, "where they will remain as an enduring monument to the Club." All money would go directly towards expedition preparations because the club's officers received no salaries. Jesup had given

[7] Peary to Charles Moore, January 18, 1898, Folder "M," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, RG 401: National Archives Gift Collection of Materials Relating to Polar Regions. (1) RADM Robert E. Peary Family

ten thousand dollars to start the organization. Peary implied that Hoppins should rush to join, promising that "by the time this reaches you it is probable that a dozen or more prominent men ...will also be enrolled."[8] Peary's traditional arguments for persuading scientists to join him needed merely slight adjustments to fit his new needs. He continued to emphasize the ever-lasting glory associated with his Arctic work.

As the twentieth century approached, Peary and the men dedicated to his quest used the landmark to draw attention to Arctic exploration. The poles topped most lists of remote places still unseen by humans. The arrival of a new century created an opportunity to list past exploration achievements and to point out the few significant remaining ones. Peary was actually in the Arctic aiming for the pole when the next century arrived. It fell to his closest stateside supporters to recognize the significance of the year and to capitalize on it.

The nation's dominant collection institutions and geographical societies seized the chance to recognize the progress of exploring Earth. Gilbert H. Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society (NGS) wrote an article for the Smithsonian Institution's annual report that emphasized the past century's exploratory highs. Equally significant, he wrote about the few blank spaces left on world maps.[9] In 1800, wrote Grosvenor, "about one-fifth of the earth's land surface was known." One hundred years later, however, "much less than one-eleventh remains unknown, for the unknown area is so distributed in both hemispheres that nowhere except at the North and South poles are

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Collection (A) Robert E. Peary Papers. Referred to hereafter by PFC and specific Box and Folder.
[8] From Peary to Hoppins, May 21, 1898, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[9] *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operations, Expeditures, and Condition of the Institution* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900): 416.

there remaining large unexplored tracts."[10] Grosvenor also summarized the history of Arctic and Antarctic exploration, revealing that the Arctic had lost much of its mystery. The years between the search for Franklin and Nansen's remarkable "drift theory" expedition had seen large sections of the Arctic mapped.[11] The world awaited description of the North Pole itself to complete the picture.

Peary was in the Arctic trying to do just that when Grosvenor's report saw publication. He had left again in 1898, planning to winter over for three or four years and to make a run for the pole each spring, if necessary. If he could afford to stay that long, he could avoid the annual hassle of raising funds for a single trip. Also, preparing in advance for more than one trip made it possible to relocate winter encampments if the ship could not take him as far north as desirable the first year. Peary still believed that his best chance for success depended upon his winter headquarters. He pushed himself and his men to build northern encampments on Greenland, removed from the safety of the ship. His commitment to overland travel to the North Pole and his relentless study of his chosen route made him unique among Arctic explorers.[12] Peary received annual

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[10] *Annual Report*, 1900, 417; Alan Gurney, *Below the Convergence: Voyages Toward Antarctica, 1699-1839* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 272-281. Antarctica had slowly become a point of interest for explorers. Even until the mid-1800's the most usual visitors to the area were sealers and whalers. Soon the area was recognized as a continent, requiring different methods of attack than the Arctic. Explorers approached it with increasing regularity as the nineteenth century ended, wanting to claim the South Pole conquest. James Cook initiated England's interest with his travels near Antarctica in 1774. American Charles Wilkes made a run for the southern pole in 1838. It did not have the same long, competitive history as the Arctic did, however, because there was no corollary for the Northwest Passage in the Antarctic. The English, French, Norwegians, and Americans were most interested in the Antarctic by the end of the nineteenth century. John Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return Doubtful: The Heroic Age of Polar Exploration* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999), 228-229. Roald Amundsen led a Norwegian expedition to Antarctica in 1897-1899 on the *Belgica* and won fame for being on the first ship to winter over in Antarctica. American Frederick Cook, Peary's former surgeon and eventual nemesis, accompanied Amundsen. Cook had a brief moment of fame in America for reports of his idea to have the crew eat seal meat in order to stave off scurvy.

[12] Nansen's "drift theory" experiment was daring, but he never planned to leave the relative security of the ship, despite the outcome. Peary intended always to reach the North Pole on foot and to rely on his ship for re-supply contact only.

communications and supplies from his relief ship, the *Windward*, a gift in late 1897 from wealthy British backer Alfred G. Harmsworth. Peary disliked the ship's small size, but appreciated its strength and thanked Harmsworth, promising to return the vessel, if it survived. The gift saved him several thousand dollars because he did not have to rent a whaler.[13]

Peary's friends at the American Geographical Society (AGS) of New York made his plans public as he prepared to leave. A brief note in the society's *Journal* explained that "he hopes to reach the northernmost extremity of Greenland in the early summer of 1899. Then with a band of seasoned companions and trained dogs from which to select the fittest, he will equip a small compact party and start...for the Pole, hoping to reach that point and return to the land before winter begins again...If the summer of 1899 should prove to be unfavorable, either in weather or in ice-conditions, Peary will establish his Eskimo colony at the northern end of Greenland and, if necessary, wait for the summer of 1900 or 1901.... In the meantime, the *Windward* will go as far north as possible each summer, and leave fresh supplies at certain pre-determined points."[14]

The structure and organization of this trip was unlike Peary's previous attempts. His crew management, ship and supply preparation, and intended reliance on Inuit help remained the same. This time, however, he had no intention of taking large numbers of scientists with him or allowing wealthy travellers to accompany him. He pared his passengers to the minimum needed to reach the pole. The context of the trip was also different.

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[13] Peary to Alfred Harmswworth, December 16, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC Harmsworth published the London *Daily Mail* newspaper.
[14] "Departure of the Windward," in *American Geographical Society of New York Journal* 30 (1898): 262-263.

Despite his growing financial support, Peary was actually working in increasing solitude. The only person who shared his exact experiences in the Arctic was Matthew Henson. Peary easily overshadowed Henson, an African-American, as a public figure. Henson rarely joined Peary in his funding campaigns or lecture circuits, and Peary did not consult with him regarding expedition arrangements. Henson was an able shipman who, like Bob Bartlett the captain, admired Peary and respected the quest. Peary and Henson seemed to share a formal camaraderie that made shipboard communication easy, but did not extend into stateside life.[15] Henson's race was occasionally acknowledged, but rarely discussed, in Peary's communications with PAC members. The social distance between the two men follows the pattern Peary set with most of his comrades. And Peary's references to Henson as "my body-servant" or "my negro assistant" likely undercut any patron's concerns about Henson being too powerful a leader. In early 1898, as Peary worried about the slow formation of the PAC, he received a tentative letter from Henson. Henson still aided the remaining Inuits left at the AMNH after Peary's meteorite retrieval in 1897. He learned about Peary's plan to winter in the Arctic and asked the explorer if he might accompany him.[16] Henson had previously asked Peary for jobs or money upon return to the United States. Peary still had his engineer's salary to cover finances while he planned the next trip, but Henson's detachment from Arctic correspondence and plans forced him to find other jobs. In 1895, Henson wrote twice to

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[15] Matthew A. Henson, *A Black Explorer at the North Pole* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), xxvii-xxviii. Reprint of Henson's *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1912). Henson started sailing on merchant vessels as a teenager. Peary wrote the foreword to Henson's 1912 book. He praised Henson's hard work, but also consistently emphasized Henson's race. Peary wrote of his companion: "Henson proved his fitness by long and thorough apprenticeship, and his participation in the final victory which planted the Stars and Stripes at the North Pole, and won for this country the international prize of nearly four centuries, is a distinct credit and feather in the cap of his race."

[16] Matthew Henson to Peary, January 22, 1898, Folder "Henson," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

Peary asking for help. In October he said bluntly that "I would like you to let me have some money as soon as...possible." One month later, his situation worse, Henson explained that the AMNH had no more work for him and that he wanted to meet with Peary because "the winter is near and I would like very much indeed to have something to do."[17]

Henson was Peary's companion for more years than anyone else who sailed north with them. Aside from Bob Bartlett, ship captain after 1902, the rest of the crew changed on each expedition. Bartlett, an outgoing personality who became a popular guest at social clubs and the homes of wealthy benefactors after 1909, tried once to help Peary raise money by visiting William Rockefeller. His courage failed, and he missed the meeting. Instead, he met with Jesup, whom he knew personally. Jesup assured him that he would make sure Peary had the necessary finances to reach the pole. Bartlett hated the entire experience, and smugly decided that despite Jesup's generosity, "...I do not feel that he or any of the other big men had worries any greater than a fishing Captain can have."[18] Bartlett preferred Newfoundland between trips.

Neither Peary nor the PAC officers maintained steady communication with Henson and Bartlett upon return from the Arctic, nor did they rely upon them to promote expeditions. Also, Peary sustained contact with a smaller group of dependable fundraisers. Never a socialite, his entire focus lay on securing command of a reliable, physically rugged team of men and dogs that could reach the North Pole.

Peary's strategy provided an exploratory safety net. The four-year plan ensured

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[17] Henson to Peary, October 5, 1895; November 1, 1895, Folder "Henson," Box 12, Letters Received 1895, PFC.

[18] Robert A. Bartlett, *The Log of Bob Bartlett: The True Story of Forty Years of Seafaring and Exploration* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 27-29.

plenty of opportunity to observe the Inuits and make scientific collections during the accumulated weeks and months between attempts at the pole. Moreover, his relief ship would keep communication open between him and his network of millionaires and scientists if he had anything exciting to report. McClure's magazine contacted him several times in 1898 and promised to pay for two different stories. The publishers first asked for an article explaining his plans and strategy for the upcoming trip. They also wanted a piece describing the Inuits' lifestyles, clothing, and preparations for him. The Spanish-American War had completely upset their publication schedule, but they wanted the two articles.[19] The Arctic still had mass appeal.

The publishers at Century, excited over positive press about the recently released *Northward Over the Great Ice* (Peary's first book), begged Peary to consider them for management of his next volume. Like Peary, they expected its subject to be the attainment of the North Pole. They understood Peary's unwillingness to commit to them before departure but made it clear that they were ready to issue a contract for the new book upon his return.[20] Rival publishers made grander overtures. Charles C. Haskell & Son emphasized that Peary would not have to pay any pre-publication costs, promised him one-half the gross sales, continuous reports of the profits, and a beautiful book, complete with illustrations. They insisted that their offer was "the most liberal one that has ever been made to an author." In addition, they asked Peary to send them photographs so that they could have plates prepared during his trip in anticipation of immediate publication upon his capture of the pole.[21] Haskell was persistent. When Peary refused to sign a pre-trip contract, the publisher haughtily informed him that he

[19] McClure's to Peary, April 27, 1898, Folder "M," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[20] Century to Peary, January 13, 1898, Folder "C," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

was making a terrible mistake. "Americans are a rushing people and when the fever is on they will all buy the books, but when they get cooled down it is hard to make sales," he wrote. He urged Peary to reconsider and sign a contract before departure so that he could pounce on the public's excitement when Peary won the pole.[22] McClure's magazine, which had paid for several Peary articles before 1898, cabled him as the ship pulled away and promised that "...we stand ready when you return to pay more than anybody else for a magazine article about your achievement and addition to knowledge of polar regions. Good bye and good luck."[23]

Similarly, companies that had risked association with him before now hoped for financial rewards. Officers of the Cleveland Baking Powder Company reminded Peary that he had used their product on his first expedition. Concerned about (erroneous) reports that he had instead used Royal baking powder, the company asked Peary to remember their support. They asked him "... to give us a statement to that effect, that is, that you have used Cleveland's baking powder in your expedition and found it stood the test thoroughly. If you can, and are willing, to make some such statement to offset the claim made by competitors, we will consider it a special favor."[24] The odd requests piled up. Peary's lecture tour manager, James B. Pond, asked him to send "any old Eskimo clothes or curios" to Lincoln, Nebraska, so that shopowners could create window displays. Peary planned to lecture in Lincoln and Pond thought the gesture might "help the lecture and it would also be a good way of booming your forthcoming book."[25] Peary's dream had become a marketing tool, despite his many setbacks.

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[21] Charles C. Haskell & Son to Peary, January 23, 1898, Folder "H.", Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[22] Charles C. Haskell & Son to Peary, June 17, 1898, Folder "H.", Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[23] McClure's to Peary, July 7, 1898, Folder "M," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[24] McClure's to Peary, February 9, 1898, Folder "M," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

Peary slowed his previously frenetic money-raising pace, which worried Pond. Pond seems not to have been contacted by the PAC, and Peary made a few moves that upset their old relationship. The explorer refused to set lecture appointments that post-dated his return. Peary certainly planned to negotiate for top-dollar commitments upon his return from the pole, and he did not want to lock himself into pre-determined contracts. Like the publishers, Pond ached for a pre-departure commitment that would tie him to Peary's certain fame. Peary was only one of his "stars," however, and Pond took the unusual step of arranging several highly lucrative lectures for Nansen in early 1898.[26] Nansen was a hit and Pond admitted that "It was the first snap I have had in years where I have made a little money." Apparently, Nansen had spoken extremely well of Peary in his lectures and Mrs. Peary had personally attended the two Washington D.C. talks. Pond chided Peary for using a different manager the previous fall for arrangement of a couple of Boston lectures: "...if on your return from the North you are successful, which I believe you will be, I can make as much money for you as anybody in the world and do it legitimately and everybody be happy."[27]

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[25] James Pond to Peary, January 10, 1898, Folder "P," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

[26] James Pond to Peary, January 10, 1898, Folder "P," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC; J. Scott Keltie, "The Great Unmapped Areas on the Earth's Surface Awaiting the Explorer and the Geographer," *National Geographic Magazine* 8 (1897): 263-264. Keltie, also Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society and Editor of the *Geographical Journal*, published his presidential address delivered before the Geographical section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Toronto, August 19, 1897. His sentiments about Nansen reveal the deep appreciation felt for his achievements by geographers the world over. Nansen had just returned from the *Fram* ordeal and Peary was one month in the field when he spoke. "Nansen may be said to have almost solved the North Pole problem—so far, at least, as the Old World side of the Pole is concerned. That some one will reach the Pole at no distant date is certain: Nansen has shown the way, and the legitimate curiosity of humanity will not rest satisfied till the goal be reached....Nansen and other Arctic authorities maintain that the next thing to be done is to complete exploration on the American side—to do for that half of the North Polar region what Nansen has done for the other half....it is important, in the interests of science, that this section of the polar area be examined; that as high a latitude as possible be attained; that soundings be made to discover whether the deep ocean extends all round the Pole." Keltie also mentioned the recent goals of "the gallant Lieutenant Peary" and wished him well. But as a devoted geographer, he deferred to the higher ideals of Nansen. Peary and the PAC were suspicious and jealous of Nansen, and certainly did not have such well-rounded goals in mind any longer.

[27] Pond to Peary, February 10, 1898, Folder "P," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

Peary understood the professional cost if he failed to reach the North Pole. The pole was such a public fixation by 1898 that previously spectacular achievements lost their luster. But even as he sought one of the most acclaimed spots on earth, he took the time to defend his past deeds, lest others steal his prize. In early 1897, Peary wrote to George C. Hurlbut of the AGS and complained about the society's choice for their prestigious geographic gold medal, American Arctic explorer Adolphus W. Greely. Peary worried that the medal would give Greely credit for Peary's accomplishment of crossing Greenland and determining that it was an island. Greely, a high-profile member of both the NGS and the AGS, had recently claimed to have discovered the insularity of Greenland.[28]

Much of Peary's fame rested on his treks across the tip of Greenland in 1894 and again in 1895. (See Appendix, Figures 5-6) He had been the first to proclaim Greenland an island and he did not want the credit stolen. In his letter to Hurlbut, he claimed this discovery and referred to the most recent map of Greenland as further evidence that his theories about the islands' northernmost extension were accepted by modern cartographers as well as the U.S. Hydrographic Office. Peary meant to sway the AGS privately and avoid a public fight. He admitted, "I have no wish... to influence any conservative altitude of the Society, and ... can make no suggestion as to the wording of the inscription on its medal."[29] Greely was granted the award, despite Peary's fears. As Peary intensified his efforts for the pole, he rarely missed an opportunity to defend his reputation via stories, Arctic artifacts, and advance press announcements sent to favored

[28] Adolphus W. Greely, *The Greely Arctic Expedition* (Philadelphia: Barclay and Co., 1894). In 1894, when Greely published his book, Peary was in the Arctic and nobody yet knew whether Greenland was an island, or if it extended northward over the pole to another piece of land. The determination of the insularity of Greenland—whether it was an island and, if so, where its northern boundary lay—was a topic of intense

reporters and editors.[30] His media contacts kept his name at the fore of Arctic news. At the same time, Peary pounced on negative press. He picked his fights carefully and did not respond publicly to his detractors. If necessary, he enlisted his friends among geographers to proclaim public indignation.

Arctic fans knew afer Peary's speech before the AGS in January 1897 that he planned to seek the pole in 1898-99. He explained his proposed route and his dreams for organized financial donations. He grew furious later that year when a Norwegian competitor, Otto Sverdrup (formerly captain of the *Fram* under Nansen), announced alarmingly similar plans. Peary finally wrote to Sverdrup and demanded an explanation. "My dear Captain," wrote Peary,

> Paragraphs and articles are appearing in the papers here to the effect that you intend going North with a party in the *Fram* next year, provisioned for several years ... with the intention of exploring the northwest coast of Greenland and attempting to reach the Pole... as my preparations for carrying out that project are already well advanced, these articles have created a distinctly disagreeable impression over here, and have caused and are causing such unpleasant reflections upon you that I am constraining to take this liberty of writing you and asking you to give me authority to deny the statements.[31]

The competition to reach the pole began long before the explorers crossed the Arctic circle. Peary's concerns were well-founded. Peary knew that his choice of the "American" route, through Smith Sound, gave him advantages over others still searching for ways to sail directly to the pole. Sverdrup's interest in the same route put them on

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geographical speculation.

[29] Peary to George Hurlbut, January 6, 1897, Folder "H," Box 6, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

[30] Charles Skinner to Peary, June 20, 1898, Folder "B," Box 18, Letters Received, 1898, PFC. For example, Peary sent a copy of his recent book, *Northward Over the Great Ice*, to reporter Charles M. Skinner at the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* for review. Skinner did not have time for a lengthy review, but hoped that his article would "help to create increased interest and a lively sale."

[31] Peary to Otto Sverdrup, November 4, 1897, Folder "S," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC; Robert M. Bryce, *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Press, 1997), 210. Hurlbut responded in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society that it did not matter if Sverdrup chose to trump Peary. If he did so, "men will remember him as the one Arctic voyager whom they

equal footing. Peary reacted as if he had proprietary rights to the pole, an attitude he kept until his death. He obsessed over his goal, and it startled him to face competition. To Peary, Sverdrup's sudden plan was more than a discourtesy; it was a slap in the face.

