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- Entire *DIO* vol.3 devoted to 1st critical edition of Tycho's legendary 1004-star catalog.
- Investigations of science hoaxes of the –1st, +2nd, 16th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

Paul Forman (History of Physics, Smithsonian Institution): "*DIO* is delightful!"

E. Myles Standish (prime creator of the solar, lunar, & planetary ephemerides for the pre-eminent annual *Astronomical Almanac* of the US Naval Observatory & Royal Greenwich Observatory; recent Chair of American Astronomical Society's Division on Dynamical Astronomy): "a truly intriguing forum, dealing with a variety of subjects, presented often with [its] unique brand of humor, but always with strict adherence to a rigid code of scientific ethics. . . . [and] without pre-conceived biases [an] ambitious and valuable journal."

B. L. van der Waerden (world-renowned University of Zürich mathematician), on *DIO*'s demonstration that Babylonian tablet BM 55555 (100 BC) used Greek data: "*marvellous*." (Explicitly due to this theory, BM 55555 has gone on permanent British Museum display.)

Rob't Headland (Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge University): Byrd's 1926 latitude-exaggeration has long been suspected, but *DIO*'s 1996 find "has clinched it."

Hugh Thurston (MA, PhD mathematics, Cambridge University; author of highly acclaimed *Early Astronomy*, Springer-Verlag 1994): "*DIO* is fascinating. With . . . mathematical competence, . . . judicious historical perspective, [&] inductive ingenuity, . . . [*DIO*] has solved . . . problems in early astronomy that have resisted attack for centuries"

Annals of Science (1996 July), reviewing *DIO* vol.3 (Tycho star catalog): "a thorough work . . . extensive [least-squares] error analysis . . . demonstrates [Tycho star-position] accuracy . . . much better than is generally assumed . . . excellent investigation".

British Society for the History of Mathematics (*Newsletter* 1993 Spring): "fearless [on] the operation of structures of [academic] power & influence . . . much recommended to [readers] bored with . . . the more prominent public journals, or open to the possibility of scholars being motivated by other considerations than the pursuit of objective truth."

DIO

&

The Journal for Hysterical Astronomy

Newly-Recovered 1911 Cinematic PROOF:



Doc Cook Finds North Pole of Chicago Film Studio!

Robert Bryce and DIO Respond to the Frederick A. Cook Society

First Publication of Cook's Original, Uncropped Fake "Bradley Land" & "North Pole" Photos

Plus: Did an Evil Stork Join The-Plot to NAIL Doc?

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News Notes, Etc.

A. This *DIO-J.Hysterical Astronomy* applauds the defenders of Doc Cook, creator of polar exploration's heartiest astronomical larfs: his 1908 sextant "observations" (Cook 1911 pp.257 & 274) which, if taken seriously, put him (Rawlins: Univ. Oslo 1972, *Fiction* 1973 p.86) on the planet Vesta. Thanks to Doc's 1911 doc-u-dreama cinematic debut ("The Truth About the Pole"), *DIO's* cover finds our trusty hero (in frame 1) wielding his trusty sextant at the North Pole of the planet Chicago. (See ‡4 fn 95 for fantasy behind each frame.)

B. The University of Cambridge has asked to co-publish with *DIO* the DR report on R.Byrd's false 1926/5/9 claim to have flown to the N.Pole. This report (on which the *NYT*-triggered world news story of 1996/5/9 was based) is appearing in the 2000 Jan issue of the Scott Polar Research Institute's *Polar Record* & in the *DIO* issue of the same date (vol.10).

C. Several parties (largely related to the shrinking Peary & Cook defense-cliques) have questioned the originality of DR's 1973 book, *Peary at the North Pole, Fact or Fiction?* (Luce, Wash, DC). So DR has prepared a detailed paper setting out the numerous original findings appearing in it, as well as itemizing a few errors which Bryce has corrected. (The book is currently out of print but resides in hundreds of libraries.) *DIO* may publish this in a future issue if there seems ever to be significant acceptance of the slur. Meantime, we note that oft-uncited *DIO 1.1* ‡4 scrupulously took up the task of unravelling credit for various key contributions to resolving the Controversy. Some specific examples of important but inadvertently-credited discoveries by DR (and Ted Heckathorn) follow. [a] The 1973 book's induction (pp.149-150, 158, 284-285) of a simple, neat, & nonconspiratorial explanation for how Peary got forced into his bizarre Pole-in-one steering claim. (See related DR & Bryce findings cited at *DIO 7.1* ‡4 fn 22.) [b] DR's demonstration (1973 pp.74-77) & proof (*Wash Post* 1989/4/20, *DIO 1.1* ‡4 §B2) of Peary's most undeniable exploration fraud: his 1907 discovery that he had in 1906 discovered the northernmost land on Earth, "Crocker Land". In the 1980s, we learned that, at the holy Discovery Moment (1906/6/24), his diary states: "No land visible". [c] The now-universally-repeated oddity that Byrd didn't, at his 1926/5/9 turnback point, drop his blizzard of flags (carried north to mark the Pole red, white, & blue for Amundsen to see). Skepticism about this omission 1st appeared at DR 1973 p.264. [d] Ted Heckathorn's surprise recovery (computed out by DR at *DIO 2.2*, 1992) of the very Amundsen 1911 South Pole-journey longitude observations which temporarily-combative *National Geographic* (1990 Jan p.47) had specifically denied existed (contra DR 1973 p.140, *DIO 2.2* §B1) or were even useful for steering at a Pole. (See *Science* 1993/6/11.) Scholars familiar with the Controversy literature (1) will recall that back in 1973 (when Peary was sacred & his papers sealed), DR's book pioneered the now-generally-accepted rational weighing of the Cook-Peary claims; and (2) will recognize new information and approaches (e.g., below at ‡4 fn 101) throughout. As a fun test for those just entering the case, we list (below) a bare string of pages containing items which are among the more important then-new finds on polar history and-or navigation to be found in the book (readers who can't guess any given page's novelty, may phone DR):

pp.22, 25, 51, 52, 65, 69, 73, 74, 82, 83, 86, 87, 97, 102, 111, 116, 118, 119, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 150, 151, 154, 156, 159, 160, 161, 170, 180, 184, 191, 203, 204, 215, 226, 229, 234, 237, 247, 264, 280, 284, 285, 288, 290, 292.

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Editor: Keith Pickering, address below. Publisher: Dennis Rawlins (DR), address above.

DIO is primarily a journal of scientific history & principle. However, high scholarship and-or original analytical writing (not necessarily scientific or historical), from any quarter or faction, will be gladly received and considered for publication. Each author has final editorial say over his own article. If refereeing occurs, the usual handsome-journal anonymity will not, unless in reverse. No page charges. Each author receives 50 free offprints.

The circumstance that most *DIO* articles are written by scholars of international repute need not discourage other potential authors, since one of *DIO's* purposes is the discovery & launching of fresh scholarly talent. Except for equity&charity reply-space material, submissions will be evaluated without regard to the writer's status or identity. We welcome papers too original, intelligent, and-or blunt for certain handsome journals. (Dissent & controversy are *per se* obviously no bar to consideration for *DIO* publication; but, please: spare us the creationist-level junk. I.e., non-establishment cranks need not apply.)

Other journals may reprint excerpts (edited or no) from any issue of *DIO* to date, whether for enlightenment or criticism or both. Indeed, excepting *DIO* vols.3&5, other journals may entirely republish *DIO* articles (preferably after open, nonanonymous refereeing). No condition is set except this single one: *DIO's* name, address, and phone number are to be printed adjacent to the published material and all comments thereon (then *or later*), along with the additional information that said commentary may well be (and, regarding comments on DR output, will certainly be) first replied to — if reply occurs at all — in *DIO's* pages, not the quoting journal's.

DIO invites communication of readers' comments, analyses, attacks, and-or advice. (And we urge informants to snitch on lurking typos: they get rubbed out at reprinting-time.)

Written contributions are especially encouraged for the columns: Unpublished Letters, Referees Refereed, and regular Correspondence. Contributor-anonymity granted on request. Deftly or daftly crafted reports, on apt candidates for recognition in our occasional satirical *J. for Hysterical Astronomy* will of course also be considered for publication.

Free spirits will presumably be pleased (and certain archons will not be surprised) to learn that: at *DIO*, there is not the slightest fixed standard for writing style.

Contributors should send (expendable photocopies of) papers to one of the following: Robert Headland [polar research & exploration], Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge, England CB2 1ER.

Charles Kowal [celestial discovery, asteroids], Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Johns Hopkins Road, Laurel, MD 20707.

Keith Pickering [navigation, exploration, computers, photography, science ethics],

10085 County Road 24, Watertown, MN 55388.

E. Myles Standish [positional & dynamical astronomy], Jet Propulsion Laboratory 301-150, Cal Tech, 4800 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena, CA 91109-8099.

Hugh Thurston [early astronomy, pure math, WW2 cryptography, skepticism] (Univ. Brit. Columbia, Prof. Emer. Math), Unit 3 12951, 17th Ave, S.Surrey, B.C., Canada V4A 8T7.

Christopher B. F. Walker [Mesopotamian astronomy], Dep't of Western Asiatic Antiquities, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, UK.

Inquire by phone in 40 days: Walker 171-323-8382, Thurston 604-531-8716, Standish 818-354-3959, Pickering 952-955-3179, Kowal 410-792-6000, Headland 1223-336540.

in Scandinavia for his book but that in those countries which usually pay the largest prices — including France and Germany — the serialization of his story in the Paris New York Herald was claimed so to injure the volume production that only comparatively nominal prices were offered for the rights of the book. It is to be hoped for Dr. Cook's sake that he did receive such a price as that mentioned — amounting to Two Million Marks — for his Continental rights — but I present the matter to you for what it is worth, as having possible bearing on the accuracy of the records which are now in your possession.

It is only right to give you, in conclusion, the names of some of those people who are familiar with our work and standing, and of whom you doubtless know. Our clients include such authors as Mrs. Humphry Ward, the Grand Duke Michael, Dr. Alfred Russell [*sic*] Wallace⁷⁴ (author of "Man's Place in the Universe"), Dr. Andrew D. White⁷⁵ (former American Ambassador in Germany and Russia and Delegate at the Hague Conference), and, among well known explorers — Sir Ernest H. Shackleton, Captain Roald Amundsen, and others. We are also known to Baron Palle Rosenkranz of Vimmelskaftet 42, Copenhagen (author and dramatist) and the Agency known as the Bureau Hamlet of Vimmelskaftet 36, Copenhagen, is familiar with our name and standing.

[COMMENT: While welcoming the beauty of (and past pioneering contributions preserved in) Washburn-Cherici 2001 (p.97), *DIO* notes 2 sad oddities. (1) The book never mentions R.Bryce (world #1 expert on Cook). (2) Null vetting is reflected in numerous errors; e.g., [a] Fake Peak twice misidentified (fn 41). [b] Group-photo at p.47 miscited, misdated, 80% misidentified. [c] Wright Bros. flight dated after 1906 (p.90). [d] Mis-directions at pp.104, 136, 147. [e] Five Cook-photo archival sources cited (p.181), but only 3 archived prints included (pp.120, 128, 145), 2 as "unpublished" though all 3 are in *DIO* 7.2. [f] Eleven Cook photos pp.114-142 cited to OSU archives, actually scanned from Cook's 1908 book. [g] Photo at p.145 mistakenly called unpublished, uncropped, & same as p.142 photo.

⁷⁴ Alfred Russel Wallace was (with Darwin) co-discoverer of the theory of evolution.

⁷⁵ A quite religious man, Andrew Dickson White is immortalized by his authorship of the classic, *The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896; Dover repr. 1960), dedicated to the memory of Ezra Cornell, White's partner in founding Cornell University as a progressively co-educational institution, of which White was 1st President. While (e.g., 1:168f) pointing to worse (if less organized) offenses by Protestant religious bigots, his book politely took on (as no current university's top money-hustler [read "president"] would dare) the Roman Church's megalomaniacal pretense to divine inspiration & papal infallibility. [DR questions-in-passing: [a] The pope is held infallible only in certain restricted areas; but are the restricting boundaries themselves infallibly established & applied? (And by whom?) [b] Was the cardinal-college that in 1870 voted Papal Infallibility itself infallible when making such a decree? (If so, we have a human source of infallibility without need for a pope.) [c] Papal Infallibility implies a conveniently selective divine connexion — somehow permitting god-certified judgement-perfect on a very few utterly untestable points, even while the alleged connectee often shows astonishing shortsightedness on those real issues where he *can* be tested by history.] Embarrassed apologists have been vainly attempting to tear down White's book throughout the century since it was published; see, e.g., *The Popes and Science* 1908 by Fordham University's James J. Walsh (author of the incomparable *Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries* 1907). Ever tactically transforming, this chimeral project will never die [see fn 70 under zombies, also ‡4 §Y6], so long as the Church finds it fiscally sound to continue faking possession of a link to *all-seeing* omnipotence, even while it repeatedly screws up with spectacular improvidence (committing epochal offenses against truth and equity), e.g., banning heliocentricity well into the 19th century (bailing out of Ptolemy's 160 AD astronomy only in 1835! — see White 1896 1:156, and compare his 1:157 misconception to *DIO-JHA* 1.1 ‡7 §F3); barring women from rulership; conjuring-up fine-point excuses for (on a limited planet: *DIO* 1.1 ‡2 §F) opposing any birth control method that really works (and thus might slow the Church's growth-industry push for power); and engaging by treaty in tempestuous romances with anti-Commie bulwarks like atheist Mussolini (1929) & still-unexcommunicated Catholic Hitler (1933). [The anti-White obsession continues, predictably-unabated, right into the new millennium: see, e.g., Thos. Lessl (University of Georgia) *New Oxford Review* 2000 June pp.27-33.]

‡4 Response to FACS's "Critical Review"

"The Significance of this Book to Its Members and Associates"

by Robert M. Bryce¹

A Introduction: A Response, Not a Defense.

A1 Shortly after the appearance of my book, *Cook & Peary, the Polar Controversy, Resolved*, [Stackpole, 1997] the Frederick A. Cook Society (FACS)² published what it called a "critical review" of the book in three parts,³ arguing my conclusion that its namesake, the American explorer Frederick A. Cook, was never nearer than 12 miles to the summit of Mount McKinley in 1906, nor was ever closer to the North Pole in 1908 than 400 miles, was not only incorrect but, by the tenor of FACS's remarks, intentionally so.

A2 Although the comments published by FACS are "critical," they do not qualify as a "review" in any sense of the word, since although they impugn the book as biased, selective in content and filled with errors of fact and logic, they do not give the reader an appreciation of the content of the book, overall. Instead, FACS's efforts are almost entirely centered on using various rhetorical techniques in an attempt to bring the book's integrity and my qualifications to write it into question. In so doing, the three authors of FACS's "critical review" have actually managed to say more about their own integrity than mine and have shed much light on their own biases, psychology and inability to distinguish between the product of professional research and rubbish. They have also produced a veritable catalog of fallacious reasoning. Their writings contain fallacies of inconsistency, circular reasoning, faulty analogies and fallacies of invincible ignorance. *Non sequiturs* abound: linguistic confusion, causal reasoning, hasty generalizations, wishful thinking and arguments of negative proof litter their texts. Fallacies of irrelevance, such as *ad hominem* and *tu quoque* attacks and appeals to inept authority are everywhere.

A3 The same could be said of this sort of approach that was said in 1917, when an equally devastating book appeared demonstrating that Robert E. Peary's claim to having been the first to reach the North Pole in 1909 was a hoax. Its author, Captain Thomas F. Hall, predicted that in its wake: "Interested persons with mercenary ends to accomplish; or implicated partisans desiring to sustain themselves, may by sophistry and personalities attempt to divert attention from the astounding revelation [of the imaginary character of the disputed claim] and thereby break its force. But I venture to say no reasoning from the narrative itself will be resorted to. No reviewing of the facts, or attempts at elucidations will be indulged in, for the sufficient reason, that more light would be thrown thereby upon actions which are now exposed."⁴ Ironically then, the interested persons and implicated partisans of FACS have been left with no other strategy to counter the astounding revelations of *Cook & Peary* and to defend Cook's claim than that used by those who have sought to defend Peary's, which FACS dismisses as unworthy of any serious consideration. By use of sophistry and personalities they desperately want to dissuade anyone from reading my book because, as the *New York Times Book Review* said: "Bryce demolishes Cook's evidence."⁵

¹ [Note by DR: Robert Bryce (Head Librarian, Montgomery College, Germantown Campus, telephone 301-353-7855) is author of the widely and well reviewed 1997 book, *Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* (Stackpole Books, 5067 Ritter Rd, Mechanicburg, PA 17055, telephone 800-732-3669). *Cook & Peary* has earned permanent rank as prime source on The Polar Controversy.]

² The Frederick A. Cook Society is a non-profit educational organization chartered in the State of New York.

³ *Frederick A. Cook Society Membership News*, v.4, no. 1 [April 1997], pp.3-5.

⁴ Hall, Thomas F., *Has the North Pole Been Discovered?* Boston: R.G. Badger, 1917, pp.359-60.

⁵ *New York Times Book Review*, April 20, 1997, p.21.

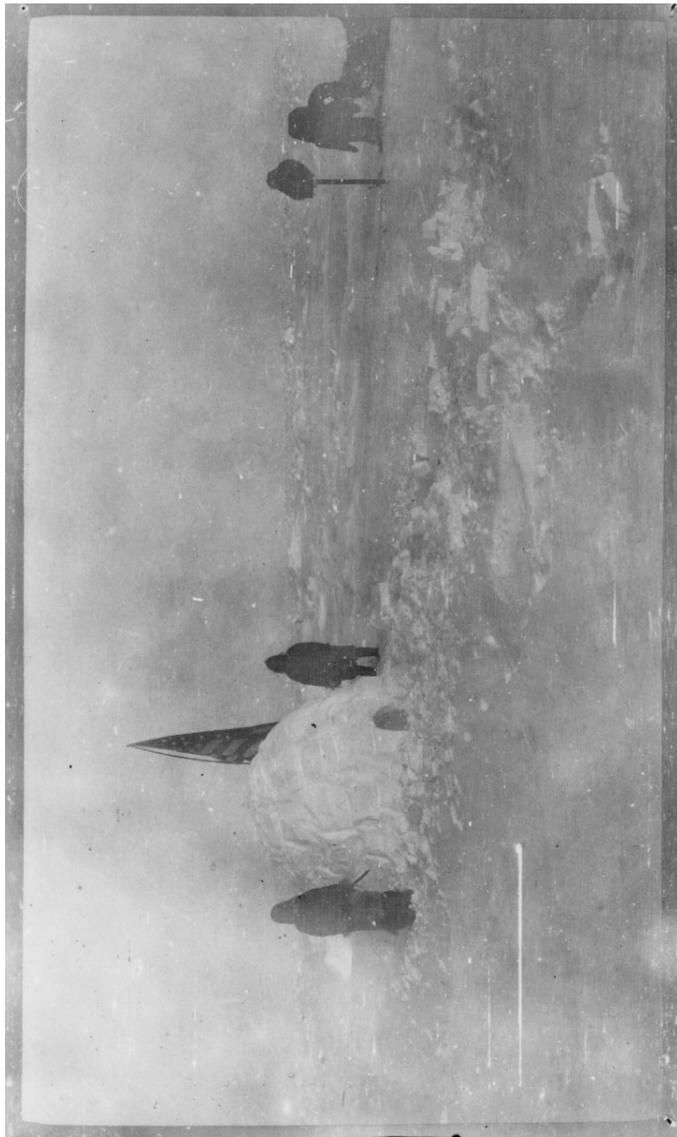


Figure 1: Unretouched reproduction of Frederick Cook print of photograph he alleged was the first taken upon his claimed 1908 April 21 arrival at the North Pole. An even less clear version was published at Cook 1911 opp. p.300. From original 3' 1/4 x 5' 5/8 print, Library of Congress. The light border suggests it may have been intentionally over-exposed to obscure details. [*DIO* note. This view is encouraged by a suspicious correlation: for all of the key photos (e.g., Fig.5 and *DIO* 7.2 Fig.18) connected to Cook's fakes, the negative is (exceptionally) missing. Despite this photo being taken in full sunlight, it exhibits indistinct shadows and horizon. The Eskimos pictured later said (Herbert *Noose of Laurels* 1989 p.316) that the photo was actually taken off east Ellesmere Island during 1909 Spring. Thus, we have yet another instance (see also *DIO* 7.2 ¶7 Fig.18) of Cook's poetic penchant for photographing flagraising ceremonies at points far distant from his exploring goals.]

Bennett for \$25,000. The magazine *Town Topics* estimated that this story alone was worth \$100,000. . . ." These tales (partly based on Cook's word)⁷² are hard to fully verify. And, after all, real offers for magazine & book publication were volatile (e.g., BR 479) and the big ones would obviously be contingent⁷³ upon eventual vindication of his claims by investigators. Which is why Cook preferred in-hand smaller sums rather than some-day bigger promises. He was already getting flush anyway in 1909 from fees for lectures, whose promoters couldn't wait for (and didn't much care about) scientific verification. After 1911, he played the mid-US as a *crucified* (fn 43 [& cover]) victim of the Eastern rich — and made even more lecture-fee cash than in 1909 as "discoverer" (BR 958).

O2 A quarter-century ago, when DR was looking through the University of Copenhagen Archives, he dug up a letter to the Director of the University of Copenhagen from one of the world's most prominent literary agents, Hughes Massie, a document which reveals the truth behind Cook's facade of publishing-naïveté. The letter (1909/12/16, headed "Private") has lain hidden too long. So we will here quote its entire body:

In the interests of common justice I feel it to be a duty to lay before you certain facts apropos of the investigation which you are now making concerning a recent North Pole Expedition. The head of one of the greatest publishing firms in America — a man whose honour and word cannot be questioned, and who is the publisher and friend of the greatest living writers in the English language — told the writer in the course of conversation at this office a few days ago, that before Dr. Cook had arranged for the American rights of his forthcoming book he had asked him the price he wished for it. Dr. Cook replied that he scarcely knew what to say in return, but that some indication of the value of the publication might be obtained from the fact that he had sold the European rights for \$500,000. The publisher in question, whose name I am prepared to give in confidence, at once replied that he did not care to make any offer whatever. It so happens that he has had considerable experience with the Continental market and the improbability of any such price having been obtained there was so great that it seemed to him that even the veracity of the book itself would be questionable.

It so happens that we have knowledge of a curious sequel to the foregoing. We act as Literary and Dramatic Agents, and through our foreign representatives, have been making for some months past a very thorough enquiry into the Continental market for books of Polar Exploration. Previous to hearing the statement of the American publisher in question, we had learned in the course of our business enquiries that Dr. Cook had made an acceptable arrangement

his story — even though (BR 1121) the true amount was about 2 1/2 times as much.

⁷²Keep in mind that Cook was not a small liar. (The suggestion [F92] that Cook *never even left of sight of land* in 1908 is supported by his total lack of photos showing sledging through or over rough ice. [See *DIO* 21 ¶3 fn 33.] Peary had many such, e.g., 1910 opp. pp.216, 217, 224, 240.) Most of Eames' data on alleged publishing offers are straight out of Cook 1911 pp.491f. Cook later claimed (*ibid* pp.482&494; BR 532, 958) he voluntarily released Harper & Bros. from a \$300,000 contract. (Does a copy survive?) But Cook was faced (BR 420, 1040) with the inevitability of Harper & Bros. suing him for fraud if he tried holding the company to payment of a big advance on a book about a false and collapsed claim. (See Cook 1911 p.494 on publishers' "cold feet".) So he might find it several-ways advantageous just to ever-so-graciously bow out of the contract. Bryce suggests this would enhance his lucrative (BR 958) image-rôle as a gentleman-victim (¶4 fn 70).

⁷³See, e.g., Cook 1913 p.494. See also BR 365 for some of the huge early offers Cook received (1909/9/3-5: BR 1035) — all made BEFORE publishers' caution set in, following Peary's fraud charge on 1909/9/8. Before Peary's 9/6 return, Cook had no apparent need for urgency, as he was the object of an increasingly aggressive orgy of fantastic publishing offers. But, by not locking up a deal before Peary's exposures of him, Cook missed out on these offers. Bryce (who takes a less cynical view: BR 365, 374, 956-958 vs 790f) has noted the irony that Brown&Massie in particular had previously been (BR 365) among Cook's most ardent suitors for rights to his polar publications!

O Appendix: Cook's Naïve-Act — a Glimpse-Behind-the-Scenes

O1 Among the more extreme delusions in the Cook circle is the idea that its hero was incompetent about money, implying that he got rich merely by accident!⁶⁵ The greatest con-man of his day actually had no interest in money.⁶⁶ He went to his Pole merely as a sporting⁶⁷ venture, thinking (F83) no one would pay to hear about it. He, “an innocent,”⁶⁸ went into the ethereal business of oil (and related stock-reloading schemes & exploitation of “sucker-lists”)⁶⁹ just to help impoverished widows.⁷⁰ A staple chapter in the Cookite gospel is that Cook turned down huge sums for his North Pole fantasy. E.g., according to Eames 1973 p.128: a member of the US Embassy staff in Copenhagen “was unable to control the Doctor’s enthusiasm for ignoring money. Although *Hampton’s* magazine offered to meet any price he asked for magazine rights to his story, and Hearst offered to double anyone else’s bid for newspaper and magazine rights, he simply⁷¹ sold his story to James Gordon

⁶⁵ Cook was clumsy with evidence (not money). E.g., he said (1911 pp.243-247, 284, & 571) Bradley Land was 40 mi distant, 1000’-1800’ high, shoreline ever-misted. But in his “Bradley Land” photo (Fig.5), rippling ice goes unobscured to the shoreline. With camera-hgt c.3 m (see Eskimos-vs-horizon), Earth-curvature limits shore-distance to under 5 mi. Shoreline parallaxic curves correlate (correctly for shore ordmag 10000 ft distant) with features’ prominence (nearness). Land is roughly 1/100 radian high on the photo, so physical height is (like distance) ordmag 1/10 Cook’s claim.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., PP18 p.50, where W.Eames argues that because Cook was allegedly flush in 1906 (though Cook 1908 p.523 admits his 1906 cheques were bouncing: ‡5 §J3), he wasn’t making sensational exploration claims for money. But when, on the page immediately opposite, Eames claims that Cook was bankrupt in 1909, Eames still insists: Cook wasn’t making sensational exploration claims for money. Even amidst 180° reversals of evidence, the Believer’s pet theory endures unaltered. (For the spectacle of Ivy Leaguers suffering like cranial impenetrability, see *DIO* 2.3 ‡8 §§C31-C33.)

⁶⁷Eames 1973 pp.64, 237. And see pp.4, 116, 131, 162f for similar alleged Cook contempt for scientific verification (also Cook 1913 pp.495, 533) — contra pp.83-86, 112, 117, and D9 fn 27.

⁶⁸In the tradition of murderer Dr. Sam Sheppard’s equally cemental defenders [*DIO* 6 ‡5 fn 4], Eames continues (1973 p.216): “a healer who healed for brotherhood. . . . As Shakespeare wrote . . .”

⁶⁹See, e.g., Bryce 1997 pp.613, 626, & 645 — and especially pp.672-673, where Cook denies ever having heard the term “sucker lists”, even though Bryce finds the term in some of his own literature.

⁷⁰ After his 1923 conviction for mail-fraud and using “sucker lists” to swindle gullible “people of poor means” (as the judge put it), Cook claimed: “I had only altruistic aims”. (See BR 672&675.) The judge suspected he’d stashed money. CookSoc scoffs (PP18 p.39) at the idea. (Contrast to attitude cited at ‡4 §K25.) Hmmm. Cook was pardoned by FDR in 1940; like most such pardons, it came in an election-year, when pols have special needs for off-the-record cash. Cook acted impoverished in 1940, but: how could a pauper buy influence with the President of the US? (Earlier, our childish- naïve sucker-list exploiter had mesmerized a US senator and gaggle of congressmen: F247 & BR 573f. Did they & the required go-betweens [& helpful journalists: fn 16] cost any less than Peary’s lobbyfolk?) We know (BR 623) that, in 1922-3, millions disappeared from Cook’s oil enterprise. And here, nearly 8 decades later, well-paid lawyers-for-Cook still stagger inexorably onward — with a cine-zombie’s pervasivity to logical bullets — strangling & mangling blind-frail Lady-Justice. (All in order to defend an epic swindler’s lies. Which is apparently most satisfyingly accomplished by absorbing big sums, supplied by said swindler’s family.) Whatever the history & whereabouts of Cook’s ill-gained profits, one thing is certain: today, money alone provides his claims the slightest credence anywhere. [Mechanics delineated at *DIO* 10 © 21.] Thus, again (see also fn 49), CookSoc achieves par with formerly-scorned NGS’ mythmaking. (Prediction: NGS will get sane first.)

⁷¹Bryce believes (BR 365, 956-958) Cook was merely incompetent & illogical about money, but Bryce’s sharp eye also launched (BR 1120-1121) a new theory: Cook had a secret publishing deal all along (see *NYH* 1909/8/29 “Forecast” boast: *NYH* 1909/9/2:5:3-5) with Bennett’s *Herald* (1899 exclusive 1st publisher of his great Antarctic story: BR 201). He may also have contracted exclusively with Harper & Bros. for a book. If such an arrangement was legally binding, then [a] it would look to be worth vast sums, and [b] it might well preclude other publishing contracts. This theory provides one of several reasonable (if speculative) possible explanations for naïf Cook’s 1909 behavior regarding publishers. It also leaves open the possibility that Bennett privately paid Cook a great deal more than was ever admitted publicly, in order to preserve Cook for as long as possible as a *Herald* exclusive property. Note that Peary and the *NYTimes* publicly gave it out that Peary had only gotten \$4000 for

A4 As Russell Gibbons, the editor of FACS’s publications, says in his introduction to its “critical review,” he recognizes “the significance of this book to its members and associates.” FACS fully realizes that if the conclusions of my book are accepted, then it has little further reason to exist. Even so, in what for it is literally a life and death struggle for justification, FACS’s spokesmen are unable to bring to bear a single valid counterargument grounded in evidence that effectively refutes any significant point of the massive documentary evidence detailed in my book’s pages, all of which support the conclusion that Cook’s disputed geographical claims are false and, indeed, knowing frauds. Therefore, this is a response to the FACS’s “critical review” but not a defense of *Cook & Peary*. There is no need for a defense when the attackers’ arsenal consists of nothing but blanks and duds. And any attempt to persuade the critics under discussion here would be as futile as St. Anthony of Pauda’s sermon to the fishes.⁶

A5 Subsequent to the appearance of its “critical review,” FACS published more material along the same lines in its annual journal, *Polar Priorities*.⁷ This material was more elaborate and detailed, though equally defective in logic and inept in effectively refuting the book’s evidence. Nevertheless, as a courtesy for past favors, I offered to respond to the various points raised by FACS’s material on one simple condition: that my response be published by FACS without editorial revision. Although FACS continues to bill the editorial tampering done by *Hampton’s Magazine* (when Dr. Cook agreed to write a series for it in 1911 with “no editorial guarantees, whatsoever”) as “the most dastardly deed in the history of journalism,”⁸ it asked me to make effectively the same deal with it. My response could not be published as written, according to Russ Gibbons, because it was not “in keeping with journalistic standards” to agree to such an arrangement.⁹ Because of this refusal, I have never responded to the “critical review” or anything else published by FACS, as to do so would place my material at the mercy of its editor to tailor and slant its content as he wished. And, then, such a response would fall only on the deaf ears of the society’s small membership, anyway, which, like St. Anthony’s fishes, would not want to hear it.

A6 Since then, FACS has put up a website on the Internet, on which it prominently reproduces its “critical review”. Because this material has been broadly available to the public, I am making this response to FACS’s various remarks and will also post it in that same neutral forum, so that anyone interested may read my comments without editorial tampering.¹⁰

B The Frederick A. Cook Society’s “Critical Review”

B1 The “critical review” was authored by three of the society’s most prominent spokesmen. The first is Russell W. Gibbons, FACS’s Executive Director, formerly a labor organizer & part-time instructor in labor history at the Philip Murray Institute at the Community College of Allegheny County, near Pittsburgh. Gibbons has been one of the most vociferous advocates of Cook’s claims since he took them up in his 1954 undergraduate thesis.¹¹ He has since had several articles and book reviews on Cook published in the periodical literature. For Gibbons, his advocacy of Cook has been “less than an obsession, but it is a sort of commitment in the sense that I’ve been involved with it for some 40 years,

⁶“The sermon ended, they all swim away. The sermon was splendid; they remain unchanged. Crabs travel backwards, cod remain fat, carp greedy, the sermon forgotten. The sermon was splendid; they remain the same.” From Clemens Brentano’s *The Youth’s Magic Horn*.

⁷Volume 17 [1997].

⁸*Polar Priorities*, v.17 [1997], pp.12-13.

⁹Gibbons to RMB, September 30, 1997, possession of author.

¹⁰The Frederick A. Cook Society website is at <http://www.cookpolar.org/> *DIO* is posted at <http://www.adsabs.harvard.edu/Journals/proceedings/DIO/> [and <http://www.dioi.org/>].

¹¹*An Historical Evaluation of the Cook-Peary Controversy*. Department of History, Ohio Northern University, March 1954. Privately published.

and there's the satisfaction of seeing an evolution of thought."¹² That evolution has not included Gibbons's thought, however, as he has never gotten very far from his confusion of the basic facts of the Polar Controversy or the conspiratorial mentality he demonstrated in that first naïve undergraduate tract. And although his published material in neutral forums feigns open-mindedness and moderation on the subject of the truth of Cook's controversial claims, he has been unremittingly and severely critical in his privately published pieces of any material that has come out against Cook in even the mildest way.

B2 Putting aside Gibbons's gratuitous and obviously insincere praise of me¹³ and my research,¹⁴ and passing over petty personal inferences and minor quibbles that would take more time to explain than it would be worth to the non-partisan reader, I will attempt to address each of his major criticisms in turn. But first, a word about the "fatal flaw" which he terms "scholarship by girth."

B3 Gibbons's arguments over the years have shown a tendency to try to have it both ways. On the one hand, he would have his readers believe that my book is padded — that it is intentionally huge to make up for a dearth of content. But still, according to him, its 1,133 padded pages intentionally left out many critical points in Cook's favor that the reader should have been allowed to take into consideration. He hopes that "knowledgeable critics who have some familiarity with the subject will not be impressed with publishers' statistics, but with content." Judging from my extensive correspondence since the publication of *Cook & Peary*, Gibbons's hope has been fulfilled, but not in the way he wished. Instead, it shows the appreciation of my book has been in direct proportion to the knowledge of the subject the reader had. The more knowledgeable the reader, the more he appreciated it, and the more he was impressed by the content. [*DIO* note. See fn 1.] And although those who have not read my book have criticized its length, most of those who have read it felt that the book was neither padded nor, in fact, too long for its exceeding complex subject matter, which it attempts to cover without omission of any pertinent argument, pro or con.

B4 Anyone who knows anything about publishing knows that the costs of bringing out lengthy books is almost prohibitive, especially if it is the author's first book. Several prominent publishers were impressed by my book's scholarship and were interested in publishing my manuscript, but they eventually passed on it because I did not agree that my text could be reduced to the size they thought commercially viable. So, the idea that a publisher would intentionally favor bulk over content is ludicrous, as the costs of publishing a huge but vacuous volume would virtually ensure the book's failure, and might mean economic ruin for the publisher as well. Stackpole Books agreed that the manuscript should be preserved virtually intact, but conditioned its agreement to publish on obtaining the sale of a number of advance subsidiary rights that would lessen its financial risk. Gibbons's argument is therefore absurd, simply because it is economically impractical. Although a well-endowed non-profit educational organization incorporated in the State of New York may have the luxury of publishing any amount of whatever suits its partisan ends, a trade publisher needs to turn a profit. *Cook & Peary* has sold on the strength of its content, despite the drawback of its extreme length, not the other way round.

B5 In Gibbons's own words, his criticisms of my book fall into several categories: "[1] ignoring the only scientific conference on Cook and his work at the Byrd Center in 1993; [2] the discounting of other scholars; [3] the denying of European opinion, much of it pro-Cook; [4] the Jean Malaurie factor; [5] the first Eskimo testimony; [6] using novelist Robert Dunn as a McKinley argument and [7] the unsubstantiated oil 'millions' Cook allegedly made in Texas."¹⁵

¹²*Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 26, 1996.

¹³"I have nothing but a deep and abiding respect for Robert Bryce . . ."

¹⁴He recently told the Baltimore *Sun* what he really thinks: "This guy Bryce sits in his library in Maryland and he's never even been to Alaska." July 24, 1998, p.2A.

¹⁵*Polar Priorities*, v.17 [1997], p.42.

or 3291) and found that he gently doubts Cook could do the climb in the time claimed.

N15 Gibbons unqualifiedly imagines (PP18 p.38) that Bob Bryce & DR were "fronting" for Brad Washburn, in our joint NPR appearance in 1997 Feb. An odd idea, since Mt. McKinley was not the main subject — and, at this time, Washburn was not in contact with either of us. (After a few letters over several decades, DR had only met Washburn once, in 1995 — once since in 1999. And Bryce has never met him.) We did not even inform Brad of the full "summit" photo's survival until the whole *DIO* issue was about ready to go to press — at which time we hoped the news would be a terrific 88th birthday present for someone who has been the brunt of subsidized, systematic slander for decades, merely for telling the truth. (Brad warned us that the three scholars who put together *DIO* 7.2-3 would soon be targets, too. Another victory for prescience.) Of course, we drew heavily (during the next few weeks) upon Brad's expertise, since none of those responsible for the issue had ever been anywhere near McKinley. Predictably (D9 §C10), PP18 used this to damn *DIO*. But, with Brad advising us, *DIO* had oversight by the top McKinley expert, ever. Additionally, Bryce worked perceptively from photos & maps, and *DIO* Editor Keith Pickering deftly tested contentions via fine-scale-geography computer reconstructions.

N16 If *DIO* is to be portrayed as ignorant, where are the fruits of said ignorance to be found? The *DIO* 7.2-3 issue on Cook-McKinley contains hundreds of data & analyses of Cook's photos, drawings, compass-data, diary-maps, etc. But PP18 finds not one non-trivial *DIO* error (despite automatic claims of such). [The present issue's 1st printing was less well-proofed.] *DIO* even (§I4) located Pegasus & Friendly Peaks without assistance from standard maps (which don't bother marking these obscure features), merely by comparing photos to a beautiful McKinley-area map⁶² which Brad had sent DR decades ago. (This deduction was built upon Bryce's sharpeyed discovery of the unannounced fact that PP14's top-back cover photo was of Pegasus Peak, which'd been identified only for the front cover.) And, as honestly acknowledged at PP18 p.48 (not by RG but by CookSoc's single academically-productive associate), *DIO* was more accurate in this matter than the CookSoc explorers who'd been there. Which backs librarian Bryce's just conclusion that archival & logical abilities are at least comparable in importance to on-the-spot experience here, though Brad's advice repeatedly proved crucial, as well, in ensuring that *DIO* 7.2-3 would prove a solid, lasting scholarly contribution, one that's easily withstood the frustratedly enraged shrieks of eternally-hard-evidence-bare cultists.

N17 Note: While criticizing Ted Heckathorn's balance,⁶³ *DIO* admires his owning⁶⁴ to an error. (Compare to *JHA* Assoc. Ed. J.Evans: *DIO* 8 News Notes.) And Ted has contributed major discoveries to the Polar Controversy: see, e.g., p.46 & ¶4 fn 80.

⁶²"Mount McKinley, Alaska" (1960) Swiss Federal Institute of Topography (Bern-Webern), Mercator projection: 62°56'N to 63°15'N by 150°34'W to 151°16'W. (Mailed DR by Washburn, 1973.)

⁶³What's costing Cook his due isn't Evil Plotting (§M1 & fn 46) but his cult's love (vs PP17 p.41) of gossamer-tenuous fantasy. Peary lodged 3 US claims of finding new separate land in the American Arctic (all false: fn 4), but *Cook alone ever made such a US discovery*: Meighen I. (1908), well mapped by his Eskimos (F91-94). [Claim lost when he shifted this flat "glacial island" 450 nmi north & subbed a photo of dramatically-unflat elsewhere: ¶4 Fig.4.] CookSoc rejects Cook's unique prize, *handing it to Cook's arch-enemy Peary*, who PP18 p.13 suggests discovered Meighen I. in 1906 *but kept secret this, his career's precious sole new-land discovery*, so that, years later, he could use Meighen I. to squash Cook's credibility! No matter that in 1906, the men's fight & Cook's odd off-poleward-track 1908 wanderings (west to Meighen I.) were far in the future [compare ¶4 §L12] & unknown to Peary.