Peary worried more about the timing of his trips than the physical difficulties. To confidantes, Peary emphasized the significance of preparation, a dependable ship, and public recognition. His friends and geographical societies were outraged by Sverdrup's announcement. The Geographical Society of Philadelphia wanted to use the media to attack the apparent glory-snatching. The members proposed that "our protest would take the shape of a resolution passed at one of our meetings, to be subsequently published in our next Bulletin."[32] The AGS also took a shot at Nansen. An anonymous reviewer of the *Journal* of the AGS wrote about *International Geography*, a book in which Nansen was one of seventy contributing authors. The reviewer singled out Nansen for taking credit for discovering the northern limit of Greenland and noted that Nansen had been too long out of touch with recent Arctic events. He supposed that Nansen had " ...not found time since his return to Norway to make himself acquainted with the work of other explorers. He has youth on his side, however, and may hope, with diligence and the cultivation of a right spirit, to arrive at a knowledge of several things which are now dark to him."[33] The digs at Nansen continued after his return to Norway, while Peary remained in the Arctic within shot of the pole. Peary's allies never failed to point out the shady tendencies of his competitors.

Peary, meanwhile, downplayed his anger at Sverdrup. A few days before he

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would gladly forget."

[32] Henry S. Bryant to Peary, February 10, 1898, Folder "Henry S. Bryant," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

[33] *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 31 (1899): 511.

wrote to Sverdrup. Peary sent one of his frequent notes to Theodore Roosevelt, then the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, expressing various concerns over the Navy's Corps of Engineers, an organization of much value to Peary. Peary paid close attention to the promotions and corporate mechanics of the Corps of Engineers. He still worked for the Navy, despite his repeated leaves of absence. A friendship grew out of the professional communications between the lieutenant and the assistant secretary. Peary rarely addressed even long-time acquaintances (aside from his wife and mother) with more than necessary salutations, but his letters to Roosevelt were remarkably warm and appreciative. The letter in question was a reply to Roosevelt's thanks for an Arctic souvenir. Roosevelt had also expressed discouragement over Nansen's public dismissal of Peary's meteorite retrievals. Peary assured his friend that "I have had sufficient experience before this with reporters to know how unreliable and misleading they may be, even with the best of intentions. I make it a point to pay no attention to newspaper comments or criticism or misstatements."[34] Despite this dismissal, Peary also included with the letter a clipping from the New York *Sun* that announced Sverdrup's polar attempt.

Peary also admitted to Roosevelt that authorities in Greenland had told him that they were already planning to have dogs ready for Sverdrup the following summer. The dogs were an important issue. In his attempts to organize, Peary had started breeding sled dogs in the United States to take with him to the Arctic.[35] Of the dozens of dogs that

[34] Peary to Theodore Roosevelt, October 29, 1897, Folder "R," Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[35] H.T. Foote to Peary, April 28, 1898, Folder "F," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC. Peary left his dogs in various places. Zoos kept a few when he did not need them, boarders and veterinarians managed others. His arrangements were not always successful, though. Dr. H.T. Foote of Brookside Farm in New Rochelle, New York demanded that Peary retrieve the two bitches Peary left with him. He found the dogs impossible to domesticate and wanted them returned to the Arctic.

began each trip, only a handful usually survived.[36] The Greenland Inuits could not keep up with the numbers of dogs needed by explorers. An entire trip could be thrown into jeopardy for lack of dogs.

Nansen and Sverdrup were internationally famous, but nobody went to the Arctic as often as Peary did. Peary referred to Sverdrup's plans in his letter to Roosevelt as "an extreme of discourtesy which borders on something else" and disclosed that he refused to believe friends who insisted that Nansen was secretly involved. Despite his calm tone, Peary was anxious about his competition. He still knew how to make the Arctic work for him, though, and told his sportsman friend that he hoped "I might sometime have the privilege and pleasure of taking such a splendid lover of big game as yourself where you could draw a bead upon a huge tusked walrus, 'the elephant of the north.'"[37] Either he wanted special favor from his well-placed comrade or he simply knew how to please another sizable ego.

Roosevelt was one of a small group with which Peary corresponded about non-Arctic concerns. A few months before he sent Roosevelt his private concerns about Sverdrup, Peary asked the assistant secretary to reconsider his decision to go to Cuba. Newspaper reports told of Roosevelt's plans "to take the field in Cuba," and Peary feared for the assistant secretary's life. He asked Roosevelt to consider that

> there are so many men who have the pure physical courage for the work of fighting in the field, while there are so few who have in addition, the moral courage and executive ability which you possess in such a pronounced degree. I believe you are needed where you are now, more than anywhere else and I feel that you are risking too much in a struggle which I cannot feel will be worthy of you and your abilities....[38]

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[36] Most succumbed to exhaustion or pibblokto, the Arctic madness that overcame them in the extreme conditions of the far North. Dead dogs were used as food for the rest of the pack.
[37] Peary to Roosevelt, October 29, 1897, Folder "R," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC.
[38] Peary to Roosevelt, June 1897[?], Folder "R," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC. His letter to Roosevelt

Peary thought that the situation in Cuba was unimportant, which proved to be a damaging miscalculation. The Spanish-American War seriously affected the wealth and the membership of the PAC in the midst of his first polar effort.

When Peary left in 1898 for a planned four-year trip, he had no idea how much his finances would suffer during the war. He organized himself as well as possible before departure, and kept in touch with Henry Cannon, PAC treasurer. Even as he sailed North, he wrote to Cannon and reminded him about upcoming bills and payments. Peary explained how much and when to pay the crew of the *Windward*, depending upon her ability to return home as scheduled. He also told Cannon that he had promised both the crew and the captain special bonuses if they landed him at his chosen spot and managed to return the *Windward* safely home in the same season.[39] Peary did not expect expenses for sending the *Windward* north again to exceed $4000. If she got stuck in ice, however, and the PAC had to send the *Hope* in 1899, it would cost $7500.

With this in mind, Peary informed Cannon that "It will be very desirable to swell the membership to 25 or 30 as soon as possible."[40] A PAC membership of 25-30 would cover the necessary costs for the next two years and enable repair of the *Windward*, with money to spare. His costs included improving the *Windward*'s condition; it needed a new engine, a boiler, and a propellor. Even with the PAC's support, Peary could not relax. Despite the luxury of a gift ship, Peary believed that "the Windward's machinery

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shows the esteem he accorded the future president. In 1905, Peary named his specially built ice-breaker ship the *Roosevelt*.

[39] Peary to Cannon, [1898], Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC. He promised the crew a bonus of $1000, a significant sum considering the PAC's limited finances and untested ability to recruit new members to cover unforeseen costs. He promised the ship's captain the same bonus, though its disbursement could wait till the following summer, if necessary. The first PAC members pledged $1000/year, so the bonuses alone ate up considerable income.

[40] Peary to Cannon, [1898], Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC

is in critical condition and causes me a great deal of anxiety."[41] Peary believed that use of a solid ship that could get him through Kane Basin was vital to his success. Relying upon the *Windward* in order to save money must have worried him as he organized his trip. The ship would prove unworthy of the job, despite Peary's careful planning and the PAC's excitement. Peary had successfully recruited scientists in years past, but persuading businessmen to make a long-term commitment was more difficult.

Peary paid all but two bills before his departure. He enclosed one draft and asked Cannon to cover it and explained about the second in more detail. His wife had charged several things for the expedition at a local store. By mistake, the bill was credited to her account rather than to the PAC, and he asked Cannon to recompense her.[42] The bill was less than fifty dollars, yet Peary took the time to explain the cost. Clearly, despite the thousands of dollars under control of the PAC, every dollar counted.

Peary had every reason to be concerned about Cannon's ability to increase PAC membership to cover future costs. John H. Winser, Secretary and Assistant Treasurer of the AMNH wrote to Peary on behalf of the new president of the organization and turned down his request for financial aid. Winser wrote that the president "feels great doubt ... that success will attend any efforts in raising a large sum of money at this time; capital as you know is timid in the face of war, and as you doubtless will concede, the conditions have undergone a radical change. He would feel very loth [sic] under the existing

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[41] Peary to Cannon, [1898], Folder "C," Box 6, Letters Sent 1897-98, PFC Harold Horwood, *Bartlett: The Great Explorer* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1989), 50. The *Windward* was old, small, and had a weak engine. Peary could not afford to pass up the gift of a free ship, but the *Windward* would never have been his first choice. It took the ship 56 days to sail across the Atlantic to the United States, one of the longest journeys ever recorded by a ship that did not get stuck in ice. The vessel was a converted sailer, equipped with a small coal engine. The boiler required constant maintenance, too. When John Bartlett tried take the ship out of harbor and head to Greenland, the tidal force was too strong for the engine and he had to wait for a strong wind to push the ship into the ocean.

[42] Horwood, *Bartlett*, 50.

outlook to address letters to his friends, confident that it would almost court failure, and would certainly embarrass him deeply."[43]

Other potential benefactors waited to see who else joined the PAC before committing themselves. Amzi Lorenzo Barber, New York asphalt entrepeneur, did not blame the war, but simply saw no need to contribute. Peary petitioned him at least twice to join the PAC. The first time, Barber replied that his money was directed elsewhere. However, his interest in Peary was apparent: "With regard to your Club, you need no assurance of my interest and good-will. If these alone were to be considered, I would join it instantly, but I am already under obligations to several other enterprises..."[44] One month later, after Peary asked again, Barber told him that "I must not hold out to you any expectation that I will join it, but you may be sure of my sympathy, and it is possible that I can see my way to come in later."[45]

It was a difficult time for even the wealthiest men to rally behind Peary's cause. In addition to the obvious competition, most of the nation still suffered from the depression of 1893, which hindered philanthropy. Cannon, president of Chase National Bank, felt the impact in the hub of the New York financial district. Cannon personally tried to get men to join the PAC, but had limited success. He informed Peary on one occasion that he had "...faithfully labored with at least a half a dozen capitalists and regret that my efforts to obtain subscribers for the fund have been of no avail. I shall try again ..."[46]

The economy began to recover in 1898, but the first upturns were in agriculture

[43] John H. Windsor to Peary, April 26, 1898, Folder "A," Box 18, Box 18, Letters Received, 1898, PFC.
[44] Amzi Lorenzo Barber to Peary, May 27, 1898, Folder "Barber," Box 18, Letters Received, 1898, PFC.
[45] Amzi Lorenzo Barber to Peary, June 30, 1898, Folder "Barber," Box 18, Letters Received, 1898, PFC.
[46] Cannon to Peary, June 25, 1898, Folder "C," Box 18, Letters Received, 1898, PFC.

and transportation, which did not immediately assist Peary.[47] The impending war with Spain diverted attention from the five-year depression, but did not make the PAC's job any easier. Only a few men could make a long-term financial commitment. Herbert L. Bridgman, owner of the Brooklyn *Standard Union* and secretary of the PAC, had founded the group and knew what it would take to increase membership. After Peary left in the *Windward*, he asked Peary to add more names to an enclosed list of people to whom Bridgman might send, "from time to time, such copies of *The Standard Union* as may have any matters of Arctic or Antarctic and other Polar interest."[48] Peary depended upon such men who appreciated the sales potential of the Arctic.

Peary spent most of his time handling correspondence about the PAC, media reports, and the support of well-wishers or businessmen. He relied upon Bridgman to bring in more money and upon Henson to prepare the *Windward* for departure. Peary arranged by mail for most of the supplies and their delivery. Henson actually ran the ship for the last few weeks before Peary arrived for the formal send-off. His second-in-command wrote to Peary from the *Windward* (harbored in New York City) in June of 1898 asking for money to buy water for himself and one of the two surviving Inuits.[49] Peary intended to return the Inuit man to the Arctic. The other remaining Inuit, a young boy called Minik, had joined the household of an AMNH administrator. The adult Inuit moved from the AMNH to the ship with Henson, and remained in Henson's care on the *Windward*. Henson's letter to Peary indicates that they remained a low priority for the

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[47] Gerald T. White, *The United States and the Problem of Recovery after 1893* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1952), 2-5.
[48] Herbert L. Bridgman to Peary, July 8, 1898, Folder "H.L. Bridgman," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[49] Matthew Henson to Peary, June 14 (?), 1898, Folder "Henson," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC. Four of the six Inuits left at the AMNH in 1897 had died.

explorer, however.

The explorer emphasized the necessity of a timely departure. In 1898 especially, he could not afford delay. Sverdrup was only one polar contendor. Swedish daredevil Salomon August Andree had convinced the Swedish Academy of Sciences to support his plan to fly over the North Pole in a hydrogen-filled balloon. Alfred Nobel, dynamite inventor, loved the idea and paid half the costs. Andree tried first in 1896, but weather conditions prevented take-off. He launched successfully during the summer of 1897, and the NGS and AGS avidly reported news of his adventure. A sealer found one of Andree's carrier pigeons a few days after his departure, but he was never heard from again.[50]

Peary had lots of competition besides Andree and Sverdrup. Wallter Wellman, a wealthy American and former owner of the Cincinnati *Evening Post*, left for an attempt on the pole in early 1898 in the *Fridtjof*. His first Arctic adventure had ended badly in 1891 when ice crushed his steamer. This second trip boasted a mixed American and Norwegian crew, and the geographical societies followed his progress with much interest. Peary's fans knew, however, that Wellman had chosen a difficult route through the Arctic and would most likely fail.[51] Henry Bryant, president of the American Geographical Society of Philadelphia and leader of the scientific portion of Peary's 1894 expedition, encouraged the explorer: "I cannot understand Wellman's persisting in this means of attacking the Pole, after its impracticability has been proven by Jackson and Nansen ... I feel sure that you will restore the pre-eminence of the Stars and Stripes in the battle for

[50] Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return*, 168-183. One of Andree's polar buoys was found in 1899 on Spitsbergen. Experts agreed that Andree was dead and that the balloon had foundered.
[51] *National Geographic Magazine* 10 (July 1899): 280. Greely explained that Wellman's route around Franz Josef Land posed enough problems that he should not be a threat to Peary or Sverdrup. It left him

Supremacy in the North. You will start out under the best aupices and with your great experience and fine equipment should win. If there is any one piece of advice which I can summon assurance enough to give you, it is this:- when you have done your best, even should you not reach the goal of the Centuries, have the moral courage to turn back."[52] The advice was surely lost on Peary, who turned back only under extreme duress. Wellman was a relative unknown, having made only one previous foray into the Arctic, but everyone believed that any well-organized attempt could reach 90 N. Many men realized the notoriety associated with the pole. For Peary and a new batch of competition, it seemed as though only random bad fortune or weather could prevent success.

The threat of losing to another explorer remained serious during Peary's first year away. Peary wanted above all to stay in the Arctic until he reached the pole. Samuel and John Bartlett helped Peary handle the problem of renting a decent resupply ship. The *Windward* was too weak to return to New York, so the expedition needed another ship. John Bartlett suggested several options for securing a spring resupply ship, knowing that price remained the decisive factor. Operating out of Newfoundland, he cabled and wrote to Bridgman, comparing the prices and necessary refitting work of several ships. The *Hope* and the *Diana* were the best choices, but the *Diana*'s owners still demanded a high price. Bartlett favored the *Hope*, though he knew that the ship would "give them all they can do to have her ready by 27th June."[53] When Peary reached Etah and started his winter encampments, he sent the *Hope* home. The *Windward* was frozen in. The *Hope* was

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too far from the pole to be within reasonable reach within one season.

[52] Henry Bryant to Peary, May 23, 1898, Folder "Henry S. Bryant," Box 18, Letters Received 1898 PFC.

[53] John Bartlett to Peary, May 16, May 28, May 29, 1898, Folder "John Bartlett," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC. The cabin needed reflooring, and also the boat smelled bad. Refitted whalers often smelled

unfit for further travel, so the PAC had another ship emergency. Peary needed a relief ship, either for food for another winter, or to bring him home victorious. Samuel Bartlett maintained correspondence with Bridgman during the winter of 1898-99. Bartlett worried that ice would crush the *Windward*, and that Peary would be so desperate for help the following spring that he would have to rent a steamer hurriedly, likely paying $3000/month. Samuel expected to captain the relief ship and pushed Bridgman to find him one. He favored an English ship, the *Discovery*, but the English Admiralty refused to let the ship loose for the Peary Relief Expedition without a replacement vessel. Bartlett knew from Peary's experience with ship rental that Bridgman had to make it a priority. He reminded Bridgman and the PAC that "the *Fram* is in competition and I for one would not like to see the lieutenant defeated, and I am sure you would not like to see or hear of the Norwegian flag flying at the Pole when the lieutenant arrived there, for I am sure that he will accomplish it if everything goes O.K."[54] While Peary settled in for another long winter in the Arctic, the PAC scrambled to find a ship to send to him when the ice broke in 1899.

The club successfully met its first spontaneous challenge and rented the expensive *Diana* for the spring relief expedition.[55] Things looked promising for Peary as he prepared for the first polar run. Feeling certain of victory, the PAC continued to gloat privately over the damage done to Nansen's reputation. Bridgman obviously delighted in such news. Bridgman had sent a copy of *Northward Over the Great Ice* to Eivind Astrup, the young Norwegian who had accompanied Peary to Greenland in 1891. Astrup thanked Bridgman, but also complained at the American press's treatment of Nansen and

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terrible from the whale oil and carcasses previously stored onboard.

[54]Bartlett to Bridgman, December 24, 1898, Folder "H.L. Bridgman, Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.

Sverdrup and insisted that neither man intended to compete with Peary. He hoped that any chance meeting of Sverdrup with Peary in Greenland over the winter would "be to their mutual comfort and satisfaction." Bridgman, who stayed in close touch with Josephine, transcribed this long complaint in a letter to her and asked that "of course you will regard this as quite confidential, as it is not my custom, as you know, to 'give away' personal letters."[56]

Meanwhile, the same volume of the AGS journal that attacked Nansen's book contribution contained a glowing review of *Northward Over the Great Ice*. It also included a brief note about Peary's first impressions of his latest trip. Members noted that Peary expected to reach his desired winter headquarters in northwest Greenland, but that heavy ice had formed and that the *Windward* would probably not escape it.[57] The news item assured readers that Peary had plenty of dogs and Inuit volunteers and that "the death of their four tribesmen in New York made no difference in his relations with the Arctic Highlanders."[58] This was one of the rare public acknowledgements of the ordeal of the six Inuits left at the AMNH the previous year. With Sverdrup in Greenland, however, it was necessary to assure his backers that he had plenty of dogs and local support. Peary seemed assured of the pole.

The situation changed remarkably quickly. Peary spent a horrific winter in the Arctic. He forced his small party of himself, Henson, Thomas S. Dedrick (a surgeon),

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[55] The *Hope*, the cheaper of the two, cost $5000 (before insurance).
[56] Bridgman to Josephine Peary, December 23, 1898, Folder "H.L. Bridgman," Box 18, Letters Received 1898, PFC.
[57] Horwood, *Bartlett*, 54. The *Windward* actually got iced in almost three hundred miles further south than Peary planned. Peary's familiar problem spot, Kane Basin, was ice-blocked in 1898, and the *Windward* had no strength to push through it. As a result, Peary and his men spent the entire winter hauling supplies northward to Fort Conger so that he could attempt the pole in the spring of 1899. He was much too far south for a realistic try, but with Sverdrup in the area he could not wait.
[58] *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, 31 (1898): 355.

several Inuits and sixty dogs to move to Fort Conger in March of 1899, fearing that if he waited until later in the spring to advance that Sverdrup would beat him. Peary's feet froze and upon arrival at the small cabins, as he stripped his shoes away, several toes popped off. Eventually, he lost pieces of seven toes from the forced march. At least half of the dogs died en route as well. Henson managed to hunt enough meat for the group huddled at Fort Conger while Peary lay incapacitated. At one point Peary wrote a note to himself in Latin for which he later became famous: "Find a way or make one." It eventually became a PAC motto. The group returned to the iced-in *Windward* so that Peary could receive further attention from Dedrick. The first year had been a bust, and Peary still worried about his competition. Peary and Sverdrup knew of each other's positions, and even had two brief, cordial encounters in 1897, since both of them had docked near Smith Sound.[59] Despite this rough start, things actually worsened.