⁶⁴§N16. However, we continue to be disappointed at the cagey hedging of CookSoc figures, as the "summit" photo evidence has progressively turned out more and more clearly against Cook, now at last unequivocally so (fn 16). For decades, CookSoc's top defensemen went farther&farther down the wrong-alley of defending Cook because they were unwilling to face the unwelcome truth (that their cause is logically dead) early enough to take stitch-in-time loss-cutting steps that could have providently headed off the process of getting past the point of reputation-investment no-return. Thus, leading Cookites' lives seem now locked irrevocably (§A2) into a one-way, downhill process of ever-deeper commitment to defending an unresurrectable claim, based upon one of the great lies of history.

finally attained its pinnacle. Of blind perversity.

N12 In rage that *DIO* has done more than any modern party but Washburn & Bryce to bring out the truth about Cook's lies, RG (PP18 p.40) pretends that DR's work on Peary has only scantily acknowledged the work of predecessors. Just another Cooksymp falsehood.⁵⁸ *DIO* 1.1 ‡4 (1991) goes to meticulous lengths to disentangle which of the proofs against Peary were due to which party (has anyone else done so?) — crediting Cook, Hall, Hayes, Helgesen,⁵⁹ Ward (and DR) with their several original contributions. Cookite Ted Heckathorn and Cook-critical biographer Bob Bryce have since added numerous new finds. **N13** By instructive contrast: while spending a half-century kissing up to the well-heeled but emotionally vulnerable Cook family, Buss Gibbons has done so little historical research that he has himself contributed no discovery of the slightest scholarly value to the controversy. How could BG be CookSoc#1 for years and yet have never carefully⁶⁰ scoured the contents of Cook's records — so that it was left to Bryce, not CookSoc, to bring out the 1906 diary's problems and the "summit" photo?

N14 CookSoc repeatedly implies (e.g., PP18 p.47) that numerous alpine experts back Cook. When in 1998 DR asked a top Cook-defender about the perversity of asserting bribery of Barrill even while its own alpine-experts were being paid⁶¹ CookSoc funds (see Bryce at D7 §G2), Prof. Jos. Davidson was mentioned as an independent sympathizer (also cited at PP18 p.47, during further implication-but-not-statement that modern mountaineers accept Cook). So DR checked with Davidson (phone: Arizona State Univ 602-965-3824

⁵⁸It's particularly amusing to be accused (PP18 p.40) of slighting Henshaw Ward's key original research, which had been secret until DR's 1973 book extensively (F281-290) brought forth Ward's findings as crucial, long-suppressed exhibits — along with (F292) previously-unknown details from Yale Univ Press files revealing just how the suppression was carried out.

⁵⁹Actually E&E Rost: see Bryce 1997 pp.594-597, which does them more justice than DR's specially laudatory (but too brief) praise of the Helgesen contributions at F248. Helgesen's findings are cited at various pages in *Fiction* (and-or in their notes): F104, 155, 243, 247, 248, 254, 284, 292.

⁶⁰Parallel consideration: while the Cook cult is quick (e.g., ‡4 §§A1-A2, ‡5 §D19 & fn 37, & PP18 p.8) to question the style & integrity of those who disagree with it, CookSoc continues to publish a magazine which consistently displays slovenly editing and regularly mangles facts, science, simple grammar & spelling. (Peculiar to PP: insertion of an extra "that" into prose, so as to turn a valid sentence into Gibberish: fn 51 & ‡4 §U1. In order to lampoon DR's compact ref-codes, CookSoc printed a few compact ones at PP18 p.40 — and bungled its copy.) CookSoc has even headlined the Society's own name mis-spelled: §G3. These desecrations ignite one's curiosity: Is CookSoc officers' prime concern the elevation of F.Cook? Or is it: frequent personal five-digit Cook-trust fiscal infusions, for two-digit annual hours? (Gibbons used to be unremuneratively strange. His 5pp 1974/11/13 ms defending Velikovsky has been sent *DIO* by Leroy Ellenberger.)

⁶¹Nonetheless, Vern Tejas, one of the very finest mountain-guides in the world (and a genuine CookSoc friend & sympathizer), the chief living guide hired by CookSoc for its 1994 expedition, indicates that even he is unconvinced of Cook's success in reaching the top of McKinley. And he agrees (1999/3/27 chat) totally with the skeptics — adding that the Cook people know it too, even while not saying so — that Cook in 1906 told "provable lies", publishing (and never retracting) a "hoax" photographic record for high 1906 altitudes: a "damning" and "unconscionable" set of "obviously fake" photos, proving that he was indeed a "liar" with a "pathetic regard for reality", and "seemed like a pathological liar". (Understand: this is from the top mountaineer who's *friendliest* to Cook's claim.) But Vern: [a] does not see these points as proving Cook's 1906 nonsuccess, [b] says he's never yet seen any proof that Cook didn't reach the top, and [c] looks askance at the partisan ferocity of the Peary Arctic Club against Cook. Brad Washburn and *DIO* disagree with Vern on [a]&[b]; and *DIO* disagrees somewhat on [c], while Brad seems closer to Vern on that point. (See the criticism of the Pearyites' ferocity in Brad's oft-neglected gentle preface to his pioneering and definitive *AAJ* 1958 analysis.) Vern views Cook's claim as "possible but not probable", with the "preponderance of evidence" against it. So he is (and one expects will permanently remain) open-to-new-findings-up-on-the-mountain — a position which (under the circumstances) is fiscally provident. The other highly able mountain guide hired for CookSoc's 1994 expedition, Scott Fischer, was such a daredevil that he got killed atop Mt. Everest soon after — but even a man *who'd take chances like that* wasn't crazy enough to try Hairy Ridge (see D9 §D11 & Fig.33), which CookSoc now swears was Cook's 1906 bridge-to-swift-glory.

C “Fatal flaws in the author’s ‘fact, lack of care or logic’,” by Russell W. Gibbons

C1 Ignoring “Cook Rediscovered [sic]” in 1993. In the world of FACS, every argument against Cook's veracity has a “Fatal Flaw,” whereas the case for Cook has no flaws at all, and it is also possible to ignore something while discussing it in detail. “Ignore” is a word that comes up over and over again in FACS's material written about *Cook & Peary*.¹⁶ “Ignore” means to willfully neglect something. The word is used rather loosely in FACS's “critical review” however, since each of its authors in turn, acknowledges that every point that he alleges is “ignored” in *Cook & Peary*, is actually mentioned in my book's pages. The symposium referred to is a case in point. It was held at Ohio State University in 1993.¹⁷

C2 I attended by invitation, but was not a presenter. Gibbons himself invited me to come at FACS expense¹⁸ and added, “We would hope that you would be a participant in all the sessions as a person who may know more about our subject than anyone else there!”¹⁹ During the symposium he introduced me formally from the podium as a “resource scholar” who was working on a Cook biography. Although Gibbons repeatedly says I “ignored” the proceedings of this conference, he acknowledges that they are, indeed, mentioned in an endnote [p.1076]. His real implication, however, is that something was said at this symposium that should have had some significant impact on my conclusions, but was purposely suppressed by me. However, Gibbons never points out specifically what was “ignored,” since to try would expose the fact that this was not the case.

C3 At the time I attended the symposium, I already had a good draft of *Cook & Peary* finished. (In fact, I brought a copy of it with me to the symposium.) In writing it, my method was to draw material from the original, contemporary primary sources wherever they existed. I intentionally avoided hearsay, opinion, and third-hand debates founded on hearsay and opinion. The symposium was a valuable experience for me, but not because of what I heard said or debated there, as most of the content of its presentations fell into the last of these categories.

C4 I admired the scholarship of the paper by Kenn Harper, author of *Give Me My Father's Body*, but its conclusion was only speculative, as it should have been, considering the evidence he used in its support, and there was little in his paper that I didn't already know. In fact, I was able to correct his misattribution of the quotation that formed its title, “Liars and Gentlemen,” a correction the author gratefully acknowledged. Mr. Harper subsequently requested further documentary material from me, as I did from him, which we supplied to each other without reserve.²⁰

C5 Ted Heckathorn's paper purported to contain “New Evidence about an Old Controversy” in Cook's favor. His “evidence” proved to be no more than his own misguided speculations and unsupported inferences, however. After the symposium I wrote to Heckathorn and pointed out 17 major factual errors in his paper,²¹ hoping to spare him the embarrassment of putting such obvious gaffs into print, such as his statement that John Verhoeff, who died on the North Greenland Expedition of 1891-92, was survived by a wife and daughter.²² I pointed out that Verhoeff was never married, but Heckathorn insisted that

¹⁶This same line of attack has been used for years by FACS. Virtually the same arguments were leveled against Wally Herbert's *The Noose of Laurels* (1989).

¹⁷Cook Reconsidered: discovering the man and his explorations, Ohio State University, October 22-23, 1993.

¹⁸Gibbons to RMB, September 21, 1993, possession of author.

¹⁹Gibbons to RMB, October 7, 1993, possession of author.

²⁰Harper to RMB, October 10, 1994, etc., possession of author.

²¹RMB to Ted Heckathorn, October 30, 1993, copy in possession of author.

²²The Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky, has a collection of the Verhoeff family's correspondence and memorabilia. The Verhoeff family was very eminent in Louisville. Among this material is much family history and a complete family tree, which shows this statement to be false.

he had documentary evidence supporting his statement both from Peary's book, *Northward Over the "Great Ice,"* and in Peary's contemporary diary. On my other points, Heckathorn refused to acknowledge any of his mistakes, beyond the most indisputable.²³ When I asked for copies from Peary's diary and the page reference in Peary's book, along with a long list of requests to justify his other contrary assertions to my letter so that I could correct my own manuscript (in case it was I and not he who was mistaken), he failed to send me any proof of his assertions, although he had claimed to possess documentation of each one.²⁴

C6 Probably the most useful piece of information I heard in the symposium's papers was Captain Brian Shoemaker's description of arctic ice conditions based on overflights and meteorological data. This added some physical evidence to the numerous documentary indications I already had that Cook's journey ended about 100 miles to the northwest of his starting point on Axel Heiberg Island in March of 1908, and confirmed the physical conditions described on Donald MacMillan's journey of 1914 over this same area. After further checking and verification, I incorporated these physical descriptions into my evidentiary arguments. None of the presentations at the 1993 symposium added to my already existing text a single fact that was based on primary documentary sources, however.

C7 Since I gained no new knowledge (beyond non-documentary physical evidence in the public domain) that I could use from the papers presented, there was no need to elaborate on the content of this symposium or to cite it specifically as a source in my book. In fact, to have given a blow by blow description, merely for the record, of a symposium from which no documentary material was cited would not only have been a tedious exercise but would have just added to the burden of readers facing a book already in excess of 1,000 pages. Besides, FACS assured its members that the proceedings would be published by "a university press"²⁵ in 1995. At this writing, [October 1998] the proceedings have still not been published, however. This would not be the case were they "a watershed exploration of the subject," as Gibbons claims.

C8 This is not to say that the conference was of no value to me. As already mentioned, it was a valuable experience, but not for its content. It was there that I made contact with a descendent of Clarence Wyckoff, from whom I obtained a copy of the diary he kept on the *Erik* voyage of 1901, of which Dr. Cook was second in command. This diary's content caused me to make major revisions to my chapter covering that voyage. There I also met Keith Pickering, a computer analyst who acted as technical advisor and proof reader for sections of my book dealing with various mathematical and navigational problems related to the Polar Controversy. It also enabled me to ask two of the presenters, Dennis Rawlins and Wally Herbert, important questions in person that they had not answered in my correspondence with them.

C9 The final reason why a description of this symposium was not included in my book had to do with the book's basic organization. The narrative section (Part 1), which is strictly chronological, ends in 1989 when Cook's granddaughter dies and donates his papers to the Library of Congress. Only then could anyone hope to resolve the Polar Controversy by using the original documents previously unavailable to the scholarly world. There is no attempt in the explicative section (Part 2) at an all encompassing chronology after that date, since few relevant primary documents were produced in that time period, but those that were are covered in detail. In other words, the symposium fell outside of the scope and chronology of the book, but had anything come to light there that had a bearing on the conclusions or content of my already existing manuscript, as with the incorporation of the Wyckoff diary material, it certainly would have been included in my finished text.

C10 In summary: the insinuation that in confining my comments on the 1993 conference to a passing mention, I had left out something important that might have persuaded a reader

N9 Gibbons has a hard time explaining DR's putative venom — since DR has had no personal problems with the Cook Society and was even a paid speaker at its amiable⁵⁵ 1993 meeting. Gibbons' past attacks (fn 47) on DR were never replied to in kind. In sympathy with a fellow non-establishmentarian, DR always spoke kindly of RG (also in DR's *Peary . . . Fiction?* 1973 p.253), as the 1993 Byrd Center symposium videotape will confirm. (At PP18 p.39, the 3-digit sums paid DR in 1993 & Bryce in 1997 for putting together and delivering research papers are somehow rendered pseudo-sinister, while 5-digit Cook-trust sums, paid regularly to CookSoc biggies — often for pathetic scholarship (e.g., §G3) — seem never to be fit copy for PP.)

N10 But RG's canny intuition finally figured out the source of DR's venom. It has to be that: obscure DR has been quietly harboring a quarter-century-old jealousy-vendetta against the awesome scholarship of Cook-supporter Hugh Eames. And DR is allegedly green-eyed (PP18 p.38: "nursing a 25-year-old grudge") against this Who Eames, specifically because: [a] Eames got his book rigged to come out the same day (1973/6/29) as DR's.

[b] Eames' book did better among reviewers.

Comments:

[a] RG's explanation of simultaneous 1973/6/29 publication is the precise reverse of the truth⁵⁶ — and makes no sense, because Eames' publisher was big-name (Little-Brown), while DR's was small (R.B.Luce). The same-day coincidence was agile Luce editor Joe Binns' achievement (at DR's urging), not Eames'.

[b] As for the books' relative reception: well, other than grumpy Gibbons' own (trite-insult) reviews and those of the *New York Times* (a newspaper which Eames' sane, unvitriolic book deemed⁵⁷ a "yellow", underdog-kicking, "braying" donkey-servant to the Peary Arctic Club's "ruling mind"), DR's reviews were consistently better than those of Eames (whose book is now deservedly forgotten by everyone but serious scientists, who never noticed it in the 1st place): see the joint reviews of, e.g., *Wash Post*, *Wall Str Journal*, *Chi Trib*, *la Times*, *Atlantic*, *Time*, etc. Eames' "joke of a book" (*Wash Post* 1973/7/29) was not even paired with DR's in the 1973 review by *The New Yorker*; nor that by the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (1975 March).

N11 When (at PP18 p.39) attacking 88^y-old Washburn for not wishing to debate a whole mob of (much-younger) fanatics all at once, RG lacks the balance to point out that DR did precisely this on 1993/10/22 (at CookSoc's Ohio State University Symposium on Cook): a lone skeptical speaker vs. the entire CookSoc house. (RG knows that DR did the same on 1991/4/19 at the US Naval Institute, effectively taking on a room full of Peary cultists and apoplectic family-members simultaneously in the afternoon debate session. RG's sole productive researcher Ted Heckathorn was there — and materially contributed to DR's success.) Is RG so hate-possessed that he is incapable of recognizing positive qualities in an "enemy"? (See *DIO* 2.2 §A2 on this point. And see *ibid* fn 14 for what Roald Amundsen would think of atypical war-combatant RG.) In any case, we have covered the issue of courage elsewhere here (§L). And for defenders of Frederick Cook (the explorer who turned for home at the first steep grade in 1906: D9 §D11) to be attacking Washburn (who has thrice risked his life genuinely climbing McKinley) proves only that CookSoc has

slander being hurled against Washburn, that we felt some evaluation of Cookite logic was permissible — not out of hate, but rather from desire to shine light into long-darkened Cookite skulls. We regretted the inevitable upset this would cause a longtime valued DR friend within the CookSoc circle; but such is the price which truth-seeking will occasionally exact.

⁵⁵ CookSoc President Warren Cook to DR (1993/12/16): "On behalf of the Frederick A. Cook Society, many thanks for your very valuable participation in our recent Ohio State Symposium. . . . Your very articulate presentation was most impressive and corroborated our Symposium theme of total objectivity and not a 'stacked deck of cards'."

⁵⁶ This is obvious from PP18 p.52. Eames first told DR (1972/1/5 letter) about his publishing contract (and 1973 Spring publ date), not vice-versa.

⁵⁷ See Eames' immortal *Winner* 1973 pp.233-236. [Also *DIO* 10 fn 155 on C.Lehmann-Haupt.]

²³ Heckathorn to RMB, November 4, 1993, possession of author.

²⁴ RMB to Heckathorn, November 10, 1993, copy in possession of author.

²⁵ *Polar Priorities*, v.14 [1994], p.36.

N2 Of course, obtaining testimonials for baseless contentions requires alot of politics and funding — thus the current CookSoc tactic of cozying up to Ohio State University’s Byrd Polar Research Center and supplying it welcome 5-figure fiscal injections at least annually. (Byrd’s lovable daughter Bolling — a distant relative of Bolling-family-descended DR — has recently joined the board of the Cook Society!)

N3 To reply critically to such testimonial (as against physical or logical) “evidence” inevitably requires suggesting its unreliability — which enrages Cookies, who then charge hate-crime or somesuch and go on vindictively to “emulate” something that never existed in the first place among skeptics.

N4 An especially funny insubstantial testimonial is analysed at D9 §B3, where *DIO* adduces a perfect Washburn photographic match (Figs.28&29) showing Cook’s [nontrivially retouched] “15400 ft” photo was taken at c.5000 ft: an unevadable hard-evidence proof (§E6). But instead of conceding even this obvious point, CookSoc says (*idem*) it’s just a matter of opinion, since Gonnason saw (but neglected to photograph!) a similar scene at 15000 ft. How can one reply? Other than by identifying Gonnason’s testimony as that of one who has supped at the Cook table for decades? (Indeed, Cook’s daughter was [PP14 p.25] chief funder of Gonnason’s 1956 expedition. [Even so, he later at first wrote Molenaar that Cook had failed.]) If people make incredible claims dependent only upon their unsupported word, that word may get doubted, as Cook’s fate illustrates. (CookSoc’s Gibbons counters at PP18 p.39 that skeptics have also drawn non-neutral funding. Which typically attempts to obscure the germaine point: Gonnason’s PP-cited contributions are merely his unsupported opinions or claims, the pro-Cook value of which is entirely dependent upon Gonnason’s word. On the other hand, skeptics’ contributions are: data, records, photos, topographical work, math, and logical connexions — none of which depend on our word.)

N5 Lesson: instead of resorting to for-every-expert-there’s-an-equal&opposite-expert ploys (as in our ever-more-farcical, O Simpson-springing courts: fn 33; *DIO* 6 ¶4 & ¶5) and engaging in deliberate obfuscation, if CookSoc had merely played the game according to the rules of evidence, then there would have been no question of personal reliability.

N6 Another example of unnecessary integrity-questioning is central to the Cook case: Barrill’s affidavit against Cook says they stopped at the Gateway. Test after test on hard evidence (compass data, camp-trash, maps, photos) confirm the Gateway as the pair’s farthest point towards the mountain (fn 5) — thus utterly vindicating the affidavit’s account of their movements. CookSoc reply: Barrill was bribed to lie against Cook. Comments: [a] When the evidence independently and consistently supports a document, does it even matter how much it cost? (E.g., Barrill told where Fake Peak was, and the newly-recovered full original “summit” photo now backs him up.) [b] When a cult for decades generates such needless and irrelevant slander (out of sheer fury at having its religion exploded by proof after proof), it takes nerve for this same cult then to accuse others of intrinsic nastiness.

N7 The verbal examples Gibbons thinks prove *DIO* “venom” are: “chimera”, “mole-hill”, “cult”, “clique” — vicious stuff like that. (It takes some imagination to see hatred in these expressions, but if there’s one thing RG doesn’t lack, it’s imagination.)

N8 Gibbons portrays the whole world in terms of vendettas — unable to admit that Browne and others attacked Cook simply for lying, and that *DIO* did a double-issue on Cook not out of venom but because Bryce had made a spectacular archival discovery. DR learned of it at the Byrd Center in late 1997, when Bryce brought the “summit” photo up on his laptop — while Gibbons&co were snubbing Bryce and going off elsewhere in the building, dreaming up imaginary plots to explain why Bryce’s findings were negative even though CookSoc had paid him. (Imagine Gibbons’ shock of misprojection: just because you pay someone, that doesn’t guarantee he’ll support your fanatical viewpoint. Not everyone sells out.) The “summit” photo was obviously worth publication, as the *NYTimes* was soon to agree, bigtime [1998/11/26 p.1]. What has that undeniable fact got to do with vendettas?⁵⁴

⁵⁴During proofreading-checking of *DIO* 7.2-3, *DIO* became so appalled at the kind of indefensibly evidence-immune argumentation (e.g., [§C6, esp. bracketed ref there! — &] D9 §B3) and the insane

to doubt my conclusions, is without any basis, whatever.²⁶ This is proven by Gibbons’s failure in his part of the “critical review” to cite one documented statement presented in its proceedings that contradicts a single material fact in my entire book. But that was apparently not Gibbons’s intent; Gibbons seems not to be interested in facts, since he apparently has none to counter my thesis. He seems only interested in insinuation designed to raise doubts about it. His insinuations are meant to imply that my book was selective in its content, avoiding any contrary evidence to its negative conclusions about Frederick Cook’s disputed geographical claims. This theme is expanded upon in the next two points of his “review.”

C11 Any student of the Polar Controversy should find it most ironic that those who have contended continuously that Dr. Cook’s claims were defeated by distorted attacks upon his motives, credibility and character, driven by innuendo and falsehood and financed by very substantial monetary resources controlled by biased partisans, instead of an objective examination of the merits of the actual facts of Cook’s case, are now willing to use those identical methods in an attempt to divert attention from the documentary evidence that must lead to the inescapable conclusion that Frederick A. Cook did not tell the truth about his major geographical exploits.

D “Discounting Other Scholars”

D1 Insinuation is one of the principal techniques Gibbons uses to attack my book. And it has been his stock in trade during his long career as a defender of Cook’s claims. In 1956 Gibbons wrote a piece which, among other things, implied that Ted Leitzell, a long time advocate of Cook in the 1930s, had been induced to stop writing pro-Cook and anti-Peary material by being bribed with a high paying job at the Zenith Corporation by a former Peary crony, the explorer Donald MacMillan.²⁷ Leitzell was so outraged by Gibbons’s insinuations that he snapped to the publication’s editor, “Gibbons should learn his facts before writing such material about anybody Since you obviously did not check his statements, I am giving you here the facts.” Leitzell explained how his “highly-paid publicity job” was actually a position in Zenith’s factory as a screw driver mechanic at 80 cents per hour, and that the supposed crony of Peary was not and never had been an officer or director at Zenith, as Gibbons had claimed. “Gibbons has slapped at both Zenith and me in a way I don’t like,” Leitzell told the editor, and demanded that his rebuttal letter be reproduced photographically and sent to the magazine’s entire circulation list.²⁸

D2 Throughout his section of the “critical review,” Gibbons shows that his methods have changed little over the past 40 years, so I will, like Ted Leitzell, “give you here the facts.” Gibbons insinuates that I know of additional evidence, but neglected to mention it, because it contradicts my viewpoints or conclusions, and accuses me of “seeding doubt” about the intentions of other writers on the Polar Controversy who provided this evidence, to discount those contrary views. The “writers and other scholars” about whose intentions and work Gibbons says I try to “seed doubt” include Thomas F. Hall, William Shea, Andrew Freeman and, ironically, Ted Leitzell, all of whom, except Shea, published magazine articles or books on the Polar Controversy favorable to Cook.

D3 For a scholar to point out the errors in reasoning, mistakes, or contrary documentary evidence against the conclusions of previous writers in his major field of scholarship is not “seeding doubt”; it is simply honest reporting and his honest duty to the scholarly world. Had Gibbons pointed out such errors or mistakes in my book and if he had the contrary documentary evidence to back his assertions up, then his “critical review” could have been considered his honest duty to the scholarly world as well, rather than a blatantly partisan

²⁶For those who doubt this, FACS has available a video tape of the entire conference; watch it for yourself and be convinced.

²⁷*Doubt*, whole number 52, p.405.

²⁸Leitzell to Tiffany Thayer, May 15, 1956. CSC.

defense. However, he has not done that, nor can he ever, since his arguments lack any foundation in evidence, and because the “other scholars” Gibbons promotes are misguided or just plain wrong. Gibbons then complains that “[Bryce] totally ignores the existence of critical work by authorities whose conclusions are at variance with his” and cites three of the presenters at the 1993 symposium discussed above: Brian Shoemaker, Joseph Fletcher, and Ted Heckathorn, along with other “authorities” from previous decades: John Euler, Theon Wright, and Hugh Eames. The quality of the work of these last three, who I do not mention by name in my book, he claims, “match[es] Peary’s biographer Weems, who is acknowledged.” Finally, he offers Farley Mowat, who he says I dismiss as an advocate. Let us examine the credentials of the other “writers and scholars” and “authorities” mentioned by Gibbons.

D4 Thomas F. Hall was a manufacturer of feed grain equipment. His analysis of Peary’s various claims in his privately published book²⁹ is an amazing achievement of dogged persistence that effectively crushed Peary’s shaky claim to the North Pole by sheer logic. But in examining Cook’s story, Hall was far less logical and was prone to wishful thinking and gloss of significant flaws in Cook’s narrative. FACS never tires of quoting Hall as unbiased fact, but his book is hardly as impartial as it would have others believe. Proof of this exists in documentation that shows that Hall worked directly with Cook on his supposedly unbiased book, even as to its actual content.³⁰ Hall had a visceral hatred for Peary, which caused him to go so far as to supply anti-Peary material to a congressman bent on preventing Peary’s retirement as a rear admiral. Hall seems to have favored Cook’s claim mainly to prevent Peary’s priority in the race for the Pole, whether he reached it or not. Nearly the same could be said of William Shea, a free-lance writer from Boston who published several anti-Peary articles during the 1920s. He also seemed most interested in Cook as a tool to demolish Peary.

D5 Ted Leitzell, another free-lancer from Chicago, became quite an expert in polar matters through diligent study in the 1930s. But in explaining his advocacy of Cook, he admitted an even shallower regard for the truth when he declared, “My real interest through it all was to bring a few brief hours of happiness to a tired old man, and I did not really give a damn about establishment of historical accuracy for its own sake.”³¹ He proved this by suppressing crucial photographic evidence relevant to Cook’s 1906 claim to have climbed Mount McKinley. On a trip to Alaska in 1938, he was able to duplicate one of Cook’s photographs from the top of a tiny hillock of rock which Cook’s detractors said was the actual location at which the controversial photograph Cook claimed was the summit of McKinley had been taken, despite the doctor’s denial that he had ever visited the spot they called Fake Peak. Cook’s “summit” photograph (D7 Fig.18) has since been conclusively proven to have been taken there, just as his opponents had contended, however.³² Leitzell realized that Cook had been on Fake Peak, but kept it secret because “it would only give the opposition a chance to confuse the issue.”³³

D6 Besides Leitzell, Andrew Freeman, alone among the first group, could be considered anything close to a true “scholar.” His research for a biography of Cook in the 1930s was exhaustive, and when published in truncated form in 1961 as *The Case for Doctor Cook*, it proved very accurate within the limits of his cited sources. But Freeman freely admitted he was more interested by the Polar Controversy as a good story, and in the human interest side of Cook’s life, than in the truth of his claims.³⁴ A study of Freeman’s correspondence with Cook shows that he struggled to reconcile many unanswered questions and contradictions that weighed against his eventually-published positive conclusions about Cook’s claimed

M6 D7-D9 instead argued tightly via facts and logical reasoning therefrom. The opposition’s *own choice* (§L) of its main pro-Cook points were cited and were met head-on in detail. (PP18 does the opposite and meets none of *DIO*’s points.)

M7 By contrast, PP18’s main thrust was browfurrowedly to pretend to sober expertise,⁵⁰ like one of the old SatNightLive voice-of-authority talking-head skits: We’re Heavy-Face, and You’re Not.

M8 Namecalling is slung with demented passion, inaccuracy, and irrelevancy. Meantime, CookSoc complains of vindictiveness.

M9 Hurling slander at DR is noted above as a seemingly pointless RG effort. (DR is not *DIO*’s main researcher on Cook. Bryce is.) That is, *unless* the intent is to intimidate *DIO* into silence. Which (as one can see from this issue) isn’t going to work any better than it has against Brad Washburn.

M10 Scientist DR is particularly tickled at being called a press-contact sort⁵¹ by Gibbons, a professional p.r. man, who exhales press-releases in his sleep, while knowing exactly as much navigational math as his hero. (On Cook’s hysterical astronomy, see F53-56.)

N From Sacred-Cowing to Money-Cowing to Critic-Cowing

N1 Personal remarks are *inevitably* a Cookite tactic: [1] Arguments for pathetic lies will never convert rational observers (no matter how near acceptance may occasionally seem). Thus, Cook-loyalists are self-condemned to relive forever the legendary punishment of Sisyphos. After suffering enough frustration with reasoned argument, they, in time, *always* segue into attacking opponents’ credibility. (If such work is funded by a family-contributed trust, does that make one a subsidized-slander-slinger?) [2] Lacking credible evidence for Cook’s claims, supporters have depended [¶4 §E1] upon citing *testimonials*. (Cook himself devised all the current defense-tactics, the several bizarre conspiracy-theories,⁵² the buttering-up and-or hiring of publicly-trusted figures or institutions,⁵³ etc. The testimonials-ploy is no different: Cook launched it firsthand. See, e.g., Cook *My Attainment* 1913 ed. p.584; tradition carried on at p.262 of the CookSoc edition of *Top*.)

⁵⁰A pretense predicted & countered at D9 §§C9-C10.

⁵¹ RG puts into scientists’ mouths some ludicrously unscholarly slanderous language, which his own source cites to the Marie-Peary-family-NGS circle: standard bad-loser lashing-out sputterings. Just as reliably, RG (PP18 p.40) says, “DR insisted on examining the [Richard Byrd 1926] diary, and concluded that erased sextant readings that [*sic*] differed from those in the official report (also to the sponsoring NGS). Again DR rushed to the press”. Facts: in 1996 Ted Heckathorn pushed a (stupidly) reluctant DR to come out to the Byrd Center to see the newly “discovered” Byrd diary — in which DR wrongly expected to find nothing of great interest. However, upon the historic and shocking finding of these discrepancies, DR’s immediate reaction (in Ted’s presence) to OSU’s archivist was that Ted&DR would stay silent and let the Byrd Center bring the truth out, though DR would write a report for it to use or not use towards that aim. As OSU and the *NYT*’s Science Dep’t will remember, DR’s report on Byrd was sent to the *NYT* by OSU, not DR. (DR suggested to the Byrd Center that the report instead be released through *Science* magazine, Amer Assoc Advancement Sci. The Center vetoed that and opted for the *NYTimes*; so DR then alerted the latter and set the ball rolling.) Gibbons’ version: DR “rushed to the press”. How much brain-atrophy does it take to mangle facts so well-known (firsthand) to one’s own top scholar (Ted)? [By the way, DR’s Byrd report (basis of the *NYT* 1996/5/9 story that ended the Byrd 1926 N.Pole claim) was ultimately published by the world’s leading polar journal (Scott Polar Research Institute, Univ of Cambridge, *Polar Record* 2000 January pp.25-50), jointly with *DIO* 10. The idea of Cambridge publication of the report was initiated by SPRI, not DR.]

⁵²Only paranoid theories could counter contra-Cook proofs appearing already in 1909. He concocted such on his own: Cook 1911 Chap.34 (“The Mt. McKinley Bribery”) & Chap.35 (“The Dunkle-Loose Forgery”). On Cook’s evolution from noble to ignoble, see F80, 81, 243, 244, 246. From 1909 on, hedonism encroached (e.g., BR 505-506 [vs 241], 627).

⁵³Biggest CookSoc kiss-up success: §N2. [But of four B.Gibbons pals (3 spelled OK) cited at *Memb. News* 8 (2001/7) as academic fans of “My Attainment of the Pole”, none say Cook attained it. Yet.]

²⁹*Has the North Pole Been Discovered?* Badger: 1917.

³⁰Hall to Cook, August 17, 1916. FCC.

³¹Leitzell to Helene Cook Vetter, April 16, 1954. CSC.

³²*DIO* 7.2-3, December 1997.

³³Leitzell to Cook, September 6, 1938. CSC.

³⁴Freeman to T.E. Harre, February 15, 1937. FCC.

L6 When each of these *CookSoc-chosen* avenues led to cul-de-sac disaster, the Cook Society — undeterred — didn't get the consistent message and (lacking the integrity to admit a big mistake) simply **turned to emphasizing other** (progressively vaguer: §G2) alleged evidences in order to keep unquestioningly driving towards Cookies' ever-unalterable (& ever-unattainable) goal of ultimate vindication.

L7 Thus, when looking (§G3) to identify *those devious baddies who cleverly deflect attention from key evidences brought forth by Cookites*, CookSoc need only

CHECK THE MIRROR.

M Mirrorless Plot-Accusers

M1 PP18 also enragedly and (standard-confusedly) threw names at “enemies”, and repeated as fact increasingly fantastic theories of vendettas and secret “alliances” to persecute hero Cook.

M2 Reading these, one learns little about McKinley and alot about Russ Gibbons' sanity — and his painfully obvious *loathing* of DR, who refuses to hate⁴⁶ him or anyone else back.

M3 DR has never had an unfriendly social exchange with RG (despite his ignominiously pathetic snipings in DR's direction since 1973).⁴⁷

M4 But RG has evidently been squirreling away for decades every enraged, clumsy, trite, misattributed, and/or fantasized personal attack ever made on DR in print — and now that he has come unhinged at the debacle of seeing publication (by former friends and fellow Peary-claim-skeptics) of the very same fatal photograph which CookSoc thought it had successfully hidden, RG has unloaded his whole raw garbage-file on DR into PP18, in sheer — seemingly pointless — vindictive spleen, *a CookSoc reaction explicitly anticipated at D9 fn 47*. (DR believes that D7-9 contained only one [rather mild] personal attack on a specific Cookie: that in D7 fn 30, which was ameliorated on the spot by inserting bracketed praise of the great earlier contributions of the subject.)⁴⁸ Unfortunately for RG, none of PP18's *ad hominem*s answer the D7 centerfold photo's fatal implications for RG's hero.

M5 Overview point. Though D9 attempted (again: only *after*, please note, the establishment of hyper-overkill evidence destroying Cook's McKinley claim: fn 48) an evaluation of the Cook crowd's argumentation-methods and cult-religious mental impenetrability toward incoming disconfirmatory evidence, D9 made no argument that Cookites should be disbelieved just because they are unreliable.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ All the hate is coming from one side in this case, for a simple reason noted at *DIO* 8 ¶5 §I2.

⁴⁷ Typical contentless RG denigration-pet: *American History Illustrated* 10.1 p.49 (1974/4).

⁴⁸ D7 & D9 indeed contained general remarks on CookSoc's religious mentality. But, when the hard evidence is 100.000% against a group that isn't adjusting its sacred conclusions *at all* (D9 fn 37) to that evidence, then (and only then): a few sociological speculations may be permissible and justified. And the speculation of D9 fn 47 has been vindicated by PP18's publication of extensive personal attacks instead of the *pair* of key Fake Peak photos (D7 Fig.18 & Fig.4) which D9 §G3 challenged the Cook Society finally to let its members see AS A PAIR (§C1), which CookSoc has never done and will never do. See also §E6 (above) on yet another photo-pairing (D9 Figs.28&29) that you'll find discussed (see quote at D9 §B1) but NEVER photographically reproduced (as a pair) in CookSoc literature.

⁴⁹ D9 does undo Cookite pretenses to expertise, but that is merely to neutralize an invalid and rather irrelevant CookSoc ploy. *DIO* has repeatedly acknowledged the occasional Cook (e.g., *DIO* 1.1 ¶4 §B4) and Cookite (e.g., *DIO* 2.2) contributions to the Polar Controversy. By contrast, Gibbons cannot acknowledge any value to *DIO*. (Ted Heckathorn, notably, is not so narrow: see PP18 p.5.) This is the approach of a politician, not a scholar — and it is therefore the most indicative feature to look for when trying to distinguish the two types of creatures. *DIO* has cited numerous parties who pursue similar policies (including National Geographic, which Gibbons increasingly resembles: fn 70) — many of them in Ivy League academe, well outside of polar studies. *DIO* behaves in a quite opposite fashion. See, e.g., *DIO* 2.2 on Ted Heckathorn; also *DIO* 1.2 fmn 16&174, cataloging *DIO*'s various appreciations of the valid productions of a clique of historians, even though they are often wrong and have tried strenuously to inflict lethal harm upon several able scientists.

accomplishments, but in the end he did not mention these contradictions in his book. Despite Hall's willingness to always give Dr. Cook the benefit of the doubt that he sternly withheld from Peary, and despite Leitzell and Freeman's suppressions of anti-Cook evidence and conflicts (Shea never published anything advocating Cook), the reader of Gibbons's “review” will find no accusations of selectivity or bias against their writings.

D7 Now for the “authorities” whose conclusions are allegedly at variance with mine. Brian Shoemaker, a retired Naval captain with service in both polar regions, gave the already mentioned (§C6) paper on ice conditions, but gave little evidence of having any of the morass of details of the Polar Controversy firmly in hand. He demonstrated that relevant ice conditions in the early spring were consistent with conditions Cook described along the first 100 miles of his route, but gave no evidence that would corroborate Cook's descriptions beyond that point that was half so credible. Still, he casually concluded that Cook probably reached the Pole. Therefore, although Captain Shoemaker's *opinion* that Cook might have reached the Pole in 1908 was at variance with my conclusions, his *evidence* was totally consistent with my conclusion that Cook's actual journey ended about 100 miles to the northwest of Axel Heiberg Island. Rather than ignoring his talk, I asked for a clarification of several of Shoemaker's relevant points in correspondence after the symposium.³⁵

D8 Joe Fletcher, a retired Air Force colonel who participated in many missions to floating ice islands in the polar basin in the early 1950s, showed film taken on some of these at the symposium and talked about his experiences flying the Arctic. I do not recall that he took any position on Cook's veracity at all, (perhaps Gibbons could supply such corroboration from the tape of his presentation) although my reading of some of Fletcher's correspondence during research indicated that he was open-minded on the subject of Cook's claims.

D9 Ted Heckathorn, a real estate agent from Washington who claims to be a “polar historian,” made the presentation already discussed, which contained so many errors that it seriously undercut the legitimacy of its title (§C5). Rather than ignoring the differences I had with his paper, as mentioned above, I had lengthy correspondence with him about it.

D10 There is good reason why I “ignored” the other three “authorities” mentioned by Gibbons (I actually did not “ignore” them; I referred to Euler, Wright and Eames in my text without naming them): I was reluctant to cite their scandalously uninformed writings gratuitously. Euler published little of real consequence about Cook — only a short piece in *Arctic*³⁶ and an article or two in “men's” adventure magazines, such as *Bluebook*, in the 1950s.

D11 As a researcher, Eames was a total amateur, whose book, *Winner Lose All*, originated from a small inheritance he received. It must have been very small indeed, because what is not cribbed directly from Andrew Freeman's *The Case for Doctor Cook* comes almost exclusively from newspaper accounts Eames read in the New York Public Library. Eames was so impecunious that he could not afford a trip to Fort Worth to read the trial record of Cook's conviction for mail fraud. His account of the month-long trial was based entirely on a purchased typescript of Cook's testimony only — a relatively small part of the record, and difficult to understand divorced from the other 10,000 pages of the trial transcript — and, again, newspaper accounts read in New York libraries. When I compared these newspaper accounts with the actual trial transcript during research, I found them to be a very inaccurate record of what happened at the trial.³⁷

D12 Theon Wright's book, *The Big Nail*, is hardly better. It is rife with errors in names, dates, places and sequences of events that are part of the uncontroversial historical record. When an “authority” can not even keep published facts straight, what can be expected of him on uncharted ground?

³⁵RMB to Shoemaker, October 30, copy, December 17, 1993; Shoemaker to RMB, November 23, 1993; Note written on mine of December 17, 1993, undated, all possession of author.

³⁶ “The Centenary of the Birth of Frederick A. Cook,” *Arctic*, v.17 [December 1964]: 219-21.

³⁷The author read the entire transcript and all collateral documents at the Southwest Branch of the National Archives, Fort Worth, Texas, in November 1991.

D13 Witness these mistakes in just four consecutive paragraphs concerning the very well-documented *Miranda* voyage of 1894: “Dr. Frederick Wright, later author of *The Ice Age in America . . .*” (actually, Wright had already written the book); “[the *Miranda*] had to be towed back to St. John’s [after striking an iceberg] . . .” (actually, she steamed there under her own power after laying over in Cape Charles Harbour); “Cook, with two Eskimos accompanying him, piloted a small boat 90 miles to Holsteinborg . . .” (actually, Cook had nothing to do with piloting the boat, and he had three men from the *Miranda* with him along with a crew of six Eskimos, including the pilot Jacob Neilson); “and brought a Danish fishing boat, the *Riegel*” (actually, she was an American schooner, and her name was *Rigel*) “back to the *Miranda* . . .” According to Theon Wright, Dr. Frederick Wright was relieved “at having been salvaged from the icy waters of Baffin Bay,” which is on the other side of Davis Strait, and nowhere near the Greenland coast, where the *Miranda* was stricken, or even where she foundered. Meanwhile, we are told, Peary was “establishing a base on McCormick Bay,” when he was actually erecting a house on Bowdoin Bay. All these errors are on just a single page [59] of Wright’s book. This is the kind of “scholarship” and “authority” Gibbons prefers over mine.

D14 To equate this or the equally amateurish attempt of Eames to John Edward Weems’s entirely competent, and factually very accurate professional biography of Peary³⁸ (I know it to be such because I read much of the same material Weems did from Peary’s personal papers) is such a disservice to Weems as to discredit Gibbons’s ability to discern the difference between hack writing and scholarship. It also brings into question the accuracy of Gibbons’s own knowledge of the facts of Frederick Cook’s life and experiences. But, as we have seen by the Leitzell example, Gibbons has little interest in truth or facts; he is only interested in conclusions favorable to Frederick A. Cook and in vindicating himself and his own partisan viewpoints.

D15 All of Gibbons’s “writers and scholars” are favorable to Cook; that is the all-important criterion to a Cook partisan. No matter that the “facts” used by these writers to arrive at those favorable conclusions are false. It should also be noted that none of these men were “historians” in any academic sense of the word. And none of them, with the exception of Leitzell, ever visited any of the places associated with Cook’s controversial claims.³⁹ As we shall see, FACS argues that these same deficits disqualify me from writing authoritatively on the subject of the Polar Controversy. Nevertheless, Gibbons cites all of these men as “authorities” on the same subject, solely because they reached the “right” conclusions about Cook’s claims.

D16 But Gibbons saves his most ironic reference for last, when he advances Farley Mowat as a character witness for Cook. The Canadian writer recently caused a national scandal when he admitted that much of the content of his dramatic “non-fiction” books on the North was entirely made up. He excused himself by saying, “The primary consideration for a writer is to entertain.” Although he has set himself up as an authority on the Northwest Territories, the people native to those territories call Farley Mowat “Hardly Know-What,” and one reviewer assigned him the Inuit title of *Sagdullorsuaq*, which means “teller of tall tales.”⁴⁰

D17 Mowat’s hugely best-selling books on the Inuit of the Keewatin District (*People of the Deer*, etc.) and one on wolf behavior (*Never Cry Wolf*) were said by him to have been based on his own extensive experiences. Yet Mowat’s diaries, kept during the experiences that supposedly provided the raw material for these books, and other documents now at McMaster University, show that Mowat never set foot in an Inuit camp and abandoned his studies of wolves after a mere four weeks in the field. Mowat concedes this, but contends that when you have “entertainment” in mind, “you can do anything you want,” including

L Evidential Cowardice: the Boys Who Cried Proof

CookSoc is so dreamily disdainful of hard evidences that it meets none in PP18. However, once upon a time, most of *DIO*’s now-CookSoc-discarded hard data (the sort by which genuine scientists test claims) were of downright magnetic fascination to CookSoc. But, in each case, CookSoc turned tail just as soon as the evidence’s unwelcome implication began emerging. (See D9 §E.)

L1 The Cook circle was creditably the first to realize that some of the diary drawings displayed compass data — and was so excited (at the possibilities) that this important find was (D9 §E) written up in PP14 (1994) p.5 & CTC (1996) p.239 as new evidence that potentially could finally tell us where Cook was in 1906. However, the data later all turned out to be from Ruth Glacier (privately acknowledged in 1997), south of the Gateway. So brave CookSoc ran off its self-created compass-data evidential battleground.

L2 DR first learned (1995) of the two diary sketch-maps directly from the Cook group, which was naturally looking for vindication from them. But these Cook diary sketch-maps (D7 Figs.12-13) end at the Gateway, thus *both visibly resemble the already-published (& long-CookSoc-hated) Peary-Arctic-Club “purchased” sketch-map of Cook’s “Judas”,*⁴³ *Ed Barrill.* (Compare Cook’s sketch-map at D7 Figs.12&13 to Barrill’s at D7 Fig.11.) CookSoc does not explain why Cook’s McK diary contains *two* Cook sketch-maps of Ruth Glacier,⁴⁴ but *zero* sketch-maps for anyplace beyond it, and why the sketch-map (D7 Fig.12) showing Cook’s activities indicate *zero* beyond the Gateway, e.g., no activity at all near the four in-line mountains (#9-#12) he saw in the distance from the Gateway, mountains which his & CookSoc’s (1996 Fig.2/12-13) routes demand he passed next to.⁴⁵

So bold CookSoc bailed out (§D) of its self-created sketch-map arena, too — and omitted reproducing the diary sketch-maps even in its publication of the diary (which included some of Cook’s other, *less damaging* drawings) as an appendix to CTC. The sketch-maps belonged at CTC pp.281-282.

L3 Fave (fn 28) Cook-defender Hans Waale used to insist that Russell Porter’s drawings were based upon 1906 Sept photos which Cook supposedly had taken well above 10,000 ft (see PP15 p.36). But Bryce 1997 (pp.830f; also D7 §E7) showed that no such photos ever existed. So, CookSoc now claims (PP15 p.34) that mere hard photographic evidence just “diverts” from the real debate.

And so CookSoc exited yet another evidential battlefield. . . .

L4 Right up until the *DIO* surprise-publication of the (previously CookSoc-hidden) full uncropped original “summit” photo (D7 Fig.18), Cookites have repeatedly suggested (§C5, or D9 §G1 & fn 46) that conspiratorial forgery might have secretly lurked behind the apparent match between Cook’s “summit” photo and *others’* photos of Fake Peak. But Bryce’s find of the original (and *DIO* 7.2’s publication of it) has finally killed off that avenue, since it is Cook’s *OWN* photos that now (see also §C5) prove beyond all doubt the identity of Fake Peak and his “summit”.

So intrepid CookSoc fled its self-created doctored-“summit”-photo evidential arena, too.

L5 CookSoc originally stated that Cook’s barometer readings were trustworthy within “several hundred feet . . . good, broadly accurate” (CTC p.269). But then D9 §F2 [d] showed that the barometer reading on CookSoc’s sole “hard” evidence, diary p.52, disagreed by thousands of feet with CookSoc’s East-Ridge (11000 ft) placement of p.52. CookSoc’s “reply”? A headline-fantasy (§F) that *DIO* had ignored p.52!

Thus did brave CookSoc run off even the barometric-data battleground.

⁴³ [Byrd (*DIO* 10 fn 20) was not the only North Pole faker to compare himself to Jesus. Cook wrote (1911/1/29) that his movie (see cover & ¶4 fn 95) would help “heal the wounds inflicted in my side.” (Letter displayed at start of film.) See below at §O1.]

⁴⁴ Each of the two sketch-maps in Cook’s diary bears the hand-written words, “Ruth GI” at its head. See D7 Figs.12&13.

⁴⁵ D7 Fig.12’s peaks are numbered in Cook’s hand as #9-#12. Compare to CTC Plate 2/12.

³⁸ Peary: *The Explorer and the Man*, Houghton-Mifflin, 1967.

³⁹ Andrew Freeman went to Alaska in 1956, but his closest approach to Mount McKinley was Talkeetna.

⁴⁰ *Saturday Night*, May 1996, pp.48+, all quotes of Mowat.

aimed about NE by N. This study-in-misorientation is published under PP18's (p.45) inadvertently ironic title: "A Response [to Not-Been-There *DIO*] from Someone Who Actually Went There". Further: in PP's been-there photos, the East Ridge (as so labelled on Fig.2/12 of CookSoc 1996) isn't just on the right but stretches *all the way across* the middle of the photos, and the Ridge isn't in the upper part of the photos — indeed all points consistent with where CookSoc suggests³⁹ the diary-p.52 drawing was made are very near the photo's horizontal midline. [Traleika Col is actually below the 1999 photo's middle.]

K Flimflamming and the Miraculous

DIO finds yet another hilarious improbability regarding the §H3 MooseMess Shortcut:

K1 It has been thoroughly established by Brad Washburn, Brian Okonek, & Bob Bryce that Cook took photos in the Fake Peak area and in the *middle*⁴⁰ of the Great Gorge (upper Ruth Glacier). Problem: by the CookSoc's OWN map (CTC Plate 2/12), Cook was never in the former on the return trip or in the latter on the outward trip.

K2 Therefore, the CookSoc alibi⁴¹ that Cook ran out of good film becomes rather more complicated than as originally proposed (D7 fn 49). We must believe that Cook's film [a] went bad right as he passed the Gateway going north and [b] *stayed bad* all the way up CookSoc's precious East Ridge (which all Cookies assume *positively* he got onto — though not a single one of his photos puts him there; or drawings: §F); then, [c] up McKinley and [d] down McKinley and [e] down the same beloved East Ridge. Baaaad film on all these parts of the trip; however, more inspired and inspiring is the capper: **his film suddenly GOT WELL again as soon as he passed the Gateway going back south.**⁴² (What a doctor!) How else could he get a photo in mid-Great-Gorge, when [according to CookSoc: §K1] he wasn't there at any other time than the return trip.

K3 The Gateway is the same location where all Cook's other hard evidences stop. (See above, §E7.) For CookSoc to be right about Cook, the Gateway has to be a more improbable miracle-spot than Lourdes.

³⁹ CookSoc keeps insisting that it has proved Cook got onto the East Ridge. But, oddly, it can't quite make up its mind WHERE Cook is supposed to have first struck the Ridge. CTC p.245 implies it was at Traleika Col (which is almost all the way to the right on the midline of the misoriented photo in question: PP18 p.47 bottom). But CTC Fig.2/12 puts the arrival spot (highly improbably) east of TC, while Fig.2/13 puts it west of TC.

⁴⁰ At least three Cook photos place him in mid-Great Gorge; two are found opp. pp.171&205 of *Top* [Washburn-Cherici 2001 pp.134&136].

⁴¹ PP15 p.35. Or (*idem*): his camera might have frozen. Cook is said to have claimed at one point that his "films spoiled" (Browne: Explorers Club minutes 1909/10/15 p.12). Or maybe (BR 452&814 vs 821) he left his camera at the Gateway. Which doesn't explain claiming a photo at 15,400 ft (D9 Fig.28). The PP15 p.35 ran-out-of-film theory creates yet another oddity: why would an explorer (at Gateway), down to his last films, take at least *five* photos [e.g., Washburn-Cherici 2001 pp.138, 140, 142, 145: latter 2 virtually same!] from this northernmost verified campsite? And how'd he (so early on) *get* to the end of his film? By (pre-Gateway!) sneaking into the Fake Peak amphitheatre, to shoot Barrill flagwaving atop a geological zit. [Fake Peak is *so* minor that even top McK expert Washburn's new book (p.97) confuses adjacent molehills for it at pp.131&163. It's one zit to the right of the arrowed one, in both photos. (Former slip from Browne 1913 p.114.) Correct in p.117's S view & p.147's S-of-E view.] Cook wasted at least 12 photos on this tiptoe side-trip: see, e.g., fn 35 & BR 832. [Note: The outta-film alibi implies the "summit" photo is fake. But CookSoc won't say so, knowing this exonerates (§C5) satanic Browne! The Moosterstroke idea can be even ditzier: dense northward phototaking stops at Gateway, *no shots for over 12 beeline miles* 'til summit, *just ONE* shot (at best) there *to save film for the mid-Great-Gorge??* (See fn 40.)] All Cook 1906 photo-vistas have been identified by alpinists Washburn & Okonek, whose highly expert 1sthand mapping of these photos' sites&directions was generously shared with *DIO*, thus effecting 100% resolution of the Cook-McKinley ex-controversy.

⁴² There is an inverse parallel here to Peary's 1909 fable: his dogs dawdled until his April Fool Camp, when they all turned into jet-snowmobiles for the sprint from there to "the Pole" and back to April Fool Camp — and then they suddenly got tuckered again. See F159.

calling total fantasy fact. This is a viewpoint Mowat shared with Frederick Cook, whose books on his supposed conquests of McKinley and the Pole are also filled with eminently entertaining lies. Like Mowat's fantasies, Dr. Cook's were exposed by a researcher who took the time to examine the primary documents related to the stories he published, including Cook's field diaries kept during his disputed expeditions. It is that technique of returning to original documents that separates fact from opinion in historical matters, and it separates scholars from popular writers with insufficient research skills, as well. But FACS refuses to differentiate between the two, recognizing the only "authorities" as those who back Cook's claims.

D18 Not even John Euler, one of Gibbons's "authorities," supports his implicit definition of "scholarship" as that which produces the desired outcome, no matter the means. Euler said: "A larger issue [than the recognition of Cook's personal achievement] is to determine — if possible — history as it really was and not as some might wish it to have been. The essential requirement — the only requirement, if justice is to be done — is to restrict the discussion to the pertinent facts and their logical interpretation. Hearsay, pseudo-scientific testimonials and evidence not directly related to the case should be rejected."⁴¹ *Cook & Peary* uses just this approach, restricting the discussion to pertinent facts and their logical interpretation, but in *Cook & Peary* "history as it really was" does not come out the way FACS wishes it to be. To FACS, that is really its "Fatal Flaw." And although Gibbons quotes Euler as an authority in Cook's defense, Gibbons's own arguments abound in hearsay, pseudo-scientific testimonials and evidence not directly related to the case, which Euler says should be rejected. But Russell W. Gibbons doesn't care. He loves to have it both ways, whenever it suits him.

E "Denying European Opinion"

E1 Gibbons accuses me of "denying European opinion." I am not unaware of the European opinion Gibbons refers to. I have read all of the authors he mentions, and their opinions range from uninformed to inconsequential — in other words, from hearsay to pseudo-scientific testimonials. Furthermore, much of what they wrote was written long ago, when all one could have about Cook was opinion in the absence of the primary documentation that informs *Cook & Peary*. However, in writing my book I studiously avoided "opinion" from any quarter and of any persuasion, European or not, since opinion is valueless as evidence. Opinion, by its very nature, is merely belief stronger than impression and means nothing to history or to truth, especially where there is documentary evidence to the contrary. Therefore, I don't "deny" European opinion. I simply recognize that these opinions, since they have no basis or support in existing primary documentation, are unsubstantiated, and not worth mentioning. [See ¶6 §N1 item 2.]

E2 One reviewer of a book based on the Cardiff Giant hoax of the 19th Century remarked on "the peculiarly American superstition that the correctness of belief is decided by the number of people who can be induced to adopt it — that truth is a matter of majorities."⁴² FACS seems to subscribe to this superstition, as if the disputed claims of Dr. Cook were a matter up for a vote, and everyone had an equal vote, no matter how uninformed he was on the subject of the Polar Controversy. I dare say, if a vote was actually taken, however, Cook would not be vindicated by it, but buried under a landslide of negative ballots. Few informed people today, outside of FACS, believe he reached the North Pole, and even a couple of its own members have written to me to say they have recanted their belief in Cook after reading my book. Most of the rest of the world has never heard of the man, and simply doesn't care. But history is not settled by indifference or voting or opinion or even

⁴¹ Euler, *Arctic* p.219.

⁴² Osborne, Linda Barrett, "A Really Big Show," *Washington Post Book World*, November 9, 1997, page 9.

pseudo-scientific testimonials; it is settled by evidence and documentation. My book *does* settle the point that lies at the heart of the Polar Controversy: that Frederick Cook was at base, a personally charming but dishonest man. This is exactly the reason why Gibbons concentrates on the useless material that *Cook & Peary* does not contain and studiously avoids all of the overwhelming documentary evidence that it *does* contain. He is left with no choice but to call attention to the amateur writings of Americans and the uninformed favorable opinions of Europeans to avoid the necessity of refuting its evidence.

E3 Gibbons even misses the point of the one specific mention of evidence that he cites. He says “[Bryce] suggests that his findings are original, not giving credit to others who had established the status of Cook’s medal and honorary degree.” Had he read carefully, he would see that my findings about Cook’s medal and honorary degree *are* original. All others before me have merely said that Cook’s medal, given him by the Royal Danish Geographical Society, and his honorary doctorate presented by the University of Copenhagen, were never withdrawn, implying that Cook is still recognized in Denmark as the discoverer of the North Pole. Quite to the contrary, I discovered that Cook is not on the official list as a recipient of the medal because he never provided the promised documentation that would prove his claim. He therefore was given a medal *conditioned on the understanding that he would present such proofs*, but since he never presented the required documentation, he has *no official recognition from the government of Denmark for any specific geographic feat*. The medal has never been physically withdrawn, true, but the official recognition has never been granted, either. In the case of the doctorate, I discovered that the University of Copenhagen set up a review board in 1914 to consider withdrawing the doctorate, but since the degree made no mention of Cook as discoverer of the Pole, the University decided to avoid further embroilment in an issue that had already brought it acute embarrassment, and just let the matter drop.

F The Missing Jean Malaurie

F1 I am not quite sure what “the Jean Malaurie factor” is. Gibbons seems to insinuate that I somehow deceived FACS by saying M. Malaurie would write a foreword to my book, and since the book, when published, contained no such foreword, this is evidence of deceit. If this is his inference, then he is again making reckless assumptions, and as Leitzell said of him (fn 27), he “should learn his facts before writing such material about anybody.”

F2 In his after-dinner remarks at the symposium in Columbus in 1993, the French anthropologist struck a theme that exactly mirrored my conclusions on Cook and the controversy surrounding him. Malaurie offered that “the controversy within the controversy” was over the true character of Frederick A. Cook, and that he believed Cook was a far more complex personality than generally perceived. Cook’s true character lay at the crux of the matter, he thought, and that, in fact, he believed Cook was virtually “a man unknown.” The balance of his remarks, in which he suggested that someone should look deeply into the newly opened primary resources on Cook’s career to find the answer to the controversy within the Polar Controversy, struck me as a plea for the very book I had already written.

F3 Therefore, I asked M. Malaurie if he would consent to writing a foreword along the lines of his remarks — remarks he prefaced by exclaiming to the audience that based on his over-dinner conversations with me that evening, “Mr. Bryce knows *everything* about Dr. Cook!!” When I asked, he readily assented. But there was difficulty in obtaining a copy of his remarks, which he no longer had. Various attempts on my part to obtain a tape of his comments from Ohio State University proved fruitless, the recording having been inadvertently destroyed. By the time this became known, considerable time had passed, and the deadline for publication of *Cook & Peary* drew ever nearer. But once again he assented by cable:

JULY 1, 1996 DEAR SIR, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER TWENTYNINE MARCH I CONFIRM I CONSENTING TO WRITE THE FORWARD OF YOUR BOOK

upper reaches are approximate.” I.e., CookSoc nit-collecting came up so bare that it is left with nothing better-worse than proudly announcing to the world that: *DIO*’s approximate map is approximate! A nitbin this empty speaks pretty well for *DIO*’s accuracy.

I4 As to the *ad-hominem* attack on remote-skilled *DIO*’s expertise: CookSoc’s only capable researcher agrees (PP18 p.46) to our Pegasus Peak altitudes (12200+ ft & 12060 ft — already published at D9 fn 46) and admits CookSoc’s error (p.48) in placing this, its favorite peak. But CookSoc cannot acknowledge that this contrast establishes the very opposite of the alleged relative technical expertise. Understand: *DIO* correctly identified & located Pegasus (which *DIO* 7.2-3’s three writers had never seen), even though: [a] It’s CookSoc’s obsession, not *DIO*’s, [b] Pegasus isn’t marked with that name on standard topo charts, & [c] CookSoc had seriously mismapped it. If *DIO* is to be slandered as too ignorant of the area to be listened to, then: how did we (again: none of whom had ever been within 1000 miles of the place) manage to get this right, while been-there CookSoc fumbled it? (At D9 fn 32, we — also without visiting the area — correctly identified understandably-unlabelled Friendly Peak in CTC Plate 2/13, — noting that this CookSoc photo itself proves that, from where CTC Plate 2/12’s caption claims Cook made Fig.52’s lower drawing, Friendly Peak looks *nothing at all* like the drawing.)

J CookSoc Mapmaking

Meanwhile, one notes that CookSoc’s Plate 2/12 is riddled with obvious distortions which we passed over in D9. Examples:

J1 The peninsula containing the Pegasus Peak pair (63°06’N, 150°40’W) is depicted as sharp, when it is actually blunt and stubby as shown in Keith’s *DIO* map.

J2 At the very point where PP18 is complaining that *DIO*’s map doesn’t show the 1994 CookSoc team’s steep glacier climb (the place where the 1994 team was re-tracing Cook’s supposed CTC Plate 2/12 route, starting up onto the East Ridge), the *DIO* map in fact shows³⁷ a strong gradient starting upward well before CookSoc’s Plate 2/12 shows same.

J3 Final oddity (noticed during a productive, detailed 1998/10/25 DR chat with Jim Wolf): right opposite CTC Plate 2/12 one finds Plate 2/13, with “Dr. Cook’s 1906 Route on the Ruth Glacier” depicted by a white line — which comes right up Ruth Glacier, *not* across §H3’s Moose-mess.

J4 I.e., before attacking others, can CookSoc get its OWN act straight here? (Similarly, see §G2.)

J5 As if in answer to the question: in 1998 and again in 1999, CookSoc bungled yet another elementary geographical matter. PP18 (1998/10) p.47 and the 1999 April *PP Supplement* p.15 display photographically a scene from the Pegasus Peak-Traleika area.³⁸ Both captions play yet again the CookSoc broken-record fantasy that Cook made the drawing on diary p.52 from the East Ridge; 1998 caption: “Dr. Cook drew the sketch from atop the East Ridge (upper right)” — and 1999 caption similarly: “Dr. Cook drew the sketch on page 52 of his diary from atop the East Ridge seen at the upper right.” CookSoc has again demonstrated its capacity for durable error. For, in the photos, the upper right is actually a ridge (connecting three peaks of respective heights 11880 ft, 11610 ft, 12290 ft) which aims *more north* than east (trending towards Mt. Silverthrone, 13220 ft, the slopes of which dominate the top of the right side of the photos). This ridge is far east (& north) of the path CookSoc has dreamed for its hero. (Neither side believes Cook was anywhere near the ridge specified in the captions.) I.e., PP thinks its camera was aimed roughly E when it was actually

³⁷This point can be confirmed simply by making photocopies of both maps and then (since the scales are nearly the same) just holding the pair (superposed) up to a bright light.

³⁸The 1998 & 1999 photos are from nearly the same point and the camera was aimed in virtually the same direction, thus the misorientation of each is about the same: roughly half a right angle.

H2 This odd Shortcut was a masterstroke ploy, not only making his route look (superficially) shorter&faster but additionally incorporating — and thus softening the strangeness of — Cook’s diary-certified (fn 34) foray into the Fake Peak area, a side-trip which was pointless except for faking a “summit” photo, and was thus never mentioned in his published writings on the trip. Even less excusable is a hitherto-neglected elementary point: though Cook’s Fake Peak amphitheatre side-trip is unquestionably in his diary³⁴ and positively verified by four of his photographs,³⁵ his own published depiction of his 1906 September path (D9 Fig.31) takes him **straight up Ruth Glacier to the Gateway without interruption.**

H3 The “short”cut theory has a difficulty which the highly experienced alpinist Dee Molenaar immediately spotlighted (D7 fn 30): it goes right over the *horrible* terrain of the Moose’s Tooth region. CookSoc’s proposed “shortcut” takes one directly towards Mt. McKinley, right over the mountainous region shown in the foreground of Cook’s own excellent photo of McKinley, seen from atop Fake Peak — first published at D7 Fig.25. (In 1999, Brad Washburn — only about a year short of his 90th birthday! — precisely verified the exact location by duplicating the vista photographically from atop Fake Peak.) Why would an explorer adopt such a ghastly route towards a point which he could arrive at much more easily by (not diverting to Fake Peak but instead) just continuing-on up Ruth Glacier? The Shortcut is on a ©1995 map said to have been rushed³⁶ for a 1996 Sept book’s deadline.

H4 Another question: why would Cook not take a single photo of the magnificent scenery along this alleged Shortcut — until he’d gotten past it, back into the smooth Gateway area we all agree he was at?

I Bare Nitbin

I1 Considering the massive amounts of data published in D7-D9, it is striking that the self-styled mountaineer-experts of CookSoc found NOT ONE INACCURATE *DIO* DATUM. By contrast, D9 fn 46 noted that CookSoc’s map (CTC Plate 2/12) of the McKinley area seriously mis-placed the Society’s beloved Pegasus Peak — actually putting it on the wrong side of the West Fork Traleika Glacier!

I2 And note that, in D9 fn 46, instead of using this glaringly central screwup to slander the CookSoc crew, *DIO* instead (*idem*) mercifully suggested that this was just a slip — and so explicitly (and vainly) asked that CookSoc not get us all into a nit-contest.

I3 PP18 p.49 n.12 reacts to this kindness by claiming that the CookSoc error was about-to-be-corrected (hey, no non-expertise here) and then humorlessly and (ignoring *DIO*’s generosity and warning) rashly attempts counter-nitting that Keith Pickering’s map (D9 Fig.32) of the Ruth Glacier (which Brad Washburn deems an excellent job) contained worse errors — allegedly omitting the glacier that CookSoc had climbed in 1994. However, D9 Fig.32’s caption explicitly states that the map is “simplified” and that “Boundaries of glaciers in their

³⁴ See Cook diary p.59 (CTC p.286 or D8 p.79 Day 3).

³⁵ Several of the Cook photos definitely taken in Fake Peak amphitheatre (a few miles east of the straight-up-Ruth-Glacier path depicted on Cook’s map of his path: D9 Fig.31) are in *DIO* 7.2-3 (Figs. 4, 18, 24, 28). Regarding other amphitheatre photos, see fn 41, also D7 §E6 and BR 1088-1089.

³⁶ One supposes that this proposed Shortcut was originally just a mistake that occurred in a careless hurry and thus in ignorance of the roughness of the Fake Peak amphitheatre — a region which CookSoc’s 1994 venture studiously avoided. But, now that CookSoc has published the blunder, it’s stuck with it. This because: admitting the mistake could give aid&comfort to Evil Enemies (not a speculative theory: see fn 16), who might point to it as suggesting that CookSoc’s pretense to alpine expertise is slightly transparent. The idea that standing by nonsense will keep genuine mountaineers from eyeroll-snickering, is just one more index of CookSoc’s grip on reality. The deadline-rush is acknowledged by CookSoc in extenuation of the same map’s undeniable error in positioning Pegasus Peak. See PP18 p.49 n.12, where we also learn that CookSoc errors are merely slips due to deadlines while CookSoc-critics’ “errors” which are lesser (*and*, by the way, not actually errors: see, e.g., §J2) are said to be [a] greater and [b] proof of non-expertise. (See D9 §C10 on: balanced judgement.)

CONCERNING FREDERICK A. COOK PLEASE TELL ME THE DEADLINE THE FORWARD WOULD BE IN FRENCH AND YOU WILL HAVE TO SUBMIT ME THE TRANSLATION

TRULY
JEAN MALAURIE

F4 In a subsequent cable to my publisher, M. Malaurie asked for the text of my book. At great expense, my editor duplicated the galleys and forwarded them to him, express, but when faced with the 900+ pages in English, being inexpert in the language, he said he had not the time to read them and asked for the notes, and specifically if they contained references to his own published works. My publisher, because of its sales strategy of holding back the crucial research findings of the book until publication for news value, was not eager to have the proprietary sources of those findings disclosed well in advance of publication. With my concurrence, my editor wrote to M. Malaurie explaining why we could not deliver the notes. Jean Malaurie never replied and did not send the foreword he had twice consented to write. For the exact reason he did not deliver on his promise, he would be the best source. But as with every other dealing I had with FACS during the writing of my book, my report of the correspondence concerning Malaurie’s prospective foreword was truthful and honest in every respect, as the several written confirmations that he intended to write it prove.

G “The Eskimo-Witness-Version Bias”

G1 The so-called “first Eskimo testimony” was later refuted by the Eskimos themselves, and so should be moot. However, FACS avoids bringing forward anything, even recanted testimony, that might be unfavorable to Dr. Cook, yet it accuses me of “bias” and selectivity.⁴³ Since this “first Eskimo testimony” is the essence of the material published in criticism of my book by Sheldon S.R. Cook, I will defer my detailed comments on it until I take up his below. However, I will correct several more of Gibbons’s fallacies before moving on, since his erroneous statements bring into serious question his ability to follow logical arguments or understand the relationship or importance of documentary evidence to the events being discussed.

G2 Gibbons says “some 80 years ago, Thomas F. Hall made the first objective analysis of the ‘Eskimo Testimony’ versions.” This is true, and Hall concluded that the conflicting accounts of what the Eskimos said, sometimes to the same person, had made the Eskimo testimony worthless as evidence. These were essentially my own conclusions. Gibbons is right that I thanked Sheldon Cook-Dorough [he has recently had his name legally changed to Sheldon S.R. Cook] in my acknowledgements for providing me with “positive evidence” (perhaps it would have been more accurate to have said “positive interpretations of evidence”) for Cook, yet he says I used none of it. This is untrue. Much of it appears in Chapters 28 and 29 in the form of positive proposals and speculative scenarios favorable to Cook put up for testing, such as the elaborate theories about Cook’s McKinley climb of Hans Waale, with whom Sheldon had lengthy personal conversations over the years. In every instance and nearly every detail, these proposals and scenarios failed, since they were contradicted by actual evidence.

⁴³ Although it publishes its own “critical review” of my book, it has yet to reprint any of the professional reviews, all largely favorable, that have appeared in the legitimate press. The book was reviewed in *The New York Times Book Review*; *Book World*; *Library Journal*; *Naval History*; *American History*; *The American Alpine Journal*; as well as *NewsStead*, *Adventure West*, *Explorers Journal* and other less available publications. It was also reviewed unfavorably by Russell Gibbons in *Arctic*, which printed my rebuttal as a letter to the editor in June 1998.

G3 Finally, he says: “Amazingly, Bryce does not pursue the significance of ‘Cook’s seized Annoatok letters’ said to be found with the Peary diary in a Maine safe deposit box.” On the contrary, one of these letters is quoted in full on page 326 of my book, and the other is fully summarized there. It is a mark of Gibbons’s inability to grasp my complex book that he fails to realize that the “significance” of these letters is that both are dated at Annoatok, February 20, 1908, *one day after Dr. Cook claimed to have left his camp at Annoatok to start for the North Pole*, and that in those letters he says he is not even about to leave for the North. The misdating by Cook of his starting time (by a full week according to evidentiary sources) is integral to showing the fantasy of his eventual narrative of his polar journey of 1908. These letters are direct evidence from his own hand that, from its very outset, *his narrative is false*. Cook’s original diary, which I recovered from Copenhagen, supports this misdating and, along with its other details, brands Cook’s polar journey as a fictitious account. But Gibbons fails to mention this astounding recovery of a diary lost for 84 years, because he wishes to avoid all evidence against Cook. Gibbons’s mention of the condemning Annoatok letters simply appears to be a blunder on his part. From this it seems evident that he still does not fully appreciate the complete contents of my book or the depth of the evidence it contains, by which it objectively dismantles Cook’s fabulous contentions about his accomplishments at both the North Pole and Mount McKinley.

H “Dunn In on McKinley”

H1 Gibbons calls Robert Dunn a novelist. His non-fiction works outnumber his novels, however, and even his novels are only thinly disguised autobiographical material. *The Shameless Diary of an Explorer*, which is the book by Dunn quoted *exclusively* in *Cook & Peary* in relation to Cook’s Mount McKinley expeditions, is a non-fictional blow-by-blow eyewitness account of Cook’s first attempt to climb Mount McKinley in 1903, which failed. Gibbons’s remarks are designed to imply that Dunn’s account is fictional because what it contains is a very unflattering portrait of Cook in the field. It is important to note that this book was written in 1904, however, long before Cook became a controversial figure, and years before he became the object targeted for destruction by what FACS is so fond of calling the “Peary Cabal.” So Dunn’s book could have no ulterior motive along the lines of a pro-Peary conspiracy.

H2 On the contrary, there is documentary evidence that Dunn’s book, rather than being fictional, is very close to the truth. It comes not from one of Dr. Cook’s enemies but from one of his best friends, Louis Bement, who wrote to Dunn after reading it, “Your description of him and his ways is so perfect that had I not known he was on the trip I could have named him. And since he is so real, the others must be. I trust you will not think that I am knocking on the Doctor, as I am very fond of him and consider him one of my best friends.”⁴⁴ But like every book, then and now, that depicts FACS’s hero in a bad light, it rejects Dunn’s *Shameless Diary* as unworthy of consideration as fact.

H3 Nothing in *Cook & Peary* is brought to bear directly from Dunn in the examination of Cook’s 1906 claim,⁴⁵ except a quotation of Dunn commenting about the 1906 climb in a contemporaneous interview. In it, Dunn *supported* Cook’s claim to have made the climb as truthful. Therefore, Gibbons’s statement that “Bryce builds his case against Cook on McKinley in both 1903 and 1906 through Robert Dunn” is utterly false. There is no case to build against him in 1903, since he made no false claims. My case against his claim to have climbed McKinley in 1906, as is every other factual discussion in the book, is built entirely upon documentary evidence. Although none of that evidence comes from Robert Dunn, much of it comes directly from Frederick A. Cook, himself, in the form of his forged

⁴⁴L.C. Bement to Robert Dunn, quoted in Dunn’s manuscript autobiography, p.356, Dunn Papers, Dartmouth College.

⁴⁵Dunn is only mentioned twice in the entire chapter examining this claim in *Cook & Peary*.

from Cook’s “descriptive and [diary] sketch evidence”. Like the PP18 p.41 allegation that *DIO* ignores same — a falsehood right in the **title**³¹ of Sheldon Cook’s article there: see §F. That is, the CookSoc editorship requires 5-digit annual support in order to turn out — once a year! — a journal that publishes a falsehood right in a title; and, while damning those evil Cook-doubting “patisans” [*sic*], the editorship tells us on the same page (PP18 p.3), in huge print, atop the issue’s table of contents, the name of its cult: “The Fredrick [*sic*] A. Cook Society”. This is the CookSoc Representative to Ohio State University. Does OSU have *any* academic standards left? [We answer that question in *DIO* 10 §Q & © 1.] Does OSU not even care that, regarding the documents it was supposed to hand over to OSU, CookSoc has (e.g., §E3, D7 §E2) repeatedly tried to hold back the most damning photographs?

G4 The alleged *DIO* “ignoring” of sketch-evidence is a Cook-size whopper. Facts:

[a] *DIO* spent page after page (fn 20) on the diary-p.52-drawing so beloved of Cookies, plus much more³² on Cook’s diary sketch-maps. (Also, Bryce in his article and book pointed out insuperable difficulties *in* the very Cook textual accounts which Bryce is accused of diverting *from*.)

[b] There are no less than NINE distinct diary counterindications (§F) of CookSoc’s interpretation of p.52.

G5 No wonder PP18 couldn’t quite meet our D9 challenge to print *DIO*’s phone number, fax number, and address — as we did for *Polar Priorities* (at D7 fn 30 and D9 fn 14). PP18 prints only the address — hoping that anyone checking with *DIO* will be slowed or discouraged. (One just keeps getting the feeling that CookSoc really doesn’t *want* its faithful to be exposed to dissent. *DIO* has no such problems.) We ask again that our phone numbers be provided *Polar Priorities* readers, in the same detail as we (in D7-D9) provided full contact-info for CookSoc chiefs and publications.

G6 This is an apt place to make a general reflection: CookSoc repeatedly and unqualifiedly states as fact that it has proven Cook’s ascent of the East Ridge, based upon the diary p.52 rough *drawing*’s alleged match to a view & photo which it in fact only faintly resembles. (The pretended match of p.52’s art to Pegasus & Friendly requires ignoring a flock of obvious negative hard evidences against it, right *on* p.52. See §F.) But, more to the point, CookSoc at the same time argues³³ (D9 §B3 and PP18 p.42) against accepting PERFECT photographic matches. (*PP18 Suppl* p.15: “Dr. Cook’s pencil might prove to be mightier than the [*sic*] Brad Washburn’s camera tower.”) The contrast belongs in the realm of the more pathetic branches of psychology. It ranks with believing oneself to be Julius Caesar just by vaguely-matching his baldness — without counting any of the unambiguous contrary evidences: nation, chronology, language, wealth, skill. And sanity.

H Molenaar’s Objection to CookSoc’s Moosterstroke-Shortcut

H1 The CookSoc CTC Plate 2/12 map depicts Cook’s outward 1906 journey as including a bizarre “shortcut” directly from the Fake Peak amphitheatre to the Gateway, right past the Moose’s Tooth. (As with CookSoc’s newly-favored East Ridge route to the top, topographical difficulties are tossed aside in favor of beeline shortness — to help the plausibility of Cook’s supposed fastest-climb-ever-from-southeast.)

³¹Univ Chicago talent has pulled off a stunt comparably whacky: publishing a book review that didn’t even understand the *title* of the book being reviewed. (See *DIO* 1.1 ‡5. Such brilliance won the reviewer a MacArthur grant.)

³²See sources at §D.

³³At *National Review* 1998/10/26 p.44, Jonah Golberg comments on the peril of expanding (into general society) a standard lawyer-sleight (central to the O Simpson-trial-#1 farce): “the moral equivalence of facts. According to this credo, an almost comical abundance of DNA evidence carries no more weight than one detective’s racist comments ten years before the murders in question. As Felix Frankfurter once observed, ‘To some lawyers, all facts are equal.’” [See ‡5 §D19.] Another ever more pervasive expansion-of-courtroomdom: “experts” who’ll say absolutely anything if paid.

of the two peaks as on the west side of the other? After all, that's *exactly* what it says in the italicized part of the passage just quoted from Cook's own account.

F9 Cook's caption to the p.52 drawing provides (in feet) the difference in the two peaks' height.²⁷ Which raises yet another new question. If the main peak is really insignificant Pegasus Peak, then: how did Cook find such a remarkably exact estimate of the height difference vs. its neighbor? (He provides no other such estimate. Why would Cook be — by CookSoc's fantasy — so fascinated by the height difference between two minor peaks while providing such a differential datum for no other pair, not even for the two peaks of his goal, McK?) His diary does not even *claim* that he took the sort of measurements (angular height combined with triangulation for distance) required to determine the heights of distant points. Thus, it makes sense that the height-difference cited was already well-known (from prior explorations' observations at a distance) — i.e., the approximate height difference between the South & North Peaks of Mt. McKinley.

G The Divert&Conquer Ploy (But It Won't Work in a Debate)

G1 The above §F items typify the sort of rare entertainment we've all come to depend on receiving from CookSoc. Understand, diary p.52 is THE star "new" physical CookSoc evidence, the Cookies' prime exhibit produced by years of field work, even the proud cover-photo of its biggest McKinley issue (PP14 [1994]). And now we find that it (by §F's items) *nineways*-proves the very reverse of what Cookies have spent tens of thousands of McKinley-trek dollars to establish. (D9 §F2 refers to the multiple-backfire-collapse of Cookism's p.52 argument as perhaps "history's first known case of serial-suicide".)

G2 CookSoc naturally wants (§G3) to keep the reader fixed on Cook's textual verbal descriptions (and, with diary-p.52 now exploded by *DIO* 7.2-3, this will increasingly be CookSoc's favorite retort-strategy), since such soft evidence is subject to various interpretations. (Reminds one of A.Salter on Freudian dream-analysis: like playing poker with every card wild.) One should note that Cook's words are so twistable that CookSoc itself can't get a consistent picture. Would-be Cook-redeemer Hans Waale (a CookSoc fave)²⁸ interprets Cook's text to mean that Cook went over and way past the East Ridge (see Bryce 1997 p.827 for a diagram of Waale's speculative Cook-route, which — contra D7 Fig.12, where peaks 9-12 are bunched — places Cook's "peak 12" all the way beyond Muldrow Glacier!) and then came at McKinley rather from the *northeast* (agreeing with Cook's own map of his route: D9 Fig.31; see §H2 for a sure lie in it). But CookSoc has spent big to try instead proving on-site that Cook came at McK from the *east* (E.Ridge), *utterly contradicting* (CTC Fig.2/12 vs D9 Fig.31) Cook's claimed route. (Hmmm: CookSoc is thus contending that Cook *on firm land* didn't know where he was in 1906 [this, even while it's claiming (¶4 §O1) Cook could navigate]. So how'd he *on moving water* find the invisible N.Pole in 1908?) Thus, though the 2 top modern CookSoc theorists share unconfirmed surety that Cook's Step-One beyond the Gateway (the farthest universally agreed-upon point he actually attained in 1906) was getting onto the E.Ridge, already by just STEP-TWO of the post-Gateway journey there's huge intra-Cookite dissension! Well, if even something *this* elementary can't be gotten straight²⁹ — then it's a joke to expect credibly consistent Cook-text-based solutions for the *whole* post-Gateway alleged trip to the summit and back.