Peary spent the summer of 1899 in preparation for another winter in the Arctic. With the arrival of the *Diana*, he had two ships at his disposal, making walrus hunting and storage even easier. He also planned to spend the second winter further south at Etah, rather than Fort Conger, which made travel to and from the marooned ships easier. He still needed to recuperate from the surgical removal of most of his toes, and the loss of so many dogs made it impossible to cache or carry supplies. Sverdrup, meanwhile, moved further westward and made it obvious that he was no longer in contention for the North Pole.[60] Peary tried in earnest for the North Pole in May 1900, but was turned back when the ice pack proved too difficult. He was already on the northeastern edge of

[59] Wally Herbert, *The Noose of Laurels: The Discovery of the North Pole* (London: Grafton Books, 1991), 112-116. Herbert's book is an intense psychological biography of Peary. He surmises that these long winters in the Arctic, during which Peary had fully expected to reach the pole, effectively broke his spirit. When Peary eventually wrote about this trip, he barely mentioned Sverdrup. After so much anxiety, he still

Greenland, so in his retreat to Fort Conger he had an excellent opportunity at last to observe the very edge of the island. When he eventually returned home to the United States, the maps of this venture were his greatest contribution to Arctic lore.

In 1900, after Peary had already failed once to reach the North Pole, another competitor made headlines. Italian Prince Luigi Amadeo, known as the Duke of Abruzzi, achieved a new Farthest North at 86 33', eclipsing Nansen's recent record. Italy spent almost five hundred thousand dollars outfitting the *Stella Polare* for the trip, and the investment was a good one. Inspired by this success, the Italian planned to team with Nansen for a future attack on the North Pole.[61] Peary, of course, did not know about his newest challenge. The PAC did, however.

In late summer of 1900, Peary returned again to Fort Conger with Henson and several Inuit hunters and prepared for winter. It put him into excellent position for a spring 1901 nab of the pole.[62] But in April when he, Henson, and their Inuit guides tried to reach the North Pole, they lasted little more than a week in the effort. The men were in poor shape and the effort was beyond them. They returned defeated to the ship.[63] Peary made a last try for the North Pole in April 1902 after a winter at Cape Sabine, but encountered a wide lane of open water and could go no farther than 84 17', a new American record.[64] Peary's grand plans had resulted in three tortuous winters, four failed attempts at the North Pole, and few positive results for his weary benefactors.

Peary had not only pushed his personal limits; he tested the loyalty of the two

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refused to make public his fears.
[60] Herbert, *The Noose*, 123.
[61] *National Geographic Magazine* 11 (October 1900): 411, 413.
[62] Herbert, *The Noose*, 122-125.
[63] Herbert, *The Noose*, 128-129.
[64] Henson, *A Black Explorer*, 11-12. It was a famous stretch of difficult terrain, known as "The Big Lead" to all who saw it. Henson explained that it was generally believed to mark the continental shelf of northern

people closest to him. In 1899, Bridgman rode Peary's first relief ship the *Diana* to check on Peary, whom he found in Greenland struggling to recover from his recent frostbite ordeal, determined to try again the following spring. Bridgman returned stateside and conferred with Josephine, and in 1900 she decided to assess Peary's condition herself. She took their daughter Marie, now seven years old, and returned to the Arctic on the *Windward.* In 1901, therefore, Bridgman and the rest of the PAC faced uncertainty in their investments. They knew that Peary was in poor shape physically but refused to quit, and that they needed also to send another relief ship with supplies and to arrange for his wife and daughter to return home.[65]

The PAC members' annual fees of one thousand dollars (pledged for four years) were designed to cover the costs of the main enterprise as well as the re-supply expeditions. They had not expected to rent more than one ship, but by 1901 the PAC had two ships in the Arctic, with no idea of their condition or whether a third rental might be necessary; funds were low. Bridgman, therefore, offered a special tourist package for PAC members: five hundred dollars for passage on the *Erik*'s summer relief cruise. Bridgman appealed privately to the PAC with the following concerns:

> 'The summer of 1901 is likely to mark the culmination of the work of the Peary Club, though its members, confident as they have been from the outset in Mr. Peary's success, are pledged to stand by him unfalteringly to the end. Three years have elapsed since Mr. Peary left America, and two full season' work is to be learned upon the return of the Erik. More interesting, in a personal and dramatic way, that the geographic work of Mr. Peary, is the fate of his wife and daughter and of the steamer Windward from which nothing has been heard since her departure from Godhaven, Greenland, August 20, 1900.'[66]

A handful of men accepted Bridgman's offer. Dr. Frederick Cook, later Peary's

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hemisphere landmasses.

[65] Kim Fairly Gillis and Silas Hibbard Ayer III, eds., *Boreal Ties: Photographs and Two Diaries of the 1901 Peary Relief Expedition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 4.

bitter rival, traveled as ship surgeon, a position he had also held on Peary's first independent Arctic trip in 1891. Everyone expected that Peary would require surgical care for his feet. Cook also served as second in command under Bridgman. Two more Bartlett men worked the ship, Moses as First Officer and Will as Second Officer (the captain was John Blakeney). The rest of the passengers, however, paid for the privilege of seeing the Arctic. Clarence Wyckoff, PAC member, millionaire inheritor of his father's Remington Typewriter money and a successful businessman, joined the group after convincing two friends to join him. Louis Bement, who sold hats for the Henry H. Angell Company, and Alfred Church, grandson of Gail Borden of the Borden Milk Company, boarded the *Erik*, too, upon Wyckoff's request. Herbert Berri, Polytechnic Institute student and son of the man who owned the Brooklyn *Standard Union*, and Limond Stone, a professor at Polytechnic Institute [New York], completed the passenger list.[67]

Peary's ship frustrations extended beyond his own endeavors to affect his relief efforts. Before departure, the PAC assured its inexperienced passengers that the *Erik* was a trustworthy vessel. Seriously stretching the truth, the PAC described the little steamer as being "'in the best condition and well adapted for her Arctic work.'" Over three decades later, Wyckoff still remembered the sorry state of the ship. He recalled that "'at the time they [the engines] were built, I imagine they were rather modern, but the ship had seen much hard usage in the Hudson Bay trade and the engines were only useful in a fair wind. With a fair wind and no sails spread, we could make about 6 or 7 miles an

[66] Gillis and Ayer, *Boreal Ties*, 6.
[67] Gillis and Ayer, *Boreal Ties*, 8.

hour. When the wind or tide was against us, we anchored or tied up to a cake of ice.'"[68]

Eventually, the *Erik* found the *Windward*, and the people on both ships toured the Greenland coastline for a few weeks before the *Erik* took both relief parties home again. Cook, Wyckoff, and Bement took hundreds of photographs of the other passengers, the landscape, the Peary family, and the Inuits. Wyckoff and Bement also kept personal journals, in which they recorded the one bizarre event of the summer. Surgeon Dedrick, who was already with Peary in the Arctic in 1901, became agitated about some decisions Peary made and resigned his post as surgeon, but refused to return to America on the *Erik*. Bridgman and Cook tried to alleviate the interpersonal tension and to plead with Dedrick to return stateside, to no avail. Wyckoff and Bement disliked Peary's handling of the problem. Peary refused to speak to Dedrick, forcing the intermediary action, and when Dedrick convinced the crews to leave him behind with the Inuits, Peary resented Wyckoff agreeing to give Dedrick a rifle for hunting food. Peary claimed that he and Josephine feared that Dedrick might try to kill him. Bridgman (editor of the Brooklyn *Standard Union*) told Bement that he "'was not going to mention it in any of his dispatches or his paper so the public would not be any the wiser.'" Bridgman also said that when Dedrick finally made it home in a year or two that, "'by that time it would be an old worn out story and I guess nobody will pay any attention to it.'"[69]

Wyckoff had one further cause for resentment against Peary. As the *Erik* pulled away from shore, Wyckoff tossed a gun over the railing for Dedrick. The following year,

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[68] Gillis and Ayer, *Boreal Ties*, 10.

[69] Gillis and Ayer, *Boreal Ties*, 34-35, 169, 172. It was not entirely clear why Dedrick broke with Peary. In 1902, when the story broke in the press, Peary's media machine spread stories that Dedrick was insane or had resigned over leadership rankings. Another version is that Dedrick was distressed over an epidemic that struck the Inuits that summer. Dedrick believed that the American exploration crew had infected the Inuits, and Dedrick wanted to help them medically. Regarding the gun, Peary not only feared Dedrick might shoot him, he also believed that Dedrick might use it to win favor with the Inuits during the winter, and possibly

he learned that Peary had somehow come into possession of the gun and had donated it to the AMNH in his own name. Enraged, Wyckoff demanded the rifle be returned to him. Peary responded that he had asked an Inuit to inlay the rifle stock with walrus ivory to make it more interesting to Wyckoff, and that if he wanted it back Peary would arrange its retrieval from the museum. Wyckoff eventually received the gun, but the damage was done; he resigned from the PAC.[70] Peary was exceptionally tough in the face of Arctic cold and ice, but his obsession could be overbearing.

Bridgman was wrong about both the timing and the media frenzy of the Dedrick story, though the fault was his. The story broke to the American press in October 1901, before Dedrick returned to the United States. Upon reaching port in New York, Bridgman announced to a reporter that he thought Dedrick was "practically insane," as explanation for the doctor's extended stay in the Arctic. The following winter, when Dedrick returned, he put his own version into circulation. In November 1902, The New York *World* printed a story in Dedrick's name in which he accused Peary of extremely cruel and unjust treatment. Dedrick claimed: "'The animosity exhibited in the endeavor to brand me and bring me into disrepute, the refusing my unpaid salary on such technical grounds, Mr. Peary's disregard for the lives of his native helpers and almost inhuman treatment of me without provocation during the last year, and his threat to maroon me for a fifth year on the side of the channel uninhabited by Esquimaux at the expedition's vessel taking final leave...make reasons for my resignation unnecessary.'"[71]

Dedrick also contacted a few members of the PAC seeking redress. Cannon

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launch his own polar attempt the next year.

[70] Gillis and Ayer, *Boreal Ties*, 215-216.

[71] Herbert, *The Noose*, 148. Letter from Barnes & Johnson, November 12, 1902, Folder "B," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Barnes & Johnson, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, advised Peary

informed Peary of the contact, but was unfazed by it. Like Bridgman, he thought the matter might disappear. To Peary he wrote: "I assume that Dedrick informed you that he had written me concerning his affairs. I replied briefly to his letter, suggesting that if he had any claim against the Club he distinctly formulate the same in writing, as his letter to me was not precisely in the nature of a demand. His communication was not disturbing."[72] Cannon thought Dedrick wanted his salary, which Peary refused to pay, more than he wanted media attention.

Bridgman, too, remained calm about the matter, even when a New York *Times* reporter worried enough to warn him a day early about the AP story that the *World* planned to run. The article was based mostly on Dedrick's letter of resignation. Bridgman informed Peary that he had sent the article and further explanations to the PAC's legal counsel firm. One month later, while attending a dinner lecture in December, a colleague spoke to Bridgman about Dedrick. Bridgman thought that the incident would pass in time, and assured Peary that "at the present time the executive committee of the Arctic Club is scratching its head to see how it can get Dedrick safely overboard." To another PAC friend, Bridgman reiterated that "The latest broadside from Dedrick...brought no editorial responses whatever from any American paper, and I think that by this time the American public is thoroughly tired of the whole matter. Peary's course has been from the beginning characterized by dignity and consistency, while that of Dedrick seems to be animated by a disordered imagination and an uncontrollable desire for notoriety, which...have magnified the incident far beyond what its merits, (if it

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that he had a good case against Dedrick for libel, but also urged him to settle the matter privately.
[72] Cannon to Peary, October 28, 1902, Folder "C," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

ever had any) warrant."[73]

Upon his return to the United States in 1902, Peary had little time for recovery. He trusted his friends that the Dedrick matter would dissolve, and turned to other concerns. When he left in 1898 he had publishers begging for contracts. Two years later, however, Frederick A. Stokes, publisher of *Northward Over the Great Ice*, informed him that purchases of his book had stopped altogether. He expressed shock at the lack of sales, but asked Peary if he could lower the list price in hopes of raising public interest.[74] Stokes' problem exemplified the greatest disadvantage to Peary's long absence. Unable to maintain his usual flurry of positive notices and well-placed stories, Peary had trouble maintaining his hold on public enthusiasm. Bridgman tended to wait for news before contacting publishers. He also did not have ready access to Peary's seemingly limitless supply of Arctic souvenirs that helped curry favor. It surprised everyone that the North Pole still lay untouched, and Stokes was one of many who felt the effects.

Other parts of Peary's support base took longer to show cracks. The AGS stood by him in remarkably strong fashion. In January of 1902, Chandler Robbins of the AGS wrote to Josephine and asked her to reply in confidence as to whether Peary might like to become the next president of the organization. The AGS planned to confer another award on Peary –the Charles P. Daly Medal-- and still they wanted further honors for him. By that date, they all knew that Peary had not achieved his goal, so the request was a fully informed one. But Robbins believed that "...too much honor cannot be extended to him in recognition of his phenominal [sic] courage, skill, perseverance and self

[73] Bridgman to Peary, November 6; December 29, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman, Sec.," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC; Bridgman to J.S. Keltie, December 5, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman, Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC..

[74] Frederick A. Stokes to Peary, July 7, 1909, Folder "Unidentified," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902,

sacrifice."[75] Robbins hinted in a letter to Peary, however, that there was more to their decision than respect. The group believed that "...the administrative ability and the wealth of resources displayed in the conduct of your admirably planned and difficult enterprises eminently fit you to fill with dignity and success the responsible position at the head of this Society."[76] The AGS realized that Peary was a prolific money-raiser and wanted to reap the benefits.

Peary's favored geographical organizations kept his name before their readers as much as possible between 1898 and 1902. The PAC sent the *Diana* with relief supplies for Peary in 1899. A small scientific team went with the ship, and the AGS published the brief reports that the researchers sent home before the winter sealed them in.[77] Robert Stein of the US Geological Survey, who had travelled with Peary before, wrote a letter to the PAC that saw publication in the AGS *Journal*. He wrote of his successful landing at Cape Sabine and asked the PAC to have the relief ship sent out the following year pick him up in the same area. He promised to pay for the passage. The *Journal* also included information, supplied by Bridgman, that Peary had spent a useful winter at Fort Conger and had collected interesting relics left there by Greely's men decades earlier and had collected them to send home to the US government. The *Journal* printed a letter from

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PFC.

[75] Chandler Robbins to Josephine Peary, January 23, 1902; October 26, 1902, Folder "AGS," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Actually, the letter to Josephine came months after the AGS had already written to Peary to inform him of both the medal and the impending presidency. The AGS wanted Peary to receive the first Daly Medal before he accepted the presidency, believing that it would be awkward for them to give the honor to their own president. Perhaps the AGS decided belatedly to include Josephine in the decision, since she had been so active in handling Peary's affairs during his absence.

[76] Chandler Robbins to Robert Peary, September 10, 1902, Folder "AGS," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[77] "The Mission of the Diana," *National Geographic Magazine* 10 (July 1899): 273. The NGM followed Peary's progress almost as closely as the AGS *Journal*. A small scientific party that took advantage of the *Diana*'s trip. Stein intended to explore Ellesmere Land and wanted to stay at least one year. Professor William Libbey of Princeton University took along deep-sea dredging tools to investigate Smith Sound. Russell Porter, a practiced Arctic traveller and friend of Peary's, wanted to hunt in Greenland.

Peary in which he briefly mentioned his winter at Fort Conger, the amputation of his toes, which he described as a "mishap," and his intention to leave the *Windward* again for Fort Conger shortly.[78]

Bridgman provided the *Journal* with a Peary-drawn map and pointed out the increased information gathered by Peary in his explorations around Fort Conger. Also, and perhaps most significantly, Bridgman reported that the *Fram* was frozen in fifty miles south of Peary, Sverdrup's surgeon had died over the winter, and that Sverdrup planned the next year to explore the northern and eastern coasts of Greenland. Peary alone would aim for the pole.[79]

Bridgman worked diligently on Peary's behalf during his entire absence.[80] The AGS served as a willing outlet for the bits of good news that filtered in. Time and again Bridgman sent scraps of good news that turned into positive press. For example, the *Journal* created a news brief out of information provided by Bridgman that Peary had found and sent home relics from the 1876 George Nares expedition in the *Alert* and the *Discovery*. It certainly was not the exciting announcement Bridgman hoped to deliver, but it kept Peary's name and expedition relevant. According to the *Journal*, "Both sextant and record were tendered to the Lords of the Admiralty by the Peary Arctic Club, in accordance with the suggestions of Mr. Peary, who transmitted them last summer, and

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[78] *Journal of the American Geographical Society* 31 (1899): 380.

[79] *Journal of the American Geographical*, 31 (1899), 381.

[80] Bridgman to Peary, July 11, 1902, Folder "Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Bridgman assured Peary that the public, the Club, and the presses were still behind Peary, despite Peary's failure to reach the pole. He explained his method for keeping the AP updated about Peary's progress: "My feeling all along has been that the custom of 1899 and 1901, to give the Associated Press, immediately upon landing, a full general, connected resume of the work, such as you will of course recollect, is better than to negotiate with individual papers....Eleven hundred slips are now in as many newspaper offices awaiting release by wire immediately upon the departure of the Windward, and I think to this policy is perhaps due the general hospitality and respect which the newspapers accord to you and to the Club." Peary received this letter upon his last return to the *Windward*, just before his departure for home.

the response was prompt and appreciative."[81]

After Peary returned to the United States in September 1902, he attended to his usual at-home duties. He needed time physically to recover, but he also had a follow-up lecture circuit to organize, mounds of correspondence, and another trip to create.[82] Despite the hardships and openly missed opportunities of the past four years, he intended once more to try for the North Pole.

The adjustment was a strange one for all involved. The Bartletts returned to Newfoundland, though Peary had already asked Bob to captain his next trip. While Peary waded through countless lecture offers and Bridgman scrambled to hold the PAC together, Henson finally tried to capitalize on his connections. Henson and Peary, despite their total reliance upon each other in the Arctic, still had little in common upon returning to the United States. One month after their return to the states, Henson asked Peary to write a letter of recommendation for him so that he might be hired by the New York Central Railroad as a porter.[83] He successfully landed a buffet car porter position on the Pennsylvania Railroad. He did not like the work, however, and said that he planned to move to the Pittsburgh line. Still, he asked Peary to keep him in mind for other jobs, and said that "I should be very grateful to you if you would let me know of something better should you chance to hear anything. I think that you might be able to get a more suitable position for me as you know a great many people that have employees."[84] He wrote

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[81] *Journal of the American Geographical Society* 32 (1900): 181-182. Harmsworth, who had given the *Windward* to Peary, oversaw the actual transfer of the artifacts. He was an honorary member of the PAC.
[82] Peary also kept up his usual habit of sending Arctic animals to various locales. In the name of the PAC, he sent the New York Zoological Park a walrus, a muskox, and four Eskimo dogs.
[83] Henson to Peary, October 2, 1902, Folder "M. Henson," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.; H.H. Batteron to Peary, December 8, 1902, Folder "P," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Peary wrote the letter for him. He received a letter from H. H. Batteron of the The Pullman Company promising to place Henson as soon as possible.
[84] Henson to Peary, November 8, 1902, Folder "M. Henson," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

again shortly thereafter and said that he had received lecture offers from Atlanta and he wanted to oblige. He asked Peary to write some lectures "about your travels to the North Pole" for him to deliver. He had also written to Bridgman about this chance, and Bridgman promised to send him a thirty-dollar roundtrip ticket to Atlanta.[85] Audiences still wanted to hear about Arctic conditions and adventures, even without descriptions of the North Pole.

Future trips, however, remained a hard sell. Bridgman forwarded letters to Peary from men who would no longer donate money. Frederick Hyde, a devoted benefactor in for four thousand dollars, withdrew his name from the PAC. He explained that "I was willing to make a four years' contract, as the amount to be contributed and the time were definite; but experience shows that in Arctic work both these points are uncertain."[86] Other enthusiasts followed suit. "If I were to consult simply my personal preference, I would say certainly, go ahead. I do not feel, however, that I should further financially assist the Club in pushing its work," wrote Clarence. F. Wyckoff of the Decauville Automobile Company.[87] Of course, Wyckoff had recently been with Peary in the Arctic, and the experience killed his enthusiasm for polar work.

H.H. Benedict demanded to know exactly how his money was supposed to help in the future. He reminded Bridgman that all original members had been asked to donate no more than five thousand dollars, which had by that point all been paid and spent. Benedict stated his case:

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[85] Henson to Peary, December 4, 1902, Folder "M. Henson," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. It is difficult to know if Henson ever delivered the lectures. He never mentioned them in his autobiography, nor did Peary refer to them in the foreword he wrote to Henson's book.

[86] Frederick Hyde to Bridgman, November 24, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[87] Frederick Hyde to Bridgman, November 26, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. He was on the relief expedition of 1901 to reach Peary.

> I am not now saying that I want to decline to join with the others, but before consenting to do so, I should like information upon certain points as, for instance, how long Commander Peary thinks he would require to accomplish the final result; that is, how many seasons? Second, how much is it going to cost in the aggregate, and are we going to get additional members and thus reduce the proportion of each member, or would we go on with the Club as it is; also, would all the present members continue? These, and possibly other questions I might wish to ask before deciding what I would do.[88]

Benedict's words summarized the views of several other men who also either hesitated to recommit or resigned from the PAC.[89]

Bridgman held the group together with promises, assurances, and repetitive descriptions of fame and glory, but he hid the worst news from Peary. He told Peary about the several resignations, but he also assured the explorer that Jesup would keep them afloat financially.[90] Jesup, meanwhile, questioned his ability to continue with the mission. He told Peary that "if this matter involved work and a great expenditure of money on my part, I could not do it. At the same time, I want to place myself in a hopeful position with my associates, for if I do not, I can see very clearly that the whole undertaking may fail."[91] Bridgman wanted to increase PAC membership to fifty, with annual dues of one thousand dollars.[92]

Two eager publishers continued to push for a commitment from Peary. Haskell

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[88] Frederick Hyde to Bridgman, November 25, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[89] H.H. Benedict to Bridgman, November 25, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Things looked so grim that in a letter to Peary about several unrelated points of interest, Bridgman included the following insight: "I am going to propose to Mr. Jesup and to Mr. Cannon, if the Peary Arctic Club lives, that it be incorporated and put on all fours, as a regular business proposition, which would, I think, very much facilitate its work."

[90] Bridgman to Peary, April 16, 1902, Folder "Mr. Herbert L. Bridgman," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. Bridgman also told Peary that he was working to keep Jesup's expenses as minimal as possible.

[91] Morris K. Jesup to Peary, December 26, 1902, Folder "J," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. "This matter" to which Jesup referred was the possible purchase of a ship for Peary's next trip. Jesup resented the thought that other PAC members believed that if the expense were too much they inevitably thought "let Mr. Jesup do this: it always has been so." Jesup told Peary that he had told Bridgman of his concerns.

[92] Bridgman to Jesup, December 1, 1902, Folder "J," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

wrote several times between 1898 and 1902, each time stating that the next polar expedition would succeed and that his house would love to own the story. Even after Peary returned disappointed in 1902, Haskell assumed that Peary would try again: "I hope you will not give up the search, for I believe that you can reach that point and when you do, we want to publish the book that you will then write."[93] McClure's magazine contacted Peary as soon as possible and negotiated a deal: five hundred dollars for an article about the trip, his American record, the tip of Greenland, and his plans for the next attempt.[94]

Peary returned to a different financial environment, which must have buoyed him in his efforts to keep the PAC together and to plan another polar trip. Moore wrote to him enthusiastically, in awe of the changes for businessmen since 1898. He marvelled that

> The commercial developments of this country since you left it have been most phenominal [sic]. Fortunes of such gigantic amounts as hardly were dreamed of in past years have come to men who little dreamed of them, but have come legitimately; and when I tell you that John D. Rockefeller to-day is worth more than a thousand millions of dollars, and is credited with being the richest man in the world...when I tell you that the railroads have been combined to such an extent that you would hardly know the map of the railroads of this country; that the great shipbuilding plants...have all consolidated...you can gather an idea of some of the great industries through consolidation of kindred interests.[95]

Jesup's hesitancy aside, times were better for Peary and the PAC. They needed the good tidings; Peary's future plans would triple the expense of the last one.

Peary accepted lecture engagements immediately. One of his first, of course, was before the NGS. His services were rarely free, however, even for those who had been

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[93] Charles C. Haskell to Peary, October 22, 1902, Folder "Charles C. Haskell," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[94] McClure's to Peary, November 18, 1902, Folder "M," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC. The magazine also boldly asked Peary not to make deals with other magazines until after March, so that

with him for over a decade. The NGS paid him one hundred dollars for the honor.[96] Undoubtedly, his audience was well-informed. Bridgman had strategically sent news items to both the AGS and the NGS when he could, and both dutifully gave top billing to Peary in their respective publications' periodic snippets of polar miscellania.[97]

Bridgman and Peary were surprised by one of their heartiest congratulatory letters. The PAC maintained the illusion of close association with other explorers, despite their private correspondences. Nansen wrote to Bridgman thanking him for an invitation to share a formal dinner with Peary. Nansen declined, but also had overflowing praise for his American peer and asked Bridgman to "please give my warmest greetings to Peary....I also congratulate the Club on the return of its prominent member with such great achievements. I do not know what I admire most with Peary- the indefatigable energy with which he works for his goal, year after year, and in the teeth of the most formidable odds, or the never-failing readiness with which he overcomes the greatest and most unexpected of difficulties." Nansen then listed the several geographical accomplishments of Peary's latest trip, and expressed appreciation for the further cartographic knowledge of Greenland.[98] The PAC, having failed to reach the pole, had Peary's sighting of the edge of Greenland as a consolation prize. Publicly they echoed Nansen's sentiments about the achievements of the past four years. Privately, the only goal mentioned was the pole. The benefits to mapmakers were incidental.

McClure's might have an exclusive.

[95] Charles Moore to Peary, July 2, 1902, Folder "M," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[96] National Geographic to Peary, December 22, 1902, Folder "N," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

[97] *National Geographic Magazine* 10 (October 1899): 414-415. Bridgman liberally praised Peary for these propaganda pieces. After Peary's first terrible winter, Bridgman nonetheless wrote that "Those who read between the lines and who follow matters practically, find in Peary the mental as well as the physical traits, making a combination as rare as the work he has undertaken, coupled with a clear head, and a practical, definite correlation of means to ends, which go far to secure the results desired."

Thus ended Peary's first serious polar quest. He failed to reach the North Pole on four separate occasions. He suffered serious enough physical injury that he walked with a limp for the rest of his life. His second child, a daughter, had died in infancy in 1899, while he was in the Arctic away from his family. His mother died during his third year away, and he received the news in a letter delivered by his relief crew in 1901. Many ardent fans withdrew their support in frustration over his limited successes. It was no longer enough to survive the Arctic or to be a keen observer. A real race to the North Pole was at stake. As Peary planned his future, however, he found much of value. Not one of his competitors, all of whom had as much probability of reaching the pole as he did, had yet beaten him. He had definitively proven the insularity of Greenland, a theory on which much of his previous fame rested. His innermost circle of benefactors remained loyal. The public still craved details of Arctic travel despite repeated failures from international efforts.

Most importantly, the North Pole lay unclaimed. Peary and the PAC officers drew together and became even more efficient and organized over the next few years. It took three years to put Peary back in the field, but when they did it was an astounding plan. Peary left for the North Pole again in 1905 aboard his personally designed, expensive, hardy ice-breaker, the *Roosevelt*. No longer did he have to scour the shipyards of Europe and the United States for cheap whalers to carry him through Smith Sound and Kane Basin. On the *Roosevelt*, he smashed his way into a new phase of Arctic exploration. The next chapter will examine the height of the PAC's power.

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[98] Fridtjof Nansen to Peary, November 1, 1902, Folder "N," Box 19, Letters Received 1900-1902, PFC.

Chapter Five

"I Would Sometimes Sell my Soul:" The Need for a Ship, 1902-1905

Robert E. Peary returned to the United States in late 1902, but it took him two and one-half years to rally for another polar attempt. When he finally returned to the Arctic in 1905, he did so at the helm of a magnificent ship built to his own specifications. The *Roosevelt* was the finest ice-breaker ever constructed and it took Peary further north than any ship had previously sailed. The PAC accepted increasing responsibility for management of Peary's fund-raising, equipment needs, and media exposure. The geographical organizations that had been so important to him, particularly the National Geographic Society (NGS) and the American Geographical Society (AGS), followed his progress and reported his achievements. Each group, however, decreased its investment in Arctic exploration in efforts to become champions of all geographic accomplishment, American or foreign. Peary was still America's most heroic Arctic explorer, but neither the NGS nor the AGS could maintain the level of attention that he needed.

The failures of the past four years had crushed Peary's confidence, but he kept his insecurities private. Historian Wally Herbert believes that this expedition nearly broke Peary. The explorer worried that he had been too selfish in pursuit of his goal and had hurt his wife, his mother, and his children, all to no avail. Peary wondered if he were too old and that he should give up the dream. Herbert argues that the extreme devotion between Peary and Josephine helped Peary recover from these failures, and that he simply would not quit. [1] He was efficient, even brusque, in

[1] Wally Herbert, *The Noose of Laurels: The Discovery of the North Pole* (New York: Grafton Books, 1989), 129, 142-143, 148.

business dealings. Little of his personality seeped into his professional correspondences about Arctic work. Within a few months of his return to the US, he had a plan for his next attempt to reach the pole.

Peary believed that the remaining hurdle for the North Pole trek was in selecting the proper overland starting spot, and he still favored the Smith Sound route. But finding a good ship was his paramount concern. The *Windward* was a gift from an influential English newspaper magnate, so Peary could not afford to vocalize all of the ship's faults.[2] The AGS *Journal* accounts of his unsuccessful 1898-1902 expeditions mentioned merely that the *Windward* was frozen in. Only attentive fans of Peary realized that the ship's inability to chug past Kane Basin the first winter seriously affected the next several years. He was almost three hundred miles further south than he planned. Peary endured more winter overland travel than necessary in 1898-99, and lost most of his toes to frostbite. He never recovered momentum, and his next three polar attempts also failed. The window of opportunity for overland Arctic travel was so small that any extra time might mean success. When Peary left the US on the *Windward* during the summer of 1898, he planned to send the ship stateside and expect its return the following summer for re-supply. The ship's poor condition and inability to make the roundtrip meant that the PAC had to rent a second

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[2] E.D. "Departure of the 'Windward'," *Journal of the American Geographical Society* 30 (1898): 262-263. The ship was a gift to Peary from Alfred G. Harmsworth. The journal informed its readers that the *Windward* "In her famous trips to and from Franz Joseph Land in connection with the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition...established her reputation for solidity." [Untitled article] *Journal of the American Geographical Society* 32 (1900): 272. The *Windward* broke free of ice each spring, but was in poor condition and could not return stateside for resupply. Samuel Bartlett, the ship's captain, took it to Newfoundland for substantial repair. Workers overhauled the engine, installed new propellors, a new shaft, and strengthened its hull. The ship gained 1.5 knots in speed, making its speed the equivalent of the *Kite*, Peary's first Arctic ship. Also, President William McKinley signed the necessary paperwork to shift the ship's nationality from English to American origin. The *Windward* became the first American steamer to sail into the Arctic since Hall's 1871 expedition. By 1900, Peary had his land bases established, and needed the ship only for eventual transportation home.

ship in 1899. The unexpected expense explained the PAC's offers for paid passage during the relief trip of 1901.

As Peary pressed for another chance at the pole, he emphasized his desire for a sturdy ice-breaking ship. This had been a problem for him even before the 1898-1902 trip. Josephine's resolution of the same situation in 1894 became his introduction to Morris K. Jesup, when Jesup responded to her personal request for ship rental funds. The United States' dominance of the North Atlantic whaling industry ended as Peary first attempted the pole. As a result, he had difficulty finding a ship strong enough to carry him through the Arctic ice. The outdated sailers that he converted to steam for exploration were too small and too weak. After 1902, however, Peary insisted that this problem was his last obstacle and that if he had a ship designed to handle the Arctic elements, he could claim the pole.

Peary was still the only American with the combination of both a plan and a record of accomplishment. He used a route that he believed in, he had Inuit support, and he organized his trips well. His physical trauma aside, he and his crews avoided the sorts of grisly Arctic disasters that befell most of his predecessors. He also had a new Farthest North record, and he had proven that Greenland was an island. Peary had a sterling leadership record. His closest friends, Jesup and Herbert Bridgman, stuck with him. Many of his other allies, however, despaired of ever seeing an American at the pole. As a result, the explorer spent more time recruiting help. The delays associated with begging for money frustrated and outraged America's premier explorer. It shocked Peary that numerous wealthy individuals and groups hesitated to fund him. All Arctic fans knew that by 1902 it had become an international race to

reach the North Pole.

In a frank letter to Henry Hyde, president of Bowdoin College, Peary explained the situation: "Arctic exploration today has a business phase as pronounced as its scientific or sentimental phases, and it may be utilized as a business proposition."[3] As usual, Peary extended beyond explanation into an invitation to fund polar work. Peary told Hyde that "Hardly a day passes that I do not get an editorial from some paper saying that this country should secure the Pole, and that the comparatively small amount of money (as money goes now-a-days) required, should be forthcoming. Suppose that Bowdoin and her friends raised $150,000 to purchase a ship and fit out the 'Bowdoin North Polar Expedition.' The moment the fact was known the name of Bowdoin would be in every paper in the civilzed world."[4] Peary emphasized the everlasting fame that Bowdoin might reap if the school donated the money.

Peary also stated that the significance of a single institution backing him would be remarkable if he reached the North Pole, and almost as rewarding (for Bowdoin) if he missed 90 N but instead reached a Farthest North. Before 1903, Peary almost never mentioned secondary achievements: he emphasized the pole. Yet he began suggesting that potential backers could be proud of any significant Arctic trophy. Most of his letters to friends sounded more optimistic than any previous spate of correspondence, but they suggest he had lost confidence in his ability to win the race.

Peary's past dealings with businessmen had taught him that fame alone could

[3] Robert Peary to Henry Hyde, March 25, 1903, Folder "H," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[4] Peary to Hyde, March 25, 1903, Folder "H," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

not attract money. Many benefactors wanted immediate returns on their investments. But should Bowdoin give him all-out financing, "...as a legitimate and high-grade advertisement on a grand scale and world-wide distribution...such an expedition might return to Bowdoin and Portland, and the State, nearly, if not quite, dollar for dollar of initial expenditure."[5] Peary had no evidence to back up his claim. His success with the media, however, had shown him that thoughtful pieces could make Bowdoin internationally famous. Despite all of these claims, the explorer played the martyr. Nevertheless, exasperated with the need to keep explaining the value of his quest, Peary informed Hyde that "I have had however too many disappointments to be over-sanguine, and...I expect to sow many times on rocky ground; but the proposition is now before you."[6]

Throughout the fall of 1902, Peary wrote the usual letters probing for money. He was in a rush because he planned to strike again for the pole in 1903. After a few months of negative replies, Peary understood that he had another major fund-raising campaign before him. He used his one seat of persuasion, the presidency of the American Geographical Society (AGS), to personal advantage. Gradually, he moved the interests of the Peary Arctic Club (PAC) and the AGS closer together. He wanted the scientific reputation of the AGS to be tightly affiliated with the PAC, his major source of money. In the end, the PAC's influences, more than anything else, secured him another polar attempt.

Peary wrote to Jesup in 1903 and informed his old friend that he wanted to sell the three meteorites to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) for

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[5] Peary to Hyde, March 25, 1903, Folder "H," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[6] Peary to Hyde, March 25, 1903, Folder "H," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

$50,000 (total). The AMNH responded that Peary's asking price was too high.[7] Peary dumped his concerns onto Jesup: "I have done and am still doing all that I can, but it is impossible for me to do everything...I have never cared especially for money, but now I think I would sometimes sell my soul for the means to do that on which I have set my heart, and which I still believe I am capable of doing."[8] In another letter to Jesup, Peary wrote:. "It would seem (to me at least) a comparatively easy thing for the [New York] Yacht Club and the Geographical Society in combination with those of my old friends who would like to see the work brought to successful completion, to raise sufficient money to fit out an expedition properly. The probabilities are however that anything of this kind, if done at all, will be done too late. The Duke of the Abuzzis [sic] has in spite of his success via Franz Josef Land come out frankly in favor of the Smith Sound route as the most practicable way to the Pole. It is said that he will lead another expedition by that route."[9] Peary had too little money for an immediate return to the Arctic, and another competitor planned to use the route Peary had proven to be superior. It looked as though the United States might forego its last chance to be a serious polar contender.