G3 In the Baltimore *Sun* of 1998/10/17 (p.3), CookSoc again commits projection (§L7) in accusing *DIO* of (by concentrating on mere hard evidence) diverting³⁰ attention away

²⁷ CTC p.284 reads Cook's writing as 150 ft (close to the difference in heights of the Pegasus pair, while *DIO* makes it 750 ft (McK's N&S peaks differ by about 850 ft). But PP18 p.46 creditably agrees that the first digit does have a sevenish appearance.

²⁸ See, e.g., PP15 p.36 (1995 Oct), PP18 p.41 (1998 Sept).

²⁹ See Bryce 1997 p.823f.

³⁰ See similarly PP15 p.34.

diary and his faked photographs, including his famous picture of the "summit" of Mount McKinley, taken 19.5 miles away from and 15,000 feet below its actual summit.

H4 Only one quotation from any of Dunn's fictional works is used anywhere in *Cook & Peary*, and this is clearly labeled as fiction in my book. It is quoted in a discussion of Cook's psychology, and could as easily be termed "cogent analysis," in that context, rather than "psycho-babble," as Gibbons would have it. This is simply another example of how Gibbons loves to have it both ways.

H5 At the end of his "review" he quotes William James as saying "Down with psychology, up with logic." However, in 1968, Gibbons wrote an article whose theme was "Frederick Albert Cook, an Enigma in Polar History,"⁴⁶ and he has often alluded to Cook's obscure personality while he milks the psychological aspects of Cook's story. When it suits him, then, Gibbons plays up the "enigma" of Dr. Cook, but when I make an examination of Cook's private writings seeking to come to an understanding of that enigma in his own words, Gibbons condemns such an approach as "psycho-babble." Instead he calls for logic; however, anyone reading this commentary to this point should already have serious doubts as to whether logic is one of Gibbons's stronger suits.

H6 In Gibbons's article he quotes L. P. Kirwin, former director of the Royal Geographical Society as saying "the strange case of Dr. Cook is a subject for psychological rather than for historical study" but Gibbons suggests that a historical re-evaluation is really what should be in order.⁴⁷ In *Cook & Peary*, the world has been given both, since the latter without the former leaves many questions unanswered. Those questions center on the inscrutable personality of Frederick Albert Cook. As Dr. Kirwin said, "there is still an interesting psychological problem to be solved in the strange case of Dr. Cook," which L.H. Neatby defined as "a fundamentally brave and worthy man, [who] suffered from some extraordinary mental quirk."⁴⁸ By defining that mental quirk, *Cook & Peary* is able to resolve the Polar Controversy by solving the "interesting psychological problem" that lies at its heart. As Jean Malaurie realized, it is Cook's personality — that "controversy within the controversy" — that holds the key. A study of Cook's psychology to discover the "man unknown" is thus indispensable and entirely appropriate to unlocking the controversy within the Polar Controversy.

H7 My relegation of FACS's 1994 Alaskan expedition aimed at bolstering Cook's climb to the source notes⁴⁹ is not, as Gibbons terms it, "an amazing show of bias," but an appropriately concise summary of an event that proved nothing beyond the lengths FACS will go to indulge its fantasies. My recent article in *DIO* 7.2-3 fully addresses the contentions FACS has made as a result of this expedition, so there is no need to repeat them here. Upon analysis, all of FACS's contentions proved as baseless as my note cited by Gibbons says they were. His subsequent statement that I ignored the material published in FACS's 1996 reprint of Cook's 1908 book, *To the Top of the Continent*, including the Cook and Barrill diaries and the photographs it contains, is also incorrect. The shortcomings of the reprint are discussed in some detail on page 1083 of my book, including the serious errors in the transcriptions of the diaries as published by FACS, and the significant photographs in Cook's book are discussed in excruciating detail in *Cook & Peary*, both in the text and notes of Chapter 28. All of them, and all of Cook's drawn illustrations depicting his "climb" in his book, proved to be fakes. Unlike Gibbons, this fact was not lost on the reviewer of the *New York Times Book Review*, who said Cook's ascent of McKinley was "now definitively refuted by Mr. Bryce's meticulous scrutiny of Cook's bogus 'summit' photographs."⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Polar Notes* 3 [June 1968], pp.48-67. Dartmouth College Library.

⁴⁷ *Polar Notes*, p.50.

⁴⁸ *Polar Notes*, p.52.

⁴⁹ *C&P*, pp.1089-90.

⁵⁰ April 20, 1997, p.21.

I “Cook’s Oil ‘Millions’ ”

I1 From this section, we can only surmise that Gibbons, who claims to be an editor, must be a poor reader for content. He again has missed the point entirely in the matter of the “unsubstantiated” millions Cook made in Texas. However, they are substantiated fully in the testimony of the expert accountant H.B. Matheny, who was hired to examine Cook’s oil company books.⁵¹ What’s more, in his own sworn testimony at his trial, Cook readily accepted Matheny’s figures as being accurate. It is true that Cook never showed any evidence of great wealth after his release from prison, as I noted in my book. But I also explain that no one has ever been able to trace what happened to all of the money Cook raked in from his gigantic stock reloading and pyramid schemes during his time as a Texas oil speculator.

I2 Gibbons quotes me as contradicting myself in the *Washington Post* by saying “It’s clear that he had to have made millions of dollars. But what happened to the money? [There is no indication he ever lived extravagantly, and] no trace of it ever turned up,” and calls this “a somewhat reckless, or at least, an unwarranted and absurd charge to make.” Notice Gibbons’s “journalistic standards” at work here. He leaves out the portion of my quotation bracketed above that says that Cook always lived modestly after his release from prison — exactly what he uses to justify his criticism of my statement as “reckless”, “unwarranted”, and “absurd.” Then he goes on immediately to criticize *me* for “lack of care or logic.” This being so, is *that* not “a somewhat reckless, or at least, an unwarranted and absurd charge to make”?

J “‘Of fact, lack of care or logic’ ”

J1 No statements in my book in any way suggest, as Gibbons would have it, “that any error [in *Cook & Peary*] — which must be demonstrated to [Bryce’s] satisfaction — would be of fact, lack of care or logic.” What I actually wrote on page 977 in acknowledging those who assisted me was that “[the author] is responsible for whatever errors the book may contain — whether of fact, lack of care or logic.” Two pages later, in an entirely unrelated Notice to Correspondents, I wrote “anyone who wishes to correspond with the author, especially as to factual errors, is welcome to do so and will receive a response if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included. The author declines, however, to debate points and theories based on hearsay evidence, or his own clearly labeled opinions and speculations, unless the correspondent has documentary evidence to the contrary.” This is hardly a statement that any error “must be demonstrated to [my] satisfaction,” but only a further example of Gibbons’s “journalistic standards,” which apparently not only allow him to quote out of context to distort meaning, but also to string together whatever unrelated paraphrases he chooses to, then draw from this created “quotation” his own inference, not only to distort its context and meaning, but also to misrepresent it as my original thought. Can the reader blame me for not placing my response to FACS’s material in the hands of an editor who holds such “journalistic standards” as these?

J2 Gibbons’s subsequent piece in *Polar Priorities*,⁵² more or less repeats all of the above arguments, but elaborates on them further. In so doing, he delivers more evidence of his own poor grasp of the details of the Polar Controversy, despite his long years spent in Cook’s defense. Here are some of the highlights of what he doesn’t know, or what he wants to mislead the reader into believing:

- The National Geographic Society was not Peary’s “original sponsor” as Gibbons claims. They contributed only \$1,000 to his expedition in 1907, a mere drop in the bucket compared to the more than half a million 1908 dollars the expedition cost.

peak at PP18 p.46: E.peak 12060 ft vs W.peak 12200+ ft, which contradicts the caption²³ of CookSoc’s lonely “hard” evidence!²⁴ CookSoc thinks p.52’s top drawing looks *north* towards the Pegasus peak-pair; so: how can the right (lower) of the two Pegasus peaks be to the *west*? This *directional absurdity* hands unalloyed victory to Okonek’s contention that p.52’s top drawing is of McK, seen from the Ruth-Fake Peak area, where the left peak looms nearer&higher than the distant lower right peak (convincing mostly-west-looking Cook that the remoter right peak [really the N.Peak] was “west”, as diary p.52 states).

F8 CookSoc rejects the foregoing highly expert O-W-B interpretation with the following (textually unsupported) claim at PP18 p.46: “The fact that Cook wrote [upon his p.52 diary drawing] ‘west peak’ should have made it obvious [to *DIO*] that he was not sketching Mount McKinley since he already knew McKinley’s twin peaks were north and south, not east and west.” (CookSoc discussions of what Cook wrote on p.52 somehow never mention that the first word Cook wrote atop this page, describing the subject of p.52’s artwork was: “McK”.)²⁵ Not so fast. It is an oddity of the history of McKinley exploration that no map of the McKinley area (including Cook’s maps) up through 1906 ever showed that the McKinley’s near-twin peak was due north of McKinley. And what was Cook’s notion of the true direction of what we now call the “North Peak”? When in 1906 Cook returned from Alaska and recounted his triumph, this is how the *NYTimes* reported his story (slightly mangled either by Cook or *NYT*), as noted by Bryce (BR 281): “Very early on the morning of the eighth day we made the dash for the top. In our climb we encountered two peaks. We chose the southwestern. We reached the top at 10 o’clock.” When Cook published his story, his maps didn’t show the other peak, and his words were virtually identical in his two written accounts²⁶ where we have added emphasis at the crucial point: “We had seen the summit from various sides, but we were not prepared for the surprise of this great spread of surface. From below, the apex appears like a single peak, with gradual slopes. From the northern foothills we had previously discovered two distinct peaks. But now, from the upper slopes, we saw that there were several miniature ranges running up to two main peaks about two miles apart. *To the west* a ridge with a saddle, to the east a similar ridge, with one main peak to the southeast. This peak was the highest point, and to it we aimed”. How can CookSoc interpret such a description as showing that Cook knew the two peaks were north-south and that *DIO* is ignorant in supposing that Cook’s diary could refer to the lower

²³ A reasonable explanation of the caption has been proposed by Pickering: the artist knew he was looking westish (NW by W — almost exactly compass-west) and thus mistakenly but understandably took the lower-profile background peak (North Peak) to be west of the foreground peak (South Peak, the very top of McK). CookSoc’s problem is that the PP14 front cover photo that allegedly matches diary p.52 was taken looking roughly *north* (a little west of north), while the Okonek-Washburn-Bryce perception of the p.52 drawing has Cook looking mostly west instead (about 35° north of west) — thus Pickering’s test shows that the latter is a far better theory for matching the directions entered (in Cook’s own hand) at diary p.52. Note: the North Peak is almost exactly NORTH (not west) of South Peak, and only 1 3/4 nmi distant — so one might suppose that a man who allegedly stood on the South Peak would know enough to correct that p.52 caption. Note that Cook’s account of the alleged summit scene (CTC pp.231-233) makes no mention at all of the nearby, prominent North Peak — much less what direction it was in (due north). Nor does he mark the North Peak on his private diary sketch-maps (D7 Figs.12&13) or his published maps of his alleged 1906 route (D9 Fig.31, CTC Fig.1/5 — the latter being identical to the map in *Top of the Continent* between pp.152&153).

²⁴ Pickering has gone farther, arriving at an undeniably-final resolution for the orientation of diary p.52’s upper drawing. He points out that all three of the directions written on the drawing itself show that the viewer was looking westish: “N” (“N gl.”) is on the right, “East” (“East ridge cornice”) is in the foreground, and “west” (“west peak”) is in the background. It’s a triple-verification of the Okonek-Washburn-Bryce interpretation (fn 23 above, or D7 §G5) that diary-p.52’s top drawing looks approximately west, thus at McKinley. CookSoc’s theory demands that the drawer was looking virtually north, towards Pegasus Peak: CTC Plate 2/12 (correcting Pegasus’ position: §I1), PP18 p.46.

²⁵ CTC p.284 has already agreed (1996) to this interpretation of Cookscribble at diary p.52 line 1.

²⁶ Cook 1907 p.835, & Cook 1908 (or CTC) pp.225-226. We here quote verbatim from the former.

⁵¹ See *C&P*, pp.655-67.

⁵² “Polar Mist” v.17 (September 1997), pp.42-43.

over ten *DIO* pages²⁰ analyzing them! And *DIO* spends 2 more pages on the p.52 contradictions (and more here at §§F7 & G4), in a section (D9 §F) entitled “Self-Destruct Bombs on Diary Page 52”. The diary p.52 disasters are billed on *DIO* 7.2-3’s *cover*-sub-headline: “Cook-Defenders’ Star ‘New Evidence’ Serially Suicides”. How’d the world’s most dedicated CookSoc men miss all of this? — blithely going on (PP18 p.41) to exaggerate “ignoring” up to “wholly ignoring”!

F1 The lower p.52 drawing’s caption (in Cook’s hand) *explicitly identifies the viewing site*: “seen from gl. opp. Peak 7.” And isn’t p.52’s “peak 7” right at the Gateway?! (Note new Bryce confirmation: fn 17.) If not, then (§E5): **where does CookSoc say Cook’s peak 7 is?** (Since CookSoc, in CTC Plate 2/12’s caption, says that both diary-p.52 drawings were made atop the East Ridge, perhaps it can explain *where* atop the East Ridge one can find any glacier at all — much less a Cook “Peak 7”!) *No comment* in PP18 — this despite the fact that PP18 p.8 and CTC p.245 **both cite Cook’s “12 peaks”** but (§D) do not reproduce the three Cook-Barrill sketch maps (D7 Figs.11-13) placing them, so that the reader can see that peak 7 is at the Gateway (according to both Cook and Barrill). See the twelve-mountain sequence in Cook’s diary sketch-maps — suppressed (§D) until Bryce produced them in D7 — “8 peaks” at D7 Figs.12&13, and peaks 9-12 atop Fig.12.

F2 Extra item in the foregoing connection: at D9 fn 30, we pointed out where CookSoc reported (see PP18 p.8 & CTC p.245) that it had attempted to photograph Cook’s 12 peaks, “but the result is not in CTC.” Question: how *could* such a 12-peak photo — with the peaks all numbered²¹ — be published by CookSoc, when [a] This would of course instantly raise the issue of why Cook didn’t sketch-place and carefully number any features beyond what was visible from the Gateway. [b] A CookSoc photo with numbered peaks (as in D7’s Fig.1) would reveal to the reader that Cook’s peak 7 was at the Gateway, which explodes CookSoc’s pretense that diary-p.52’s lower drawing (captioned “seen from gl. opp. Peak 7”) was up on the East Ridge. So CookSoc’s omission of its own proposed 12-peak photo simply adds another unsubtle hint that CookSoc is selecting evidence just the way any other lawyer would.

F3 CookSoc claims the Cook p.52 drawings were made at 11000 ft, while *DIO* says they were made at 5000 ft. The barometer-reading given right on p.52, atop the drawings (D7 Figs.15&16), is 24 inches, which is quite wrong for 11000 ft. This is shown by calculation at D9 fn 43; but Doc’s own diary data cook him just as convincingly: its p.59 (CookSoc *Top of the Continent* 1996 reprint p.286) gives 5500 feet for virtually the same barometer reading (24.6 inches) — while diary pp.76-77 (*ibid* pp.286-287) twice gives 19 inches for 12100 ft (allegedly on the Ridge).

F4 Why is the p.52 top drawing’s foreground feature labelled “East ridge cornice” if the artist was standing *upon* it? (PP18 p.46 tries calling “East ridge” merely a “description”. No, it labels a drawing of a physical feature — the recognizable shape [D7 Fig.25] of the East Ridge, as seen from Cook’s distant vantage-point.)

F5 Why did Cook label the whole of p.52 “McK” (not Pegasus or Friendly or whatever)?

F6 New²² point (not in *DIO* 7.2-3): by CookSoc’s scenario, not only are the two drawings on p.52 out of order (see D9 fn 33) but p.52 is *itself* out of order, since Cook’s drawing on p.56 is from the Fake Peak amphitheatre (“amp th”) which Cook visited only 1906/9/10 (D8) on his outward trip and thus **before** he could have gotten atop the East Ridge, where CookSoc claims the p.52 drawings were made. [Bryce adds: the bottom p.52 drawing-label was written after p.56’s drawing. On the top drawing: see ¶5 §D16 & D7 §§G14-G15.]

F7 Another new point (not in previous analyses, including *DIO* 7.2-3): the p.52 drawing’s caption says the left (east) peak is **higher** than “the west peak” (on right); but for CookSoc’s Pegasus Peak photo, the **lower** peak is what CookSoc *itself* rightly calls the east

The National Geographic Society’s significance came later in its subsequent approval of Peary’s claim in 1909, without proper examination of his evidence.

- I did not say that Dennis Rawlins “ ‘contributed little’ in scholarship” to the Polar Controversy, as Gibbons would like to quote me. What I said was that his book “contributed little that was really new to the subject beyond salvaging the unpublished work of Henshaw Ward.” Gibbons, who complains bitterly about the selectivity of my quotations, proves here and numerous other places that he knows first hand how to be selective in what he misquotes in paraphrase. And he misattributes this “quote” to page 737 when it is actually on page 757.
- Likewise, he practices other distortions. He follows his distorted paraphrase on Rawlins with a another on Herbert, of whom he says I say: “The reader is told that Herbert’s motivation was to achieve his own polar priority by dog sledge to the Pole.” What this passage actually says is: “The Navigation Foundation’s report [a group hired by *National Geographic* to examine Peary’s claim] attributed Herbert’s rejection of Peary’s claim to a motive similar to the one Stefansson had imputed to Amundsen in 1926 — trying to eliminate Peary as a claimant so that Herbert himself would be recognized as the first man to have led a dog sledge expedition to the North Pole.” Once again, Gibbons’s “40 years as an editor” do not prevent him from misattributing the reference to the wrong page. It is on page 760, not 758 as he claims.

J3 He then goes on to say that “Bryce thus seeks to establish himself as the first to ‘seriously’ debunk Peary, setting the stage for his subsequent vilification of Cook.” Even if Gibbons had represented my statements accurately in the instances above, this would hardly be the case. I actually spent very little time debunking the Peary claim for the very reason that, as I say in my book, “Five major books have devoted themselves to showing that Peary’s narrative does not hold up on its own internal evidence. Though one may differ on their authors’ individual points, it is difficult to deny their common conclusion: Robert E. Peary did not reach the North Pole,”⁵³ so why bother? How could an author who acknowledges five major books that have discredited Peary long before he ever wrote a word (and who discusses each of them in some detail in his text) possibly be seeking “to establish himself as the first to ‘seriously’ debunk Peary”?

J4 As for my “vilification of Cook,” one cannot vilify someone whose own writings and deeds have already led many to the conclusion that he was villainous, and many persons do label Cook’s actions as such. However, in my book I make no moral judgment about Frederick Cook at all, but leave that to the reader. Many of my readers, in fact, rather than believing my book vilifies Cook, have easily recognized that it is sympathetic to him. As a result, they have come away with a very favorable impression of him as he really was. As one said, “Through [*Cook & Peary*] I rediscovered the Dr. Cook that so many have felt compelled to support and defend — courageous, kind, capable and convincing — a modest man of great personal charm.”⁵⁴ This is vilification?

J5 Gibbons condemns my study as “psycho-history” for seeking the motives within the minds of the perpetrators of these grand frauds from their own private writings, yet swallows Cook’s preposterous story of “mental disability” to innocently explain away all of his seemingly inexplicable actions in the wake of his claim’s collapse in 1909. He accepts what Cook said about everything, apparently, without exception, even though much of it is totally contradictory. He even repeats Cook’s precious story about how he and his Eskimo companions “lived like Stone Age cavemen in an underground den” on Devon Island over the winter of 1908-09.

²⁰ See text of D7 §G, as well as Figs.24-27.

²¹ See the numbering in D7’s Fig.1.

²² Also noted simultaneously by Jim Wolf of Baltimore.

⁵³ *Cook & Peary* p.880.

⁵⁴ Review of *C&P* by Randall J. Oszcewski, *Polar Priorities*, v.17 [1997], pp.39-41.

J6 As I explain in detail in my book, an examination of Cook's own diary kept at the time shows that he lived in a comfortable standard stone igloo, had plenty of ammunition, food and all the comforts the Arctic could provide through his two skilled Eskimo hunters. He acknowledged this in the letter he wrote to his wife immediately after returning to civilization by saying "we finally made ourselves very comfortable in an underground den."⁵⁵ But Gibbons truly ignores all this, because he has always preferred Cook's fantasies, and his own, to any contrary documentary proof of Cook's deceptions, of which his account of a "Stone Age" winter in 1908 is one of his greatest.

J7 In his article in *Polar Notes*, Gibbons had this to say:

The unresearched papers and collections in a dozen universities and archives may yet provide a more likely road toward ultimate solution of the Cook enigma [than a trip over the Polar pack following Cook's route]⁵⁶ It is to be hoped that the unique collection of Cook papers and materials, which is an as yet untapped record of much of Cook's turbulent and complex career, will be made available to professional historians Cook's diary, for instance, has yet to be fully transcribed, and this document alone — closely written and almost illegible — represents a special challenge to any researcher To the knowledge of the writer, no one with a primary interest in Cook the man as well as the explorer has researched the several collections or manuscripts available which would have significant material.⁵⁷

J8 Those once-unresearched papers have now been thoroughly studied by one with a primary interest in Cook, the man as well as the explorer. That challenging diary has now been deciphered, and together they have indeed provided the ultimate solution to the Cook enigma. That solution can be found in the pages of *Cook & Peary, the Polar Controversy, Resolved*. Incidentally, all of this material also indicates that Cook's claims to having climbed Mount McKinley and reached the North Pole are false.

K "The triumph of selective Mount McKinley & Polar research," by Ted Heckathorn

K1 As a whole, the FACS "critical review" of my book shows an extreme tendency to what is called by psychologists "projection": the imputation of one's own characteristics or tendencies to others. Gibbons's section has given ample evidence of this already, and Ted Heckathorn's continues the trend. The title of his section, in fact, would be wonderfully apt for his own arguments.

K2 Heckathorn, a real estate agent from Woodinville, Washington, who describes himself as a "polar historian," seems almost willing to entertain the notion that my book raises some serious doubt about Cook's polar claim, but he stoutly denies the similar evidence against Cook's Mount McKinley climb, which was almost a dress rehearsal for his polar hoax. This is because Heckathorn has a personal stake in it, having gone on record representing his own premature assumptions and theories as facts, which are now refuted by the documentary evidence I uncovered and subsequently published. He has thus become, in Captain Hall's words, an "implicated partisan desiring to sustain [himself]." Unwilling to admit his errors, he has been forced to rely on many of the same techniques as Gibbons's critique, starting with his gratuitous praise of my research abilities, though, according to his title and subsequent remarks, those techniques have produced nothing more than "a triumph of selective . . . research," which, by implication, is false in its conclusions.

⁵⁵ Cook to Marie Cook, May 8, 1909. FCC.

⁵⁶ Notice Gibbons having it both ways again. Here he advocates primary sources over field research; today he says just the opposite.

⁵⁷ *Cook & Peary* p.66.

hard evidences all end at the Gateway, *right where Barrill swore that he and Cook turned for home*. PP18 p.42's dreamt-up alibi that Cook's film went bad at the Gateway (D9 fn 28) doesn't account for why his compass data, his sketch-maps, his scenic drawings (his own and Barrill's),¹⁷ his published map's accuracy, and his camp-trash ALL stop at the Gateway, too (D9 §D9). *CookSoc's PP18 does not even attempt an explanation*. (See below at §K for yet another miracle at the Gateway.)

E8 CookSoc apology-method logic: fake photos don't *prooove* a fake climb. See, e.g., invincibly-selective-agnostic Sheldon C at D9 §C2. (Centrist academics can be just as stolid: *DIO* 2.3 ‡8 §C18.) All right, so let's try a simple mental experiment: what if this very same never-say-die approach were being turned around to defend Barrill? In that case, we'd be hearing: OK, OK, so \$5000 was paid by Peary Arctic Club Pres. Thos. Hubbard to a Tacoma, WA, lawyer (James Ashton) on 1909/10/1; but — even though that looks odd — does that **prooove** that Barrill lied for a bribe?¹⁸ However, let's reason comparatively, in order to highlight CookSoc's selective imbalance: is the attractive but shaky presumption,¹⁹ that Barrill lied for Peary money, as strong or crucial as the powerful presumption that a person who lied about his McK "summit" photo also faked attaining McK's summit? CookSoc is so mote-beam-unbalanced that it remains rigidly stuck on the weaker **and** far less important bribe-presumption, while vowing permanent imperviousness to the other, powerful, central one: a flag-before-turnaround, lifetime-publicly-unretracted, deceitfully-cropped molehill-photo is pretty darn good evidence of a fake summit-claim. (See D7 fn 49.)

F The "Ignored" p.52 Drawings

As for Cook's drawings (D7 Figs.15-16) on p.52 of his diary (D9 §F2): PP18 p.41 repeatedly, dementedly, and **even bold-titularly** claims *DIO* ignores them — though Bryce expends

¹⁷ See, e.g., Barrill's diary-map at D7 Fig.11, and his scenic drawings at D7 Figs.21&23 as well as the newly-available Barrill artistic depiction of Ruth Glacier mountains #4-#7 (Mt. Wake, Mt. Bradley, Mt. Dickey, & Mt. Barrille), discovered by R.Bryce after publication of D7 — but with the four peaks numbered exactly as in Fig.1 of D7. Note that the numbering of Mt. Barrille as peak#7 is crucial to the identification of the site of the needlessly-contended lower drawing (D7 Figs.15&16) on p.52 of Cook's diary: see D7 §G9 & fn 33.

¹⁸ The record (‡4 §L14, ‡5 §E2, CTC pp.296-298) indicates that Barrill had trouble getting wages-owed (several of Cook's associates over the years had similar problems with him); so Barrill hoped finally to get recompense (by taking advantage of the now-frantically-over-the-Barrill millionaires of the Peary Arctic Club) — apparently making "wild" demands. Further, legal talent costs money; and the legal work of getting the Barrill affidavit incurred various extra expenses. Evidently, Barrill was paid a fraction of the \$5000, though reports differ as to how much (up to \$1500 by one estimate — a lot of money then). Ashton himself said between \$100 & \$200 (Bryce *Cook & Peary* p.1041), so it was never meant to be a secret that money changed hands. *DIO* is not vouching for Ashton's accuracy, and we regard it as a quite reasonable *presumption* (though see fn 19) that Barrill wouldn't have gotten any money from the Peary Arctic Club if he hadn't made the affidavit. Incidentally, DR recalls seeing long ago in the Explorers Club Archives (NYC) a 1909 communication — which has never been published — from Hubbard (a leading figure in the ethics of law) to Ashton, rejecting anything like "buying testimony" (Hubbard's words). As noted at n.19 of DR's 1993/10/22 Cook Symp. paper [*DIO* 21 ‡3] (ms to RG 94/4/21, OSU ©1998 [BPRC Rep.#18], no proofs, crossrefs botched, last sentence suppressed): Eames' theory that the Cook-persecuting Peary Arctic Club spent \$350,000 to "see [Peary] through" the Cook Controversy was just a Cookie-coot's mishearing of a Bridgman speech (maybe that discussed at Bryce 1997 p.548), citing the \$350,000 the Club had spent *before 1909* to "see [Peary] through" *to the Pole*. (Ted Heckathorn was first to discern, from National Archives documents, that the center of the web of harrassers of Cook was not the Club but Peary himself.)

¹⁹ Question: do we automatically disbelieve newspapers because their writers are paid for their work? (No, there are lots of better reasons to disbelieve them.) In any case, Barrill's affidavit is today generally accepted as accurate not because of associated financial considerations but due to the affidavit's many verifications, as repeatedly and very thoroughly checked in D7-D9.

E2 Why did 1995 Oct's PP15 (p.34) publish the *cropped* version of the "summit" photo, when CookSoc already¹³ possessed and knew of the *uncropped* original? (Bryce had told CookSoc of the full "summit" photo after locating it, and CookSoc's very own Sheldon wrote on 1994/2/26 & 6/25 that he had confirmed its location: D7 fnn 10&12.) And Bryce wonders: why did CookSoc repeat this suppression when in 1996 it republished Cook's 1908 book (as CTC) with 3 reproductions of the cropped version (p.iii, Fig.1/16, & back cover) but none of the uncropped version which had been in CookSoc's hands for years.

E3 WHERE is the super-sharp version of the "summit" photo, which CookSoc had in hand in 1994 (§E2)? — and on the back of which Cook himself had written (D7 fn 12) that it was made from the original negative. (Can CookSoc understand why it seems suspicious that this photo has since disappeared?)

E4 From §C: why did CookSoc cite,¹⁴ as defense-experts (on this matter), oldtime Balch, Rost, Leitzell, & Waale, whose common charge that Browne fudged photos (to put Cook at Fake Peak) is disproved by this same uncropped photo, which we know (§C8) *CookSoc was hiding at the very time it made these attacks on Browne's integrity* (see especially PP15 pp.35 & 41)?

E5 Cook's label for diary p.52 bottom drawing (D7 Figs.15-16): "seen from gl. opp. Peak 7". So: where is Cook's "Peak 7"? What "gl" was he on? Answers (D7 Figs.9-13): Gateway. Ruth Gl. CookSoc *disbelieves its own hero* by alleging an East Ridge site: §F1.

E6 CookSoc says (§N4, D9 §B3) Washburn's detailed photo-match of D9's Fig.29 to Fig.28 is merely his *opinion*, countered (without photo) by the *opinion* of CookSoc-fundee Gonnason. Question: *Why hasn't CookSoc ever published both photos together, so its own members can see this match & its import?* (PP14 p.9 used Washburn's *AAJ 11.1* [1958] plate 18a photo [taken 1947/7/9] without consulting him, so non-permission is no bar for CookSoc.) And the 1994 CookSoc expedition¹⁵ spent days within a few miles of the site of Figs.28&29; if it had doubts about the legitimacy of Washburn's photo (Fig.29) of the Fake Peak amphitheatre, these could have been tested by first-hand checking of the vista. No interest. *No living CookSoc representative has ever been to Fake Peak amphitheatre.* Sympathizer Ted Leitzell went there in 1938. He photo-verified that the scene from Fake Peak was indeed that of D7's Fig.4, proving Cook was there, just as Browne had claimed. So Leitzell hid his photo (¶4 fn 32), because releasing it would help The Enemy.¹⁶ Cook personally connived in this censorship, with the same integrity shown by current CookSoc failure to publish the original of the "summit" photo (D7 Fig.18) in all the pre-*DIO* 7.2-years the Society possessed it.

E7 PP18 p.45 says again that Cook's 1906 companion Barrill was bribed, but nowhere speaks to the fact that Barrill's map (D7 Fig.11) accurately located Fake Peak (from which some Cook photos were undeniably taken, though Cook's published story never mentioned even going into Fake Peak amphitheatre: fn 35) — nor to the fact (D9 §§D7-D8) that Cook's

K3 Like Gibbons, Heckathorn avoids every substantive point of documentary evidence my book contains, yet he faults my failure to cite every writer who favors Cook, no matter how slight his credentials or how shallow the foundations of the evidence he based his writings on. He also faults what he believes is my neglect to give the right proportion of credit to some supposed scholarly "priority," no matter how unimportant the fact first noted. He interprets this as an attempt to establish myself as a paramount and primary authority on the subject rather than as a result of my true and practical desire to spare the average reader of my book from such tedious details, which would be of no interest to him, and to spare my publisher further expense in publishing them. While he is on this subject, his remarks on what I said about Dennis Rawlins show that he also has in common with Gibbons an inability to make an argument without flatly contradicting himself.

K4 Heckathorn at least correctly quotes me as saying of Rawlins's book that it "contributed little that was really new beyond salvaging the unpublished work of Henshaw Ward," but then goes on to say that I blithely proceed to quote items first published by Rawlins and others without giving proper credit. Typically, as we shall see, he gives no examples of what items these may be.⁵⁸ Then he mentions Rawlins's 1970 article, which is cited in my book, and lists the Rawlins book's accomplishments: "Indeed, had it not been for Rawlins, there is little doubt that history would have lost Henshaw Ward's manuscript, plus many other key letters and documents." Notice that this is exactly what I said Rawlins's accomplishments were myself. Beyond that, and some of Rawlins's technical explanations, there really is very little really new in *Peary at the North Pole; Fact or Fiction?* that was not in Captain Hall's book. (Anyone who has read Hall's book would know how difficult it would be to have come up with anything really new!) And any direct reference to Rawlins's material that I used was fully cited in my notes.

K5 Heckathorn's title accuses me of "selective Mount McKinley and Polar research," then, like Gibbons, he uses his own interpretation and emphasis of selected quotes from my book to illustrate this. From these he draws conclusions that no one who reads my full text could possibly draw. Some of his inferences are quite grotesque. Again, like Gibbons, all this is designed not to answer the evidence I present [suggesting by implication that it is unanswerable], or even to review the book, but only to raise doubts as to my motives and credibility and to allege my supposed anti-Cook agenda.

K6 Even though he declares that the chapter which exposes Cook's Mount McKinley hoax (his self-proclaimed specialty) is "laced with factual errors and distortions," Heckathorn uses none of his space to identify a single one of them. After he first made this charge in a call to the Diane Rehm Show on February 25, 1997, in which he claimed the same chapter was full of "factual errors," I immediately wrote him a letter in which I offered to make revisions in a future printing of my book correcting any error he could document in the chapter. My letter went unanswered.⁵⁹

K7 He claims I slighted the FACS expedition to Ruth Glacier he was associated with in 1994 and omitted its "pertinent data." Actually, as mentioned above by Gibbons, I addressed it in one of my notes and concluded there that it produced no original or "pertinent data" of any kind, and that the unsupportable suppositions that grew out of it are not only unoriginal but incorrect. He also says I "ducked" the 1994 evidence by using the researcher Hans Waale's "unrealistic theories" as a "blocking dummy." I can't claim to follow this thought,

⁵⁸Dennis Rawlins contends this is so, himself. Perhaps it is. I did not take time to note the first mention of each fact I cited, as stated above. Then again, authors sometimes think they were the first to discover a fact, but are simply unaware that it had already been discovered before (Wally Herbert's "discovery" of an "uncropped" version of Cook's "Glacial Island" photo being one that comes to mind. This photo was discovered and appreciated for its implications by E.B. Baldwin in 1913). In any case, I am unaware of any major "discovery" which I falsely claim to have been the first to publish. All significant documentary "discoveries" made by others have, so far as I was aware of them, been attributed to others.

⁵⁹RMB to Heckathorn, February 27, 1997, copy in possession of author.

¹³See D7 fn 9-fn 12.

¹⁴E.g., PP14 p.14, CTC pp.252-253.

¹⁵D9 §C10: "A likely purpose of the recent Cook Society expedition to the McKinley area was the establishment of we've-been-up-there Expertise", to more convincingly defend an explorer who pretended he reached McKinley's summit. But a more important purpose of CookSoc trip-funding may be: paying mountain guides large sums to pretend that the Cook Society has a sane case.

¹⁶Leitzell to Cook 1938/9/6 (¶4 §D5 or BR 731): publishing Leitzell's matching photo would (emph added): "only give the *opposition* a chance to confuse the issue." Cook-Leitzell's suppression presaged CookSoc's current inability to publish clear enlargements of the Killer Pair of Cook's own Fake Peak photos (D7 Figs.4&18): side-by-side, like *DIO*'s blow-ups. (Who paid Leitzell's way to Alaska? And who paid the 1956 Alaskan fare [¶4 fn 39] for yet another 1930s pro-Cook writer, Freeman?) Leitzell noted contrasts between Fake Peak's appearance: 1906 vs. 1938 (after 32' of weathering), unaware Cook was hiding the uncropped "summit photo" (D7 Fig.18). with its indicting left&right backgrounds: D7 Fig.6(a)vs(b) & Fig.8(a)vs(b). But: Fake Peak's big *left*-side rocks are same in 1906 & 1957: see Fig.6[a]&[b] & caption. And, despite snow and higher photo-site, the big rock with diagonally-lined flat-face in Fig.6[a] (& [b]) is visible in Browne's 1910 photos: e.g., D7 Fig.7, Bryce 1997 p.492.

but actually, Hans Waale's theories were far more reasonable than Heckathorn's, which, in any case, have now all been fully addressed by me in *DIO* 7.2 §G.

K8 Like Gibbons, Heckathorn studiously avoids the evidence in *Cook & Peary* that contradicts his personal points of view. Most significantly, he fails to address my recovery of an original photographic print that proves conclusively that the picture Cook always claimed represented the summit of Mount McKinley is actually "Fake Peak," just as all of Cook's detractors since 1910 have asserted. This is the picture Heckathorn was still defending as genuine up until the publication of *Cook & Peary*, and those detractors are the same men he has openly accused of a dark conspiracy to trump up evidence aimed at debunking Cook's 1906 climb and destroying Cook's personal reputation. As late as 1996, he also was asserting in print that the diary of Edward N. Barrill, Cook's climbing partner, "has disappeared" and hinted that this fact was part of the conspiracy against Cook.⁶⁰

K9 According to FACS, every unpleasant inconsistency that points to Frederick Cook being a liar can be explained away by this conspiracy of the "Peary Cabal," which has survived the death of every person who had any personal involvement in the events of 1909 and persists intact to this very day. FACS claims that the original denial of Cook's claim in 1909 and its failure to gain widespread credence since, is a result of this never-ending conspiracy and avoids mentioning that Cook's downfall was actually due to his inability to present any verifiable evidence that he climbed Mount McKinley or reached the North Pole.

K10 Even 1,133-page books that bend over backward to consider every reasonable piece of favorable counter-evidence before declaring Cook's claim a fake are seen as part of this "vendetta." As Heckathorn recently told the Baltimore *Sun*, "I call it McKinley-gate."⁶¹ Heckathorn is as wrong about this as he was about the authenticity of Cook's summit picture or the disappearance of Barrill's diary. These are examples of Heckathorn's tendency to leap to fantastic conclusions or to believe whatever fantasy fits his purposes when his limited research abilities fall short or lead him astray.

K11 As Ted Heckathorn was weaving the Barrill diary's "disappearance" into his imagined "McKinley-gate" conspiracy theories, I was studying Barrill's diary at the National Archives, where it has been, along with the rest of Peary's papers, for the last quarter-century. Heckathorn said *he* had been unable to find it among Peary's papers or anywhere else, and therefore it no longer existed. I found it quite easily in 1990. The difference in the result of these searches for the same item in the same place is the difference between the skills of a professional researcher and an amateur.

K12 A stark example of this came at my very first meeting with Heckathorn in 1990. As a result of that meeting, as an unsolicited favor, I supplied him with a copy of Vilhjalmar Stefansson's "The Problem of Meighen Island," which he also could not find anywhere, and around which he wove a hilarious conspiracy plot on Stefansson's part. He wrote to me detailing his fantastic theories about the genesis of this work, which was nothing more than a chapter deleted from Stefansson's book, *Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic*. Heckathorn claimed the story that it was dropped from Stef's book in 1938 because of a threat of a libel suit from Dr. Cook's lawyer was a ruse, that Stefansson had made use of "Dr. Cook's copyrighted works without his permission," and that Stefansson did not in fact ever want this material to be made public. That was because (according to Heckathorn) Stefansson's real reason for writing this item was to create a tool he could secretly use to undermine Dr. Cook's claim.⁶² Apparently, Stefansson's method of subterfuge was utterly unique: He

⁶⁰Heckathorn, Ted, "Reopening the Book on Mount McKinley," in the FACS reprint of *To the Top of the Continent*, pp.237-262. Just after my book was published, Heckathorn called to ask me for a free copy. During the conversation I mentioned to him that I had an original print of Cook's "summit" photo and had discovered Barrill's diary. It was easy to judge by the long and deathly silence that followed these revelations, that he had no prior knowledge of either.

⁶¹July 24, 1998, p.2a.

⁶²Heckathorn to RMB, September 17, 1990, possession of author.

Gibbons' slyness has succeeded only in doubling the evidence for his own buyability.

C8 The Cookie mentality is getting worse, not better. CookSoc's 1998 *Special Supplement* to PP18 pp.13-16 [see also CookSoc's just-prior *Membership News* 5.3 p.7] repeats the standard agéd Balch-etc arguments (§§E4&L4) and takes advantage of the fact that Browne's 1910 photo and Carter's 1957 photos were (due to changing snow-level and eventual crumbling of the right part of Fake Peak) slightly imperfect matches to Cook's 1906 photo — but CookSoc never lets its members know of the killer match (§C1) of two of Cook's *own* 1906 photos. The deceptive intent is rendered particularly outrageous by the fact that the hard-earned 1910 & 1957 photos (the latter reproduced above at ¶5 Fig.6 [b]) were shot by Browne and Carter — at *enormous* expense in time and labor — *only because* Cook and his family & intimate circle [a] would not admit the truth about his 1906 lies (which were pretty obvious even before Bryce, *DIO*, & the *NYT* published the uncropped "summit" photo) and [b] *were themselves hiding Cook's full-uncropped "summit" photo* from Browne and Carter. For a gang to *dishonestly* use the very (pre-*DIO*) imperfections in photo-matching — **imperfections which their own clique's dishonesty thus¹¹ CAUSED** — represents a pioneering double-dip hades-depth-Low in unharmlless-crankitude (fn 2). ***DIO*** will be glad to explode this CookSoc imposition **in open debate, even at CookSoc's own Ohio State home arena**. [Bold CookSoc in 1998 *Memb. News* 5.3 p.2: skeptics "wish the debate to be over. It is not." Bluff called:]

ARE WE ON?

D Sketch Maps

Further bearing on the integrity of those defending Cook: CookSoc has never published¹² the Cook 1906 diary's Ruth Glacier sketch-maps — not even in the Society's 1996 reprint of *Top*, which reproduced the text of that very diary (at pp.272f) and did not mind including others of the diary's Cook-drawn illustrations. (The 1996 reprint has been referred to by the prefix "CTC" throughout *DIO*'s discussions.) These diary-maps indict Cook because:

D1 *None exist past the Gateway* (as DR instantly emphasized to his old friend Ted Heckathorn when Ted first told DR of these materials years ago) versus **two** such Cook sketch-maps up to the Gateway (D7 Figs.12&13) — also Barrill's sketch-map up to the Gateway (D7 Fig.11), likewise unaccompanied by any sketch-map beyond that point.

D2 The one at p.44 of Cook's 1906 diary shows (D7 Fig.12) mountains 9, 10, 11, & 12 going off into the distance north of the Gateway — beyond Cook's range of densely-busy activities indicated (on the diary-map) south of the Gateway (D9 §D10).

E Questions to CookSoc: Reality-Time? Or More 5th Amendment?

Several questions *DIO* would like answered by the CookSoc circle's main defenders:

E1 Does CookSoc agree that ¶4 Fig.6 and D7 Figs.18, 4, 6, & 8 definitely & conclusively establish that Cook's "summit" photo was actually taken at Fake Peak? (Why is this central evidence not met AT ALL in PP18? Hitherto-overlooked skull-penetrability test: will any Cook-defender own that these photo-matches weaken his case *in any degree whatever?* During the almost 100^y of this controversy, none ever has. For the nearest thing, see D9 fn 37.) No §C7 diversion into whether this proves Cook failed. Just ANSWER this repeatedly 5th-Amendment question: **YES** or **NO**. If the latter, then try providing an explanation (of the photos' spectacular matches) that will withstand debate-crossexam.

¹¹ Let's specially repeat-isolate the fantastically perverse heart of this situation: the very photo-match-imperfections (which the Cook cult now deceitfully mocks) only EXIST AT ALL because Browne and Carter-Washburn took photos that *wouldn't have been necessary in the first place* had the Cook people not hidden the match (of Cook's *own* photos: fn 7) that IS perfect.

¹²See §§F1&L2 below, and D9 §F2 item [c].

C5 The D9 §G4 suggestion of CookSoc apology to Browne-Parker-Washburn is rejected at PP18 p.39 (also p.48): “They [The Enemy] are going to have to wait.” No uninformed reader of Gibbons’ ramble here will know what is being skirted. *DIO*’s apology-suggestion was not directed at CookSoc’s logical shortcomings in persistently not facing the truth of Cook’s various fakes. Rather the apology-proposal was precisely aimed at a specific point of simple decency, bearing upon cultists’ penchant for evil fantasy: Cook’s defenders for decades have (see D9 §G1) promoted charges that sneaky-vindictive critics *used doctored photos* to prove that Cook’s “summit” photo was at Fake Peak. (This logic’s aching heel is lampooned at D9 fn 13.) But now Cook’s OWN photos (D7 Figs.18, 4, 6, & 8) have proven that the critics were right⁸ — and thus that **the charge of dishonest conspiratorial photo-tampering to falsify a match, was itself false**. PP18 has nothing to say on this point. (Instead, CookSoc’s standard [D9 §§C9-C10] diversion-tactic alleges lots of irrelevant nit-“errors” by opponents: a cartoon-Napoleon we’re-the-authorities pose.)

C6 A bit of revealing CookSoc history: Hugh Eames was the first Cook-promoter to propose (*Winner Lose All* 1973 pp.63-67) that Cook had indeed faked the “summit” photo — but Eames regarded that dishonesty as merely “a slight [ethical] slip”: *ibid* p.67), excusable in Eames’ eyes because the fake allegedly⁹ *looked something rather like* (!) the real summit. In spite of this loyal alibi [now loonily “readjusted”: D9 §A3], Cook’s daughter took Eames’ admission of photographic fraud as treason. And for decades thereafter, no other Cookite committed such treason. But, after CookSoc had delved into the Cook papers, the 1990s saw a seemingly inexplicable CookSoc adoption of Eames’ originally exiled bizarro-argument. The cause of sudden CookSoc tolerance — of what it had itself once rejected as treason! — is obvious in retrospect: inner-circle Cookites had finally seen (strictly privately) the full, uncropped “summit” photo (D7 Fig.18) and thus knew that it indeed *was* taken at Fake Peak. So — without any public explanation — CookSoc began (at least as early as 1994: PP14 p.14) FOR THE FIRST TIME leaving open the “possibility” that the photo might indeed have been (innocently of course) taken at Fake Peak. (Standard party-line now: see D9 §§C7-C8 & fn 17 [& D9 fn 12: sharp “summit” print last seen in 1994 early summer].)

C7 However, even while promoting the weird last-ditch §C6 ploy that a photo’s “similarity” is as good as its genuineness, CookSoc *simultaneously* continued citing Authorities who had claimed Cook’s photo was of the real summit: decades-ago deceased Cookites E.Balch, E.Rost, T.Leitzell, & H.Waale, whose arguments had suggested (of necessity) that Belmore Browne’s Fake Peak photo-match to Cook’s “summit” photo was itself faked. Now, consider carefully what this reveals about CookSoc’s people: **How could modern inner-circle Cook-defenders (who clearly had seen privately that Cook’s own “summit” photo convicts him of faking it) deliberately continue such false slander against Browne?** The 1998/11/26 *NYTimes* frontpage story on Bryce’s discovery of the photo (acknowledging that *DIO* 7.2 first published it) quoted World Number One CookSocPerson, Russ Gibbons, as responding (p.A29): well, even if the photo WAS taken at Fake Peak, that doesn’t prove Cook’s failure! Thus, genius Gibbons thinks he has ever-so-cleverly not committed himself to *either* of two undeniable propositions: [a] The “summit” photo was taken at Fake Peak. [b] This fact condemns Cook.¹⁰ Question-in-passing: if the fact that Cook’s “summit” photo was taken at Fake Peak doesn’t constitute *the slightest* evidence that Cook faked his claimed attainment, then: **why is CookSoc still unable [Fig.6 caption] to admit the photo was faked?** [Answer: fn 41.] Historians of cult-thought know the pattern: fight the evidence as long as possible; but, when your case collapses, then claim that the very same evidence (which you’ve struggled against ferociously for years, up to now, to repel) really doesn’t matter after all! [Watch a Harvard prof dancing the same shuffle: *DIO* 10 fn 177.] However, since [a] and [b] are *each* valid (to all but mercenaries for Cook),

⁸See also §L4.

⁹Not only a ludicrous line of reasoning (which CookSoc pretends not to understand the academic community’s side-splitting incredulity at) but utterly and ironically false: see D9 §B2 & Fig.34.

¹⁰See CookSoc’s malleable criteria for what constitutes proof: §E8.

would use it to “secretly” undermine Cook’s claim by having 300 copies privately printed in 1939 and then give them away to major libraries and anyone who expressed an interest in one!

K13 Once again, these illogical imaginings are completely contradicted by primary documentation in the form of extant correspondence between Stefansson and Cook’s lawyer, Stanley Boriss, now at Dartmouth College, which clearly shows that far from being a secret text, Stefansson had asked Cook’s permission to quote from his publications for inclusion in this chapter, and that he gained Cook’s approval (Cook even went so far as to ask him to make a correction to his text in *My Attainment of the Pole*), only to have Cook change his mind and make a threat of a suit, which prevented the material’s use in Stef’s book.⁶³ The deleted chapter went to press exactly as it had been set up for the book, complete with page numbers in accord with its intended placement. The first page is numbered 257. Stef’s private printing has this “Explanatory Note” at the front:

The material between these covers was originally written as a chapter of *Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic* but was not included in the Special Edition of that book, published by The Explorers Club, because (without justification, I think) an action for libel was feared.

There is even now no thought of any formal publication of this material. Three hundred copies are being privately printed through the generosity of my friend, Mr. Joseph Robinson. Of these the odd numbers, from 1 to 299 will be in the possession of Mr. Robinson, and the even numbers, from 2 to 300, in my possession.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

January 25, 1939

K14 Heckathorn told me at our first meeting that the only copy of Stefansson’s deleted chapter was in the Library of Congress, which would not permit him to copy it. When I said I thought I would have no trouble getting him a copy, he looked incredulous. Within a month, I obtained it through the most elementary of basic research tools, an interlibrary loan from the Portland University Library in Heckathorn’s neighboring state of Oregon. In thanking me, he said he was “surprised” at this because Oregon State University’s Library did not have one. Any “researcher” who does not know that what one library holds has nothing whatever to do with what another holds, has very little idea of the nature of library resources. And any “researcher” who does not know how to arrange an interlibrary loan has no right to that title, let alone that of “polar historian.”

K15 As already related (§C5), after the Cook Symposium in Columbus in 1993, as a courtesy, I sent Heckathorn a long list of suggested corrections to his paper “New Evidence About an Old Controversy,” in the hope of saving him the embarrassment of seeing his name attached to a paper filled with so many factual errors. But he refused to admit that anything I said that differed from his paper was correct, beyond several very obvious mistakes. Since he insisted he had documentary evidence that my points about his paper were what was actually in error, I asked for this evidence so that I could correct these points in my own manuscript. When asked to back up his statements with documentation, he failed to supply any. If Heckathorn was unable to execute an interlibrary loan, or locate available resources, such as Barrill’s “missing” diary, or was inaccurate or mistaken in all these instances in his paper, can he be trusted to be giving an accurate assessment when he declares *Cook & Peary* is fraught with factual error? If he was unwilling to correct his own errors in the face of contradictory documentary evidence in the past, and was unwilling to supply documentation to the contrary, which he claimed to possess, why should we expect more of him now? With such a history, until his claimed evidence is forthcoming, we must assume

⁶³A friend of Cook’s was financing actual libel suits against several others at the time, so Cook’s threats were taken seriously by Stef’s publisher.

that he is unwilling to provide such evidence that would refute my book because he is unable to do so.

K16 When he characterizes the philosophical preface to *Cook & Peary* as an “indignant” attack on my predecessors or draws any of his other embarrassingly preposterous conclusions about what it means, there should even be serious question whether Heckathorn is generally capable of objective interpretation of evidence at all or of following a logical argument based on evidence. In reading my preface, anyone with even ordinary perception will see that the only advantage I claim to possess over previous writers on the Polar Controversy is that I had what none of them had the opportunity to see — the primary documents in the dispute — and that I made no such claim “as to possess sufficient moral integrity to recognize and proclaim the real truth,” as Heckathorn puts it. On the contrary, I said in my preface that I found the whole truth lay hidden, not “on those pieces of paper, as I had naively believed,” but rather was “locked away forever only in the hearts of the men who lived it.” And could anybody but Heckathorn not understand that a person who “never intended to write this book,” once he had read those documents, felt compelled to do so by the magnitude of the discoveries he made, even though his original intent was merely to satisfy his own curiosity? And does Heckathorn really believe that every librarian with a compelling interest in a subject, or anyone else so interested, writes a book about it? Although the skills of librarians are absolutely indispensable to anyone who attempts to write a book such as mine, librarians actually write very few such books.

K17 About the only statement in Heckathorn’s piece that is a logical assertion is that a “1100+ page book does not materialize overnight.” It took eight years of very demanding effort for *Cook & Peary* to “materialize.” However, many of his other statements demonstrate that he has no idea whatever about the processes by which such a book is created or comes into physical being.⁶⁴

K18 Heckathorn complains of my index without saying that it was I who pointed out to him in a phone conversation its absolute inadequacy and my own deep disappointment with it.⁶⁵ His statement that producing an adequate index would have delayed the book’s publication by “a week” shows how little he knows about legitimate publishing.⁶⁶

K19 Of all the examples of Heckathorn’s limited research abilities, the most amusing is his vignette attempting to illustrate the superiority of field research over the study of primary documentation, since his account of the “fable” about where the Golden Spike was driven is, ironically, a perfect example of just the opposite. The error in identifying the place the Golden Spike was driven is trivial, but Heckathorn never states exactly what the error was in order to give it more importance. The mixup was probably due to no more than an honest confusion of two very similarly named places in the same proximity, yet he treats

⁶⁴In 1999, the Oxford University Press published a major biographical work, to which Heckathorn contributed an article on Robert E. Peary, which takes a decidedly anti-Peary view, and one on Josephine D. Peary, which tells us precious little about Mrs. Peary, but is used rather to continue criticizing Peary; Russell Gibbons wrote the Cook biography. Both authors’ articles contain a number of errors, but Gibbons’s article is by far the least sound factually. By any objective criteria, one must wonder what scholarly standard was used in making the choices of contributors. [*DIO* note. Further on the legitimacy of scholarship currently published by Oxford University Press, see *DIO* 8 p.2. Note added 2002/2/28: *DIO*’s publisher regrets a lapse here in earlier editions, where Ted was scorned for minor (pre-1999) publication, a point neither accurate nor relevant to his output’s occasional very high value.]

⁶⁵A new, meticulously exhaustive index is available, postpaid, at cost (\$3) from the author.

⁶⁶*Cook & Peary* went to press in December 1996. An index cannot be written until the book is in page proofs. Since the illustrations in the book were laid into the text, until the pictures were positioned, page proofs could not be produced. Printers have schedules that must be met. If their deadline is missed, the printing might be delayed by months. Complicated arrangements had also been made with Barnes & Noble to have the book in its stores on the release date of February 17, 1997. Because of difficulties that arose with the illustrations, the page proofs were delayed. Thus the indexer simply did not have enough time to finish an adequate index and still meet the production schedule, and the book had to go forward with as much as she was able to finish if the publisher’s other commitments were to be met.

final thrust) to fake the climb. His 1906 journey towards Mt. McKinley ended⁵ at the Gateway, about 13 mi short of and 3 mi below the top of the mountain. He had already begun re-writing his diary and shooting flag-raising “summit” photos while still⁶ about 20 mi from the top.

B2 The family-funded Cook Society — abbreviated “CookSoc” here — predictably went more aggressively nuts than ever over these revelations, data which prove that their crusade to vindicate Cook is perfectly missin’ and just as impossible.

B3 Result: CookSoc has by now utterly lost interest in responsive and honest discussion — and has come to act as if reality is something one purchases at a convenience-store, and truth is just a football to be booted about as one pleases. Indeed, *DIO*’s prime initial reaction to the truth-kicking CookSoc folks’ *Polar Priorities 18* is that its pretense to be substantially answering *DIO* 7.2-3 is just another fake.

B4 Throughout the following, *Polar Priorities 18* (1998 Sept) will be referred to as PP18 (analogously for other PP volumes), and we will refer to *DIO* 7.2-3 †7, †8, and †9 as: D7, D8, D9, respectively. D7 & D8 are by Bob Bryce. PP18 falsely assumes throughout that D9 is entirely by DR, even though *DIO*’s Editor is Keith Pickering. (In fact, the authorship is joint: KP-DR.) Below, BR (followed by page-number) is sometimes used as an abbreviation for Bryce *Cook & Peary* (1997), though the book is also often referred to as: Bryce 1997. And F (followed by page-number) is uniformly used for Rawlins *Peary . . . Fiction* (1973).

C CookSoc Crosses the Line Between Dementia and Deceit

The key arguments of D7-D9 were based on hard data:

C1 The original, uncropped “summit” photo was published for the first time in D7. From reading PP18, one would not know that the Cook Society has possessed this photo for years without publishing it, and would not know that it proves anything — because, despite our challenge to CookSoc (at D9 §G3 & fn 48) to air the photo and its mate (D7 Fig.18 & Fig.4, resp) AS A PAIR, the cult has *still* not done so — much less published our lethal blow-up comparisons at D7 Fig.6 & Fig.8 which are undeniably *the* hard centerpiece-evidences (fn 7) in the whole Cook-McKinley affair.

C2 It is obvious that CookSoc would prefer that its own members not *see* that its hero’s alleged photo of McKinley’s top is a fake — positively proven by the *DIO* blow-ups to be at a place (near Ruth Glacier) which Cook *himself* said was only 8000 ft high.⁷

C3 The poison-Cookies’ reaction to the photo’s recovery & *DIO* publication? Vengeful slander. (Vindicating predictions at D9 §C10 & fn 47 — and inadvertently revealing how deeply *DIO* has struck home.)

C4 Besides personal attacks, the only response is just CookSoc lawyer Sheldon Cook’s bald statement at PP18 p.42 (1998): “it seems unlikely that Cook’s photograph captioned [as] the top is Fake Peak.” (Four years earlier, same Sheldon at PP14 p.9 [1994]: “it seems very unlikely . . .”) This eyeless-echo stolidity is an *answer* to D7’s Figs.18, 4, 6, & 8?

decided upon the latitude: “During Feb.-July, 1906, the Latitude of 87°06’ North was reached”. But none of these five records provided the Farthest’s later-alleged date, 4/21 — which Cook was later to exactly copy for the final version of his 1908 N.Pole claim. Similarly, it took Peary until 1909 June to specify the date of his 1909/4/6 “Pole” attainment. (The June record said that expedition chief-scientist Ross Marvin of Cornell was “drowned”: yet another lie.)

⁵ See §§D1, D2, L2, N6.

⁶In 1906 Cook stopped at the Gateway (for its location, see D7 Fig.1& D9 Fig.32), so he never got within twice the distance from the top (and barely half the height) he’d already achieved during his creditable 1903 pioneer circuit of Mt. McKinley.

⁷ Actual altitude is even less: about 5000 ft. See D7 Fig.4 for Cook’s published photo (plus the text of his 8000 ft caption to it), there shown to match the “summit” photo (D7 Fig.18) by comparisons of blow-ups of two key details in both photos: see D7 Fig.6(a)vs(b) & Fig.8(a)vs(b).

‡6 High Comedy at Low Altitude: Cook Cult Bare

DIO 7.2-3 Leaves Hoaxer-Huggers in Paranoiac Frenzy

Faker's Defenders Reduced to Desperate Emulation

How About a Face-to-Face, Photo-to-Photo Debate?

A Unharmless Cranks

After years of closeup-observation of strange scholarship in action, *DIO* has induced two simple but curiously little-appreciated principles regarding the crank — a creature generally a little more abundant outside the academic establishment than inside¹ it.

A1 Anyone who is long addicted to defending scientific nonsense will eventually become addicted to deceit.² See below (§C8) for the high pinnacle of lowness by explorer Frederick Cook's modern advocates.

A2 What starts out as a misguided-but-idealistically-motivated crusade increasingly degenerates into a self-centered vortex of frustrated rage, where upholding The Cause has become less psychologically dominant than an I-can't-have-been-this-wrong-this-long³ justification of the crusader's own life and reputation.

B CookSoc's Miss-Imps

B1 *DIO* 7.2-3 presented simple photographic, diary, compass, and barometer proofs of the 1906 fraudulence of then-highly-respected explorer Frederick Cook's claim to have climbed 20320 ft Mt. McKinley — plus evidence that Cook had decided⁴ early on (in his

¹See D9 fn 47 & *DIO* 4.2 p.56 Table 1. [Also here: the bracket in §C7 & 1st parenthesis in §E8.]

²How else make a case for a belief, in the face of incoming evidence that consistently contradicts it? See DR's 1977 *Skeptical Inquirer* article (*Skinq* 2.1:62 at pp.73-74). Also *DIO* 8 ‡5 fn 62.

³See D9 fn 28.

⁴Peary was a far greater explorer than Cook but his decisiveness in firming details of his own occasional frauds was little better than Cook's. Evidence of Peary's ambivalence about his non-existent Peary Channel in 1892 is found at F46 and more convincingly at BR 80, 85, 89, 134, 336. As for Peary's back&forth indecisiveness before permanent commitment to faking his 1899/7/18 sighting of "Jesup Land": this claim (contra Rost: BR 596) was entered upon an 1899 map at the last minute (to impress the Peary Arctic Club). The map was published in that year by the AGS. (It is reproduced at F57 and analysed at F50.) But Jesup Land is not in his written reports of that time. A later DR check in the Peary Papers of his 1899/7/18 "discovery moment" manuscript material uncovered no mention of his seeing any land beyond Cannon Bay. His surveying data of this date (which DR checked a decade ago) fixed the position of nothing beyond that bay's entrance. His 1899/8/28 handwritten report to the Peary Arctic Club said he looked "some fifty miles to the northwest", a sentence which got expanded in his 1903/11 speech to RGS to read (emph added): "some 50 miles to the northwest, *beyond which appeared yet more distant land*". (See F52.) As for Peary's decision to fake his 1906/6/24&28 sightings of Crocker Land: we know this occurred between 1906/11/23 and 1907/2, probably after 1906/12/12. (See F74; also Peary to Crocker 1907/4/16&24 in the Peary Papers.) For detailed proof of deliberate fraud here, see *DIO* 1.1 ‡4 §§B1-B2. But Crocker Land wasn't Peary's only 1906 hoax: there was also his supposed "Farthest North". In that year, Peary left five cairn records along Ellesmere Island's coast: 6/8 (*NGM* 106:525; 1954/4), 6/28 (Hobbs 1936), 6/30 (F77), 7/5 (F77), 7/28 (unpublished: original at US Naval Museum, Annapolis). The 6/8 record claimed his Farthest North but gave neither its date nor even its latitude! Nor its longitude — though the very same record specifies longitude 50°W as where he struck land (5/12: F69) on the return south to Greenland, a figure he eventually (in his 1907 April book) adopted for the alleged Farthest, but only after he'd tried out 45°W for the Farthest (in his 1907 Feb *Harper's* article): see F69. The 7/28 record (hitherto unnoticed in Controversy literature) finally

it as a mighty error with massive implications for the understanding of truth and history.

K20 The Golden Spike was driven at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869, during the ceremonial joining of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific R.R.s. But, Heckathorn tells us, his high school and college text books, and even the likes of Henry Steele Commager and Samuel Eliot Morison stated that the Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Point, because "naïve authors and historians" (the eminent Mr. Commager and Mr. Morison, by implication, among them, we must suppose) have perpetuated this mistake down to the present time because they never took the trouble to check it out "in the field." Only by going into the field, Heckathorn tells us, was he cured of this "smug belief," and he uses this as an indictment of "arrogant historians (or librarians)" who refuse to abandon their primary sources for field research. He finishes by chiding that "Not all truth is in the library."

K21 I would agree: not all truth is in the library. Sometimes you need only to go to your own bookshelf, or perhaps as far afield as your telephone to access the primary documents that hold truth about documented historical matters. In the case of the Golden Spike, there is certainly no need to visit Utah personally.

K22 When the Golden Spike was driven, it was one of the first events reported "live" via telegraph. All primary accounts of the ceremony clearly state that the messages are coming from Promontory, Utah. And any good book that uses primary documents states this.⁶⁷ The confusion arose later when some second-hand accounts confused the town of Promontory with Promontory Point — a peninsula 35 miles to the southwest. A check of *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopedia: a Scientific & Popular Treasury of Useful Knowledge*, which was published in 1874, and which I happen to have a copy of on my reference shelf, lists Promontory as a village in Box Elder County, Utah "at the highest point of the Union Pacific R.R., population 43," confirming that Promontory lay on the railroad line in that year, well before the railroad arrived at Promontory Point in 1903.

K23 To straighten out the exact facts of this slight historic confusion, I phoned the Golden Spike National Historical Site and spoke to Rick Wilson, head ranger there. He confirmed that many books still have Promontory Point as the site of the ceremony because "they have just copied the incorrect information from other sources." This is exactly my point.

K24 Heckathorn had his "smug belief" because he had only consulted erroneous *secondary printed sources* — his high school and college histories.⁶⁸ I had no difficulty at all in finding the truth by reading accounts that used *primary sources*, checking a near-contemporary secondary source and then confirming the details by consulting an expert. And I *did not have to leave my living room to do so*. In fact, Mr. Wilson was so taken with my 1874 encyclopedia that he had me look up several items he was curious about in it (and ran up a hefty phone bill in the process). But as a librarian, I was pleased I could help him with his information needs. That's what I do for hundreds of people every week.

K25 Heckathorn cautions his readers about accepting at face value the writings of arrogant or naïve historians and librarians, yet swallows whole Hugh Eames's half-truths and innuendoes about Judge John Killits, the trial judge at Cook's Texas mail fraud trial, and says I "wimped out" on the "strange" judge's background. In *Winner Lose All*,⁶⁹ Eames mentioned that the judge had been investigated for possibly taking bribes and had been given a contempt citation by the Supreme Court. He also mentions that Killits left his wife an estate of only about \$3,000, yet she died some years later leaving an estate of \$82,000. Eames closes this selective biographical sketch of Killits by saying "There is no indication that she had been independently wealthy." Obviously, Eames was trying to imply that the judge might have been less than honest and that this monetary disparity was suspicious. But

⁶⁷One such source on my bookshelf is Jensen, Oliver, *The American Heritage History of Railroads in America*, New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1975.

⁶⁸These are the same sort of sources that Russell Gibbons heartily recommends to his readers for "balance" against my book.

⁶⁹Pp.300-01.

was Eames hinting that the Judge who was alleged to have taken bribes, received a large payment from the ever-present “Peary Cabal” for throwing the book at Cook at his mail fraud trial, which he then hid in his wife’s name? If so, this has no known corroboration in the historical record.

K26 If Heckathorn ever looks into the primary sources on Judge Killits’s career on the bench, including his easily obtainable obituaries, he may cure himself of this smug belief as well. The judge was exonerated of all charges brought against him during his judicial career and retired honorably from the Federal Bench. Mrs. Killits’s money could have come from investments over the fourteen years between their deaths or a thousand other innocent and honest means that had nothing to do with any payoff. Such unfounded suggestions of wrong-doing are typical of amateur researchers and partisan defenders like Eames and Heckathorn, who fill in the blanks however they like when they don’t know the truth and don’t know how, or don’t want to find it out, either. And it is clear from Eames’s book that he could never have found it out.

K27 At one point in his book, Eames states: “No daily record exists of [Cook’s] movements in 1911, 1912, and most of 1913”⁷⁰ Eames said this because Andrew Freeman, from whom Eames cribbed most of his book, spent little time on these years in his *The Case for Doctor Cook*. Thus there was nothing to crib, and since Eames depended so heavily on Freeman’s research, being no researcher himself, asserted there was “no daily record” to excuse the gap. To the contrary, I found a wealth of material on these years during which Cook traveled the Chautauqua and Vaudeville circuits presenting himself as a wronged man to millions. *Cook & Peary* devotes more than 50 pages to these three years (a sixth of the length of Eames’s whole book), and they represent a mere fraction of the hundreds of pages of material from which they were synthesized. The material was there; Eames just couldn’t find it.⁷¹

K28 Heckathorn still has his “smug beliefs” about Frederick Cook’s McKinley claims because he would rather go into the field, which contains no primary documents and in which even the conditions on the ground are now significantly different than those at the time of the events in question. If he ever gets around to an objective reading of the primary materials of the 1906 expedition on which Cook claimed to have reached the summit of the mountain, he will find that they, in fact, point unerringly to Cook’s climb being a fake. Arrogance does not come from objective study of primary documents in preference to traipsing around the sites of historic events, it comes when an individual continues to defend myths like the Cook climb in the face of overwhelming documentation to the contrary that he has not yet bothered to consult.

K29 Before Heckathorn first “went into the field” in 1994, or FACS required you to be a “polar historian” (or at least have its certification that you were one) to write about the Polar Controversy, he was singing a different tune. In a review of David E. Fisher’s *Across the Top of the World*,⁷² Heckathorn warned: “Let those who write about the Cook-Peary Controversy beware. In this field, academic degrees, institutional standing and reputation mean nothing. Only documented facts and sound analysis count.” Heckathorn asks at the outset of his review, “What happens when a nuclear physicist and professor of cosmochemistry invades the field of polar history?” “The historical equivalent of a Three Mile Island Disaster,” is Heckathorn’s answer, because this “polar historian” detected “more than 40 factual, historical errors” in Dr. Fisher’s book. Collaterally, the reader of this response might ask, “What happens when a real estate agent invades the field of polar history?” On a comparative basis with Heckathorn’s analogy the answer is: “Meltdown at Chernobyl.” Too bad Heckathorn didn’t take his own advice to heart while he still had some standing in

⁷⁰ *Cook & Peary* p.272.

⁷¹ It is true that there was very little coverage of Cook’s movements in the New York newspapers at this time because the Peary Arctic Club had arranged an embargo on all news about Cook, but local newspapers published in the towns he visited have plenty of details.

⁷² “Cosmochemistry at the North Pole,” *Polar Priorities*, v.12 [September 1994], p.42.

each student in the class she teaches that examines the nature of true and false discourse, and she has placed *Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy, Resolved* on the class reading list. She is also using other material I provided her to show that it was impossible for Cook to reach the North Pole along a “magnetic meridian,” as he claimed.⁶⁰ On June 3, 1999, Dr. Nicholson submitted another evaluation to Amazon declaring, “As a piece of scholarship, this is a definitive book. . . . Those wishing to spend time with this book will be rewarded with credible information about one of the fascinating human stories of the last two centuries.” *DIO*’s analysis of Cook’s fake summit picture is not argumentation “to fit the model.” Anyone with eyes can see that it is identical to Fake Peak, and there can be no further argument about that, since the fit is perfect. On the other hand, Heckathorn’s argument that the sketch on page 52 is Pegasus Peak is designed to fit his model and, as anyone with eyes can see, that is quite a stretch, indeed.

N Conclusion

N1 I have now come to the absolute conclusion of my response to these three would-be critical reviewers. But to say this is *the* conclusion would be to fall to a level of wishful thinking only possible to a Cookite. Any *true* scholars of this subject, having had this many errors, fallacies, absurdities, and self-contradictions pointed out in their writings, would shrink away in shame knowing their credibility could never be made whole again, and would move on to some other field of endeavor not requiring fundamental research skills or even the ability to make a logical argument. But these three will never quit. Their credibility may be gone, but as long as the trust set up to bankroll FACS by Dr. Cook’s granddaughter remains solvent there will be more *Polar Priorities* with more criticisms of *Cook & Peary*, *DIO*, and any other future forum which dares to bring proofs against their wishes.⁶¹

N2 On that basis I would recommend future issues of *Polar Priorities* to all students of the psychology of cultism and hero worship, as well as to those interested in the methods of egotism, self-justification and common greed, but not as a serious forum for the discussion of polar history.

References

- BBD The papers of Belmore Browne, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
 CSC The collection of the Frederick A. Cook Society, Ohio State U., Columbus, Ohio.
 FCC The Frederick Cook Collection, Library of Congress.
 PFC The Peary Family Collection, National Archives.
 SCD The Vilhjalmur Stefansson Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
 NYT The *New York Times*

[Note added 2001. The Library of Congress currently has on display an exhibition entitled “American Treasures of the Library of Congress.” Tens of thousands of tourists have visited this exhibition, which devotes one entire display case to Dr. Frederick Cook and his claim to have reached the North Pole. It contains one of his original polar notebooks and several of his stereopticon slides. The explanatory panel in the case adopts Bryce’s conclusions that Cook’s diaries have contradictions, insertions, deletions, and substantial erasures that brand the narrative they contain as a fabrication. Visitors to the Library of Congress can view the exhibit on the 2nd floor of the Jefferson Building.]

⁶⁰ E-mails from Nancy Nicholson to the author, dated March 8 and 10, 1999; June 3-4, 1999; possession of author.

⁶¹ [For proof, see the accusations in FACS publications made against the *New York Times* after it printed a story (November 26, 1998 p.1) on Bryce’s discovery of the original of Cook’s “summit” photo.]

Browne letter of 1914 is read in context there is another perfectly innocent interpretation of it that, if accepted, would “blow away” Heckathorn’s continued assault on Browne’s honesty. Here is the relevant passage in full:

Captain Baldwin has called on me several times lately, and I have furnished him with a copy of Dr. Cook’s, and my own book, as well as the original negatives of Dr. Cook’s fakes, which I secured in 1910. He has secured an affidavit from his photographer to the effect that these negatives have never been tampered with.⁵⁸

M2 The “original negatives of Dr. Cook’s fakes” could legitimately be interpreted, not as Cook’s negatives, but the ones Browne took in Alaska during his attempt to duplicate Cook’s pictures, which he, for a fact, “secured in 1910” on his expedition to Fake Peak. And if Browne never had Cook’s negatives, then Heckathorn’s conspiratorial implications of suppression in the astonishment he expresses that Browne never discussed these negatives with Washburn vanishes as completely as Bradley Land has since the last time Dr. Cook “saw” it. If it is Heckathorn’s implication that the photo appearing in the *New York Times* is some sort of fake by Browne (and this is by no means sure from Heckathorn’s muddled text), that notion is severely undermined by the next sentence of the letter quoted, in which Browne states that Baldwin’s photographer had made an affidavit saying that the “original negatives” Browne gave him “have never been tampered with in any way.” So whether they were Cook’s or Browne’s, any implication of fakery involving these negatives is refuted. This statement is significant in that in 1914 E.C. Rost, who was Cook’s paid private Congressional lobbyist at the time, made the allegation that Browne’s photo of Fake Peak was a composite photo/painting. The timing of Browne’s gift of negatives to Baldwin and the affidavit certifying that they “have never been tampered with” by the photographer strongly imply that the negatives in question were Browne’s, not Cook’s, and the affidavit of their genuineness was intended to counter Rost’s allegation. On the basis of this new reading of Browne’s letter, I now lean toward this interpretation, and that the negatives referred to are those of Browne now at Dartmouth College, not Cook’s. My examination of Baldwin’s papers showed that they contained neither Cook’s nor Browne’s negatives, however. The incriminating full image of Cook’s summit photo turned up in Cook’s own papers, instead; and we have it from no less an authority than FACS’s “historian” that the original print I discovered there, **whose subsequent mysterious disappearance has yet to be explained by FACS**, had an inscription on the back in Dr. Cook’s own handwriting that it was made from the original negative.⁵⁹ As so often before, Dr. Cook’s own hand condemns him, and demolishes Heckathorn’s implication of Browne’s deceit in one motion. Heckathorn still does not seem to comprehend in the slightest the point of the *Times* presentation of the uncropped photo. By superimposing on the full original image taken by Cook in 1906 a frame representing the area included in the version of this photograph as published in 1908, it shows what *Dr. Cook, himself, cropped off his original for publication so as to hide the geographical features visible in the background that would give its true location away*. Belmore Browne certainly had nothing to do with that! And its true location is Browne’s Fake Peak, and not the mighty summit of Mount McKinley.

M3 Finally, Heckathorn quotes a passage from “a critic” on the amazon.com web page. This passage was so enigmatic that I wrote to the author to get an explanation of just what it meant. The writer turned out to be Dr. Nancy Nicholson, a professor at the University of Miami, Ohio. I have since had extensive e-mail correspondence with her and I have sent her additional materials, including *DIO* 7.2-3. After reading my articles, she termed them “excellent” and she now agrees that Cook’s “summit” photo is identical with Fake Peak. She has also requested enough copies of the Mount McKinley *DIO* issue to furnish one to

the research community. With each issue of *Polar Priorities*, he is becoming its laughing stock instead. Whatever credibility he may have once enjoyed there, has now, surely, totally vanished.

K30 The theme of my book is not “a pox on both your houses — both fakers and liars” as Heckathorn and Gibbons both say it is. The theme of the book is fairness: giving Cook and Peary credit for what each actually accomplished, but giving them none for what they only said they accomplished. The book is not without compassion for two men swallowed up by their own irrational dreams, and for Cook more so than Peary. Because they were both fakers and liars in their most sensational claims, each brought the pox on his own house and to his unfortunate descendants, some of whom were unable or unwilling to see that the documents bequeathed to them from their ancestor’s own hands embodied convincing evidence against his claims. As the *New York American* editorialized in the wake of Cook’s downfall, “No money can buy comfort for a ruined life. No reminiscent glow of passing repute can console eternal shame.”⁷³ And yet, in the aftermath of Cook’s ruined life, he left counsel to others so that they might learn a lesson from his choice of passing repute. In this he succeeded, more or less, and so, I think, saved himself from eternal shame. That, in the end, is the real lesson of my book, to the extent that it can be perceived by the reader. Obviously, it has been lost on Ted Heckathorn and Russ Gibbons.

L “Sins of Omission and Contradiction,” by Ted Heckathorn

L1 Heckathorn subsequently published an elaboration of his “review” of my book, which only buried his credentials as an authority on the subject at hand deeper than ever before. Again, its title is a good reflection of its own content. Fortunately, for the present reader, half of it dealt with Heckathorn’s feud with Bradford Washburn, which spares me the need of commenting on it to any great extent. It may be relevant to the present discussion to mention, however, that Washburn is acknowledged throughout the world as the foremost expert on Mount McKinley. And although Heckathorn dismisses me for not having been on the ground, he does not dwell on Washburn’s vast experience “in the field” around the whole Alaska Range or atop many of its peaks, including Mount McKinley (thrice) and even above all of them with an aerial camera. By comparison, Heckathorn has made one brief visit to Ruth Glacier and reportedly was unable to reach even the 12,000 foot ridge of the East Buttress. Yet Heckathorn dismisses Washburn nearly as out of hand as he does me, accusing him of suppressing evidence and carrying on a vendetta inspired by the “Peary Cabal.” Though I found in my personal dealings with Washburn that he is not always the rational scientist when it comes to Dr. Cook, in retrospect he looks like a paragon of objectivity compared with Ted Heckathorn.

L2 In the original “critical review” and on several other occasions, as we have seen, Heckathorn has stated that my McKinley chapter is “laced with factual errors and distortions,” but that he carefully avoided pointing out even a single one of these that “insider folks will enjoy a few laughs at [when reading] . . . some of [Bryce’s] blunders.” In his elaboration in *Polar Priorities*, he is more talkative about what he considers “a host of errors — large, small and even some ridiculous ones.”

L3 He says, “[Bryce’s] comments about Cook’s failure to find a workable route overlooks the fact that had Cook gone about 20 miles north from Mt. Yenlo in 1903, he would have reached the Kahiltna Glacier. This leads to the West Buttress route used today by nearly all climbers.” This is typical of Heckathorn’s muddled reasoning. What possible relevance does this have to the accuracy of my book? The *fact* is Cook *didn’t* go 20 miles north from Mount Yenlo in 1903, and the *fact* is that the popular West Buttress route *was not worked out until 1951*, by Bradford Washburn. So any such “if” statement has no *fact*

⁵⁸Letter, Belmore Browne to Thomas H. Hubbard, January 21, 1914, PFC.

⁵⁹See *DIO* 7.2-3 p.45.

⁷³*NYA*, December 22, 1909.

in it that has anything to do with the discussion he refers to, since it is about something that was unknown in Cook's time. The *fact* remains that Cook failed to find a workable route in 1906. The discovery of a workable route 45 years later has no relevance whatever, then, to Cook, as he could have no knowledge of it.

L4 Heckathorn also says I mix up the East Ridge with the East Buttress. This is hairsplitting. [*DIO*: for substantial confusion, see ¶6 §J5!] The use of terms describing the topography of Mount McKinley in Cook's time was very inconsistent, as it always is in early accounts of unexplored territory before names for various features become standardized. It is clear to anyone who has read my book and its notes, that I attempt to describe the mountain as the early explorers did, not as it has since come to be known and described today, clarifying their descriptions only when it could make a difference to the reader's understanding. The term East Ridge was often used for the whole East Buttress in those days, and even in the modern literature, the terms are by no means used consistently.⁷⁴

L5 Heckathorn also apparently measures "blunders" in inches. He complains [vs. ¶5 fn 51 !] that Walt Gonnason's height is elevated to "six-foot-four," but, as usual, does not tell us how tall he really is so we can measure the true magnitude of this "blunder." I have never met Mr. Gonnason, so I don't know how tall he is, but I took the estimate of his height directly from this passage in an eyewitness account written by Dr. Cook's daughter: "It took Gonnason longer to disentangle his six feet, four inches [from the cockpit of the plane]."⁷⁵ My repetition of Mrs. Vetter's apparent misjudgment of Gonnason's height only shows how faithful I was to my original, if occasionally inaccurate, primary sources. So where are all these "ridiculous" errors that insider folks are chuckling over? The world still waits for Ted Heckathorn to point them out, even though he has had several opportunities to do so and let us outsiders in on the purported joke.