Peary did all he could to raise money by himself. Lecture engagements kept him extraordinarily busy. He had so many offers that he occasionally turned them over to Bridgman. The explorer always spoke highly of Bridgman and tried repeatedly to maneuver the man into his other circles of influence. One group in

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[7] Lyle Rexer and Rachel Klein, *American Museum of Natural History: 125 Years of Expedition and Discovery* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995), 81. Ironically, Josephine Peary sold the three meteorites to the AMNH for only $40,000 in 1909. She used them to pay for their children's education.
[8] Morris K. Jesup to Peary, [1903?], Folder "J." Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[9] Morris K. Jesup to Peary, April 5, 1903, Folder "J." Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC; Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 160. Italian explorer Luigi Amedeo di Savoia, the Duke of

Philadelphia offered Peary one hundred dollars for his stories. Peary explained to Bridgman that "I have declined with thanks and have referred...to you, giving you a proper send-off."[10] A few days later, Peary again wrote to Bridgman and related that "I may be able to turn over some more lecture work to you, as the requests are beginning to come in and it will be entirely impracticable for me to attend to most of them."[11]

No longer could Peary devote himself to the cultivation of benefactors, as he had done with the scientists and geographers during the 1890's. Peary never enjoyed fund-raising, and he had difficulty starting it again after others handled it while he was in the Arctic. He admitted to Jesup that "I cannot solicit interest in my subject now as I would and could have done five years ago. Wherever the opportunity occurs whether in public or in private, as at the Yacht Club, and the Balt. [Baltimore] Geog. [Geographical] Society I shall present the matter with such clearness and force as I may command. I expect to sow many times on rocky ground, but the hundredth time, God willing, I shall find fruitful soil."[12] As he had ten years earlier, Peary began to cast himself as a lone explorer searching for a few hardy souls willing to exchange money for everlasting fame and glory. His personal resolve wavered while he waited to see if a plan would develop, but this tactic failed. In the end, his solid reputation and the decision to construct a special ship attracted the money.

For the next year, Peary maintained steady contact with only Jesup and Bridgman of the original PAC members. He complained to them about his financial

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Abruzzi, failed to reach the pole in 1900. But he reached a new Farthest North at 86 34'.
[10] Peary to Herbert L. Bridgman, October 1, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[11] Peary to Bridgman, October 6, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[12] Peary to Jesup, [1903?], Folder "J," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

problems, explained in detail his plans for the next trip, and asked them to join him in various campaigns for both his Arctic work and the AGS. Finally in late 1903, he resumed communication with Henry W. Cannon, another longtime fan and former PAC treasurer. He assured Cannon that he had money at his disposal and that prospects for the proper outfitting of a ship looked good. Peary asked Cannon if he would be willing to pledge the same amount as he had before. He nudged further, commenting that "Mr. Jesup still stands ready, as he did last winter, to contribute $10,000."[13] The PAC lost Cannon, however. The search for adventurous, wealthy men continued.

Peary actually had two personal objectives in mind upon his return to the United States in 1902. First, he wanted to buy a ship to carry him north again. Second, he worked to increase the prestige of the AGS. He believed that his personal polar quest would benefit from affiliation with the elite geographical society. Both the AGS and the NGS had supported Peary over the years, but his ties to the AGS were stronger, and his election to the presidency in 1903 solidified this fact. Peary's history with numerous scientist members of the AGS bound him to that group. The NGS, which had a more inclusive membership, no longer depended upon Peary's fame as much as it had in previous years. The National Geographic *Magazine* published photographs, enjoyed a huge circulation, and reveled in tales of geographic adventure and natural history, amateur and professional.[14] The NGS continued to

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[13] Peary to Henry Cannon, December 19, 1903, Folder "C," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[14] Philip J. Pauly, "The World and All that is in It: The National Geographic Society, 1888-1918," *American Quarterly*, 31 (Autumn 1979): 517, 521, 524. By 1918 the National Geographic *Magazine* had a circulation of 500,000. From the beginning, the *Magazine* was better illustrated and more popular with professional geographers than the AGS *Bulletin*. Gilbert Grosvenor, editor of the Magazine after 1899, also worked to make its articles interesting and accessible to the public. The *Bulletin* made no such effort.

celebrate him and honor his achievements, but he was one of several successful American explorers of interest to the NGS.[15] Also, the NGS experimented with other ways to showcase geography.[16] The AGS continued to focus specifically on the science and methodology of geography. Peary was a superstar of the smaller, less successful AGS.

Peary bragged about increasing the publication rate of the AGS *Bulletin.* During his presidency, the organization's magazine began to appear monthly, rather than five times per year. He wanted to make the AGS "the same to this Hemisphere as the Royal Geographical Society is to the Eastern."[17] He named the most prestigious geographical society in the world as the nearest competition of the AGS, significantly overlooking the NGS. Peary maintained affiliation with the NGS and gave numerous lectures before its members, but he dreamed of leading the AGS into a position of international prominence without catering to the public.

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[15] The NGS funded Arctic expeditions by William Ziegler (1903-1905) and Walter Wellman (1898-99, 1906, 1907, 1909—the last three by dirigible).: "Mr. Ziegler and the National Geographic Society," *National Geographic Magazine* 14 (August 1903): 250-252. The NGS also funded a scientific team for Arctic fan William Ziegler. In 1903, Ziegler organized a scientific voyage to discover the North Pole, to be led by Anthony Fiala. The trip looked like the cumbersome expeditions Peary happily gave up after the 1890's. The NGS chose William J. Peters of the US Geological Survey as its scientific representative on the trip. The society also organized a Research Committee and created a list of experiments for Peters, including pendulum studies of gravity during the winter. The Research Committee had trouble holding meetings, however, due to the members' scheduling conflicts, so the committee's chairman, G.K. Gilbert, corresponded with friends at the Weather Bureau, the Coast Survey, and with General Greely, and decided from these suggestions what Peters should study. The *America* got stuck in ice for two winters, significantly short of even a Farthest North record, and despite a few scientific observations, achieved almost nothing.

[16] C.D.B. Bryan, *The National Geographic Society: 100 Years of Adventure and Discovery* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1997), 119-120. In 1906, for example, NGS *Magazine* editors realized the potential of funding international photographic work and paid for Ion Perdicaris' photos and adventure narrative of travels in Morocco (1906). Increasingly, the magazine devoted space to photos and stories of mundane trips to exotic locales. No longer was the sole focus on identifying and defeating the extreme boundaries of geographical science.

[17] Peary to James W. Davidson, February 17, 1904, Folder "D," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC; Peary to Frank Presbrey, March 28, 1904, Folder "P," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC. The Bulletin had over three thousand subscribers.

He also paid close attention to the relative prestige of the various geographical clubs. He disliked the Arctic Club because he believed that its membership standards were not rigorous enough. Frederick Cook had founded the Arctic Club after his disastrous *Miranda* expedition of 1894. The constitution of the club listed its purpose as "To promote Arctic and Antarctic exploration, and good fellowship among its members."[18] Peary once wrote to a colleague and dismissed the Arctic Club, explaining that "There are good men in the club...but the requirements for membership were so lax, amounting practically to the ability to pay the two dollars for the annual dinner, that a year ago Mrs. Peary and myself requested that our names be hereafter omitted from the list of honorary members."[19] Peary saw himself as an elite geographer and refused to have his name associated with what he viewed as an insignificant organization.

By December 1903, Peary found the ideal way to put the AGS under an international spotlight. The Eighth International Geographic Congress (IGC) was going to be held in the United States in September, 1904. The members of the previous IGC, meeting in Berlin four years earlier, had chosen America as the next host. The NGS snatched top billing, but one year before the event nobody had yet determined the exact site or additional sponsors for the event. No single institution could handle the cost alone. Peary wanted the AGS to be a major player in this prestigious meeting. Of course, he was an Arctic explorer first, and still planned to

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[18] "Constitution and By-Laws of the Arctic Club," January, 1906. Membership cost $2.00 per year. Cook was the surgeon on Peary's 1891-92 trip as well as the relief expedition of 1901. He and Peary were not enemies until after their nearly simultaneous announcements of independent claims of the North Pole in 1909. Peary's dismissal of the Arctic Club was not based on personal emnity. Cook tried to reach the North Pole in 1894, but required rescue.

[19] Peary to William Davis, February 16, 1904. Folder "D," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC..

make a 1904 polar attempt. By early spring of 1904, with no ship at his disposal, the IGC had his full attention.

Once he hatched his plan for the AGS, Peary asked his media friends to help. In one letter to the New York *Mail and Express*, he explained: "If the American Geographical Society of New York City should decide to take a leading part to make the Congress a credit to the country and to New York city; will the 'Mail and Express' join with the other great metropolitan dailies in exerting its influence to arouse an interest that will secure a large paying membership in the Congress in New York City and vicinity?"[20] Peary saw two benefits to such a deal: the first IGC to be held in the US would reflect well on the nation and the AGS would not have too many costs to bear.

Peary wrote a similar letter to a reporter with the New York *Herald*. He wanted the newspapers to keep the matter "before the public in the proper light to arouse public interest, and thus increase the paying membership in the Congress."[21] In keeping with tradition, Peary flattered the reporter by sending him a copy of his daughter's book. Peary was proud of his newspaper connections. He knew that his ties trumped those of the AGS. In a letter to Chandler Robbins, secretary of the AGS, he stated plainly that "I have sounded the managers of the principal metropolitan dailies (nearly all of whom I know personally) and they are willing to exert the powerful influence of their papers towards this end."[22]

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[20] Peary to New York Mail and Express, December 7, 1903, Folder "N," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[21] Peary to Rieck (?), December 10, 1903, Folder "R," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC. Membership cost $5 per person.

[22] Peary to Chandler Robbins, December 11, 1903, Folder "R," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

The Arctic remained Peary's primary objective, despite his excellent media work on behalf of the AGS. In a letter to a reporter with the St. Louis *Post and Dispatch*, Peary replied to the man's query of what the world might profit from the next quarter century of Arctic exploration. Peary had addressed this question in its various forms for years. In twenty-five years, wrote Peary, there would be no "'terra incognita' or 'mare incognita' about the North Pole." Also. "Undoubtedly the South Pole will have likewise been attained before then. Events follow with ever increasing rapidity, and the South Pole in the light of our present knowledge is a simpler problem than the North Pole. In both these directions lie the privilege and the duty of this great country. Let us attain the North Pole first. It is our natural northern boundry [sic]. Let us first capture the prize and win the race, which the nations of the civilized world have been struggling for for nearly four centuries. The prize...is the last great geographical prize the earth has to offer...."[23]

He repeated these phrases dozens of times in letters to friends, newspapermen, wealthy businessmen, college presidents, museum personnel, and anyone else to whom he turned for help. He knew well that the drive for the pole had a long and tragic history rooted in the search for the Northwest Passage. Despite the dreariness of scraping for money, Peary still found historical value in his quest. He used these turns of phrase to capture the idealism and passion of polar exploration, but he also

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[23] Peary to Sr. Louis *Post and Dispatch*, October 10, 1903, Folder "S," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC. Peary corresponded with several people in St. Louis throughout 1903 and 1904. The city hosted a World's Fair in 1904 and occasionally the event organizers asked for his opinions or help. Peary's reference to the North Pole as "our natural northern boundry" was his post-1902 means of referring to the geographical significance of his quest. Questions regarding the open polar sea and the northern boundary of Greenland were settled. Peary feared that excitement over recent attempts to reach the South Pole might detract from the North Pole. The North Pole was physically closer to Americans and the region's geography was familiar to them. The South Pole, however, was remote and of little "personal" significance to Americans.

removed himself from the picture. This habit set him apart from other veteran Arctic explorers. Unlike Kane, Hall, or Cook, Peary rarely dwelt on the power and beauty of the region. Instead, he noticed only that it was an undiscovered point on the planet.

The AGS successfully made itself a part of the IGC management. Most of the nation's leading geographical groups involved themselves at some level. Peary went further, and made it clear that he wanted to be considered for a top leadership position at the IGC. His ego almost killed this plan, however. Long before the IGC expected to convene, the organizers sought to name the leaders. Professor W J McGee, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, asked Peary to serve as president of the US delegation to the congress. There was a glitch, however. McGee wanted General Adolphus Greely to be President General, the overall head of the IGC.[24] Peary refused to serve, explaining that "I regarded my sacrifices in the field of Geographical research equal to and my experience and achievements more extensive than those of Gen'l Greely. In a purely Geographical assembly I do not care to have the stamp of inferiority put upon my work by being placed in a position subordinate to Gen'l Greely. It seems rather a pity that Greely should be selected for the distinction of being marked as the leading Geographer of this country."[25] To drive his point home, Peary overstepped the bounds of courtesy and related the following tidbit: "As an officer of high rank said at a dinner in Washington, 'Greely enjoys the unique distinction of being the only officer in the entire history of Arctic Exploration who ate

[24] Greely led the disastrous American scientific expedition of 1881-1884. Based at Fort Conger, the men awaited supply ships each spring, not realizing that southerly ice prevented help. Many of the men starved to death, and others resorted to cannibalism to survive.
[25] Peary to Parish, July 23, 1903, Folder "P," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

his companions and came back to tell about it.'"[26]

Peary had another reason for wanting Greely removed from consideration, aside from his private dislike for the man. He preferred to surround himself with familiar supporters, and he told McGee that Bridgman should be a part of the IGC. Peary reported that Bridgman was "the kind of a man to be interested in the subject of the Congress and the kind of man whom the Committee [Committee of Arrangements] ought to know."[27] Peary knew how to combine money with need. He saw no harm in pairing the AGS with a generous philanthropist willing to consider new interests. The move was also another way that he kept Bridgman close to him while he waited for his next opportunity to return to the Arctic.

The IGC resolved the in-fighting by March, 1904. Electors chose Peary as president, and he informed Cyrus Adams of the AGS: "The Presidency of the Congress is very gratifying to me, and to have severed my connection with the American Society would have been a source of sincere regret to me."[28] Immediately after the election he offered his resignation to the AGS after hearing rumors that some AGS members thought that the dual position might compromise him. The AGS officers refused his resignation and he viewed his election as a significant coup for the AGS. He also recognized the chance to merge his Arctic dreams with the future of the AGS. He hoped that the IGC presidency might provide an easy public platform for his polar work. He told Jesup that "It is perhaps a plausible assumption, that should I be elected to the position, it would not only be a deserved compliment to the

[26] Peary to Parish, July 23, 1903, Folder "P," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[27] Peary to Bridgman, October 20, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

[28] Peary to Cyrus Adams, March 20, 1904, Folder "A," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.

American Geographical Society, but would have a favorable effect upon Arctic matters in which we are interested."[29]

Peary worried incessantly about the public image of the PAC. He reminded the press that even though the old PAC no longer existed, some of its former members continued to pledge support. Peary had hyped the fact that he had federal support for this trip (due to a speedy approval of another leave of absence), which led to erroneous reports that he had the necessary finances. It infuriated Peary if anyone suggested that he had money from the national government, and he stood by his private donors. He told Bridgman that "I will do what lies in my power to raise the funds for the expedition, but both you and Mr. Jesup and the others of my friends may as well understand now that I shall not beg or urge them any further in the matter. If they feel, of their own will, to continue, I shall be only too gratified and pleased. If they do not, well and good. Somewhere in this great and rich country I am satisfied the money is waiting ready to do this work. If it is not so waiting, - if we are too poor as a nation to undertake this thing, also well and good. Let some one else win the prize...I am done urging my friends in the matter."[30]

Peary lied. He asked everyone he knew for money. In a remarkably open letter to James Hall, a favored reporter at the New York *Tribune*, he listed his frustrations. He seethed with the knowledge that he had more public recognition than ever before, but still lacked financing. Peary appealed several times to the Carnegie Institution for financial aid. Even though he wanted Carnegie's money, he also resented the need to ask. Peary saw more value in his polar work than in the random

[29] Peary to Jesup, February 17, 1904, Folder "J," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[30] Peary to Bridgman, October 1, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

generosity of Carnegie. Peary often explained his search for the pole in these terms: "...success will mean not only the highest degree of present prestige and reputation, but an absolutely undying name, which will be remembered when Mr. Carnegie's libraries and Mr. Rockefeller's Universities have been forgotten."[31] Therefore, it grated upon him that he could not get the attention of the Carnegie Institution. In one request for money, Peary went so far as to remind the Carnegie of its purpose and that his mission fit the bill. He reminded D. C. Gilman, president of the Carnegie Institution, that it was "'An institution which shall in the broadest and most liberal manner encourage discovery'" and that President Roosevelt had said of Peary's work that "'No better----and I may add, no more characteristically American---work could be done.'"[32] Peary knew that the organization had enough money to help, but told Hall that "Dr. Gilman has not a half of Mr. Jesup's fire and push....further than this, the Committee has already largely obligated the current funds of the Institution in numerous directions...so that to take up this matter I fancy they would have to break into the reserve fund. This will probably mean action by the whole Board of Trustees, and this again means delay, delay, delay."[33] Despite numerous exchanges between the Carnegie Institution and Peary, he never convinced the organization that Arctic exploration was a worthwhile matter.

Peary also suffered the consequences of a competitor's failure. The American William Ziegler, president of Royal Baking Powder, sought Arctic fame in 1900. He funded meteorologist Evelyn Baldwin's effort to reach the North Pole in the *America* in 1900. Baldwin failed miserably and Ziegler replaced him in 1903 with Anthony

[31] Peary to John J. McCook, April 18, 1904, Folder "M," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[32] Peary to D.C. Gilman, February 18, 1904, Folder "G," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.

Fiala, the ship's photographer. The expedition failed despite the change of commanders, and the ship had to be rescued from the ice in 1905.[34] Peary realized that the publicity associated with the disastrous Baldwin-Ziegler Polar Expedition could only hurt him, and he said as much to Hall. "I have felt for some time that many men would hesitate to take the matter up for fear of being considered imitators of Mr. Ziegler, and beyond this is the idea given by the Baldwin-Ziegler fiasco, that the whole Arctic business is more or less of a fake, to use a slang expression: it is too bad."[35] For years, Peary had explained the significance of Arctic exploration to his many audiences in an effort to keep national attention focused on his quest. So delicate was his support base, however, that the poor organization of another well-endowed American polar quest could damage his own carefully planned endeavors.

Despite his original plans, Peary spent all of 1903 in the United States. He scoured for money for another polar trip and also placed the AGS as a major force behind the Eighth IGC. It was a disappointing year for the explorer, who wanted nothing more than to be "at work <u>now</u>, with my loaded sledge and my faithful dogs before me, working across the polar ice pack...."[36] The next year, however, found him back in top form with a real chance to return to the Arctic.

The tight affiliation with Jesup and Bridgman paid off. The trio, part of a small handful of men who refused to withdraw their support, had managed to keep the PAC together throughout 1903. It was the same organization, though most of its

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[33] Peary to James P. Hall, January 8, 1904, Folder "H," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[34] John Maxtone-Graham, *Safe Return Doubtful: The Heroic Age of Polar Exploration* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1988), 196. Robert M. Bryce *Cook and Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 237.

[35] Peary to Hall, January 8, 1904, Folder "H," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[36] Form letter from Peary to Un-Named Person, Folder "1904" Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.

members were new, and their singular purpose after 1904 was raising the money necessary to construct a ship. Peary had repeatedly recited his reasons for Arctic exploration and had even condensed them into what he termed his "Polar Creed." His agenda had three main points: the North Pole should be reached, the Smith Sound or "American" route was the only practicable one, and the conquest of the pole would buoy American pride and patriotism.[37] He emphasized especially the race's history and the international value placed upon this geographical prize. The Navy Commander (no longer a lieutenant) sent stories to the press, accepted lecture offers for himself and Bridgman, and wrote innumerable letters explaining his situation and the immediate need for more money. In almost every plea, he insisted that he had the full support of President Roosevelt, the Navy, the media, various scientists, and the American people. After a year of mostly ambivalent responses, his situation finally changed.