L6 Heckathorn's drum beat (and that of FACS in general) that I am unqualified to write about Mount McKinley because I have never been over the ground would, as we have seen, disqualify every single one of the proponents of Dr. Cook whom Gibbons said I ignored, but one. It would also disqualify both of the other Cook proponents who have been quoted liberally in Cook's defense, namely Edwin Swift Balch and Ernest C. Rost. Yet no such warning is given about the writers Gibbons and Heckathorn urge on their readers for "balance." They don't tell them, for instance, that Rost was Cook's personal lobbyist, paid by Cook himself to carry out a campaign on his behalf in Congress, at the very time Rost wrote the tract about Cook's summit photograph which FACS is so fond of quoting as impartial expert testimony.⁷⁶

L7 Even so, one must ask: should the reader of a book that describes what the Eiffel Tower looks like be suspicious of the accuracy of the description if the writer has never been to Paris? Are the only men who are qualified to write about the surface of the moon former members of an Apollo mission? Must one cross the Alps on an elephant to write "authoritatively" about Hannibal's campaign? Can anything be learned about the Battle of Gettysburg by standing in line to buy a hamburger in the MacDonald's that now stands directly across the path of Pickett's Charge? As we saw in the case of the Golden Spike, field research is not necessarily superior to the study of primary documents. Conditions in the field change with season and time, but primary documents are immutable.

L8 If it was necessary to write only from experience "in the field," few writers would be qualified to take up a pen on any subject. It is possible to write competently about

⁷⁴It should be noted that Cook always termed the ridge he said he climbed to the summit of Mount McKinley, the "Northeast Ridge." Was this a "ridiculous error" on Cook's part? Or was it because he actually mistook the East Buttress for the true "Northeast Ridge" in working out his fantasy route? [See *C&P*, pp.824-26.]

⁷⁵Vetter, Helene Cook, "Talkeetna Encounter," unpublished manuscript written for *Esquire*, c.1956, page 17. CSC.

⁷⁶Rost later sued Cook for more than \$3,000 in back wages when Cook fired him without paying him. He won [Bryce 1997 pp.601, 791].

from someone unable to follow even his own stated facts? He says that "while Washburn was playing with his 'fifty-foot erector set' on the lower Ruth Glacier, Gonnason's 1956 expedition was exploring the East Ridge area on the Upper Ruth Glacier." However, only two paragraphs before, Heckathorn tells us that Washburn had erected his photographic mast (the referred-to "erector set")⁷⁷ in an attempt to duplicate Cook's photo in 1957, not 1956, so the two events were *not* coincident. When a "polar historian" cannot keep his facts straight for three consecutive paragraphs, how much faith can we have in his command of detail or logic? So when Heckathorn introduces the obscure 1956 expedition of one James Mills, which he says was the first to ascend Pegasus Peak, we must beware of his intent. Heckathorn offers that "Mills had no idea that Cook had visited [Traleika Col] half a century before or had seen and sketched Pegasus Peak in his 1906 diary." So, what is the point in mentioning Mills at all then? That becomes clear only later when Heckathorn says "Washburn's photographic evidence and persuasive arguments (published in the 1958 number of the *American Alpine Journal*) seemingly closed the door on Dr. Cook's 1906 ascent. The expeditions of Gonnason and Mills were reduced to footnotes or less." His implication could be that news of Mills expedition was intentionally suppressed by the terrible "Peary Cabal" — cum Washburn, even though Heckathorn has just finished saying that "until the diary of the dead explorer [Cook] . . . arose from the archives" no one, including Mills, knew that Cook had visited Traleika Col and seen Pegasus Peak. Therefore Washburn, also, could have had no idea that Cook had allegedly done this great feat, much less that it would become the key argument put forward in his defense by his followers forty years later. So, even the malevolent, ever-present and never-ending "Peary Cabal" could have had no reason to "suppress" anything about Mills's expedition at all. Therefore this is a most ridiculous implication. And of course, *DIO* 7.2-3 has shown conclusively that Cook neither reached Traleika Col, nor is the drawing on page 52 actually Pegasus Peak, so this entire argument is irrelevant, anyway.

6. Fake Peak III: The Rehash to Fit the Model, 1998. Here Heckathorn selectively quotes from my book to place in the reader's mind the idea that I did not come to a definite conclusion in my book about Cook's "summit" picture being the same place as "Fake Peak" and that my subsequent "rehash" of the identification of the place in Cook's picture was only an "afterthought" inspired at the urging of that diehard vendettist, Brad Washburn, to fit Belmore Browne's 1910 model. This is totally false. On page 821 of *Cook & Peary* I discuss the Cook photograph that first appeared in *DIO* 7.2-3 (Fig.18) and was later reprinted in the *New York Times*, in exactly the same terms as I did in the article; I just didn't print the picture in the book because I did not have a reproducible copy at the time the book was published. There I state: "In [Cook's original] print the rock structures stand out boldly, and it cannot be doubted that they are identical to those of Fake Peak that still remain. Furthermore, more of the 'distant peak' at the right is visible, and the top of the adjacent cliff, shown on the left margin of [Cook's summit photo] can be seen protruding over the left shoulder of Cook's 'summit,' doubly confirming that the places Cook and Browne photographed were, indeed, one and the same." Apparently these facts are still lost on Ted Heckathorn. Instead, he seems to suggest here that the photo printed in *DIO* is some sort of fake perpetrated by Belmore Browne on Cook's original image when he supposedly obtained it in 1910. He cites my own book as evidence for this innuendo, where I expressed some doubts of Belmore Browne because he once had Cook's negatives in his possession, and because I remarked that apparently Bradford Washburn was never aware that "Cook's negatives had once been in Browne's possession." I suppose I should be flattered that Ted Heckathorn puts such faith in my speculations even though he rejects facts I first brought to light, such as the identical nature of Cook's summit and Browne's Fake Peak, but I now accept that my belief that Browne once had Cook's negatives was mistaken: when the entire

⁷⁷[*DIO* note. Reference is to an almost-high-enough platform Washburn & Adams Carter had to build (due to post-1906 snowmelt: §E4) to acquire Fig.6's near-match. (In Fig.6 caption: D7 = *DIO* 7.2 ¶7, and D9 = *DIO* 7.3 ¶9.) The ironic inappropriateness of CookSoc's sneer is stressed at ¶6 fn 11.]

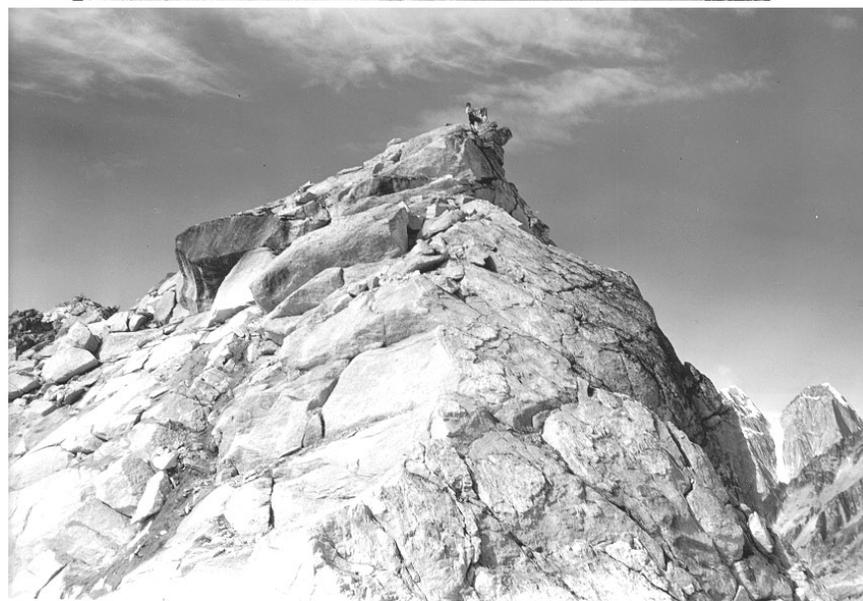


Figure 6: [a] Cook's 1906 photo (top) compared at the same size to [b] the Carter-Washburn 1957 photo of Fake Peak [D7 Fig.5] (some top-right profile lost by then [D9 fn 13]). [DIO note. The conspiratorialist (§B1, ¶4 §§K9-K10 & fn 95) Cook Society **STILL** can't own (¶6 §C7 & fn 11) that photo [a] (Cook's "summit" shot [D7 Fig.18]) wasn't taken atop McK. So: *what* Wingéd Demon lifted, off **McKinley's** top, those unmistakably-shaped rocks on photo [a]'s left side (shapes same in Cook's published [D7 Figs.2&3] & Browne's 1910 photos: ¶6 fn 16) & flew them 19 miles onto an identical left-side setting (photo [b]) on **Fake Peak's** top?! All before Browne Fake Peak photo#1 (1910/6/28, years ere Cook's lessers climbed McK), *snapped the very month when Root-of-All-Evil Washburn was born: WERE THE ROCKS ON LEFT FLOWN TO FAKE PEAK BY WASHBURN'S STORK?*]

places one has never been after careful study of contemporary documents, topographical maps and relevant photographs. Witness what Jerry Kobalenko, a Canadian journalist who has traveled alone on Ellesmere Island, said about my descriptions of that place, which I have never seen either: "In reading your book I was astonished by how I couldn't find any travel errors, despite your supposed lack of field experience. Over the past 12 years, I've accumulated about 2,500 foot miles on Ellesmere — probably as much as either of your two subjects — so I'm certainly qualified to say that your book reads true in that regard. (Earlier books during the height of the North Pole controversy, on the other hand, were full of confident but mistaken assertions by armchair experts who had a poor grasp of the conditions up there.)"⁷⁷

L9 As we have seen, I was able to ascertain the truth about the Golden Spike without opening my front door. The truth about Dr. Cook was not that easy; it took thousands of hours of study and weeks of travel, not to view the sites of Cook's disputed claims, but to visit the repositories of the crucial documents he left in evidence of those claims. And as one reviewer of my book noted, "Now that Dr. Cook's notebooks are available, his polar claim seems so transparent that it can easily be assessed without such understanding. Bryce's vast archival experience seems to have more than compensated for his lack of arctic experience."⁷⁸ And as my *DIO* article shows, the same can be said of Cook's McKinley claim as well.

L10 So where are the blunders? Honest mistakes of little consequence, perhaps, blunders, no. In any case, Ted Heckathorn should be the last one to accuse someone of "blunders." His, in print and out, are legion. Take this single paragraph from his piece in *Polar Priorities* (v.17 [1997], p.24):

If, as critics claim, Cook's motive was to raise cash or obtain backing for future exploration, then he knowingly shot himself in the foot with his 1906 claim [to have climbed Mount McKinley]. As an experienced explorer, he knew that a "heroic failure" would reap much bigger financial rewards than a final success, as evidenced by the experiences of Peary, Nansen, Scott, Shackleton and other explorers. A "near miss" would guarantee him an expedition somewhere in 1907.

L11 You do not have to be among the "insider folk" to chuckle over this one. You only need a fair working knowledge of the major highlights of polar history. While accusing me of "startling leaps from fact to fantasy," apparently Heckathorn not only believes in such fantasies as Cook climbing McKinley and reaching the North Pole, but he also believes that Cook could see into the future. Of the "heroic failures" he alludes to in this paragraph, only Nansen's had occurred when, according to Heckathorn, Cook "shot himself in the foot."

L12 Cook made his claim to have conquered McKinley in September 1906. Peary's "heroic failure" of falling short of the Pole but claiming a new "farthest north" record only became known in November of that year. Shackleton's "near miss" of falling short of the South Pole by 97 miles didn't happen until 1909. But according to Heckathorn, Cook did better yet, foreseeing Scott's "heroic failure" of losing the race to the South Pole to Amundsen six years in advance of the date it happened — 1912! This tangled chronology is not much of a creditable performance for someone who advertises himself everywhere as a "polar historian." Here, in this one paragraph, Heckathorn has made three blunders larger than any he has yet pointed out in all of my 1,133 pages, and in so doing he has shot his credibility in the head.

L13 Even more amusing is that although Heckathorn says "there simply is no evidence to justify the claim that a profit motive existed for either Cook or Barrill in 1906," he does not tell his reader that, largely on the strength of his claim to have climbed McKinley, Cook

⁷⁷ Jerry Kobalenko to RMB, March 12, 1998, possession of author.

⁷⁸ Review of *C&P* by Randall J. Oszcewski, *Polar Priorities*, v.17 [September 1997], page 41.

received full funding for his Polar trip from the millionaire gambler John R. Bradley in 1907 — exactly the opposite result of what he has been building this “better a heroic failure than a final success” thesis on. It is typical of the twisted reasoning of a Cook partisan in the wake of my book that Heckathorn could spend several paragraphs arguing that what he knows has already happened, couldn’t happen!

L14 That he thinks Barrill lied for nothing shows how little Heckathorn absorbed from my pages. As I explained there, Barrill wanted his back pay, and by going along with Cook’s fraud, he was the only one on the entire expedition who received it, plus \$200 extra for his trouble. Cook also sent him \$200 more in 1909 when the Peary forces closed in, probably hoping to keep him from spilling the beans. But in 1906, Barrill could not possibly have imagined what the truth about Cook’s McKinley story would be worth to Peary’s wealthy backers three years later. In 1906 he just wanted his back pay, which was the only reward on the horizon then. But in 1909 he saw an opportunity to earn far more, honestly, by simply recanting his former lies. Who wouldn’t jump at such a chance?

L15 Some of Heckathorn’s other past assumptions about Barrill are equally misguided. For instance, he has maintained that Barrill certainly had prior experience traveling on glaciers, since he had once visited Glacier National Park. Perhaps Heckathorn does not realize that Glacier National Park was not even organized until 1910 and that it is called that because the landscape was created by the action of Glaciers during the Ice Age, not because it is chock full of them today. The few small glaciers it still holds (the largest covers only about 200 acres) are all very far off the beaten track. Perhaps Heckathorn is suffering from another of his “smug beliefs” because he hasn’t even bothered to look at a primary document, say, a map of the park. Or could it be he has no “field experience” in Montana?

L16 As evidence of his authority on polar matters, Heckathorn likes to practice a technique I would call “reference dropping” — the mention of sources without an ounce of evidence that they are relevant to his argument. As we have seen in several examples already, he loves to tell his readers what these references say without quoting them. This method of establishing himself as an expert runs throughout his writings for FACS and might work with people who accept him at his word. But it fails to impress anyone familiar with the actual sources he cites. Often these sources are completely irrelevant to his discussion; at other times they flatly contradict his interpretation of them. A good example is the so called “recently discovered Inuit testimony and other evidence” he mentions, which “differed materially from what [the Peary interests] reported to the media.” I have had a copy of this “recently discovered” material since 1989, and I can say that it does not “differ materially” (though it is not exactly the same in all details) from the published Peary version.

L17 An amusing incident arising from this material occurred during the reading of Heckathorn’s paper in 1993. He referred to the notes of an interview with Cook’s Eskimos taken down in Greenland by George Borup, one of Peary’s assistants, where he stated that the Eskimos had said that Dr. Cook was “shaglahutee.” He paused at this point, beamed around the room, and asked if there was an Eskimo interpreter in the house. What he didn’t know was that “shaglahutee” was Borup’s phonetic attempt at the Polar Eskimo’s version of the word that has the same root as the one mentioned above in connection with Farley Mowat — a “teller of tall tales” — an enormous liar.⁷⁹ It seems obvious that Heckathorn thought (and perhaps still does) that a translation would vindicate Cook. I don’t speak Inuit, but I knew this word from my study of primary documents, including early accounts about the Polar Eskimos. The term was so well known, even to white men in 1909, that Borup didn’t bother to translate it in his notes.

L18 Although Heckathorn elaborates his imaginings into whatever he wants, he discounts in the most casual way the most crucial evidence that is actually “recently discovered.” He characterizes my recovery of the original notebook that Cook kept on his

⁷⁹ Apparently, he still hasn’t found a translator, as he innocently repeats this same passage in *Polar Priorities*, v.18 [September 1998], p.14.

Resolved, pages 235-62, which, despite its alleged inaccuracy, is cited by Dr. Myerson four times.⁵⁴ In fact, with the exception of two background sources on the early discovery of the mountain, all of the 24 citations are in (or from) my book, as is some of Dr. Myerson’s actual text.⁵⁵ So, obviously, I am not one of those who has “forgotten” this “prelude,” nor have I played it down. In *Cook & Peary*, I described Cook’s 1903 journey as probably the most underrated feat in the pioneer exploration of Alaska. So, I have nothing but admiration for it, and nothing to take exception to in Dr. Myerson’s account, beyond a number of small factual errors.⁵⁶ But Cook’s legitimate 1903 expedition is irrelevant to a discussion of his 1906 fake, other than that it was in 1903 that Cook gained the experience and made the observations necessary to carry out his later hoax.

3. Ignoring the Pegasus Peak Sketch in Cook’s Diary. *DIO* 7.2-3 devoted over 10 of its pages (62-67; 70-74) to “ignoring” this sketch. What Sheldon must mean by “ignoring” it is that *DIO* failed to agree with his (and Ted Heckathorn’s) conclusions that the sketch was indeed of Pegasus Peak (though Sheldon disagrees with himself on this point: see §C2). When this identification has been shown to be false, as it was in *DIO*, then all of Sheldon’s arguments have no evidentiary basis, whatever, and therefore have no factual basis. For why you should reject FACS’s conclusion about this sketch, read the above-cited pages of *DIO* 7.2-3 where we “ignored” it. Sheldon’s comparative outlines of Cook’s sketch and the photo of Pegasus Peak published with the article, if anything, graphically emphasize the dissimilarity of the two in the same respects noted in words on *DIO*’s pages, rather than convincing the viewer they are identical. Even Edwin Swift Balch would not attempt to lay those two pictures over one another! As far as Cook’s descriptions are concerned, I acknowledge in my book that some of them are uncannily accurate, but explicable in terms of Cook’s experience and previous observations in 1903. These, combined with the solid data available to Cook, such as Russell Porter’s detailed 1906 triangulations of the mountain, allowed him to make accurate descriptions and estimates of the heights of the various features Sheldon notes. Some of the evidence he credits to Cook as original observations, had already been published and were thus available in the public record. For instance, the fact that McKinley’s two summits are approximately two miles apart had been published earlier than 1906 in the surveys made by the US Geological Survey. Cook’s several accurate descriptions cited by Sheldon (there are many others which Sheldon fails to mention that are totally inaccurate), are not in the same class of evidence with the original documents of the expedition: the photographs made and original diaries kept on the expedition. As *DIO* shows, in all crucial respects dealing with Cook’s alleged ascent, these photographs and diaries are all fakes.

4. Fake Peak I: Browne Blown Away by Balch, 1910. Balch’s circumstantial arguments of 1914 (not 1910) are once again trotted forth by Ted Heckathorn to “blow away” Belmore Browne. But Belmore Browne has proven to be a far more substantial figure than Heckathorn believes, and remains standing. We have already seen above at §D how Edwin Swift Balch did not want to look at any evidence Browne offered in contradiction to his own arguments. In truth, these 85-year old arguments were unperceptive in 1914 and seem downright daffy now that Cook’s original photograph is available for study. In any case, I pointed out on page 816 of *Cook & Peary* why Balch’s method of analysis, which is the basis for the abstracts of his arguments quoted here, was bankrupt as evidence.

5. Fake Peak II: The East Side of Mt. McKinley, 1956. Here Heckathorn continues to indulge his penchant and preference for headlong illogic and baseless innuendo rather than resorting to sound judgment and solid evidence. But what else could be expected

⁵⁴ He has two separate references numbered 24 in his text, both occurring on the page cited in my book.

⁵⁵ He quotes the opening sentence from Chapter 12 of my book exactly as I wrote it with the exception of a single word, but gives no acknowledgement to me.

⁵⁶ For instances: Fidele Glacier was named for his wife, not his daughter; Cook succeeded Greely as president of the Explorers Club in 1906, not 1903, etc.

right; in July 1901, Peary was 45, not 49. Yet Cook gives us a graphically detailed description of all of the particulars of Peary's physical condition. If Cook couldn't remember such simple facts about Peary as his height and age, how can we believe that he could remember more than a quarter of a century after the fact, such minute physical details?

K3 I explain on pages 787-88 of *Cook & Peary* why a diagnosis of pernicious anemia in Peary was *medically impossible* by Cook in 1901, and point out a number of major internal discrepancies which condemn Cook's account as *a completely after-the-fact fabrication*. I also show that the testimony of Peary's subsequent physicians and the record of his subsequent physical history do not support any such diagnosis being accurate in 1901. Dr. Myerson, a physician himself, knows this to be so, yet gives no rebuttal to my points, medical or otherwise, in his article on this incident. Would this be a case of selective reporting or possibly ignoring? I am surprised, because among all the FACS officers Dr. Myerson (currently VP) has always struck me as a reasonable man. This is a continuing example of how greatly the powers of Frederick Cook have always been underestimated.

L "Onas [sic] Indian Account"

L1 Finally, we have Russell Gibbons's ludicrous attempt to justify Cook's embellished article on the guanaco hunt he said he took with the treacherous Ona Indians after his return to South America from Antarctica in 1899. In my book I point out how extremely unlikely the scenario outlined in Cook's article is.⁵² Yet this does not faze Gibbons, who repeats all of Cook's preposterous statements as fact. He is so oblivious to the absurdities of Cook's story that he quotes Cook's later article, which contradicts any possibility that he could have gone off into the interior with Indians then openly engaged in all-out warfare with the encroaching whites.

L2 Gibbons says that the hunt was postponed from the first visit of the *Belgica* on the way to Antarctica "because of native hostility." Yet he then says that even though this hostility had grown much greater by the time of the ship's return, Cook went anyway. He then quotes Cook, who says things were so hazardous that he had to be taken by gunboat to study the comparatively civilized Indians living around the missions, that two missionaries sent to calm the Onas had been murdered by them, and that "in the face of this hazard it was considered prudent for me, when I returned to continue my anthropological studies, to work with military representatives and with the still friendly mission Indians of the east and south. Protected in this way I secured my best photographs." Nothing whatever was said about his marvelous hunt. Would anyone except Russell Gibbons quote Cook contradicting himself as evidence in his favor?⁵³

M "The 'Fake Peak' Serials 1910-1998: special supplement to *Polar Priorities*, v.18, 1998"

M1 This 16-page, "special supplement" was actually issued in April 1999 and has been posted on the Internet for anyone wishing to read it in full. It is a good example of how repetition never improves a bad argument, and that such repetition is the only recourse when there is no valid counterargument to be made. The supplement is in five parts:

1. The DIO genesis & one-sided media 'Controversy.' Gibbons repeats, nearly word for word, his material from the 1998 *Polar Priorities*. See ‡4 §§Bff&J for my response.

2. Forgotten Prelude: The 1903 Circumnavigation. This part, by Dr. Myerson, is an account of Cook's unsuccessful attempt to climb Mount McKinley in 1903. In so doing, it recapitulates the material contained in *Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy*,

polar journey in 1908, which contains documentary evidence indicating that Cook's eventual narrative was a fabrication, as merely "a forgotten Cook notebook in the Copenhagen archives" which provided "interesting new material." He then goes on to say that "Bryce's case [against Cook reaching the North Pole] is heavily based upon the premise that Cook faked his 1906 [Mount McKinley] claim." No one who reads my chapter on Cook's North Pole fake could possibly come to such a conclusion as this. In fact, I state the very opposite at the outset of my lengthy evidentiary examination of Cook's polar claim: "Leaping to conclusions [about whether Cook faked his polar claim] based on Mount McKinley is neither logical nor just. Dr. Cook's Bradley Arctic Expedition of 1907-09 must be judged on its own merits, whatever may have happened in Alaska."⁸⁰

L19 It is also a completely unperceptive and wishful analysis for him to state that "the latter portion of Bryce's book is filled with extensive quotations of dubious relevance, personal opinion and gossip immaterial to Cook's geographical claims . . ." of interest only to "polar trivia buffs," when it actually contains all of the extensive documentary evidence that proves Cook a fraud and a fake. There is nothing of dubious relevance in it (although Heckathorn may be unable to understand what the relevance is), there are no personal opinions that are not clearly labeled as such, and there is absolutely no immaterial gossip of any kind.

L20 Heckathorn says it is "incredible" to believe that Cook tried to reach the North Pole without knowing how to navigate by sextant. But as *Cook & Peary* shows in a very credible way, there is strong evidence that is exactly what Cook did, and it also explains why he thought he could do it. As I demonstrate in my book, Cook didn't "overlook" the need to navigate. He thought he could navigate along a "magnetic meridian" with a magnetic compass, obviating the use of a sextant, which he did not know how to use. Of course, Cook also did not know this will not work — at least the way he intended to do it. When that explanation has been made, the belief that Cook would dispense with his sextant is not "incredible" at all.

L21 The argument that Cook could not have graduated from high school and college without ever taking courses in trigonometry or solid geometry is a further example of Heckathorn's own thoughtless assumptions. I graduated from high school in 1964, and I never had a minute of solid geometry, even in college, though I earned a Bachelor of Science degree. I did have a trigonometry course in high school, but not so much as an equation of spherical trig, which is the type used in celestial navigation. Trigonometry did not become a standard part of most high school curricula until the early part of this century, and even today many students who are not college bound are not required to take it. Cook graduated from public school in 1887. A record of the coursework needed for his medical degree shows no mathematical requirements whatsoever.

L22 In attempting to excuse the errors in Cook's published navigational data, Heckathorn alludes to errors in Amundsen's navigation, but, as is his usual pattern, does not tell his reader that Amundsen's are relatively minor by comparison. Cook's, however, are the sort that prove he had no real knowledge of the use of a sextant at all, because they are absolutely fatal, not to mention ridiculous. As Dennis Rawlins said in his book, "No one who had used a sextant and artificial horizon once — anywhere — could have made [such mistakes]."⁸¹

L23 Heckathorn attempts to be ironic by saying that I try to prove Cook's claim of 15.3 miles per day average sledge speed to the North Pole impossible by citing MacMillan's much greater speeds. But MacMillan went nowhere near the Pole and returned to land with nearly empty sledges. Even so, Cook's speed was similar to MacMillan's over the same route going out, even though Cook was necessarily much more heavily equipped,

⁸⁰ *Cook & Peary* p.847. [DIO comment: Similarly, it would be wrong to devalue Byrd's genuine later accomplishments because he faked a 1926 claim. Or to devalue Cook's or Heckathorn's genuine earlier contributions because of later misadventures.]

⁸¹ Rawlins, Dennis, *Peary at the North Pole; Fact or Fiction?*, p.87.

⁵² "With Fuegians on a Guanaco Hunt," *Outlook*, February 1901, pp.567-80.

⁵³ For a full discussion of this tell-tale article, see *C&P*, pp.786-87.

since he was attempting to reach the Pole and return with what he could carry on two sleds — a round trip of in excess of 1,000 miles — whereas MacMillan’s journey totaled slightly over 240 miles. That was the point of my comparison: Since I contend that Cook’s and MacMillan’s journeys were very nearly the same, I compared apples to apples. When Heckathorn compares the two with the assumption that Cook went to the Pole, he is comparing watermelons to grapes. But Cook’s supporters, just like Peary’s, love to use comparative sledge journeys to distort and confuse, since they are not really interested in truth, but only in seeing their man win, and themselves vindicated.⁸²

L24 In the case of Heckathorn’s comparison of MacMillan’s speed from Greenland to Cape Stallworthy vs. Cook’s, they did not follow the same route, but MacMillan and Cook both took 32 days. Cook reported 25, as Heckathorn says, but as I show in my book, Cook set back his starting date by one week. So, $25 + 7 = 32$. Cook went a shorter route, yet took the same amount of time. Therefore, by actual comparison, Cook went slower than MacMillan, not faster, as Heckathorn says.

L25 Also, contrary to what Heckathorn says, Captain Shoemaker demonstrated in Columbus in 1993 that there is relatively little current in the area traveled by both MacMillan and Cook. Again contradicting Heckathorn, Cook makes it clear that he planned to head northwest, not due north upon leaving the coast to make up for an expected easterly drift (§C6). When Heckathorn gets to comparing MacMillan’s trip to Cook’s beyond that, he has no basis for doing so, and he is simply accepting Cook’s word that he actually traveled beyond the point that all evidence other than Cook’s bare word indicates he actually went. (A tactic all Cookites roundly condemn when it is used by Pearyites to justify Peary’s polar claims.) Heckathorn contends Cook’s preparations for his journey were “superior to MacMillan’s.” Unlike Cook, MacMillan was not outfitted for the Pole but only to reach “Crocker Land,” which supposedly lay about 100 miles to the northwest. So Cook’s preparations *should* have been “superior to MacMillan’s” in personnel, food, dogs, and equipment, since he had 800 extra miles to go! And to say Cook’s average speed on his entire alleged trip to the North Pole would be as good as MacMillan’s short sprint of 120 miles over comparatively undisturbed ice toward the mythical Crocker Land is preposterous; furthermore, there is no credible evidence of any kind that Cook ever made such a journey.

L26 If the above examples weren’t enough, there are many others in Heckathorn’s articles that bring into question his ability to make a rational analysis. Take, for instance, the statement in his “critical review” that insinuates that my research purposely left out primary material that would have helped Cook’s case: “This reviewer also is aware that our author omitted pertinent documentation from Dr. Cook’s diary and navigational papers that would tend to support Cook’s story.” As usual, this “pertinent documentation” is not identified, but in Heckathorn’s *Polar Priorities* piece, he reveals what it is and takes another pratfall in the process. He asserts, “Critics expect us to believe that Cook would somehow overlook any preparation to navigate on the Arctic Ocean. The data contained in his papers indicate that he did indeed make such preparations.” The only evidence he presents to back up this statement is a copy of a page from Cook’s 1907 diary, which contains a list of compass variations for various places in the Arctic written in Cook’s hand. All this proves, however, is Heckathorn’s illogic and how nonpertinent this evidence is to his argument. This list of magnetic variations is no evidence at all that Cook planned to “navigate on the Arctic Ocean.” All of the data on the page displayed was taken down by Cook *before* he left home, and they were all made by *other explorers — none of it is original*. Not one original datum among them, not even a compass variation for his base at Annoatok, where he spent several winter months preparing for his dash to the Pole. All this page of data proves is that Cook was able to locate and copy data existing in the public record. Not only did he make none of them himself, *there are no such original observations of his own in any of his extant notebooks, including the actual one he kept on his polar journey that I recovered*

⁸²See the discussion of Sheldon S.R. Cook’s material below (§R) for more on this point.

be taken toward Frederick Cook by his opponents, but it is as misguided as the portrayal of Cook by his supporters as a capable and brilliant explorer, who was nonetheless also a total naif and innocent abroad when it came to the “ways of the world,” and so was done in by the big money and political power of the “Peary Cabal.”

J2 He was neither of these, but rather an exceedingly complex personality, with a very individual outlook on life and his place in the universe; a near genius, but one, who, in common with most of his fellows, was a contradictory mixture of the noble and the base. I hope that those who are still holding a simplistic view of this man (including Dennis Rawlins and most of the members of FACS) will one day read *Cook & Peary* start to finish and thereby discover who he really was, and thus the answer to the “controversy within the controversy.” Only by coming to understand Cook’s complex nature and individual thought can all of the seemingly contradictory loose ends of the never-ending controversy over the discovery of the North Pole be knitted together so its pattern can be seen whole. Only then will it be possible to come to an appreciation, for better or worse, of what this “man unknown,” Frederick Albert Cook, really was and really did. Only then will the Polar Controversy be resolved.

J3 Having said that, I would also say that I disagree with some of Eames’s statements. It is absolutely clear from the documentary record that [as Rawlins 1973 p.80 had argued (see also ¶6 fn 66), to explain Cook’s immediate subsequent resort to fraud] Cook was personally bankrupted by Henry Disston’s failure to pay him the \$10,000 he had promised in 1906.⁴⁷ Eames assertion that Cook made \$10,000 a year as a physician can’t be true. According to the *New York Times* the average annual salary of a doctor in New York in 1909 was only a little over \$1,500.⁴⁸ That Cook could have seen 6 2/3 times the number of patients an average doctor did is numerically impossible, given Cook’s known office hours.⁴⁹ And notice that, again, Eames’s evidence of this is pure hearsay. He cites a letter discovered by Cook’s daughter as his evidence, sight unseen and without reproducing any part of it.

J4 Eames’s citation of Cook’s ability to return to his base in Greenland after a minimum trip of 1,640 miles as proof of his ability to navigate is nonsense. All it means is that he could follow Sverdrup’s map, which he had with him, and could generally distinguish North from South or East from West, since he was never out of sight of land, except perhaps for a day or two on the Polar Sea.

K “A Remarkable Physical Examination”

K1 The examination of Robert E. Peary by Frederick Cook aboard the *Erik* in 1901, which is reviewed by Dr. Myerson, was indeed remarkable, since there is every indication that it never took place. Again, the only record of it is in Cook’s personal memoirs written in the 1930s. Cook was always careful to wait until witnesses were dead before putting words in their mouths, as he does here.⁵⁰ There are numerous examples of this in his memoirs. Other than this source, *there is not a shred of independent evidence that Cook made the examination, diagnosis or prescription for cure that is recounted here*.

K2 In fact, in this analysis of Peary’s health, Cook did not even get Peary’s height right. He was just short of 6 feet tall, not 6 feet 4 inches.⁵¹ Even better, he did not get Peary’s age

⁴⁷His wife still had a considerable personal fortune at this time, but according to some sources, refused to give him any money toward a North Pole venture.

⁴⁸*NYT*, October 8, 1909.

⁴⁹See *C&P*, p.229.

⁵⁰The one exception was Mrs. Peary, who outlived almost everyone in the polar saga, but she was not present at the alleged “examination.”

⁵¹One might expect that in the next *Polar Priorities* Ted Heckathorn will be calling this misjudgment a huge “blunder” on Cook’s part, as he did [¶4 §L5] my misreport of Gonnason’s height. But since Heckathorn believes Cook was incapable of error, he will more likely argue that if Cook said Peary was 6’4”, all others must have measured him wrong.

H8 The “Court of Historical Opinion” has rejected Cook’s claim to have reached the North Pole based on his lack of evidence several times. As no less an authority than the Polar Historian Ted Heckathorn says in this same issue of *Polar Priorities*, at the time of Cook’s death, “Historians generally regarded his North Pole claim and Mount McKinley ascent as hoaxes.” Generally, since then, they have continued to regard them as such, despite several attempted comebacks mounted by Cook himself and his sympathizers. But now that my book has been published, there is no longer a chance for another comeback. Now even the man in the street, with no background in this tangled dispute at all, may form his own rational verdict based on the documentary evidence presented in *Cook & Peary, the Polar Controversy, Resolved*.

I “Bartlett Biographer”

I1 The favorable opinions of Harold Horwood as espoused in his 1977 book, *Bartlett: The Great Canadian Explorer*, are next dusted off as positive “evidence.” During my research I had read this book and was greatly interested in a number of statements it contained that I had seen nowhere else. Since Horwood’s book had no notes on his sources, I contacted him in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia (he does not live in Newfoundland as it says here) to ask him about where he found some of this unique information so I could read its sources first-hand. Horwood told me that he no longer had his research notes, but cited a number of manuscript repositories and, in some cases, specific published works where I could find the sources of the passages I found so intriguing.⁴⁴ None of them proved out, however, so I wrote to him again. This time he referred me to the collections at Bowdoin College and claimed these were supplemented by personal interviews with surviving Bartlett crew members in Newfoundland.⁴⁵ In 1991 I visited the collections at Bowdoin and found some of the materials Horwood had referred to in his letters, but they did not corroborate the unique statements I was seeking confirmation of.

I2 In his first letter, Horwood had told me that his research papers were housed at the University of Calgary. Never wanting to give up any lead, I tried again there. But my inquiries produced this reply from the Special Collections Librarian: “I regret to say that I do not believe that we can be of any further assistance. In the material relating to *Bartlett, the Great Canadian Explorer*, there appears to be nothing like the items to which you refer.”⁴⁶ All leads led nowhere. So I had to write off Horwood’s material as unsubstantiated. He may actually have been citing real documents and actual interviews (though he never indicated what came from which), but he could not provide me with any evidence that he had, and all his references to specific sources were mistaken in regards to my specific inquiries.

I3 In *Cook & Peary*, on the other hand, I provide the exact citations by which any future researcher, whether negatively or positively disposed toward my findings, can check them against original documents. Of course FACS quotes Horwood’s undocumented book as fact and rejects my documented findings as fiction, since, as we have seen, it prefers positive opinion on Cook to negative primary evidence against him.

J Eames vs. Rawlins

J1 I would have to agree with Hugh Eames on a number of points in criticism of Dennis Rawlins’s statements about Cook in his book *Peary at the North Pole; Fact or Fiction?* In my opinion, Dennis Rawlins severely misinterpreted Cook’s motives and character in his book (and still does) by assuming Cook was no more than a simple con artist without deeper drives or ambitions beyond making a quick buck. This is hardly a unique attitude to

⁴⁴Horwood to RMB, April 3, 1990, possession of author.

⁴⁵Horwood to RMB, August 2, 1990, possession of author.

⁴⁶Appollonia Lang Steele to RMB, February 23, 1994, possession of author.

from *Copenhagen*. Rather, this material tends to support the thesis advanced in my book that Cook planned to “navigate” by following a “magnetic meridian,” which he naïvely thought would lead him to the North Pole by the use of his compass alone. Perhaps he took all known variation values along, as reference points to check the accuracy of his compass.

L27 Heckathorn’s attempt to pass off Cook’s cropped picture of the glacial fringe along a solid coast as a “glacial island” far out in the polar sea is just as deceptive, and, like the allusion to the page of magnetic data, is aimed at deceiving the ignorant, unless Heckathorn is so ignorant (or illogical) as to believe it himself. That Cook’s picture is a photograph of a genuine ice island was a notion punctured ten years ago when Wally Herbert published Cook’s lantern slide version of this image showing substantial shoreline attached to his “glacial island,” even though Cook alleged his picture was taken within two degrees of the Pole, hundreds of miles from any dry land.⁸³

L28 Heckathorn exhibits (*Polar Priorities*, v.17 [1997], p.26) a photo of the ice island ARLIS II, which had a hump of rock debris on it (from ARLIS II’s Ellesmere Island origin). Yet Heckathorn tries to persuade his readers that this photo and Cook’s are similar: “Note the apparent mountain range in the background.” [See ¶6 fn 65.] Heckathorn does not tell his readers the height of the boulder pile on ARLIS II, and in the picture he prints, there is nothing to judge relative scale to give a clue as to how high it is, either. Data from the records of the International Quiet Sun Year (1965) state that the “mountain range” on ARLIS II was 41 feet high. But in Cook’s picture of his supposed Glacial Island as published in *My Attainment of the Pole*, which Heckathorn is careful *not* to show his readers (reproduced here as Fig.2), his two Eskimos can be seen driving his sleds in the distance.⁸⁴ Another version of Cook’s picture exists as the lantern slide referred to above [fig 2], that prints more of the right margin of this image, including a bare expanse of land.⁸⁵ Using the Eskimo drivers for scale, it can easily be seen that the land pictured here is far more substantial than a mere 41-foot pile of rocks lying on a broken piece of glacial fringe. Besides, as early as the 1920s, even in Cook’s carefully cropped published version, the distinct rise of the ice in Cook’s picture tipped off J.M. Wordie, who was familiar with arctic terrain, that Cook’s picture was taken near the shore of some island. No island exists where Cook says he took this picture. And the original from which Cook’s published version (Fig.2) and his lantern slide (Fig.3) were cropped is missing. [See also analytic caption to Fig.4.]

L29 Heckathorn says that I ignore the opinions of experts like Joe Fletcher that Cook saw an ice island and cites a piece of private correspondence between Fletcher and Russell Gibbons from 1956 as evidence, as usual, without quoting it. Here is another glaring example of Heckathorn’s reference-dropping technique. Fletcher’s opinion should be seriously considered, as he has had a great deal of experience with ice islands. Unfortunately for

⁸³Herbert (*Noose*, 1989 p.319) thought this is the full image, but it is not: see Fig.4.

⁸⁴Curiously, although the two sleds are seen coming toward the camera [blowups show that the dogs are in front of the sledges], a sledge track can clearly be seen running out of the foreground. Dr. Cook claimed to have taken only two sleds with him on his polar journey, so why would there be a sledge track in the immediate foreground when his two sleds are still coming *toward* him? There are at least two plausible explanations, neither of them helpful to Dr. Cook’s reputation for veracity. It is possible that Cook sent the sleds back in order to stage this shot, and we are seeing their former tracks. But would this be expected of an explorer who was risking everything to reach the North Pole as fast as he could? Would a serious man spare that kind of time and energy? And if this is the explanation, why are there not *two sledge tracks instead of one in the foreground*, since it would seem reasonable to expect that both sleds reached this spot before he ordered them back? Another possible explanation is that the picture was taken when Cook still had more than two sleds with him. This could have been at any time before he left land, or it could have been during the three days when he was accompanied by two additional Eskimos and two additional sleds after leaving Axel Heiberg Land. If it was taken at any of these times, and the last seems the most likely, then it was taken nowhere remotely near the 88th parallel, as Cook claimed.

⁸⁵Part of the donation of lantern slides and glass plate negatives given to the Library of Congress in 1973 by Helene Cook Vetter.



Figure 2: Glacial Island as published in *My Attainment*, 1911 ed., opp. p.244.

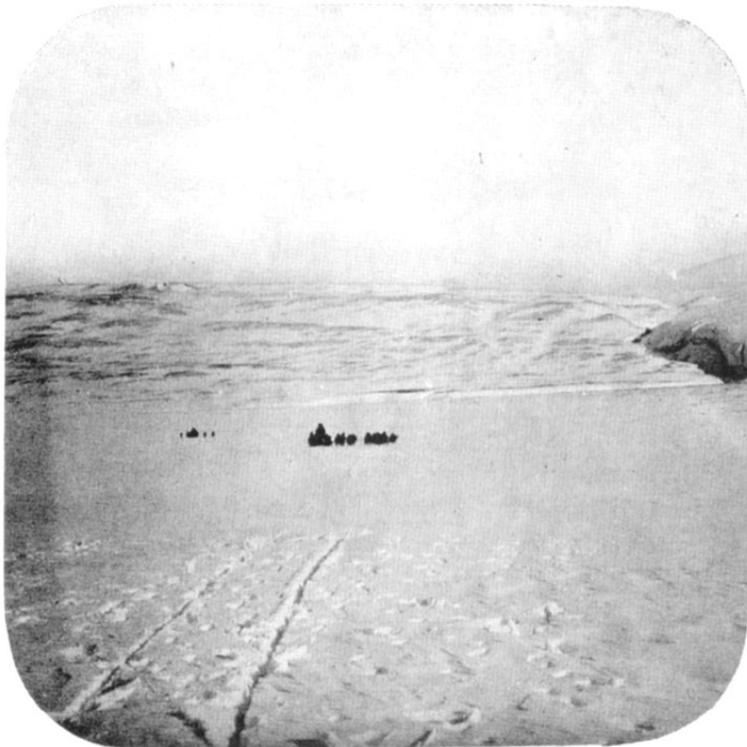


Figure 3: Cook's lantern slide of the Glacial Island, scanned from Herbert 1989.

H3 Sheldon's article has a good example of the tangled confusion of sources used by FACS to try to lend some documentation to its case. Sheldon cites a story by "Robert Fuller" which he claims appeared in the pages of the *New York Herald* for October 13, 1909. He says it reports an interview with Robert Peary that took place at North Star Bay on August 23, 1909, just after Peary came down from interviewing the Cook Eskimos at Etah. Sheldon says it contains evidence that contradicts the version of Cook's journey that Peary later reported had been told him by the Eskimos who had accompanied Cook, which Peary published as evidence against his rival.⁴⁰ This same assertion, nearly word for word, was published by FACS in 1993.⁴¹

H4 However, I own a copy of the *Herald* for Oct.13, and there is no such interview printed there. The only thing relevant to Sheldon's account is this single paragraph:

When a *Herald* reporter saw Mr. Peary at North Star Bay on August 24, he said then that he did not believe Dr. Cook had gone further north than the record made in 1906, but intimated at the time that he was depending on the condition of the sledge which he refused Mr. Whitney permission to take aboard the *Roosevelt* to substantiate the statement. Nothing was said at this interview about the statement made by the two [Eskimo] boys.

H5 The same article details this sequence of events: Peary had been told by Whitney at Etah that Cook had gone beyond his Farthest North of 1906, as Cook had instructed him to do. Peary did not hear that from the Eskimos, as Sheldon implies in his article. Instead, the *Herald* article specifically says that after Peary had this information from Whitney he called in Cook's two Eskimo companions and interrogated them. The article in the *Herald* says Peary's interview with its reporter took place on August 24, not August 23, and the article is unsigned. The reporter in question was named Royal Fuller, not "Robert."⁴² So Sheldon has that wrong as well, and it is not from the October 13 *Herald*, since there is no actual interview with Peary printed there, nor is there any article signed by "Robert Fuller." Perhaps Sheldon could provide a better reference for this reported interview so readers could find it for themselves and read it in full. Documentation that cannot be recovered is useless as evidence.⁴³

H6 Therefore, not only does Sheldon's attempt to document his case fail, his thesis that there had been no refutation of the original story the Eskimos had told Peary (that Cook had beaten his farthest north) is a completely false statement. But why beat a dead horse? We have already seen that Sheldon is blind to any possibility short of sainthood for the man he has gradually named himself after; that he cites his own questionable memories as "evidence" and that he cites sources that cannot be located in the places he cites them.

H7 Finally, there is his box (1998 *Polar Priorities* p.31) on "Hall's 1917 Verdict", where Sheldon ends his quotation of Hall before he reaches the critical point at which Hall proposes that Cook may have had "good reasons for the Jones Sound trip." I explain those reasons in detail on pages 902-04 in my book.

⁴⁰ *NYT*, October 13, 1909.

⁴¹ Cook-Dourogh, Sheldon, "Cold Facts: The First Eskimo Testimony," *Polar Priorities*, v.12 [1993], pp.25-28. FACS constantly recycles its limited counterarguments; one size fits all. Many of the exact same "First Eskimo Testimony" arguments used against *Cook & Peary* were used against Wally Herbert's *Noose of Laurels* in 1990. See above at ¶4 fn 88.

⁴² In the 1993 version, Sheldon just calls him "one Fuller."

⁴³ Sheldon may have learned this trick from the master. There is a famous example of citing unrecoverable "evidence" in the footnote to page 534 of the 1913 edition of *My Attainment of the Pole* [New York: Mitchell Kennerley]. Here Cook writes that "the well known Engineer R.C. Bates" went on record in the *Los Angeles Tribune* of February 13, 1913, supporting Cook's claim and alleging he had verified this by climbing to 11,000 feet on the Northeast Ridge in 1911. No one has ever been able to find the article Cook referred to in the *Tribune*, or anywhere else, though I know for a fact that Sheldon himself went to Los Angeles and took the newspapers for February 1913 apart line by line in an attempt to do so.

posterity some of the more choice oddities it contains and make a few other general comments.

G “The Philately of Dr. Frederick A. Cook.”

It is about time Cook was immortalized on a postage stamp (though to be so immortalized today is practically meaningless as a significant recognition of greatness; after all, Goofy has more than a score of philatelic tributes to his credit to date), and it is a relief that it is not as “discoverer of the North Pole” but for his genuine contribution to the success of the Belgian Antarctic Expedition. That was his great shining moment, when he played a key rôle in the safe return of the expedition and its valuable scientific results.

H “Court of Historical Geography.”

H1 Sheldon rehashes the “First Eskimo Testimony” (again), and finally admits that there was later negative testimony from the Polar Eskimos that directly refutes the sacred “First Testimony” (always in caps). He attributes this to either Rasmussen wanting to get on the “right” side of the Polar Controversy once the trend was clearly running against Cook, or to the inability of the intermediary missionary, who obtained this testimony for Rasmussen direct from Cook’s two companions’ lips, to understand the language of the Eskimos as well as Rasmussen did when he took the First Testimony from third parties that was favorable to Cook. Unfortunately for this last theory, the missionary in question was a Greenlander taken to Denmark and trained in the Gospel, then returned to preach among his brethren in their own language. Here is what Rasmussen himself said of him *prior* to taking the testimony:

Before I left [Greenland], I sent a letter to Hans Olsen, the new priest in North Star Bay, who was born in Greenland. I asked him to undertake the examination [of Cook’s companions] during the winter; and he can do it. He is a very intelligent man, who will not be in doubt about what it depends upon, and he is better able than I to win the confidence of Dr. Cook’s two Eskimos.³⁸

H2 A few more miscues should be brought to the reader’s attention in order to illustrate the “balance” Russ Gibbons extols, if for no other reason:

- Edwin S. Brooke, Jr. was not “an independent and impartial searcher for the facts,” as Sheldon styles him. He was very likely planted on the Crocker Land Expedition by Fred High, Cook’s publicity agent. Brooke later served as Cook’s motion picture photographer on Cook’s trip to India in 1915. So his testimony is no more unbiased than Peary’s agents’.
- All this business about Steensby and Schoubye witnessing Rasmussen’s taking of the “First Eskimo Testimony” is again found only in Cook’s personal memoirs written in the 1930s, and cannot be trusted as fact without additional documentary evidence. Neither man’s writings say they witnessed Rasmussen taking this testimony.³⁹
- Harry Whitney was certainly not a supporter of Frederick Cook after he returned to the United States in October 1909. See my discussion of this on pages 909-10 of *Cook & Peary*.

³⁸Egan, Maurice Francis, “The Witnesses for Dr. Cook,” *Rosary Magazine*, v.35 [November 1909], p.499. Quoting an interview with Rasmussen which appeared in *Zum Dannebrog*, October 26, 1909.

³⁹Their accounts may be found in Steensby, Phil. H.P., “The Polar Eskimos and the Polar Expeditions,” *Fortnightly Review*, November 1909; Egan, Maurice Francis, “The Witnesses for Dr. Cook,” *Rosary Magazine*, November 1909.

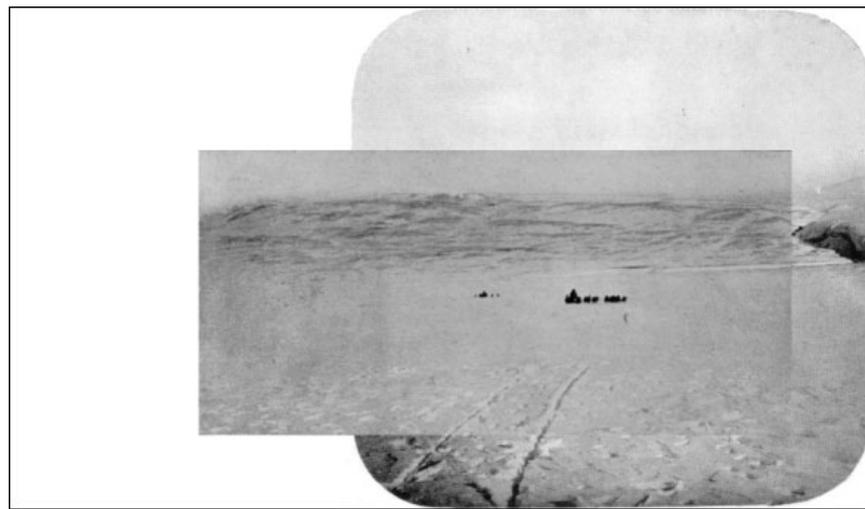


Figure 4: Each of the extant versions of Cook’s fake Glacial Island photograph has a portion unique to it, but neither represents Cook’s full original image. Even when the two versions are put together to form a composite, as here, there is a problem: the composite has a ratio of 1:1.36, height to width, but Cook’s extant photographs taken with the same portable “postcard camera” that took the “Glacial Island” image show a ratio of 1:1.73, the camera’s image-size being 3” 1/4 x 5” 5/8. [Determined by the author from the original prints donated to the Library of Congress by Janet Vetter in 1989. This collection is uncataloged and not available to the public. The author was granted a special scholar’s exception to view this material.] Thus, unless the upper portion of Fig.3 was stretched by artificially-added fake sky, even the composite cannot represent the full breadth of the original image. This situation is indicated by the above figure, in which the Glacial Island composite is formatted within a circumscribing rectangle having the actual 1:1.73 height-width proportion of the image that Cook’s camera would have produced, according to the further assumption that the height of the lantern slide version represents the full height of the original. (The right margin has been aligned flush with the frame, though it is not known whether the right or left margin, or both, are incomplete.) This assumption is lent credence by the nearness of the horizon to the frame’s mid-horizontal line (as in Figs.1&5); if it is true, then roughly 20% (or over 1 inch in the original format) of the original image’s width is not seen in the composite. (If the lantern slide does not represent the full height, then proportionately more of the width is missing.) [Bryce note added 2001/6/13: Even that ever-ready source of anti-Cook evidence, Dr. Cook himself, does not agree with Heckathorn’s §L28 bringing up ice-island boulders to exonerate Cook. Instead, Cook clearly stated of his “Glacial Island” (1911, pp.265-266): “it was quite impossible to determine whether we were on land or sea ice. . . . my combined tabulations do not warrant a positive assertion of either land or sea”. Now, if there was anything resembling a 41-foot boulder-pile (much less the enormous rock face in Figs.3&4), anywhere in sight, it hardly seems likely that Cook would write thusly. And he would surely say *something* about a big piece of dry land adhering to the place he photo-represented (Fig.2) as the “Glacial Island” described in this text. Thus, Cook’s “Glacial Island” claim is (as Rep. Robert Bruce Macon said of Peary’s 1909 trip) “a fake, pure and simple”. *DIO* 2001/8/31 comments: [a] On the issue of deceit, the reader should note (in the above superposition) how very *close* the right side of Fig.2 is to Fig.3’s rock; the cropping was *unquestionably intended to hide the rock*. [b] Did Cook get his “land-ice” idea (above) from visiting Meighen Island? Bill Stevenson (*Friendly Arctic* 1922 p.519) reported that the island’s official 1916/6/12 discoverer, H.Noice, after exploring it for a few miles “was unable to say whether he had been walking over land or snow-covered ice.”]

Heckathorn's argument, I have in my files a copy of the very Fletcher letter Heckathorn cites. In it, rather than supporting Gibbons's theory that Cook saw an ice island, Fletcher says: "There *can be* doubt about what Dr. Cook saw The exploration of ice islands has *not proved without doubt* that Dr. Cook was the first to observe them I prefer to wait until we understand more before reaching final conclusions."⁸⁶ (Fletcher's emphasis.) In this same letter Fletcher also complains that Gibbons's quotation of him in a letter he is planning to send in support of Cook "actually omits several words from the last sentence" and also that he misquotes Father Hubbard and others in the letter. (Early examples of Gibbons's budding "journalistic standards," no doubt.)

L30 Finally, Heckathorn contends that I have made gross misjudgments of Cook's character, even though all my inferences about it are drawn directly from Cook's own private writings. He attempts to illustrate this by saying that Cook was only making a joke when he told Felix Riesenbergh "My claims and records were presented to a committee of the Congress of the United States and they found that I had reached the North Pole." Heckathorn considers this Cook's satire on the Peary claim's questionable acceptance by the Naval Affairs Committee in 1911. But this only shows how very little Heckathorn knows of Cook's true character himself.

L31 Frederick Cook was not a humorous man. In the hundreds of thousands of pages of material I read in research, I never found recorded, either by Cook himself or anyone who knew him personally, a single instance of him telling a joke. Although his step-granddaughter remembered him in his old age as someone who could make people laugh, during his prime he was always described as extremely sober at all times, especially in public. As Georges Lecointe recorded during the *Belgica* voyage of 1898-99, that because of Cook's "calm and cold temper" he thought the doctor was "the most rigid American the New World has ever had; he could little enjoy our jokes à la française."⁸⁷

L32 In his original "critical review," Heckathorn said of me, "the author also was, and is, a non-factor in the Mount McKinley controversy." Evidently, he has read more of my book since then, as I had come up in his estimation by the time he wrote his *Polar Priorities* piece. There he says, "Bryce has made a valuable contribution in both research and historical analysis. Many facts gleaned from archival records are published for the first time." The two statements obviously don't square. Perhaps if he reads more of *Cook & Peary*, with more objectivity, he will eventually agree that Cook's claim to having climbed Mount McKinley has no basis in fact.

M "Ignoring the First Eskimo Witnesses in Cook's Journey," by Sheldon S.R. Cook

M1 Sheldon Shackelford Randolph Cook is a soft-spoken lawyer from Atlanta of no relation to Frederick Cook's family. As I understand it, he was born Sheldon Dorough, but later changed his name to Sheldon Cook-Dorough, then finally dropped his surname entirely in favor of his hero's. He has recently declared Dr. Cook's cause his "life's work." To avoid confusion with Dr. Cook, I will call him Sheldon, as I came to know him over the years I worked on *Cook & Peary*.

M2 To his credit, Sheldon at least devoted his part of the "critical review" to disputing something of evidentiary substance, though he keeps up the mantra of the previous two authors that I "ignored" evidence and was "selective" in what I chose to present. In fact, he concentrates on what he calls "the most blatant instance of selective scholarship in the book: ignoring the First Eskimo Testimony, and giving credence to the long-discredited Peary-MacMillan version of the journey of Cook and his Eskimo companions in March to June, 1908."

⁸⁶Fletcher to Gibbons, June 22, 1956. CSC.

⁸⁷*Le Messager de Bruxelles*, October 23, 1899.

on her part which was rebuffed and of which there is no formal written record at the AAC. Helene would never have fabricated such a thing. It would only have harmed her father's cause and would have been contrary to her own character.³⁷

E9 So the "evidence" is only Sheldon's memory, "*if my memory . . . is correct*" but something of which he is "*sure in my own mind.*" He qualifies even this by saying that the offer "may have been" of such a nature that "there is no formal written record at the AAC." In other words, personal fantasy and indefinite hearsay is again being presented as absolute fact. Thus is the wishful thinking of FACS passed on to the next generation, who are then encouraged (by the awarding of cash prizes) to repeat it as truth. Frederick Cook predicted there would always be a place in history for him. "This may be high, it may be low," he said, but he was sure there would be a place. That wasn't because he had discovered the North Pole or climbed Mount McKinley, but because he knew human nature so well.

E10 The letter Heckathorn refers to concerning editorial errors in *To the Top of the Continent* that I found in my research was dated long after Cook had been accused of fraud in the matter, and is therefore not "evidence" in his favor of any kind. It is simply, like most of the other material cited by his supporters, a personal assertion of his, which is unprovable.

E11 Again, Heckathorn accuses me of "foolish errors and erroneous conclusions" in *DIO* 7.2-3, just as he did regarding my book, without once specifying a significant example of either. After so many unfulfilled claims of this sort [like *DIO* 1.3 fn 252], one realizes he obviously hasn't got much. He claims to know of "other statements in the [*DIO*] articles that are either wrong or questionable, but there is neither time nor space to deal with them all." The one he "deals" with is Rawlins's statement [D9 fn 25] that FACS has no navigators among its members. Heckathorn's retort: this is a "rather interesting" statement since FACS may once have had one (Heckathorn isn't sure), but he died 33 years ago. This exemplifies the amazingly low level of rebuttal that *DIO*'s critique has elicited.

E12 Though Heckathorn has no "time or space" to correct all those foolish errors and wrong statements, he has time and space in the same issue of *Polar Priorities* for a four-page "interview with the Greenland Explorer's [Etukishook's] Son" the body of which contains *not one single quoted word* from the man's lips.

E13 One final note. Heckathorn's assertion that the \$5,000 given Barrill for his affidavit would today have the buying power of \$250,000 is incorrect. I provide a table to convert the sums mentioned in my book on page 991. A dollar in 1909 had the buying power of about \$16 today, so \$5,000 would be worth about \$80,000 in today's money (1999). Also, it should be noted that Barrill only received a portion of this \$5,000, which was drawn to cover "all expenses" of obtaining anti-Cook affidavits. An eyewitness said Barrill received only \$1,500, or about \$24,000 in today's money.

F Other Notes and Oddities

This issue of *Polar Priorities* is so rich with these that to note them all would take forever. Nevertheless, the record of the psychology of Cook's partisans obliges me to record for

³⁷ Cook-Dorough to RMB, November 16, 1996, possession of author. [*DIO* note. Though Helene Cook Vetter publicly pretended to openness about her father's records, she ignored DR's 1969/4/27 & 1972/12/4 letters asking to see them — and then attacked DR (Balto *Evening Sun* 1973/9/21) by claiming they were open to researchers but that DR had not asked to see them! Despite DR's 1973/12/19 letter pointing out his previous inquiries, she refused his request to either retract her published lie *or* to grant access to the again-advertised and again-requested data. . . . Her thermofax copy to DR of her full three-page single-space 1973/9/12 comments to the *EvSun* (replying to DR's 1973/7/14 *EvSun* review of Eames's book) originally stated: "Rawlins did not contact me for any data. His mind was programmed on what he wanted to fabricate . . ." (Note loose [and ironic] use of the last word, as at §D19.) She has scratched out (in ballpoint ink) only the word "any". An honest, non-truth-juggling person would have scratched out the whole sentence.]

were any there in 1906, he need only look at the map on page 44 between rules 6-10 in Dr. Cook's Mount McKinley diary to see the seracs penciled in there.³² Seracs do not exist without crevasses. And as everyone in the Frederick A. Cook Society knows, Dr. Cook would *never* tell a lie, or even draw one.

E4 Another good example of Heckathorn's homeostatic view of the universe is his statement that "our expedition did expose [Belmore Browne's] false statement about frequency of avalanches when we camped near the East Ridge." Again, he seems to give no thought to the possibility that conditions may have changed in the intervening 84 years since Browne camped there. Bradford Washburn proved that more than 50 feet of snow had melted away at Fake Peak in only 50 years. Might there just have been less snow on the East Buttress to avalanche in 1994? Also, Heckathorn fails to recall Dr. Cook's description in his book of camping at the same location: "The death-dealing spirit of the avalanches created more anxiety here than at any other camp The tumble from cliff to cliff, from glacier to glacier down the seemingly endless fall was soul-stirring to the verge of desperation."³³ Apparently, when agents of the "Parker-Browne-Pearly troika" say anything, it is false.³⁴ But when Frederick Cook speaks the exact same words, they are unquestionably true.

E5 One thing I would agree with Heckathorn on is his statement that "where Dr. Cook is concerned [Bradford Washburn] displays an anger and vindictiveness that is hard to explain." This is especially so when you consider the lightweights he is up against in the three Cookites under discussion here. Dr. Washburn should relax and enjoy his well earned reputation and realize that, as one dismayed Pearite wrote at the height of the Polar Controversy, "there will probably be idiots who believe in Dr. Cook long after we are all dead."

E6 Undoubtedly, there will be, and many innocent people of average intelligence as well, such as the annual winner of the "Ruth Cook Hamilton Award" featured in every issue of *Polar Priorities*. This is a \$500 cash award FACS gives to the student who writes the best (read: most favorable) essay on Frederick A. Cook, which regurgitates the FACS party line and its invented fantasies most faithfully. (This is a good example of the focus and scope of FACS's rôle as an "educational" organization in the State of New York.)

E7 This year's winning essayist states that Helene Cook Vetter "offered the [Cook McKinley Diary] to the American Alpine Club and the Club refused it." This is lifted directly from a Sheldon piece in a back number of *Polar Priorities*: "Shortly after the diary was found in 1956, Helene Cook Vetter offered the diary to the American Alpine Club as a valuable record of Dr. Cook's 1906 ascent of Mount McKinley and as an historical relic of the first importance. The Club refused to accept it."³⁵

E8 When I read this in 1996, I was absolutely incredulous. I could not imagine Cook's daughter offering it to the AAC, which is so closely allied with Bradford Washburn, nor could I imagine the AAC refusing such a fabulous artifact of North American mountaineering history, true or false, had the offer been made. Bradford Washburn would have been very eager to examine it, as he was in 1983 when its existence was revealed to him by Hans Waale. Besides, Vetter's personal correspondence contradicts this. She realized the "mixup in the dates" in her father's diary was a problem and didn't show it to anyone.³⁶ So I wrote to Sheldon to ask what evidence he had of this statement. Here is what he said:

If my memory of her stating to me that she offered the diary to the AAC is correct, and I have carried it since December 1973, I am sure in my own mind that an offer of some kind was made. It may have been a preliminary attempt

³²See *DIO* 7.2 p.60.

³³*TTC*, p.205.

³⁴Browne even published photos of actual avalanches in progress in his book, *The Conquest of Mount McKinley*, Putnam: 1913.

³⁵Cook-Dorough, Sheldon, "Concerning the Mount McKinley Diary of Dr. Frederick A. Cook, 1906," v.15 [1996], p.12.

³⁶Vetter to Hans Waale, November 18, 1973. CSC.

M3 Sheldon then acknowledges, like the others before him, that I cover this "ignored" testimony in my book.⁸⁸ What is more, *Cook & Peary* gives considerable space to not just this "first" version, but to *all* of the contemporary versions of the testimony allegedly given by the Polar Eskimos concerning Cook, or said by others to have been given by them. Not only is this "first testimony," which was given to Knud Rasmussen by members of the tribe to which both of the Cook's Eskimo companions belonged, covered in my pages,⁸⁹ but I also fully detail the later favorable report given to Rasmussen in September 1909.⁹⁰ I even give an account of what Cook had to say on this subject in his unverifiable memoirs.⁹¹ Although these quotes from Cook's memoirs are repeated by Sheldon in his "review" as if they were fact, objectively, they must be considered in the light of being written by a man whose veracity is seriously in question, and therefore cannot be assumed to be true. When every version of the Eskimos' testimony in Cook's favor has thus been covered in the pages of my book, I am at a loss to understand how I can be said to have "ignored" it, or how this can be considered "selective scholarship" against Cook.

M4 I did not even "discount this significant 'First Testimony' of the Eskimos" as Sheldon contends. I simply agreed with Captain Thomas F. Hall, a Cook supporter, who in *Has the North Pole Been Discovered?* said that the various versions of the Eskimos' testimony, being conflictual, were worthless as evidence for either side. It should be pointed out, however, that all of this favorable "first testimony" came from third parties — men of the tribe to whom Cook's companions belonged, but *not from the two men who actually accompanied Cook*. When Rasmussen did obtain the testimony of the two Cook Eskimos themselves through Danish-Eskimo missionaries, they gave him a story which largely *contradicted* Cook's version of events and generally agreed with Peary's.

M5 Why should Sheldon favor the testimony given by third parties over the testimony of the witnesses themselves, when both testimonies were given to the world by very same man [Rasmussen]? And if he thinks the negative testimony that Cook's actual companions gave is a lie, the lie was told by Rasmussen; why then should the earlier favorable testimony, also reported by Rasmussen, be accepted as truth? The answer, of course, is that the third parties' testimony was favorable to Cook, and the eyewitnesses' testimony was unfavorable. Therefore, just as third-hand favorable opinions are valued at FACS over negative primary documentation from Cook's own hand, third parties' testimony is valued over eyewitness testimony *simply on the basis of its favorability to the required conclusion that Cook reached the North Pole*. That is all that matters to a Cook partisan. Sheldon says not a word about this negative testimony from Cook's companions' own lips — he ignores it — just what he accuses me of doing. And in so doing he is guilty of exactly the kind of "selective scholarship" he undeservedly projects on me.

M6 In the case of what he terms the "Peary-MacMillan" version (a pairing of two entirely different accounts separated by nine years) I do not give them credence or say that they are entirely correct, nor do I agree that they are "long-discredited." I do demonstrate, however, why these versions are far better supported by documentary evidence than Cook's version of his journey, which is refuted by both physical and documentary evidence, including the contents of Cook's own contemporaneous polar notebooks. Peary contended Cook did not go out of sight of land and MacMillan that he turned back about 12 miles north of Axel Heiberg Island. I conclude that Cook turned back between 92 and 100 miles northwest of Heiberg Island. As always, my conclusion on this point is firmly grounded in the primary

⁸⁸ Sheldon previously made this very same argument, which is here lifted nearly word for word from a paper he wrote in the wake of Wally Herbert's dismissal of Cook's claim in his 1989 book, *The Noose of Laurels*. See: Cook-Dorough, Sheldon: *Frederick Albert Cook: discoverer of the North Pole, April 21, 1909. The First Eskimo Testimony, April 1909 — August 1909*, Hurleyville, New York: Sullivan County Historical Society, 1990.

⁸⁹Pp.346-47.

⁹⁰Pp.439-40.

⁹¹*Cook & Peary* p.347.

documents, and not designed to give “credence” to any predetermined viewpoint.

M7 In summary then, all of Sheldon’s contentions about my book are untrue: I did not ignore the “First Eskimo Testimony,” which he acknowledges himself; rather than giving credence to the “Peary-MacMillan” version(s), I show that both are evidently only partially true; the Peary version, rather than being “long discredited,” is still generally accepted as true; rather than being selective, I present all of the testimony about Cook’s 1908 polar journey from whatever source, positive or negative, and I allow the primary documents to dictate the most likely conclusion. What could be more fair than that?

N “Sextant, Speeds and Drift; assessing the evidence from Cook’s Polar Journey of 1908,” by Sheldon S.R. Cook

N1 In his *Polar Priorities* piece (v.17 [1997]), Sheldon takes up several other contentions that he believes counter the negative conclusion of my book. His comments are rather repetitious and involved, but boiled down, this is what he says:

1. My contention that Cook did not possess the skills necessary to navigate to the North Pole is false because there is evidence that Cook was competent with a sextant and knew full well how to use it to find his positions by celestial observation.

2. That Cook’s compass reading at the Pole as given in his narratives was reasonable and “almost certainly” correct, and that, in any case, we have to accept it, as there is no way to disprove it scientifically today.

3. That Cook’s narrative of his polar journey has been strongly supported, even proven, by the corroboration of later explorers of the physical descriptions Cook gave of arctic conditions along his route, which he could not have known unless he actually made the trip.

4. That Cook’s reported sledging speeds, although he terms them “magnificent,” were possible based on the actual later experiences of other explorers on the Arctic Ocean since Cook’s journey.

5. That the manner in which the notes are written in Cook’s notebooks does not necessarily cast doubt upon their having been written at the time of his journey, as I contend.

6. That the westerly drift experienced by Cook over part of his route proves he reached the Pole, since it has now been confirmed to exist.

7. That although it is “undeniable” that recent studies of the ice in the area where Cook says he was adrift in June of 1908 show it never broke up at that time of year during any of the times studied, but remained solid, there is contemporary evidence that the ice conditions in 1908 were extraordinary, and that this corroborates Cook’s account of drifting between the islands of the Queen Elizabeth Archipelago.

N2 Some of these contentions are as old as the Polar Controversy itself, and all of those are completely addressed in the text of *Cook & Peary*. Nevertheless, I will briefly take up all of these points in turn, and then refer the reader to the appropriate pages in my book for further discussion.

O Could Cook Navigate?

O1 Sheldon says the answer is yes because: a. Cook was interviewed by Professor Olafsen of the Royal Danish Geographical Society and Commander Hovgaard of the Royal Danish Navy, and Cook satisfied them that he could navigate.

O2 This cannot be stated as a fact. I found no reference to such a meeting anywhere but in Cook’s own book, *My Attainment of the Pole*. In any case, the man whose word is being questioned cannot be accepted as a witness in his own behalf without outside corroboration. This meeting allegedly took place in September 1909. However, in December 1909, after reviewing Cook’s written “proofs” that he had reached the Pole, Professor Olafsen, who sat on the reviewing panel, and who is alleged by Sheldon to have been totally satisfied that

But to Heckathorn, Washburn’s assumption is obviously a part of the evil plot “McKinleygate”, manipulated from the graves of the terrible “Peary Cabal” and a major “fabrication” on Washburn’s part.²⁹ To a Cookite it is more important that Washburn was mistaken about Cook wearing gloves than it is that Cook knowingly misrepresented a photograph of a 5,000 foot molehill as the summit of the greatest mountain in North America! Does FACS really think the world at large is going to take such arguments seriously?³⁰

E “Points of difference”

Heckathorn then goes on to point out some of his fundamental disagreements with me:

E1 He says Cook’s pace up Ruth Glacier that I infer from Barrill’s affidavit is too slow for anyone traveling alpine style. If you can believe *DIO*, he says, Cook and Barrill “dawdled” along at 2 miles a day “for no apparent reason.” Actually, Barrill’s affidavit says they traveled 5-6 miles a day, not 2, and Cook himself says that he started up Ruth Glacier with no intention of climbing McKinley. So why should he rush? And how about this for an “apparent reason”: If Cook had decided to fake the climb, he *needed* to dawdle as much as possible to allow a plausible time away from other witnesses so as to appear to have had time enough to have made the climb. (This is the exact same strategy he pursued in his fake North Pole claim two years later.)

E2 Heckathorn argues that the discrepancies between the Cook and Barrill diaries support their authenticity, because in a joint fake they would be exactly the same. That Cook was a psychological genius in regard to his North Pole claim should be apparent to anyone who reads my entire book. He was no less so in the psychology of his McKinley “climb.” He knew that people like Ted Heckathorn would be more likely to believe diaries that might some day be alleged to be fakes, which contained conflicts and discrepancies rather than ones that matched each other perfectly, proving a joint forgery. And he also knew that if he were to come back with no record at all, that would look extremely suspicious. Nevertheless, once he had “improved” his story in his published narrative in *Harper’s Monthly Magazine* in 1907, he could not publish his actual diary, because it was *more like the allegedly faked Barrill diary than his own narrative*. This major point still seems to be totally lost on Heckathorn. As for what was offered Barrill in exchange for his complicity, that has been alluded to already at ¶4 §L14 and is more completely explained on pages 838-39 of *Cook & Peary*. Sometimes I wonder if anyone at FACS has yet finished my book. It rationally explains every point FACS continues to raise.

E3 Heckathorn questions Barrill’s account because it says they turned back on account of dangerous crevasses near the Gateway to Ruth Amphitheater, whereas he found none in that area in 1994. That Heckathorn did not observe any crevasses near the Gateway in 1994 means nothing in relation to the conditions prevailing there in 1906. Glaciers are dynamic systems that are constantly moving, not permanent, and a lot can change in 90 years. If Heckathorn does not think so, he should try to visit the once-famous Paradise Ice Caves below Mount Rainier in his home state. These were formerly the most popular attraction in the National Park, but they are all now gone — melted away. On page 4 of *Polar Priorities* Heckathorn says: “At Cape Hardy [in 1998] the snow was too deep to find Dr. Cook’s 1908 cave.” Notice he doesn’t simply admit that there never was a “cave” at all.³¹ Perhaps the crevasses were simply covered with snow in 1994. If Heckathorn still doesn’t think there

²⁹He even implies Washburn committed perjury in stating that Cook had no gloves. (See 1998 *Polar Priorities*, p.45.) [*DIO*: If FACS really distrusts Brad, why no on-site-checks of his photo-matches??]

³⁰[*DIO*: Gloves-diversion vs evidence-mountain? Sound familiar? Another analogy with O Simpson jury#1: ignoring spectacular blood-matches because of “contamination” is akin to ignoring all the verifications of Barrill’s affidavit merely because he was paid by the Peary contingent. (This from a group getting large Cook-family-estate sums.) One more analogy: Cochran is a pathological lawyer.]

³¹It was actually a standard, comfortable Eskimo stone igloo, but “cave” sounds more dramatic and fits in better with the standard Cook mythology (¶4 §J6) that he survived a “Stone Age” winter.

D15 No one who reads *Cook & Peary* could possibly agree with Heckathorn's statement that "Bryce uncritically accepted Barrill's purchased affidavit and Washburn's questionable claims."²⁷ On the contrary, I put Barrill's affidavit to every evidentiary test possible, and it held up far better than Cook's narrative. Nor did I uncritically accept Washburn's claims. On the contrary, I had some rather stormy relations with Dr. Washburn, exactly because I *wouldn't* accept his views without question, but in the end my study of the evidence proved that his views were basically sound, as well.

D16 In *Polar Priorities*, Heckathorn drones on about the sketches on page 52 of Cook's diary as if *DIO* didn't exist. He then argues that the upper sketch on page 52 cannot be of the features Washburn labels (I had already said the fit is inexact [fn 28]) because Thayer Basin and Harper Glacier are not visible from Ruth Glacier, and he prints a picture taken near the Gateway²⁸ to prove it. I personally believe that the upper sketch on page 52 was not made from Ruth Glacier but from Fake Peak. Look at fig.25 in *DIO* 7.2. These features *can* be seen from there because of Fake Peak's greater elevation and [*DIO* 7.3 ‡9 fn 7] distance. The caption written on page 52 itself by Cook unequivocally labels the sketch "McK.": McKinley, not Pegasus Peak. But it should be said that even if FACS could somehow prove Cook was on the ridge of the East Buttress (which they can't) that is a long sight from getting him up the still extremely difficult route it specifies as the one he accomplished in a few days. The professional climbers from Heckathorn's group made it to the East Ridge, but they could not do it, nor could Gonnason in 1956. And as Washburn and [*DIO* 7.3 ‡9 fnn 35-36] Rawlins point out, no one has done this "doable" route to this day.

D17 My favorite bit of Cookite tunnel vision in Heckathorn's piece is this, however: He reads my comparative analysis of the Cook-Barrill diaries with Cook's published narrative, which shows that: a) Cook suppressed the entire day from his narrative which he spent in the Fake Peak amphitheater faking his summit photograph along with several others he later said were taken during his "climb," and b) neither his published narrative nor his diary get him to the summit on the day he later claimed to have been there. Yet Heckathorn calls my analysis "correct but not a revelation."

D18 He also says I "uncovered many useful facts" but cites only one. In an article that establishes, absolutely, that Cook was a liar about his 1906 photographs, and not the innocent victim of some sloppy editor, as Cookites are wont to maintain, and which prints incontrovertible proof that Fake Peak is indeed the same place as the one he went to his grave saying was the summit of Mount McKinley, Heckathorn does not mention these as among those "useful facts." Instead, he points out as my major triumph the discovery of a photo that shows Cook camped where he said he didn't camp, proving him a liar in his narrative as well as his photographs. But that is not the "useful fact" he cites, either. Heckathorn says this photograph is important because it shows a pair of gloves hanging on the tent line, proving Cook had gloves on his trek! This is so important to Heckathorn because Bradford Washburn said Cook had no gloves with him. You see, to a Cookite, the only useful facts are those that help Frederick Cook (all those that contradict him are unuseful facts).

D19 Apparently, Heckathorn does not give a thought to the possibility that Washburn could simply have this notion that Cook had no gloves because *Cook never mentions gloves as part of the climbing apparel he details in his book about his climb*. Washburn could have just taken Cook at his word in making this statement (as FACS always does about everything). In other words, it was an honest mistake on Washburn's part — the very excuse Heckathorn uses for his gross misplacement of Pegasus Peak on his map of Ruth Glacier.

²⁷It might be said that in 1910, Browne and Parker were able to find the true location of Cook's summit photograph because Ed Barrill pointed out its precise location on a map he made to accompany his affidavit in 1909. Still, FACS maintains that Barrill's affidavit is utterly false. Heckathorn in particular cannot get out of his head the idea that, simply because Barrill was paid for it, its content is necessarily untrue. To the contrary, the accurate location of Fake Peak on his map shows he told the truth about this key element of Cook's fake.

²⁸ *Polar Priorities* 1998, p.46. [Bryce acknowledgement of imperfect fit: *DIO* 7.2 §G13.]

Cook could navigate just three months before, was quoted as saying, "As an explorer there seems to be no doubt Cook is absolutely unreliable."⁹²

O3 Sheldon says yes because: b. Cook was interviewed by Professor Torp and Professor Stromgren of the University of Copenhagen with the same result.

O4 There is a record of this meeting, which Sheldon quotes in part. However, it is clear from the quotation that Torp, himself, had no way of judging Cook's navigational qualifications. He says that is the very reason that he brought Stromgren with him "as there were certain questions of a special astronomical nature with which I myself was not sufficiently acquainted." Stromgren was unable to make up for Torp's insufficiency, however. In 1978, Stromgren's son told Dennis Rawlins that his father had not enough ability with English to question Dr. Cook thoroughly on technical matters. Rather, it may be inferred from the quotation used by Sheldon that it was the calm and self-confident manner in which Cook conducted himself during the interview that actually convinced the two: "He showed no nervousness or excitement at any time. I dare say, therefore, that there is no justification for anybody to throw the slightest doubt on this claim to have reached the Pole."

O5 Sheldon says yes because: c. Cook was observed taking navigational sights by John R. Bradley and Rudolph Franke as they made their way toward Greenland in 1907 on Bradley's ship. And he quotes Bradley to that effect.

O6 Bradley had no idea of how to take celestial observations himself. This is evident from how he qualifies his testimony throughout the quoted passage: "I am no scientist"; "I think that Dr. Cook knew very well what he was doing"; "I think that scientists will agree that he was sufficiently versed in the knowledge necessary for him to tell whether or not he had arrived at the North Pole." Bradley simply assumed Cook was capable, mistaking his "wonderful mechanical skill," which both he and his brother Theodore definitely possessed, for scientific competence, thus mistaking him for a "trained scientist," which he definitely was not. There is simply not a jot of evidence other than such hearsay by interested parties (Bradley financed Cook's try for the Pole) that Cook knew how to handle a sextant. And when Cook submitted his "proofs" that he had reached the North Pole to the scientists (not withstanding Sheldon's attempt to put the best spin on their findings in his sidebar "The Copenhagen Verdict"), far from agreeing that Cook was sufficiently versed in the knowledge necessary for him to tell whether or not he had reached the North Pole, they found that his "proofs" had "a not permissible lack of such guiding information which could show the probability that the mentioned astronomical observations had actually been undertaken" and that they "did not contain observations or information which could be considered to prove that Dr. Cook had reached the Northpole."⁹³ After Cook's rejection, Bradley said, "If I had been fooled, well I am not the only one."⁹⁴

O7 Likewise, Franke, who was Cook's only white companion over the winter of 1907-08, was as easily deceived as Bradley. Franke had not even a grade school education and knew no more about celestial navigation than the Polar Eskimos, who Sheldon tells us could not have had "the slightest knowledge of navigation, of the use of the sextant or of celestial observations in the plotting of a course."