Jesup believed so strongly in the PAC and its cause that in early 1904 he oversaw its incorporation. It existed as a legitimate business in New York state. The move shot new energy into the group and gave it more public legitimacy. Also, this formality ended Peary's need to explain that he operated without federal funding. It did not end the membership drive, however. Instead, it simply gave Peary another point for persuasion. He sent a missive to Colonel A. M. Benson, president of the Pine Tree State Club, asking him to join the PAC. He announced the PAC's incorporation and asked Benson the following: "Is not the project and my aims such as to make it worth while for the Pine Tree State Club to raise a thousand dollars toward the work, and for you, as its President to become a member of the Peary

[37] Form letter from Peary to Un-Named Person, Folder "1904" Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC

Arctic Club? Again let me say that only the bigness of my project leads me to write this way. I feel that it is less a solicitation than the presentation of a great opportunity."[38]

The matter of a ship became the dominant issue. Peary never once doubted that if he had better transportation he could manage a victorious trip. He expected it to cost no more than $150,000 to buy a suitable vessel and upgrade it to his needs. As of early 1903, he had eight remaining PAC members, and he required each of them to maintain a substantial commitment. Peary meekly told Jesup that he did not expect his most generous benefactor to assume the cost yet again. He fully expected these few PAC members to step forward with an announcement of support for a ship purchase. He believed that they would promise him at least $35,000. This was barely enough to rent a damaged whaler. He needed much more to purchase a quality vessel. In a back-handed attempt to ease Jesup's concerns, Peary wrote that "It is entirely right and proper that you should be relieved of all work. The might and prestige of your name is enough. I am ready to take off my coat and get to work, the moment the first slip is determined."[39] Peary intimated that Jesup would not be needed for another huge last-minute donation, but also could not bring himself to relieve Jesup completely.

Peary sometimes cast himself as a noble servant to a higher cause. In one early attempt to explain his new trip, he made his needs clear: "I have told the Club that I am willing to throw myself into the work for two more years, and make a supreme effort which shall crown all past efforts with success, if I can have a suitable

[38] Peary to A.M. Benson, April 11, 1904, Folder "B," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[39] Peary to Jesup, [1903?], Folder "J," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

equipment, and by suitable equipment I mean a first-class ship, as this is practically the only expensive item of equipment that I require. I want no large pay roll, and no expensive and untried items of outfit. My Eskimos and my dogs cost practically nothing. Given a ship of strength and power sufficient to land me with my party and supplies at or near Floeberg Beach...I believe that I am justified in saying that I will answer for the rest."[40] Peary explained that he wanted to buy a big (350-400 tons) ship and have it reinforced in New York City. He planned to add weight and strength to the ship's frame, insert a strong engine, and crunch through the ice without fear of cracking her hull. The small, poorly powered whalers that he had used in the past often splintered under such pressure if they managed to make it far enough north to encounter heavy ice. Peary's last ship, the *Windward*, was so weak that the captain could not blow the steam whistle upon departure in the traditional sailors' farewell because the ship could not spare the energy.[41]

Peary estimated the cost of refitting a ship to be at least $100,000; the PAC of 1903 could only guarantee $30,000.[42] Peary asserted that the PAC could handle it if they could increase membership to fifty men willing to donate $2000 each, or one hundred men in for $1000 each. Peary pledged himself to the personal recruitment of five new members, and other PAC members accepted an equal burden.[43] Never one

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[40] Peary to Un-identified person, January 11, 1903, Folder "Unidentified, Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC. Most Arctic explorers tried to strengthen the small rented whalers or sealers available to them. Only three ships, the *Fram*, the *Gauss*, and the *Discovery*, had been built specifically for Arctic exploration.

[41] Marie Ahnighito Peary, *The Red Caboose: With Peary in the Arctic* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1932), 34-35.

[42] Peary to Un-identified person, January 11, 1903, Folder "Unidentified, Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

[43] Peary to Bridgman, February 4, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC; From Egbert Crandall to Peary, March 10, 1903, Folder "Kane Lodge," Box 21, Letters Received, 1901-1903 (H-R), PFC. Peary used any edge available. In one instance, Peary asked Grand Master Egbert Crandall of the Masonic Temple, New York City, to join the PAC. He wanted the Masons to join him

to see himself as pushy, Peary exhibited little grace in his introductory letters. For example, to one potential backer he wrote: "This letter is not one of solicitation, it rather offers an opportunity. It is no figure of speech but cold fact to say that if I win out in this work, the names of those who made the work possible will be kept through the coming centuries floating forever above the forgotten and submerged debris of our time and day. The one thing that we remember of Ferdinand of Spain is that he sent Columbus to his life-work. The one thing we remember of Grinnell of New York, that he sent Kane to his great work."[44] It stung Peary that potential donors let money obscure the everlasting fame of this Arctic endeavor, and he often resorted to bravado.

His focus on the ship became unexpectedly easier when the US Navy granted his request for leave. The gesture pleased Peary not only because it was one less hassle, but because it meant that he had the full cooperation (if not funding) of the national government. As he told Bridgman, "I am perhaps justified in a certain feeling of gratification that I have been able to settle this question of leave single-handed, and what six years ago would have been regarded as an absolute impossibility, have secured the unqualified approval of the Department and of the Administration for my project...the expedition will go North backed by the prestige and approval of the National Administration."[45]

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and to agree to represent all out-of-town lodges in the PAC. Peary had received fast funding from his "brothers" at Kane Lodge. The Kane Lodge chairman, Samuel Ball, sent out circulars asking all "brothers" to contribute to Peary's cause. That success prompted Peary to contact the larger Mason organization. He hoped that their internal network would save him time and mailing expenses. The New York City Masons declined to join.

[44] Peary to Un-Identified Person, January 11, 1903, Folder "Unidentified, Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

[45] Peary to Bridgman, September 9, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.

This was a high point for Peary, who had never had an easy relationship with the Navy regarding his continual leaves of absence. He saw it as the last necessary step to win over skittish backers. He informed Bridgman that "If this were England and a British Lord of the Admiralty wrote as Secretary Darling has written and conveyed the approval of the King as Secretary Darling has conveyed the approval of President Roosevelt, there would be a dozen men eager to assume the financial part of the expedition. I can not believe that we are any slower over here than over there."[46]

Peary felt so confident of Darling's support that he thought he might be able to secure ships previously out of his reach. Three ships associated with the Greely fiasco, the *Alert*, the *Thetis*, and the *Bear* belonged to the Treasury Department, which had a rocky past with the Navy Department. Peary believed that Darling was so interested in the matter that he might be able to make one available to Peary for refitting.[47] Peary's excitement over this turn of events was short-lived. Within a month, he had to look elsewhere for a ship. Bridgman learned that Darling's ability to intervene extended only to a possibility of having some of the machinery refitting of the ship done at federal expense.

In early 1904, Peary gave up the idea of finding a ship that he could fix for his own purposes. For months he had attempted to purchase of the *Gauss*, a fine ship used in Antarctic exploration. He never considered using one of the ships he had used in years past, though they were still active. During the whaling season of 1904, the *Windward*, the *Erik*, and the *Diana* carried crews to the Davis Straits region.[48]

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[46] Peary to Bridgman, September 9, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[47] Peary to Bridgman, September 9, 1903, Folder "B," Box 7, Letters Sent 1901-1903, PFC.
[48] Alfred Basil Lubbock, *The Arctic Whalers* (Glasgoww: Brown, Son & Ferguson, Ltd., 1937), 445-446.

Peary, however, was willing to skip an exploring season rather than use one of these outdated ships. The *Gauss* had a strong hull, but also a weak engine that Peary knew needed replacement. He figured the cost of refitting alone to be "between fifty and seventy-five thousand dollars," too high for consideration. He ended the negotiations with the following thought: "As a matter of fact, finding that it is apparently impossible for me to secure such strongly built hull as I desire at any reasonable price, I am now preparing plans of my own for a new ship which I shall have built."[49] This hope rejuvenated him. For over ten years he had explained that the ship mattered more than almost anything else in order for his overland plans to work. He still did not have enough money either to buy or to construct one, but the cost of buying was high enough that he already knew he needed to double or triple his usual expedition fund. The decision to construct changed none of the financial considerations, but it took Peary to a new plateau in the history of Arctic exploration. It was the first major piece of equipment, machinery, or transportation engineered specifically to carry an American into the Arctic Ocean. And for the first time in his Arctic career, he had good timing. The American shipbuilding industry was prepared for the order. Several deeply loyal members of the PAC offered substantial funding so that Peary could have his ship. On the condition that Peary raise $25,000 on his own, Jesup, General Thomas Hubbard, and George Crocker (president of Southern Pacific Railroad) each gave him $50,000.[50]

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[49] Peary to Gatjens & Jarke, February 6, 1904, Folder "G," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.

[50] Herbert, *The Noose*, 158; The shipbuilder, Captain Charles Dix, agreed to buy the timber himself and allow Peary to repay him later; Harold Horwood, *Bartlett: The Great Explorer* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1977), 59. Several other PAC members contributed lesser amounts.; Robert A. Bartlett, *The Log of Bob Bartlett: The True Story of Forty Years of Seafaring and Exploration* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 161. Peary went deeper into personal debt, and also pawned some of his wife's possessions to cover some costs.

Peary chose McKay & Dix Shipyard in Bucksport, Maine as the construction site because Maine hosted the nation's finest shipyards. After the 1870's, when the United States whaling industry swung from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans and eastern shipping needs changed, the shipbuilding industry shifted from Connecticut to Maine. The connection between Peary and the United States whaling industry partially explains why he could not have built an American ice-breaker earlier in his career. The ships he used most often, the *Windward*, the *Erik*, and the *Diana*, were older whaling ships that he rented for his exploratory trips, which was the usual custom for most non-commercial Arctic travelers. Originally designed as sailing ships, each vessel had weak auxiliary engines added later, when steam power was possible. For example, the *Windward* first sailed in 1860 and received its engine in 1867. And the whaling crew of the *Diana* spent the winter of 1866 iced in near Baffin Bay because the sailing ship's puny 30 h.p. engine could not fight through the unusually thick seasonal ice. When Peary used these same ships during the 1890's, he updated, repaired, or replaced thirty-year-old equipment. And the American whaling industry's coastal shift forced most shipyards to decrease continual production of new whalers and to build merchant vessels instead. Therefore, the choice of available ships on the eastern seaboard during the late nineteenth century was weak. The Greenland right whale had been hunted almost to extinction by 1908, the year of the last successful American whaling season. The old whaling fleet fell into disuse, though some of them were recalled to service during World War I.[51]

[51] Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, Karin Gleiter, *In Pursuit of Leviathan: Technology, Institutions, Productivity, and Profits in American Whaling, 1816-1906* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 269-278; Lubbock, 387, 450, 471. The *Erik* was built in 1865 (533 tons), and a German ship sank it in 1918.

The United States whaling industry converted to steam simultaneously with the discovery of new fisheries in the Pacific. After the 1880's, however, increasing numbers of Atlantic whalers were built to order. It often cost less to construct a new ship than to convert an older one. The Maine shipbuilding industry experienced a minor boom filling orders for whalers.[52]

More than that, however, Maine shipyards were enjoying federal and state incentives to boost their industry, which had struggled since the Civil War. Until the 1890's, American shipbuilding faced tough competition from England due to high import duties on steel and some kinds of timber. In addition, the federal government assigned a special "internal revenue tax" that significantly increased the cost of each ship. For example, "it was claimed that the builder of a 1,000-ton ship paid about $10,000 in taxes." Responding to a Congressional report about the state of American shipbuilding, the federal government eased restrictions, reducing the cost of each ship. By 1894, all shipbuilding items were duty free.[53] Maine's shipyards were able to take advantage of these changes more than others, because the state had "'the best local timber supply available on the Atlantic seaboard, skilled master builders steeped in the traditions of shipbuilding, and a good labor supply not strongly affected by the industrialization of the age....'" In addition, Maine shipyards almost all operated under the direction of a master workman and a small, skilled crew. They did not copy builders in other states that used larger, poorly skilled workforces and more machinery. Maine might have had the best timber, but there was so little of it left in

[52]Davis, Gallman, and Gleiter, *In Pursuit*, 269-278.
[53]William Avery Baker, *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region* 2 volumes (Bath, Maine: Marine Research Society of Bath, 1973), I: 510, 517. The internal tax was 2% on hulls and 3-5% on marine engines.

shipbuilding regions that most shipyards imported their lumber from other parts of the country. Approximately two-thirds of a ship's cost was its materials, so the wood type made a difference. The yellow pine that Peary wanted, for example, was a popular choice that had to be imported from the South.[54]

For his builders, Peary designed a ship that was special, even by Arctic standards. He wanted the vessel to be as strong as possible, and dismissed the usual concern of substantial coal consumption. He planned to take as much coal as necessary, even giving up space normally devoted to crew housing to store the fuel. He wanted to "...insure, as far as human provision can insure, my successful accomplishment of a distance of about 350 miles of ice encumbered navigation."[55]

With every cent committed to ship construction, Peary still did not have enough money to organize the rest of the expedition. But the solidity of the PAC increased his resolve. Once he decided to build his own ship, he had all of his necessities met. He bragged that it would be built on American land by an American company. The explorer composed a list of wealthy men to whom the PAC sent circulars asking for membership. The list included members of the New York Yacht Club, the AGS, and high-profile families like the Astors, Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Goulds, and at least twenty other names.[56]

The applications for membership revolved around a detailed description of the ship. Nobody could deny that it was "...the first ship ever built in the Western Hemisphere for Arctic Discovery, and will be the ablest ever built anywhere for this

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[54] Baker, *A Maritime History*, 2: 639, 791, 792.
[55] Peary to Malcolm J. Mollan, February 17, 1904, Folder "M," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[56] Peary to Jesup, December 9, 1904, Folder "J," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.

purpose."[57] It was extraordinarily strong and a staggering 1500 tons. Peary used yellow pine and white oak, reinforced the entire body with cross beams, steel bolts and plating, and wrought-iron piping. He designed it so that the ship would withstand severe ice pressure by rising above it if grabbed by underwater ice, and it had a 1200 h.p. engine. The narrow hull and powerful engines made her ideally suited for Arctic work. Also, she "...presents a complete reversal of pervious custom in Arctic and Antarctic ships, in that instead of being a sailing ship with puny auxiliary engines, she will be a powerful steamer with merely auxiliary sail power."[58] In 1880, the average cost for a ship built in Bath, Maine shipyards using white oak and iron bolts was $45 per ton. Peary's ship was built over twenty years later (in a neighboring town), but even with expected cost increases the price would not have approached Peary's eventual payment. The added steel and iron reinforcements, however, increased costs considerably. The *Roosevelt* was rugged and powerful, and gave Peary a huge advantage over any other Arctic expedition in history. Predictably, Peary found a way to turn the ship's unique design to monetary advantage. To raise funds for the E.M.C. Seminary in Bucksport, the *Roosevelt*'s home port, Peary donated wood from the ship's keel to be fashioned into souvenirs with pictures of the vessel, Captain Bartlett, himself, and the builder.[59]

Peary looked more like his old self after the PAC incorporated and his ship went under construction. He knew that within a year he would have another chance to reach the North Pole. He invited a few scientists and tourists to join him, and

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[57] Peary Arctic Club. *Objects of the Club, Plan of Campaign, Description of New Ship* (New York: Printed by the Lotus Press, 1905), 21.
[58] Peary Arctic Club, *Objects*, 20; Baker, *A Maritime*, 2: 791.
[59] The Bowdoin *Orient*, Volume 34, November 25, 1904, 194.

planned to leave any takers on Cape Sabine, then push further north with his own ship and let his auxilary ship return the assorted travelers to the United States after a few months. It certainly would be the most predictable expedition of his career, as he explained: "The voyage entails no risk, hardships, or discomforts, more than a trip to the North Cape."[60]

Like every other Arctic expedition he led, Peary needed money up until the moment of departure and had to give in to the popular aspects of his quest. He sold tours of the *Roosevelt* and once again used his Eskimo dogs to attract paying audiences.[61] The Arctic explorer had more personal notoriety than ever before, but he also needed more money and could not overlook any opportunity to earn it.

After two years of continuous scheming to be able to return to the North Pole, Peary relaxed. He watched his ship built in Maine, making sure that it met his expectations.[62] He also oversaw the successful meeting of the Eighth IGC in September in Washington, DC. Peary delivered the opening remarks to the conference attendees, a significant coup after the trouble he took to win the position. The entire affair was a success, and its organizers shuttled guests to American highlights including Niagara Falls, the St. Louis World's Fair, and Philadelphia.[63]

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[60] Peary to Frank Presbrey, March 28, 1904, Folder "P," Box 8, Letters Sent 1904, PFC.
[61] Herbert, *The Noose*, 160.
[62] Edward P. Stafford, *Peary and his Promised Land: The Story of a Love Affair Between a Man and an Island* (Published by the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island, 1998), 7-8. Peary bought Eagle Island, a tiny piece of land off the coast of Harpswell, Maine, in 1877 with his first career earnings. During the summer of 1904, he finally started building a house on the island so that his family could spend summers at his favorite retreat. The locality afforded him easy access to the ship building site.
[63] Marie Anighito Peary Stafford, "Geographical Society of Pennsylvania: History 1891-1960," (Philadelphia: Geographical Society of Pennsylvania, 1960): 20. Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 162-163. Peary had a slight connection to the St. Louis World's Fair. McGee, with whom Peary had been in such close contact regarding the leadership of the IGC, was in charge of the Anthropology Department at the Fair. He used a large percentage of the fairgrounds to organize various types of nonwhite peoples into interesting exhibit showpieces. He created a mini Filipino

The AGS basked in the praise, as did Peary.

Years of desperation had taught Peary how to handle opportunity. He took full advantage of a chance to speak before a well-informed, prestigious audience. He opened the proceedings in Washington, DC, welcomed the delegates several days later in New York, and hosted another reception in St. Louis during the two-week conference. Peary's talk focused on the excitement, use, and need for further polar exploration. He dared the geographers to be content with information already available. The president declared that "The fact of my personal interest in the polar field does not affect the truth of the broad statement that there is no longer any great pioneer work of geographical discovery to be accomplished except at the apices of the earth, at the North and South Poles." Naturally, he believed that the North Pole should take precedence, believing that it had "...a place in history, in literature, in sentiment, if you will, which the South Pole will never hold."[64]

Peary opened the conference, attended every major event, and in his closing remarks made public for the first time his details for another attempt on the pole. The gestures made a difference. The IGC attendees passed several resolutions calling for closer attention to a few geographical areas. Polar exploration received special mention: "The Congress recognizes that the Arctic regions possess a more immediate interest for the people of North America and expressed the confident hope that the expeditions now being prepared will be so supported as to secure early and complete

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village, a Native American area, an Ainu enclave, and an Arctic peoples showcase, among others. Peary had some contact with fair organizers throughout 1903, but did not directly influence the presentation of the Arctic exhibit.

[64] Robert E. Peary, "Address by Commander Robert E. Peary, U.S.N.," *National Geographic Magazine* 20 (October 1904): 389-390.

success."[65] The IGC was a resounding success for its president. After it closed, Peary devoted the next few months to serious organization of his proposed trip to the North Pole.

A highlight of this period included a visit to Bowdoin College, his alma mater. The student newspaper, the *Orient*, began in 1904 to follow the developing story about his visit. He agreed to give a lecture in May, 1905, and an article announcing the date encouraged the students to support him: "The news that Commander Robert E. Peary is to lecture before the college is received with genuine pleasure. The national attention that he has drawn to himself during the past few years has made him the most interesting figure among our alumni. Every one is proud of his name and the fame he brings to Bowdoin...We should give him a rousing reception and fill old Memorial to the doors."[66] After the lecture, the paper summarized the talk, noting that the audience seemed particularly impressed by Peary's stereopticon slides and a description of the *Roosevelt*. He explained that the ship would, hopefully, place him within five hundred miles of the pole, which he would cover on foot with dog sleds. He first showed "a series of the different types of sailing craft used during the past years by famous explorers," in order to emphasize the distinction of his ice-breaker. Peary also told the Bowdoin students that he had three reasons to expect victory this time. He had a good ship, experience, and control over his Inuit helpers. He explained that the Inuits would "obey me absolutely, and with their aid and the aid of those magnificent creatures, the dogs, I am in a better position to make the fight than

[65] "Resolutions Adopted by the Eighth International Geographic Congress, September, 1904," *National Geographic Magazine* 20 (October 1904): 416, 425. During the conference, at an AGS dinner reception, Peary boasted about his ship. He also received the Gold Medal of the Societe de Geographie of Paris.

any of my predecessors."[67]

Peary did not impress everyone, however. The *Orient* editor wrote to several of Peary's classmates before his visit, looking for further insight into the famous alum. Alfred Burton, who graduated in 1878, one year behind Peary, and was also a scientist on Peary's 1896 Arctic trip, wrote a flattering article about his friend. But George L. Thompson, a classmate of the explorer, recalled little about their shared college days, and remarked that "I cannot quite understand how one can put aside all that I consider desirable in life, in order to discover a pole which, I have no doubt when found, will be a disappointment and probably not suitable to hang the 'stars and stripes' to. So here's to Commander Peary, "May he and his family live long and posper [sic]' and may he achieve his heart's desire." Nevertheless, the Bowdoin students appreciated Peary's lecture, and the *Orient* proclaimed that it "marked the height of all instructive and entertaining events of the year."[68] Despite Thompson, the rest of Peary's classmates appreciated him. W.C. Greene proposed setting up a mock North Pole in front of the Bowdoin chapel at the 30th reunion of the class of 1877 to honor "what one classmate has done for Arctic exploration."[69]

In July, 1905, Peary guided the *Roosevelt* (named for his hero and in gratitude for his support) out of New York City and returned to the Arctic. A crowd of appreciative fans waved good-bye, and a few rode the heavy ship a while before Peary pulled away from the local bay. Henry G. Bryant, President of the Philadelphia Geographical Society, Angelo Heilprin, a scientist and devoted friend for over ten

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[66] The Bowdoin *Orient*, 34, October 28, 1904, 149; Volume 35, May 5, 1905, 23.
[67] The Bowdoin *Orient*, 34, May 19, 1905, 41-42.
[68] The Bowdoin *Orient*, 34, May 19, 1905, 43, 45.
[69] The Bowdoin *Orient*, 34, March 2, 1906, 285.

years, Josephine Peary, Madison Grant, President of the New York Zoological Society, and others enjoyed sending Peary off in style. Peary, thinking this was his last Arctic trip, allowed his guests to meander all over his special ship, and he answered every harbor ship's farewell blast with a courteous three-whistle reply. It was as close as he had ever come to a party atmosphere in his departures.[70] Later, he barely contained his bitterness when he recounted the silent reception he endured when he returned empty-handed.[71]

Despite the advantages of the *Roosevelt*, Peary failed again. His ship took him as far north as he dreamed it would, but the extra boost did little good. He enountered overwhelming pressure ridges and another open lead that prevented much overland progress.[72] A high percentage of his dogs died, and the expedition members barely escaped starvation as they struggled back to the ship. He earned the satisfaction of a new Farthest North at 87 6', a feat which by itself made this one trip of more lasting historical value than the previous four-year venture.[73] (See Appendix, Figurs 1, 6)

Peary never hesitated about trying again. As soon as several repairs could be made to the *Roosevelt*, he planned to claim the North Pole. While he waited, he cheered himself with another Bowdoin connection. Traveling by train from his home

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[70] "Commander Peary's Start for the Arctic," *Bulletin of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia* 5 (September 1905): 484.
[71] "Nearest the Pole," *National Geographic Magazine* 18 (July 1907): 448. Not one person met the ship.
[72] A "lead" is an open lane of water in the ice. If the lead is too wide, one must wait for the water to re-freeze. It is the Arctic explorer's worst hurdle. Encountering an open lead on the way to the North Pole forces the people and dogs to lose valuable time, as well as use their rationed food and water. And hitting one open lead means that there may be others further north. Hitting open leads on the return journey can be especially dangerous because the people and dogs were likely to be exhausted, food supplies low, and there could be no hope of rescue.
[73] "Nearest the Pole," 449.

in Maine to New York, Peary stopped in Brunswick to address a crowd of students: "I could not resist coming out to see you, boys. I am very deeply pleased and proud at this greeting. It is gratifying to find that Bowdoin students recognize the achievement of reaching the farthest north that has been reached by any man during three centuries of endeavor." He continued speaking, but he "was interrupted by frequent cheers, and when he had finished, the students took up the yell 'Bully for Peary,' and kept it up until the train had pulled out."[74]

Peary overcame enormous pressures and disappointments after 1902 in order to organize this expedition. He knew the value of his quest and he once again found the interested parties who could help him achieve it. Several men had already donated significant sums of money to help him, and despite Peary's hardships a few of them stuck by him. Turn-of-the-century geographers responded to him because he exploited their professional desires to fill blank spaces on maps and to describe all locales, however remote. Several prominent societies competed for prestige during the early stages of the organization of geography, and Peary seized the moment. He saw the scientists' needs and invited them to join him in the excitement of reaching a grand geographical prize. As Peary's fame grew and the pole still eluded him, he focused more attention on the institutions and philanthropists devoted to the field than he did to the individual scientists. He put national pride at stake and forced these same supporters to consider the shame of losing the accolades of history to another country. He mentioned these objectives despite repeated failures and disappointments. He was not a scientist, but geographers held him in such high

[74] Bowdoin *Orient*., 36, December 7, 1906, 176. Peary could address the Bowdoin crowd as "boys" because women were not admitted until 1972.

regard that they elected him president of two important academic societies. He made Americans feel proud of his work even though he operated best alone and acknowledged the wealthy men and corporations that backed him far more often than those who actually sledged through the Arctic with him. Through persistence, arrogance, and desperation, he kept a handful of people involved and insisted that he could win the race to the North Pole.

Conclusion

When Peary announced that he had stood on top of the planet on April 6, 1909, a media frenzy broke out to unravel a mystery. His telegraph message stating "Stars and Stripes nailed to the Pole" reached American newspapers just days after American Frederick Cook declared that he had reached the North Pole on April 21, 1908. Cook claimed that his return journey had delayed his announcement for months, and both men released victorious declarations in September, 1909. Had Peary's American rival preceded him? Had both men actually been to the North Pole? Had one, or both, lied? The matter remains unresolved.

In any case, Peary's 1908-1909 Arctic trip was his last, and he spent the rest of his life defending his name and reputation. The National Geographic Society (NGS), the American Geographical Society (AGS), and the Royal Geographic Society (RGS) supported Peary's claim over Cook's. Neither man produced indisputable proof, but Peary won the support of the public as well as most scientists. In 1911 he appeared before a Congressional subcommittee that recognized his discovery of the North Pole, and the US Navy promoted him to Admiral.[1] The controversy tainted Peary, however, and he died in 1920 at the relatively young age of 65. In the last years of his life, he watched the race to the South Pole. It makes no difference whether Peary reached the North Pole. His career deserves attention for its larger connections to American science, exploration, and nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century.

Peary needed several things in order to be a successful American Arctic explorer. He required money: to rent a ship, pay a crew, and buy supplies and trade goods. He

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[1] Robert M. Bryce, *Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 516-517.

needed reliable transportation: the Arctic is treacherous for ships, making it difficult even to place a person far enough North for exploration opportunities. In addition, Peary found it necessary to have an informed audience for his work. Reaching the North Pole first obsessed him, but it was a pointless dream until he found people who valued the quest enough to help him secure money and transportation. After twenty-six years, these three requirements merged, and Peary claimed victory.

Peary benefited from America's fascination with the West. His immediate predecessors Elisha Kent Kane, Charles Francis Hall, and Adolphus W. Greely had failed to make the Arctic a region of enduring national interest. By 1890, finding the North Pole seemed a crazed daredevil's endeavor. But Peary realized that his Arctic frontier overlapped with scientific considerations of the American West. His ability to turn certain American scientific traits to his advantage gave him two things he needed-- an audience and money. Peary led his first independent Arctic trip in 1891, a time when several American scientific fields, such as geography and anthropology, were professionalizing. These scientists formed professional organizations, restricted membership to those who had field-specific training, and identified as clearly as possible the goals of their independent specialties. Geographers, for example, paid close attention to the shrinking list of remote spots on the planet not yet discovered by mankind, and placed special professional value on studies of these areas. The North and South Poles topped the list.

Academically trained scientists distanced themselves from amateur generalists. This first generation of professional scientists affiliated themselves with colleges and universities, museums, and research institutions. Unlike the amateur hobbyists who preceded them, this generation of academics secured employment on the basis of their

career training. The scientists' capabilities for travel and fieldwork, therefore, depended upon the relative interests of their host institutions.

At the same time, these scientific groups were the last of a successive wave of explorers of the American West. During the nineteenth century, explorers, traders, settlers, the military, and scientists moved across the American West. Each group of people traveled for different reasons and placed its own value upon the land, its resources, and potential development of the West. As a result, the West reflected corresponding cultural trends. Often, through this continual process of exploration, the same areas were seen as empty wastelands, mining bonanzas, farmland, American Indian homelands and battlefields, and scientific laboratories. The federal government often sent scientists with military expeditions in order to determine the most complete value of an area, as well as maintain military usefulness during periods of peace. By the late nineteenth century, however, military necessity for most of the West had faded. The scientist explorers of the region became instead civilians affiliated with various federal agencies, especially the Department of the Interior and the US Geological Survey (USGS), or an increasing number of private ones, such as the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). Professional organizations gave these scientists ways to communicate and identify each other, though internal squabbles over the purposes of their work remained. Geologists disagreed, for example, over whether to assign value and recommend potential courses of development in unsettled regions of the West, or collect all information, regardless of cultural use, for later, more objective analysis.

Peary faced a similar problem with the Arctic. American Arctic exploration had moved briefly and unremarkably through several phases by the time he led his first expedition. Hall first searched for England's John Franklin, a hero lost in 1845 during

the international contest to find the Northwest Passage. Kane searched for Franklin, and also tried for the next great polar prize, the North Pole. Greely led an American expedition that recognized the merits of both the Northwest Passage and the North Pole, yet pushed also for a broader, scientific, collaborative approach for Arctic exploration. All failed. Therefore, when Peary began his quest to discover the North Pole, he changed the cultural perception of the Arctic for Americans. He explained the Arctic as a new frontier that his countrymen should want to claim. Peary's Arctic frontier was simultaneously a cartographic challenge; a workshop for anthropologists, botanists, geologists, and meteorologists; a means to uplift the Inuits, an international race, and a worthwhile test of human endurance.

Peary capitalized on late nineteenth-century trends of studies of the American West. He knew that professional scientists following the traditions established by the likes of John Wesley Powell of the Smithsonian Institution and Mathew Fountain Maury of the US Coast Survey were the dominant influences over material gathered in the West. Powell oversaw the direction of ethnological material about American Indians at the Smithsonian, thus affecting not only the public's reception of the distilled information, but steering also the course of federal American Indian policy. The new generation of professional scientists directed cultural perceptions of the American West. In a similar manner, Franz Boas at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) managed the material that his teams of collectors sent to the institution in a race to preserve native cultures before they became extinct. The belief that a deadline loomed for collection of authentic native artifacts affected public displays, world's fair themes, and the alliances of museum curators. Morris K. Jesup, curator of the AMNH, provided thousands of dollars for anthropological fieldworkers to fill his specially built exhibit halls with

physical evidence from native communities around the world. Peary gave the AMNH the nation's foremost collection of Arctic goods. He sent meteorites (still on display today), animal skins, stuffed animals, Inuit tools and clothing, burial items, plaster casts, photographs, and incredibly, live Inuits.

Boas and Peary certainly influenced each other's careers. But Peary did not rely solely on the opportunities available through the director of anthropology at a major research museum. Equally important to Peary was the network of communication that evolved among professional scientists. Organizations like the NGS and the AGS gave scientists the chance to correspond, meet, and discuss current scholarship trends, but they could not finance the travel necessary for geographical fieldwork. Peary, a trained engineer, joined both the NGS and the AGS, and networked among the geographers and other assorted scientist members. He crafted a simple plan: in exchange for paid passage, Peary delivered scientists to pre-arranged Arctic destinations, continued further northward for personal exploration goals, retrieved the fieldworkers after two to three months, and returned stateside with them. The opportunity to conduct studies or make collections in the remote Arctic guaranteed the scientists publishing opportunities and some measure of professional acclaim. In addition, because the scientists usually asked their host schools or institutions for the necessary travel fees, Peary was spared the need to find one well-endowed, interested party.

Peary spent the majority of his stateside time between trips corresponding with scientists he met or heard about through professional organizations. He disliked the work, but the repetitive explanations eventually helped. Often, he knew that the scientists were interested, but that they were unsure how to explain their passenger expenses to their employers or patrons. Peary crafted the arguments for them, explaining again and

again the multiple American interests in the Arctic frontier. These personal connections made him a focal point within the NGS and the AGS. He held leadership positions in both organizations and published frequently in their respective publications. By 1900, the messages in his private communications had turned into the American scientific community's mission statement for the Arctic frontier.

Peary might have funded his entire Arctic career in this fashion, but it proved impractical for two reasons. First, Peary resented the annual returns to the United States, and believed that he might win the pole if he wintered in the Arctic. The chance to re-group in the Arctic and suffer fewer distractions and delays held obvious attractions. Wintering over, however, made it less likely that he could coordinate, supervise, or provide for the safe return of teams of scientists. Second, a multi-year attempt required more money. The plan depended upon being able to rent and supply a ship and annual re-supply ships, as well as feed and equip a crew for an extended period of time.

Fortunately for the explorer, his years of contacts with the scientists helped him afford the change. A group of wealthy businessmen and philanthropists with interests in American science, most of whom had previously helped Peary, formed an organization devoted singly to placing him at 90 N. The Peary Arctic Club (PAC) started in 1898, and thanks to its incorporation Peary conducted a four-year campaign (1898-1902), as well as two additional extraordinarily expensive expeditions. The PAC members valued their donations much as they did other philanthropic gestures: as signs of goodwill, devotion to progress, and a place in history. By 1900, Peary had successfully bound national pride to the polar quest. In addition, Peary maintained exploring tradition by naming new landmark features after his best supporters. For example, Peary discovered and named

Cape Morris Jesup, on the northeast coast of Greenland, during one of his roundtrip crossings of the island.

The formation of the PAC helped Peary resolve the last of his three Arctic problems—a ship. Only a handful of men remained committed to the PAC from 1898 to 1909 (Jesup and Herbert Bridgman, most significantly), though a larger group of people joined for at least one of the three campaigns. Recruiting new PAC members, and emphasizing victory to committed ones, occupied significant amounts of Peary's inter-trip time, as did the bygone campaigns to find passenger scientists. After 1902, however, Peary stopped lamenting the problems of ship rental, and declared that success hinged on the purchase or construction of an ice-breaker ship. For each preceding trip, Peary had sailed North on small, inadequately equipped ships that could not handle the extreme ice pressure. As a result, Peary had never been able to sail as far north as he desired, making it necessary for him to risk extended overland travel. Before 1898, the scientists' passenger fees barely paid for even the smallest and weakest of the off-season, re-fitted whaling ships available as choices.

Despite the PAC's foundation in 1898, Peary relied completely on rented ships for his failed four-year venture. The PAC's extra income made annual re-supply a slightly lesser burden, but it could not yet address the larger problem—the United States had inadequate transportation for its best Arctic explorer. Peary used weak sailing ships, in an age of steam power, because the United States dominated the world whaling industry. American whaling companies made fortunes in sales of whale oil and whale bone products from Canada's eastern Arctic during the late nineteenth century. During the 1880's, however, Americans discovered a huge, lucrative whale feeding ground off the coast of Alaska, and national whaling interests swung toward the western Arctic. The

best American shipbuilders were still on the East coast, but the powerful steamers they began constructing left for whaling seasons in the Pacific Ocean. The only ships available for rent by a desperate Arctic explorer were older, outdated sailing whalers. The PAC believed Peary's assertion that a fine ice-breaker was the lone remaining obstacle to North Pole success, and in 1905 a few members pledged enough money for Peary to build America's first Arctic ship—the *Roosevelt*. Two trips later, Peary claimed victory.

The United States was ill-prepared for Peary's vision, but he addressed the problems well enough to be remembered by some accounts as the "Discoverer of the North Pole." Peary capitalized on trends within the American scientific community to win a support base of explorer-scientists. Through the academics' networks of organization, he met wealthier men equally as interested in his descriptions of an Arctic frontier. He became a significant symbol of progress and American capabilities within the ranks of the scientists and their professional organizations, which gave him opportunities unavailable to other explorers. His campaign increased the scientific organizations' prestige, and in turn their support pumped cultural value into an historically dangerous, questionable goal. He never returned to the Arctic after 1909, so his particular vision for the national and scientific merits of Arctic exploration ended abruptly upon his supposed victory. But during his lifetime, Peary turned the Arctic into a cultural frontier of greater value than his individual obsession, a remarkable feat for any explorer.

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Appendix

The following illustrations appear courtesy of the History of Science Collections, University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. The source material is: Robert E. Peary, *Nearest the Pole: A Narrative of the Polar Expeditions of the Peary Arctic Club in the S.S. Roosevelt, 1905-1906* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1907).



Figure 1. Frontispiece. Albert Operti's rendition of Peary's Farthest North record, 1906.

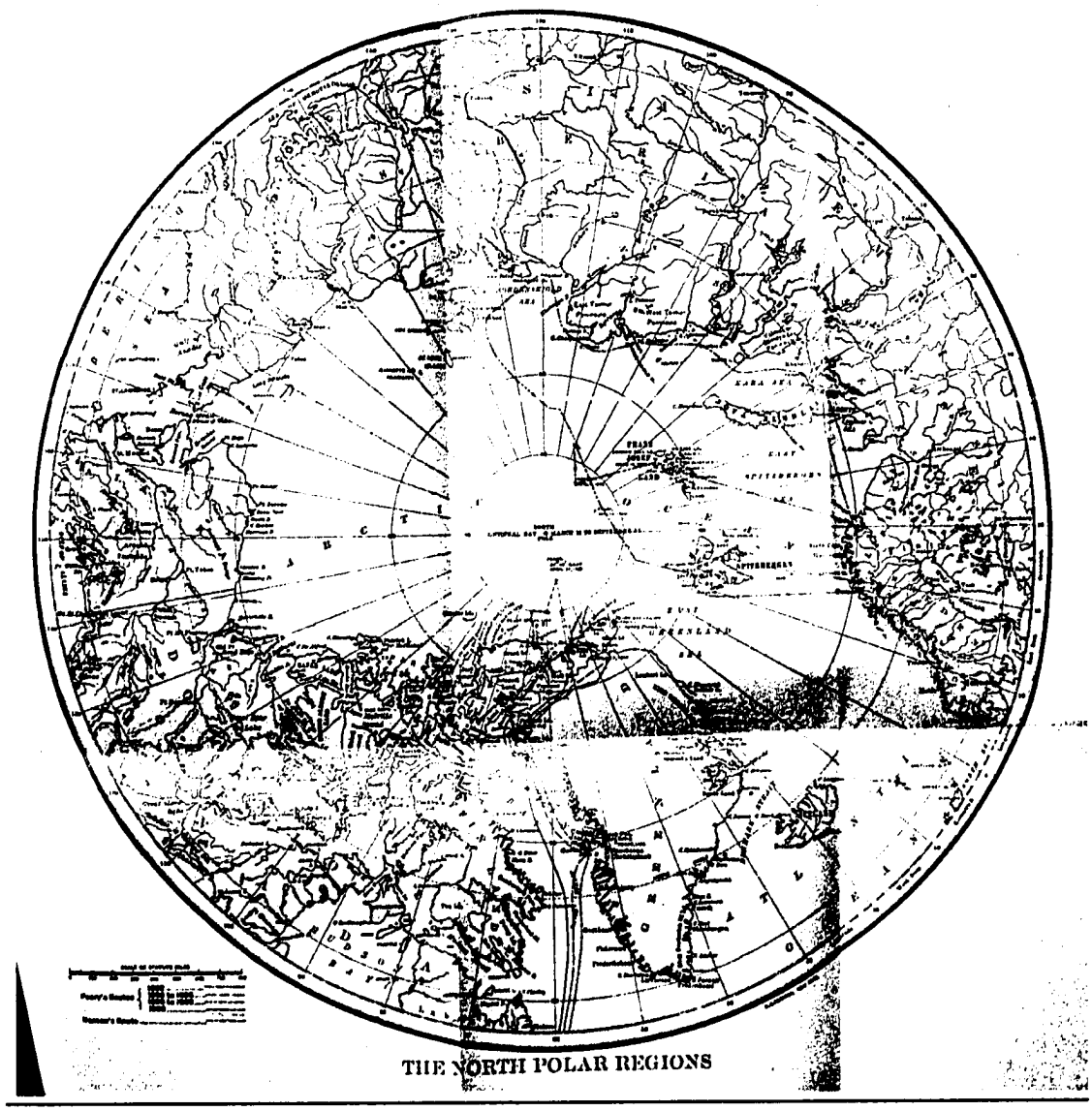

Figure 2. "The North Polar Regions."

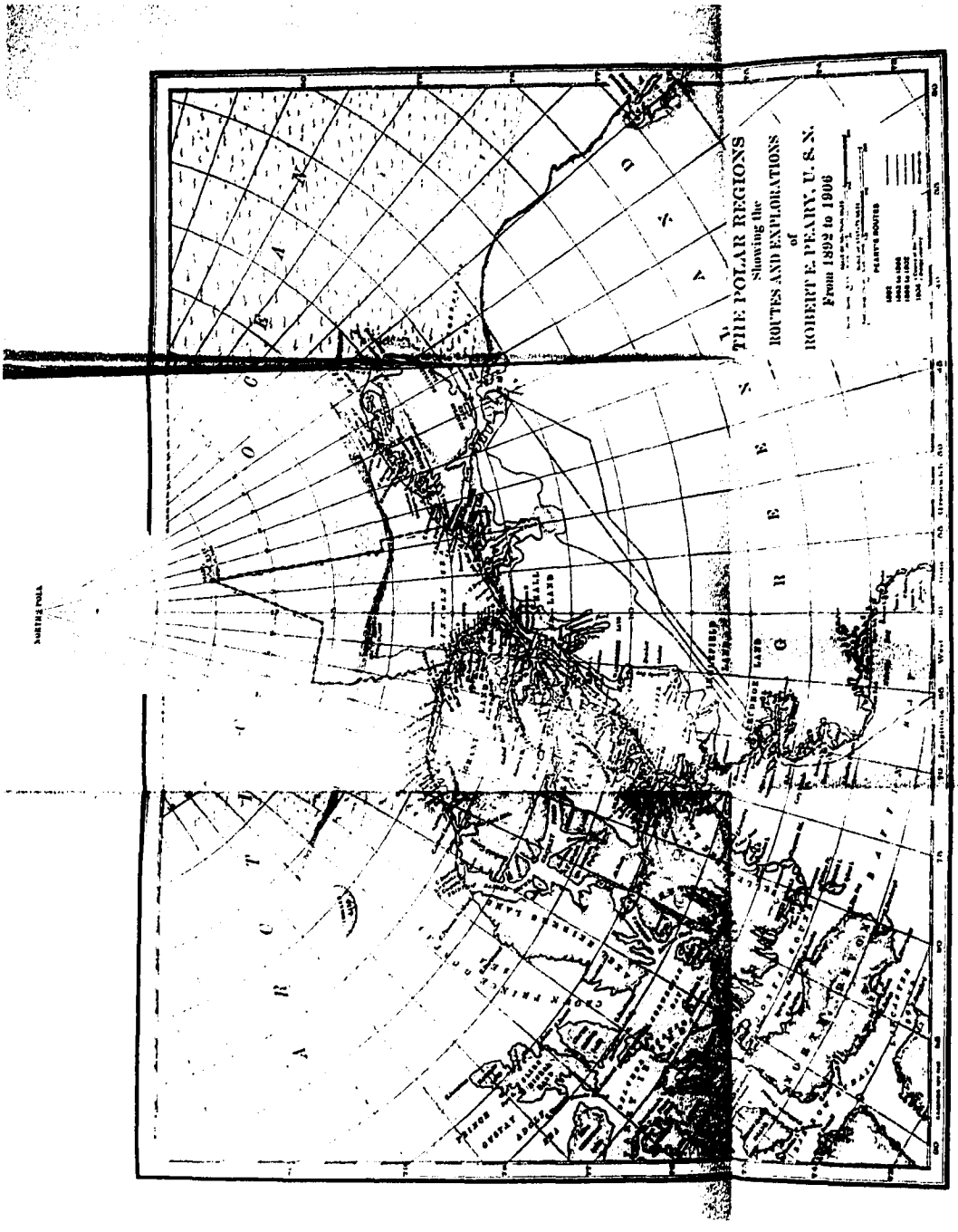

Figure 3. "The Polar Regions, Showing the Routes and Explorations of Robert E. Peary, U.S.N." North is at left.

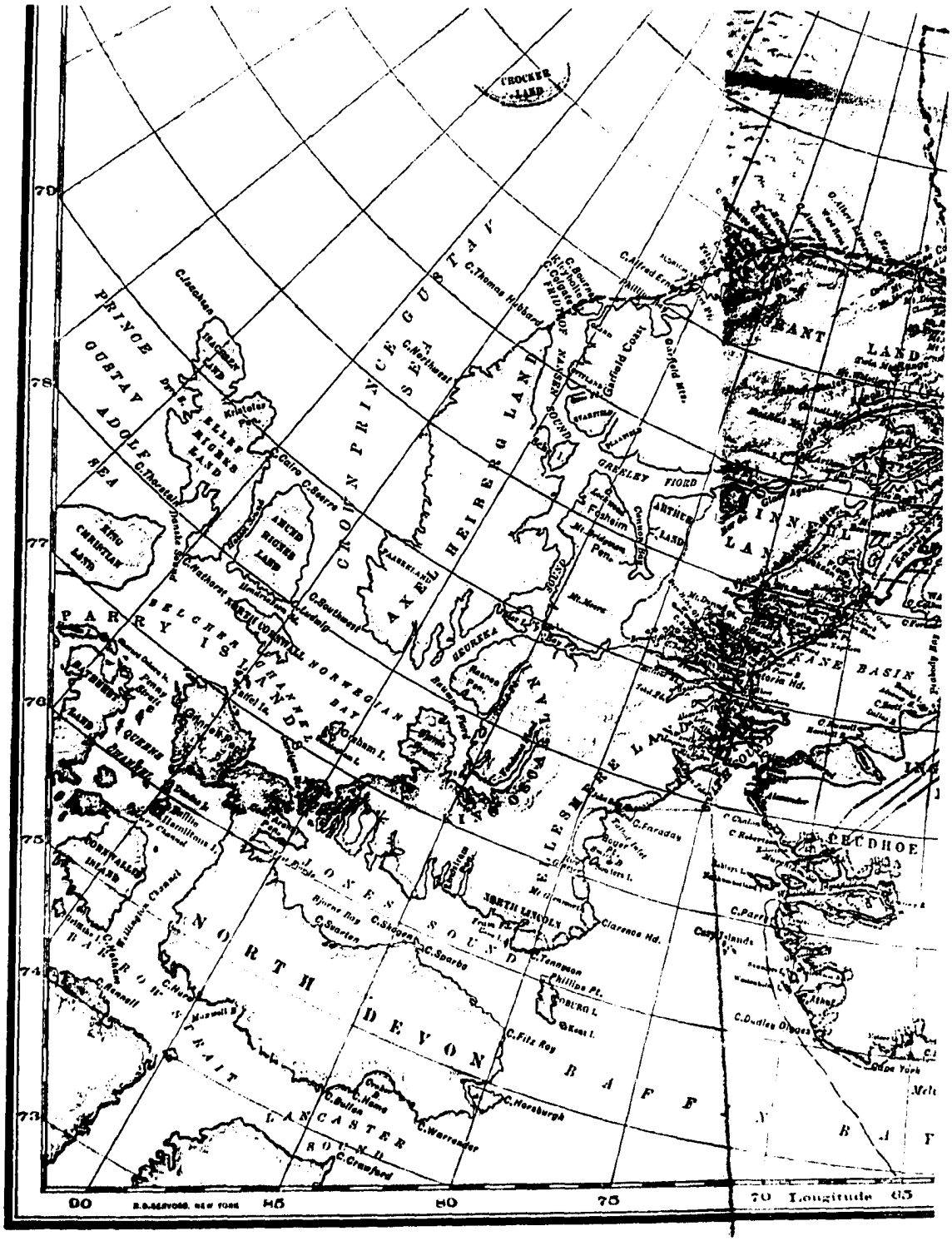

Figure 4. Detail of Figure 3, "The Polar Regions," showing the area of the northwest passage expeditions.



Figure 5. Detail of Figure 3, "The Polar Regions," Peary's American route.

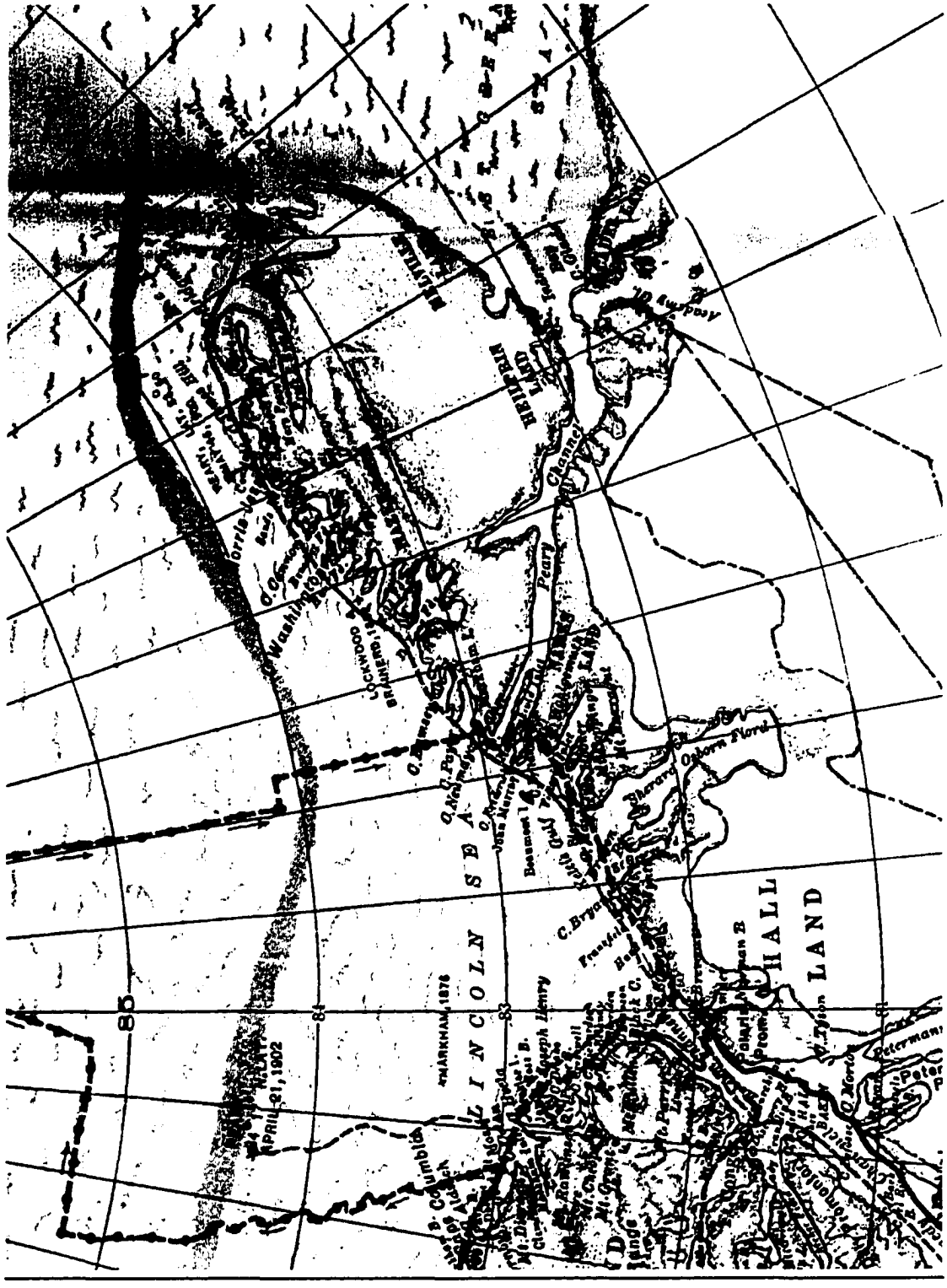

Figure 6. Detail of Figure 3, "The Polar Regions," showing northern locales on the American route. North is at left.

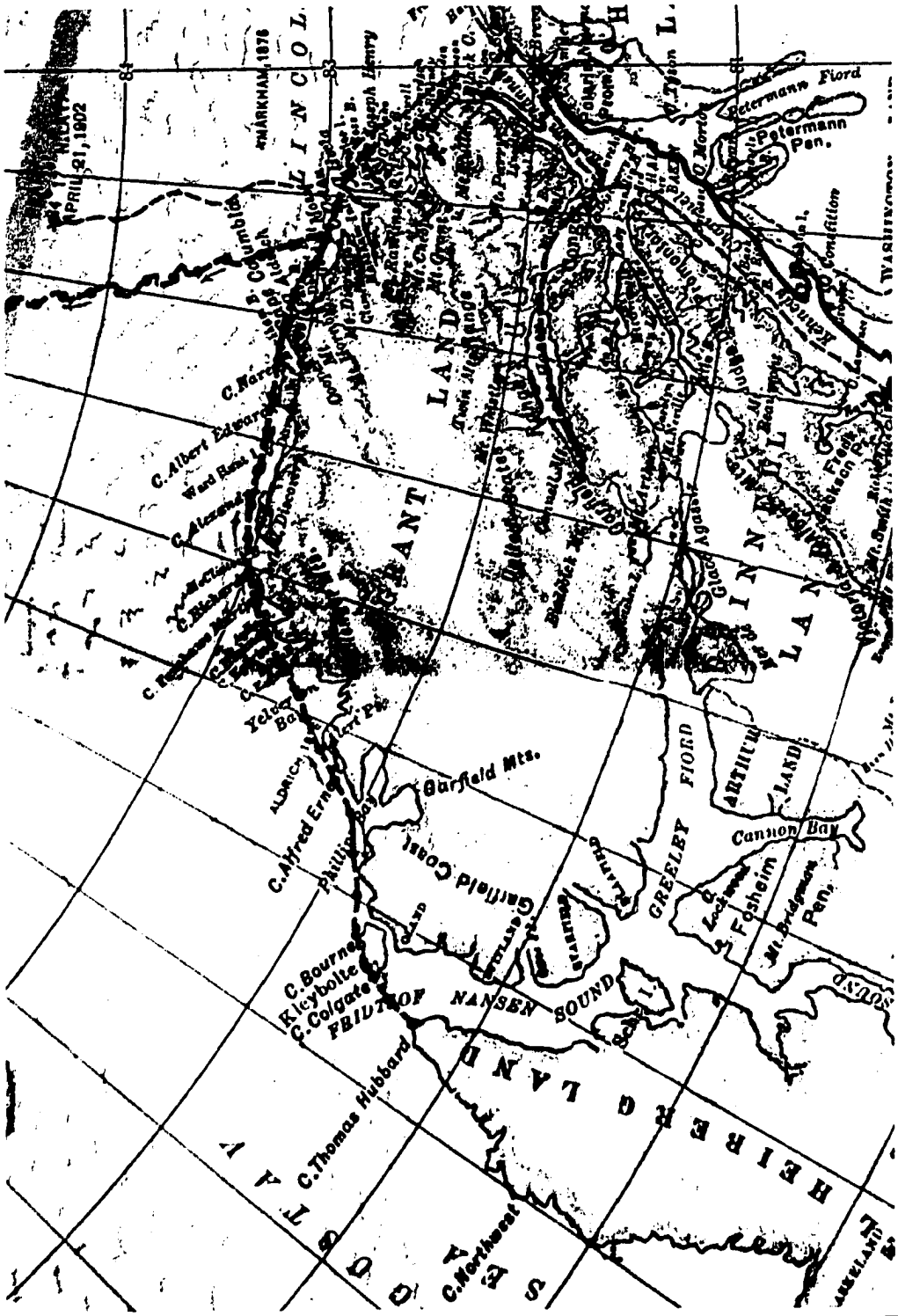

Figure 7. Detail of Figure 3, "The Polar Regions," showing northeast Greenland. North is at left.