O8 Sheldon says yes because: d. Roald Amundsen said that Cook could navigate.

O9 There is no known record that Amundsen said specifically that Cook was navigationally competent. At the time of the Polar Controversy, Amundsen had not seen Cook in ten years. By his various quoted statements, it seems that he just assumed Cook was navigationally competent, on the same premise that Sheldon does here: that it was common sense that no one would set foot on the treacherous drifting arctic pack without such knowledge, because it would be sure suicide. However, Cook planned to navigate by compass alone along a "magnetic meridian," so he thought he had no need of the sextant — but

⁹²*New York World*, December 22, 1909.

⁹³Aarbog for Kobenhavns Universitet, *Kommunitetert og den polytekniske Laereanstalt, indeholdende Meddelelser for det akademiske Aar 1909-1910*, 1914.

⁹⁴*NYT*, December 22, 1909.

this is a technique that cannot possibly work without taking celestial observations. That is how ignorant Cook was of navigation, and there is abundant evidence that he was deficient in mathematical skills in general, as well.⁹⁵ After the rejection of Cook's "proofs" by the University of Copenhagen, Amundsen was quoted as saying, "the important question now is whether [Cook] is a swindler, or merely ignorant,"⁹⁶ showing Amundsen had come to doubt that Cook could navigate. From the documentary evidence, the answer to Amundsen's question about Cook is: "both."⁹⁷

O10 Sheldon says yes because: e. "Common sense" supports this "authoritative" eyewitness testimony of Bradley, Franke and Amundsen.

O11 On the contrary, common sense rejects what is unsupported by a shred of documentary evidence. And as illustrated by the foregoing, the eyewitness testimony is not authoritative, but entirely assumptive and biased, too. It is very clear that Cook did not know how to navigate. The only observations he ever published prove that.⁹⁸

P Cook's Compass Reading at the Pole

P1 In his next point, Sheldon seizes upon a passage in *Cook & Peary* and uses it to justify Cook's scanty scientific evidence. This is the general pattern followed by Cook partisans of "any [favorable] port in a storm." They choose to believe absolutely any scrap of information they think can be turned to his good (even in a book whose conclusions are entirely negative on Cook's polar claim), but reject without argument or avoid every major piece of negative documentary evidence that cannot be rationally refuted.⁹⁹

P2 In this instance, Sheldon grasps for one point in my book having to do with Cook's navigation and elaborates on it, in an attempt to prove, as this lawyer often couches his arguments, that Cook "almost certainly" reached the North Pole. That passage reads: "It is impossible to reconstruct past magnetic force fields with any certainty, unless data exist on which to construct them. In 1908 magnetic data in the region through which Cook said he traveled were virtually nonexistent."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *DIO* note. See, e.g., ¶6 §M10. Bryce has helped recover a short 1911 film, "The Truth About the Pole" (Bryce 1997 pp.527-28), featuring awesome machinations by the dastardly "Arctic Trust", a conspiratorial club composed entirely of antique ham actors. *DIO's* cover takes us frameup-by-frameup through the persecuted-hero saga. Despite all the Trust's vile, sinuous work, Cook arrives at the Pole (his hair & navigationally-able companions neatly parted), in the company of natives (of Chicago) & sledge dogs (two adorable pet collie-types), sextant in hand. He intently searches the horizon for something. The something turns out to be his camera cue. He finally picks up on it. Frame 1: He suddenly flips the sextant broadside to look at the arc-vernier. Then goes prone to shoot Sun. (Actual procedure is shoot-then-vernier.) Swift but masterly computation on notebook, capped by Saturday-Night-Livesque we're-outta-here flourish of pencil. Frame 2: Crass, wicked Peary meanwhile supervises burglary of Cook's hut. (Peary disappoints only by neglecting moustache-twirl.) Frame 3: Barrill pockets "Arctic Trust" bribe in Tacoma bank. Frame 4: Bright-eyed collie (lower left corner), Cook, & Illini cheer starzstripes. Frame 5: "Arctic Trust" goes apoplectic & physically shreds *Herald* announcing Cook's happy-ending victory over natural elements — and over the most unnaturally satanic of all the universe's forces. . . .

⁹⁶ *NYT*, December 22, 1909.

⁹⁷ That Amundsen didn't really believe that either Cook or Peary had reached the North Pole is implicit in the entry he made in his diary at the South Pole on December 16, 1911: "It is quite interesting, to see the sun wander around the heavens at so to speak the same altitude day and night. I think we are the first to see this curious sight." [Quoted in Huntford, Roland, *Scott and Amundsen*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980, p.491.]

⁹⁸ For a full discussion see *C&P*, Cook's Observations pp.861-64; The Magnetic Meridian pp.864-67; Shadows pp.867-69.

⁹⁹ Another good example of this is that FACS continues to distribute my article, "Dr. Cook and the Yahgan Dictionary," as a pro-Cook tract. However, in the latest issues of *Polar Priorities* Russ Gibbons exercised his journalistic standards to delete any mention of me as its author.

¹⁰⁰ *C&P*, p.865.

Cook went to his grave with the lie on his lips that this photo was taken at McKinley's top. **D12** It is very curious why Heckathorn attaches such significance to Browne's exchange of letters with Edwin Swift Balch in 1915. Heckathorn omits the letter from Browne in response to the one from Balch dated March 19, 1915, and Balch's response, which again refused his offer. He also omits Browne's third letter to Balch, dated March 29, 1915, for which Browne was rebuked for "your nonsense" by Balch on April 1. Here is the text of that letter:

My dear Mr. Balch:

Your letter of the 25th instant received. My absence from New York for a few days is responsible for my not having answered sooner.

After reading your two letters I am forced to admit that I cannot understand your point of view. As I look at the question the important facts are these. You have written a book entailing a great amount of study and research, and the purpose of the work is a settlement of a controversy that has grown to be of world wide importance. In this book you have used the data you possessed to reverse the popular belief.

Then I write you a letter stating that I have valuable data which you have not studied, urging you to examine it. Instead of the prompt acceptance that I expected, you merely express surprise that I have not made the matter public, and steadily maintain that you will not study the data until it is published.

Now, photographic proof exists in original prints and negatives alone. When photographic proofs are published they are but indications that originals exist.

As the reason for the publication of a book such as yours is to give the truth to the world, I refuse to believe that you will ignore my third invitation to study photographic proof that has an important bearing on the future standing of your book.

Trusting that I may yet have an affirmative answer, I am

Yours sincerely,

Belmore Browne

D13 It is clear from even the selective letters Heckathorn prints that Browne is quite willing to lay all of his evidence before Balch, but that Balch indignantly refuses to have a look. And the reader can now decide for himself if Browne's reasoning in the last of his letters to Balch is "nonsense." So how does this reflect badly on Browne's integrity? Can FACS members see something in these letters that other mortals cannot? In his analysis of Browne's "integrity,"²⁵ Heckathorn seems eager to believe anything bad of Browne on the slenderest of evidence or implication, but when confronted with the multiple forgeries and lies exposed by *DIO* in Cook's diaries and photographs, he does not see anything wrong with Cook's integrity, whatsoever. Such is the amazingly biased mindset of a partisan. What Heckathorn alleges about Bradford Washburn and Pegasus Peak was true of Edwin Swift Balch: He was "afraid to look." Cook partisans of 1915 were no more eager to have their apple cart upset than they are in 1998.

D14 When I belatedly took up Belmore Browne's offer to Balch in 1991, and examined his evidence in the form of the original photographic prints and negatives from the 1910 Parker-Browne expedition, which are now among the Belmore Browne papers at Dartmouth College, I was convinced that Browne was utterly correct in his belief that his material was convincing, especially on the point of Fake Peak being the site of Cook's photograph.²⁶

²⁵ "Belmore Browne's Slippery Slope". *Polar Priorities*, v.15 [1995], pp.38-41.

²⁶ See my discussion of this point in *C&P*, pp.816-17.

of Pegasus Peak was solely from the air, and later from the pictures taken by the professional climbers who reached the ridge and had that vantage point. According to Sheldon, Heckathorn has never “actually been there.”²² Perhaps Heckathorn will state for the record if he did or did not reach the crest of the East Buttress or if he ever saw Pegasus Peak from that vantage point, or that he never did and thus never saw for himself the route he now advocates for Cook as “doable” (although to this date it has never been done). If Sheldon was correct (and there are plenty of other witnesses who can verify if Heckathorn was ever on the East Ridge) then that would considerably diminish his so-called “field experience.” Anyone, for a price, can be flown out to Ruth Glacier and traipse around a bit. Such a jaunt does not automatically make one an authority, however, or the leader of an expedition, either. If Heckathorn was not on the East Ridge, then his analysis of the similarity of Cook’s sketch to Pegasus Peak has no better basis than Rawlins’s and mine, since both were done from photographs, and thus his main argument against us is demolished.

D10 Heckathorn says that “[Bryce] continued to make a number of incorrect assumptions and statements about my 1994 expedition. He has never contacted me for accurate details and instead parroted incorrect quotes from others.”²³ Heckathorn continues his bad habit of not pointing out any of these “incorrect assumptions,” and I think the present reader can forgive me if I didn’t contact him for details, since he has so often failed to answer even my direct inquiries and requests for documentation on so many other occasions. He also says I “declined” to attend the FACS-sponsored symposium on Mt. McKinley in Seattle in September 1996. I didn’t decline. (I can’t even remember being invited.) I just chose not to go, since Seattle is 3,000 miles from my home and I was in the middle of finishing the galleys for *Cook & Peary* at that time. But I did talk to Sheldon for about two hours after the expedition’s return, and I read with care all of Heckathorn’s material about the 1994 expedition in the 1996 FACS reprint of *To the Top of the Continent*. I insisted that my editor insert several paragraphs about it in the galleys as a result. This material purports to contain a full account of the expedition, so if I arrived at any “incorrect” assumptions, they were derived from Heckathorn’s own published materials. Perhaps if he ever identifies these “incorrect assumptions” we could judge how incorrect they are.

D11 But even someone who hasn’t “been there” cannot escape the fact that the original print of Cook’s “summit” photo was actually taken at Fake Peak. He may avoid the issue absolutely, like Ted Heckathorn, but he cannot escape it. Heckathorn fails to confront this undeniable fact even obliquely in his article, but instead dismisses it as part of a “re-hash” of old allegations by Belmore Browne²⁴ concerning “photographs on the lower Ruth Glacier.” Old allegations on which Heckathorn has spent considerable energy; old allegations he described as part of a plot to destroy Cook; old allegations he does not now wish to acknowledge as being 100% true. Certainly, Browne and Parker do not get off without criticism in *Cook & Peary*. However, it is entirely unjust to further continue the imputation that they forged or misrepresented their evidence against Cook gathered by them on Ruth Glacier in 1910. Fake Peak is Cook’s “summit.” Of that there can be no doubt, and

²²This appears confirmed by an account of the expedition that appeared on the Associated Press wire service, dated Seattle, July 26, 1994 which said: “Three climbers — [Scott] Fischer, Doug Nixon of Oak Harbor and Vern Tejas of Anchorage — scaled a ridge at approximately 11,500 feet. What they saw and took photos of from there matched Cook’s descriptions and sketches perfectly, they said.”

²³He cites *DIO* 7.2-3 pp.63 and 77 as examples, but he is not even mentioned on p.77. The quote of Dee Molenaar on p.63 expresses Molenaar’s negative opinion of Heckathorn’s abilities to make maps and interpretations of Cook’s route; it makes no assumptions about his expedition.

²⁴Heckathorn says of Browne: “In 1910, he finally stepped upon the Ruth Glacier. . . .” Actually Browne stepped on Ruth Glacier for the first time in 1906. Something else this “polar historian” does not know. [See *ITC*, p.170 and Belmore Browne’s diary for July 22, 1906, BBD.] Heckathorn makes slight mention of the fact that Browne’s “field experience” was considerably more than his own, including participation in three pioneer attempts to climb Mount McKinley before any workable route to the top had been discovered, the last missing by only about 264 feet being the first to reach the actual summit in 1912.

P3 Unfortunately for Sheldon’s argument, it has come to my attention that this statement is *incorrect*, having been based on outdated information. Although this passage was reviewed by both of my technical consultants on geomagnetism, neither of them caught it, and both were apparently unaware of the new information that would have shown the statement was false until after *Cook & Peary* was published. When the statement is corrected, Sheldon’s contentions about Cook’s magnetic observations and Cook’s claim to have made them at the Pole are shown to be impossible, thus immeasurably strengthening the thesis of *Cook & Peary* that Frederick Cook was never even in the remote vicinity of the North Pole in 1908.

P4 Just as I asked Keith Pickering to check several technical aspects of my book in which I was not an expert, I asked him to read Sheldon’s arguments concerning navigation and magnetic variation for accuracy and, based on up-to-date information, write a critique. He responded as follows:

At its core, [Sheldon’s] argument is based on this fallacy:

“It is impossible to determine today, it seems, what the direction of the prevailing magnetic field at the North Pole was in 1908 except from Cook’s own report. Cook’s statement that the needle of the compass at the North Pole pointed south can neither be confirmed nor denied by data available to science today.”

This statement is false. In the 1960’s geophysicists began to model the earth’s magnetic field in a new way, known as spherical harmonic analysis. This method uses a large set of coefficients to mathematically describe the magnetic field. Every five years, the International Association for Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA) uses geomagnetic data from around the world to update these coefficients and create a new International Geomagnetic Reference Field, or IGRF. The IGRF has been validated as being accurate to within 1 degree (in declination) over continental areas and half a degree over the ocean. Since the IGRF is a mathematical model, it can be used¹⁰¹ to determine magnetic declination [compass variation] in places too remote to visit [easily].

Once this method became available, geophysicists began to apply it retroactively to geomagnetic data from the past. For dates within the twentieth century, enough data is available to model the earth’s magnetic field to within IAGA tolerances. To put it simply, it is indeed possible to determine the direction of the magnetic field at the North Pole in 1908. . . .¹⁰²

The only meaningful statement Cook made is that at the North Pole, the compass pointed along the 97° west meridian. We can use the National Geophysical Data Center computer program (GEOMAG) to test the veracity of Cook’s claim. We find that on 21 April 1908, the compass at the North Pole pointed along meridian 133 degrees [and a half] west. . . .¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ [*DIO* note. Modern magnetic charts (checked for extrapolation-validity by comparison to genuine early arctic data of, e.g., Nares, Markham, & Peary) were first used for evaluating polar expeditions by DR, who rejected the claims of Cagni 1900, Cook 1908, & Peary 1909 due to their false and/or absent statements on compass variation: Rawlins 1973 pp.65, 91, & 234, respectively. (Regarding *ibid* p.131 on Peary’s 1909/3/11 compass course: the datum was from his 1902 diary. As to the physical impossibility of Cook’s & Hall’s “magnetic meridian” [¶5 fn 4], see Rawlins 1993 [paper’s publication-history: ¶6 fn 18 parenthesis] p.54 & fn 34, or video of 1993/10/22 OSU talk [transcript pp.16-17].)]

¹⁰²[This model is available as GEOMAG at <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/seg/potfld/magmodel.shtml> — *ed.* (DR hint: Put file IGRF into subdirectory GEOMAG.)]

¹⁰³[*Ed.* note. The overall accuracy of the model is 0.5 degrees over oceanic regions when measured spherically. Projected onto the horizontal plane, with the high dip angle present at the North Pole, the error in declination is about 8 degrees — which, in spite of its looseness, still easily convicts Cook, whose “reading” was 36 degrees off.]

It is also possible to evaluate [Sheldon's] oft-repeated statement that it is "very probable" that the compass pointed south along the 97° west meridian in 1908. This statement is also false. The magnetic declination along the 97 west meridian in April 1908 varied from 151 degrees west to 143 1/2 degrees west between latitudes 82 and 90, considerably different from the 180 degrees declination that Cook believed and [Sheldon] has assumed.

This leads to an inescapable conclusion: Cook did not actually determine magnetic declinations. If he had done so, he would not have claimed that the compass pointed south along the 97 west meridian. This conclusion is hardly surprising, since:

- Except for the North Pole report, he did not claim to have determined magnetic declinations;
- There is no mention in his surviving diaries that he did so; and
- There is also no observational record in his diaries for magnetic declination. . . .

To support his claim that the compass pointed south along the 97 west meridian, [Sheldon] uses three arguments. (Which he calls "evidence." The author is evidently not a lawyer.)¹⁰⁴

First, [Sheldon] argues "[Cook] read his compass at Svartevog. He knew the direction in which the needle pointed." But HOW did he know? The compass tells you magnetic north, not true north. [By itself], magnetic north is a stunningly useless datum in the Arctic. To find true north, you need to make celestial observations and you need to make computations. As stated above, there is no *evidence* that Cook did so. Only when you have found true north can you determine magnetic declination, and only then is a magnetic compass useful in Arctic navigation.

Second, [Sheldon] states that "there can be no question that Cook knew the direction in which the compass needle pointed for a number of miles north of Svartevog." This is the same argument all over again [with the same answer]. . . .

Third, [Sheldon] argues that Cook must have been able to navigate accurately in order to accurately describe the physical conditions in the high Arctic. All of Cook's physical descriptions fall into three [categories]:

1. Repetitions of, or reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from, existing accounts of previous travelers. Into this bucket we can throw the Big Lead, the improvement in ice conditions about 87 north, and the direction of ice drift near the Pole.
2. Things Cook could have observed himself without leaving sight of land. Into this bucket we can put the direction of ice drift offshore, general conditions of the pack ice, and the absence of Crocker Land.
3. Things Cook could only have observed if he had actually gone far into the high Arctic or to the Pole. Into this bucket we can put Bradley Land, the submerged land ice, and the direction of the compass needle at the North Pole.

Only the items in 3 are useful in determining the truth of Cook's claim, and *all of these items are false*. A reasonable person would draw a reasonable conclusion from this.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴[Note by KP: Bryce had deliberately hidden Sheldon's name from me before asking my opinion, so that my statements would not be biased. I was therefore unaware of the irony that the critique's author was indeed a lawyer.]

¹⁰⁵Pickering to RMB, October 1, 1997, possession of author.

the world for decades, including the mysterious tale of the "great animal bones" told by Ahwelah to David Haig-Thomas in 1935.¹⁹

D5 Heckathorn tells us that a Polar Eskimo (who intimately knew the anatomy of practically every animal in the Arctic) could not tell a massive coral rock formation from animal bones, petrified or not. Heckathorn even could tell from looking out the plane's window what Ahwelah was thinking in 1908 and how little time he had to examine his discovery of the "great animal bones" (read his text, I am not making this up). He also could discern what Ahwelah and Dr. Cook *did not* talk about 90 years ago. And, of course, all these things known only to Heckathorn turn out to be "an additional piece of evidence to substantiate Cook's trip through Hassel Sound in 1908."

D6 However, Heckathorn does not know some things. For instance his map of Cook's route²⁰ does not corroborate Cook's own testimony or match Cook's own map. Cook said he went all the way to the end of Devon Island in an attempt to reach Lancaster Sound, but was unsuccessful and doubled back to Cape Sparbo for the winter. Cook also shows this on all of the maps he drew of his route, but Heckathorn's doesn't. Someone must be wrong, and we *know* it could not be Dr. Cook, since Ted Heckathorn has yet to catch him in a single error or misstatement about anything.

D7 As I recall Sheldon's lengthy conversation with me just after the 1994 expedition returned from Alaska,²¹ he said Heckathorn went out with the intention of proving his theory that Cook had climbed McKinley via the East Buttress. Sheldon was very concerned that this would be the finding of the expedition, because at that time he still strongly advocated Hans Waale's circuitous route for Cook up Pioneer Ridge.

D8 For those who missed it, it was on this expedition that Ted Heckathorn stepped foot on Ruth Glacier for the first and only time and thus became the superior of all who have never "been there" and even some who have been there far more than he ever will. Here, again, he beats his unending tattoo of "field experience" being a prerequisite for understanding historical events. I have already (¶4 §L6f) dealt with the weaknesses of this argument in some detail. However, I will say in contradiction of his specific argument here that it *is* possible to "see" Ruth Glacier from Maryland, and it does not require "supernatural visual abilities to see geographical features thousands of miles away." That was made feasible centuries ago when topographical maps were invented. Ruth Glacier can be "seen" quite nicely, anywhere, through the study of appropriate contour maps and photographs (and the best ones of McKinley are all by Bradford Washburn), which Dennis Rawlins and myself did before making our analyses in *DIO* 7.2-3. And it *is also possible* for someone who has been to Ruth Glacier to make gross mistakes in describing the region he has seen in person, such as Heckathorn's acknowledgement that he totally misplaced Pegasus Peak on his map. To prove my point, even though Ted Heckathorn has "been there," his error was pointed out to him by a guy in Maryland (Rawlins: see ¶6 §N16) looking at a topographical map who had never "been there." And anyway, if the test of credibility is who makes the fewest mistakes in his writings, Heckathorn loses hands down, despite his vaunted "field experience" and self-proclaimed reputation as a "polar historian."

D9 There is even a question as to the extent of Heckathorn's actual field experience, and where he has "actually been." He continually refers to himself as the "leader" of FACS's Ruth Glacier Expedition of 1994. And he states on page 5 of this issue of *Polar Priorities* that what "we saw on the East Ridge" matched Cook's sketch on page 52 of his diary. However, in 1994, Sheldon, who was part of that expedition, told me just after the expedition's return that Heckathorn was unable to reach the crest of the East Buttress himself, and so never could have seen the view he now claims proves Cook's arrival there. His view

¹⁹See the 1998 *Polar Priorities* p.11.

²⁰"Based on 1998 Aerial Surveys by Ted Heckathorn". In the world of FACS, gazing out a plane window = "aerial survey"; *Polar Priorities* = "scholarly journal."

²¹I have no documentation for this.

D “Dr. Cook’s 1906 Mount McKinley Ascent,” by Ted Heckathorn

D1 Finally, we have Ted Heckathorn’s “response from someone who actually went there.” He starts this piece by trying to convince his readers that he “went there” as an impartial fact-finder. Small chance. Heckathorn had been expounding his “McKinley-gate” conspiracy theory long before he broached the idea of FACS footing the bill for his “fact-finding” mission to Ruth Glacier. He intimated as much to me in our very first meeting in 1990.¹⁴ He has written: “There was no secret agenda for my expedition and we did not know in advance what the results would be.” However, any reader who has gotten this far in these papers should know by now that impartial fact-finding is not a characteristic of persons with conspiratorial mentalities or a likely activity of an organization that is dedicated to gaining “official recognition for the scientific and geographic accomplishments of . . . Dr. Frederick Albert Cook.”

D2 Heckathorn may have had no “secret agenda,” but he certainly must have offered something more than an opportunity for unbiased fact-finding to convince the officers of FACS to part with \$40,000 in cash from its endowment to mount his excursion to Ruth Glacier in 1994. So what was it?

D3 Heckathorn himself tells us: “In October 1993 . . . I submitted a proposal to the Frederick A. Cook Society to organize an expedition of experienced mountaineers and historians to investigate Dr. Cook’s 1906 route In the worst case scenario, we might find no practical route for Dr. Cook in the upper Ruth Glacier. Since American mountaineering circles held him in low repute anyway, the potential additional damage to his reputation was small. We did have new supporting evidence, including Dr. Cook’s 1906 diary. The Society accepted the risk to their own credibility and approved my proposal.”¹⁵ Does this sound like a proposal aimed at unbiased fact-finding, when the planners take into consideration “worst case scenarios,” “supporting evidence,” possible “potential additional damage to [Cook’s] reputation” and the “risk to their own credibility”? Considering the personnel chosen for the trip, exclusive of the hired professional climbers,¹⁶ no one should be encouraged to believe that impartial fact-finding was high on their agenda, secret or not. Before he left, Heckathorn stated his “unbiased” intentions as “We will follow Dr. Cook’s route onto the upper Ruth and Traleika glaciers which few expeditions have visited since Dr. Cook first explored them in 1906. The evidence presented against Dr. Cook in the 1909-1912 period was either tainted or flagrantly false.”¹⁷ In any case, it seems that FACS was expecting big things, whatever else Heckathorn promised.

D4 This can be reasonably inferred from a letter I received from FACS president, Warren B. Cook, Sr., in advance of the expedition: “We will be engaged in a major Mt. McKinley project this summer, the results of which may be an additional, positive, influential force. . . .”¹⁸ And why shouldn’t they expect big things? Ted Heckathorn has never gone “into the field” yet and come back with a scrap of evidence *against* Dr. Cook. His latest “field investigation” is described on pp.4-15 of the 1998 issue of *Polar Priorities*. Just try to find a single solitary thing in it that Cook did not report absolutely accurately. Believe me, you will be wasting your time. Heckathorn is such an amazing field investigator, that even while flying in an airplane he can solve that which has baffled

¹⁴For a gauge of his impartiality, see Heckathorn, Ted, “Reopening the Book on Mount McKinley,” in the FACS reprint of *To the Top of the Continent*, p.239.

¹⁵TTC reprint, p.240.

¹⁶Walt Gonnason (long time advocate of Cook and foe of Bradford Washburn); Jim Garlinghouse, (member of FACS Board of Directors); Sheldon Cook-Dorough (FACS Historian, no introduction necessary) and Ted.

¹⁷*Frederick A. Cook Society Membership News*, v.1, #2 [July 1994]. Cook claimed a lot of things about Alaska, but he never claimed to have been on any part of the Traleika glacier.

¹⁸Cook to RMB, April 27, 1994, possession of author.

Q Cook’s Observations of Physical Conditions in the Arctic

Q1 It might be added to Pickering’s last point that Thomas Hall, whose book the Cook partisans quote as Gospel on all of its positive assertions concerning Cook, made this very strong and final assertion about the importance of Cook’s claim to have seen “Bradley Land”: “If Bradley Land is proven non-existent, Cook is eliminated [as the discoverer of the Pole].”¹⁰⁶ And Edwin Swift Balch, whose books they likewise cite as strong evidence in Cook’s favor said “If [Bradley Land] does not exist, [Cook’s] case is demolished forever.”¹⁰⁷ Bradley Land does not exist, and none of FACS’s attempts to excuse this fact hold any water. For instance, FACS contends what Cook saw was actually a drifting ice island. But Cook’s published photograph of “Bradley Land” (Fig.5) has no similarity to an ice island whatsoever, but is undoubtedly a photograph of solid land.

Q2 FACS has also produced lame arguments concerning Cook’s submerged glacial island, claiming it too was an ice island, and it attempts to justify Cook’s fake picture of this feature by such deceptive arguments as the boulder pile on ARLIS II noted previously in the discussion (§L28) of Heckathorn’s criticisms. But Cook’s picture is incontestably a fake, just as are his pictures of “Bradley Land” and his photograph of the “summit” of Mount McKinley. It is both illogical and unnecessary to fake a photograph of a place one has actually visited with a camera. But Cook visited none of his famously-claimed places (some of which do not even exist!), and so had no genuine pictures of them, only fakes made at other places he had actually been to.

Q3 Cook also made several other descriptions of conditions based on the best evidence he had in his era, but which have proven false with more time. [See *DIO* 7.3 ¶9 fn 41.] As usual, Sheldon ignores these, which include some of the ones reported by previous travelers in the Arctic cited by Pickering, which were copied by Cook:

The high arctic is rich in animal life above the 85th parallel, although Cook said it was a barren waste, with no life whatever. The polar ice, contrary to Sheldon and Dr. Cook, does not always improve the closer you go to the Pole. The effect on the ice due to its crushing against land tends to diminish about 240 miles offshore, but the improvement of ice conditions nearer the Pole is not a hard and fast rule. It varies considerably in any given year and season and is not totally predictable.

Modern data show that the so-called Big Lead, that both Peary and Cook said marked the boundary between shore ice and pack, is not a permanent feature of the Arctic.

There is no flattening at the Pole to make up for an equatorial bulge, as Cook strongly implied, but rather there is a bulge at the Pole as well.

Modern observation has also shown that the ice between the islands where Cook said he was helplessly adrift never breaks up in June. This point is taken up in detail at §U.

Q4 Contrasting strongly with these incorrect reports are Cook’s very accurate observations of things he really saw. He was the first to realize that Sverdrup’s Shei Island is actually a peninsula, for instance. The conditions described in Cook’s diary for the first 6 days of his journey match very well with the conditions prevalent in the area north of Axel Heiberg Land in the early spring, even today, and MacMillan encountered the same conditions on his very similar trip six years after Cook, including noting the strong westerly drift at the place he turned back. Furthermore, Cook’s meteorological descriptions for those same days were verified by contemporaneous Danish weather records.¹⁰⁸ All this indicates that Cook made a journey of about 100 miles northwest of his starting point before giving up. But as we have seen, his observations beyond the point he turned back are generally inaccurate and were simply based on what was considered most probable in 1908, much of which has now been proven incorrect, however.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Hall to Stefansson, October 19, 1926. SCD.

¹⁰⁷“Polar Controversies. II. Cook’s Claims,” *Independent*, November 28, 1925, p.608.

¹⁰⁸For details see *C&P*, pp.974-75.

¹⁰⁹For more detail on these points see *C&P*, Dr. Cook’s Narrative pp.883-89.

R Cook's "Magnificent" Speeds

R1 In his third section, Sheldon takes up another time-honored tradition of the Polar Controversy: the comparative sledge journey. As I said in my book, comparisons of sledge journeys "present limitless opportunity for understandable honest confusion as well as intentional dishonest obfuscation; in nearly every such discussion . . . can be found errors introduced by one or the other." Sheldon's has quite a bit of the latter. Still, I hesitate to get involved with sledge speeds and distances, since it takes far longer to explain to the reader what is wrong with the analysis under discussion than it is worth, not to mention that it is dreadfully tedious. However, a few comments on Sheldon's statements justifying Cook's "truly magnificent" speeds are in order. I will try to spare the reader the balance of the numbing details.

R2 Simply put, no matter what argument you want to make, the fact is, no one has ever done what Cook claimed to have done (that is, make an unresupplied dogsledge journey to the North Pole and return to any point of land) in *any* amount of time, right down to today. And no one driving dogs, before or since, has ever come close to Cook's claimed sustained speeds over the Arctic Ocean pack ice for even a fraction of the time of his alleged 88-day round trip daily average.

R3 When Sheldon makes the point that "On no single day of Cook's sledge journey to the North Pole and his return across the pack did he attain a speed or achieve a distance which is impossible or unfeasible," this is utterly meaningless. The point is not that what Cook claimed to do on any given day is fantastic (or "magnificent" if you like); it is what he claimed to do *on the average, day after day, week after week, month after month* that is not just fantastic, but impossible.

R4 When Sheldon cites the journeys of MacMillan & Steger as justifications for Cook's speeds, that is equally meaningless. MacMillan's journey cannot be compared to Cook's entire claimed journey because:

(a) MacMillan only went 120 miles onto the Polar Sea and turned back. He had no intention to try for the Pole and therefore did not need to carry nearly as many supplies as Cook. MacMillan could naturally travel faster because he had less to carry.

(b) MacMillan made such fabulous speeds on his return from 120 miles out because he abandoned almost all of his gear at the beginning of his return journey and came back to land with nearly empty sledges. Cook had no such luxury.

R5 Likewise, Steger's 1986 expedition, though it reached the Pole, did not have to return (he was airlifted out), so he also did not have to haul nearly as much gear. Steger, like MacMillan, made his best speeds when he abandoned his supplies in a desperate attempt to increase his speed as he neared the Pole, hoping by this to justify Peary's claims of increased speed over this area in 1909, and thus please his wealthy sponsor and key Peary advocate, the National Geographic Society. When he arrived at the Pole, hardly a morsel of food was left on Steger's sledges. Cook had no such option; he had to return unaided.

R6 Furthermore, as I show on page 1102 of *Cook & Peary*, the speeds quoted by Steger in the appendix of his book, *North to the Pole*, are artificially inflated to make Peary's speeds look more plausible. So what Steger reported was not comparable to Peary's or to Cook's speeds in any way.¹¹⁰ Yes, Steger had a few days where he matched or exceeded Cook's best claimed speed on any one day, but Steger's *average* speed was *less than 9 miles per day, as opposed to Cook's claimed 14*. To the uninitiated reader, that may not sound like much of a difference, but it is actually enormous in practical terms, especially when you consider that Cook claimed this, on average, for every day of a round trip, while Steger did not return.

¹¹⁰Ironically, though Sheldon brings forward the same false arguments Steger used to bolster Peary's claims as evidence in favor of Cook, he and the rest of FACS see no merit in them as evidence in favor of Peary, as *National Geographic* says they are.

report."¹² And Dr. Ralph Myerson, FACS vice-president, commented: "I was truly amazed ('impressed' is not strong enough) by Bob Bryce's analysis and recommendations concerning the Cook archives. His thoroughness and his accurate assessment of the state of the collection and our needs completely satisfied the mandate given him."¹³

B12 To make this financial disclosure complete, I will also state that I returned \$136.58 in expenses paid me by FACS to attend the symposium at Ohio State in 1993 as a "resource scholar," specifying that it be used toward the organization of the Cook papers then in its possession. So, I have received approximately \$1,650 from FACS since my first contact with it in 1989, or an average of \$165 a year.

B13 In the interest of "balance," perhaps Russell Gibbons, Sheldon S.R. Cook and Ted Heckathorn would care to disclose the totals they have received from FACS's treasury since 1989? It is, after all, a public record in the State of New York. This accounting, I am sure, would make my receipts look like pocket change, and might go a long way toward explaining to readers of *DIO* and *Polar Priorities*, who may be puzzled by the trio's vehement and apparently irrational defense of Cook against the overwhelming documentary evidence of his deceits, what may be one of the basic motives behind it.

C "DIO's Fatal Flaw on McKinley: Ignoring Cook's Diary Sketch," by Sheldon S.R. Cook

C1 The next article in *Polar Priorities* by Sheldon needs little comment. The same patterns continue as in Sheldon's previous material. In this case the "fatally flawed" item alleged to have been "ignored," has been afforded more than 10 pages of detailed discussion in *DIO* 7.2-3 [pp.62-67; 70-74]. Sheldon's lengthy and repetitious treatment of the same circumstantial arguments first made in 1914 by Edwin Swift Balch in his book *Mount McKinley and Mountain Climbers' Proofs* are fully addressed in Chapter 28 of *Cook & Peary*. However, a few of Sheldon's other comments are worthy of note.

C2 Its most amazing feature is Sheldon's apparent schism with current FACS doctrine in his opening paragraph, in which he says Cook's upper sketch on page 52 of his 1906 diary "depicts features of the main mass of Mount McKinley" rather than Pegasus Peak. Sheldon told me in 1994 that he did not agree with Ted Heckathorn's contention that Cook climbed McKinley via the East Buttress. He then still adhered to the theory of Hans Waale, who had Cook take a circuitous trek to reach Pioneer Ridge as his ultimate route. Has Sheldon reverted to this former opinion?

C3 Sheldon's article contains some other astounding statements as well, the most flabbergasting being: "It should be pointed out that it has not been proven that the peak depicted in the photograph captioned by Cook as the summit is not in fact the summit or a peak in the summit formation. But even if it were positively demonstrated that the peak in Cook's summit photograph is not the true summit but another eminence, even Fake Peak, this fact would not establish that Cook did not reach the top," and also: "It seems unlikely that Cook's photograph captioned the top is Fake Peak." I am sure most readers of *DIO* did not have to have it pointed out to them that the comparative photos it contains prove that the two are one and the same. Could *anyone* looking at *DIO* 7.2-3 figures 4, 18, 6 and 8 not believe that? Only someone blind (or blinded by blind faith) could possibly believe otherwise. Such statements as Sheldon's (the historian emeritus of FACS) should totally destroy his credibility and that of the editor who endorses them by seeing them into print. Their inability to accept even the most absolute proofs against Frederick A. Cook's veracity should also utterly undermine any unbiased person's belief in their objectivity or capacity to accept any evidence that disallows their own wishes and desire to see Cook vindicated.

¹²W.B. Cook, Sr. to Russell W. Gibbons, November 21, 1994, copy, possession of author.

¹³Myerson to W. B. Cook, Sr., November 30, 1994, copy in possession of author.

6, 1997, in the form of an honorarium for my paper presented at the *Belgica* Centennial Symposium (as did every other person who read a paper there). I was invited to present by Russell Gibbons before my book was published and at a time when FACS had convinced itself that my book was going to vindicate Cook⁵ I also received reimbursement for my travel expenses. After my book was published, Gibbons suggested a debate between myself and Sheldon S.R. Cook be an added feature of the symposium, which, although it required far more in time and preparation of materials than did my symposium paper, I agreed to at no added expense to FACS.

B9 Gibbons doesn't mention the money I received from FACS in 1994. He, himself, hired me to review the FACS collection, then housed at Hurleyville, New York, to make a preliminary survey of its contents and to make recommendations as to how it might be preserved.⁶ I was asked to do this on the strength of FACS's regard for me at the time as the greatest living authority on Dr. Frederick A. Cook. If the correspondence I received from FACS's officers is any indication, this regard was maintained up until February 12, 1997, a few days before my book's release, when I informed Warren B. Cook, Sr., Dr. Cook's grandnephew and president of FACS, that the conclusions of my book were that Cook had neither ascended McKinley nor reached the Pole.⁷ Less than a month before, President Cook had written to me: "The Society is very appreciative of your meticulous and unparalleled research of Dr. Cook's life and achievements. . . . You know more about him than does his Grandnephew."⁸ Oh, but what a difference a conclusion can make! In the last piece of correspondence I got from Russ Gibbons in reply to my rejection of his "no editorial guarantees, whatsoever" terms for publishing my response, he said: "The condensation [*sic*] and arrogance expressed in your last letter is only an extension of that within your book. Again, you offer a case more for a psychologist than the historian — dismissing any view contrary to your own as but 'empty arguments and falsehoods' and as part of a denial syndrome and a 'discredited cause.'"⁹

B10 In return for 24 actual hours of work in this collection in October 1994, I received \$900, including expenses. Of this Mr. Cook said: "We have just concluded a consultative visit to the Museum by Bob Bryce, whose qualifications as Historian, Librarian, Archivist and Author are highly respected, and Russ is sending us a report of his findings."¹⁰

B11 As a result of this visit I produced a 33-page report for FACS at no additional charge.¹¹ When he received it, Warren Cook seemed pleased: "I have never seen anything to equal the depth, the accuracy and the logical guideline steps . . . depicted in Bob's

⁵Gibbons to RMB, November 13, 1996, possession of author. When I informed FACS of the book's final title, Sheldon wrote to me: "Your book should resolve the Cook-Peary Controversy and the new title is an excellent one. . . . I believe, that the title of the landmark biography of Dr. Cook should specifically allude to the all-important fact that the Controversy is resolved. For Cook!" [S.S.R. Cook to RMB, December 18, 1996, possession of author.] When the book was published and the resolution did not favor Cook, Gibbons wrote in his review in *Arctic*: "What may be the most troubling for those interested in history is the subtitle, which asserts that this book has somehow "resolved" the controversy." (v.50, no.4, December 1997, p.370). "You'll never get a final word in any historical debate like this." (*NYT*, February 17, 1997.)

⁶Gibbons to RMB, August 16, 1994.

⁷Before that, Sheldon Cook-Dorough had said: "The seriousness of your purpose, the depth and thoroughness of your research and the sincerity of your intentions would have enlisted for you [Helene and Janet Vetter's (Cook's daughter and granddaughter)] full support and co-operation had they lived to know you and to become familiar with your standards of scholarship, honesty and fairness." Cook-Dorough to RMB, November 16, 1996, possession of author.

⁸Dedication in my copy of FACS's reprint of *To the Top of the Continent*, 1996, January 14, 1997.

⁹Gibbons to RMB, March 2, 1998, possession of author. [*DIO* note. FACS letter to *Anchorage Daily News*, quoted in 1998 Dec *Memb. News* 5.3 p.7: "It is incredulous [*sic*] that Washburn. . . ."]

¹⁰W.B. Cook, Sr. to William Smith, November 7, 1994, copy possession of author.

¹¹*The Collection of the Frederick A. Cook Society housed at The Sullivan County Historical Museum, Art and Cultural Center, Hurleyville, New York: A Report*, 1994.

R7 There is no *independent documentary record* that Cook was a "superb sledger," as Sheldon claims. There is *no evidence* that he could even handle a dog team well. There is, however, *documentary evidence* that he rode the sledges as a passenger when traveling with the Eskimos at other times. His crossing of Ellesmere Island was not exceptional; and, as we have seen above (§L24), MacMillan exceeded his speed in 1914. In fact, Cook had never been on the Arctic Pack at all before 1908, and thus *he had absolutely no prior experience, whatever, traveling with dog teams over arctic pack ice*. His sea-ice experience was limited to the antarctic pack, which is considerably different in character and less chaotic in the area he traveled through. Even there he made very ordinary times in his brief excursions across it, none totaling more than 25 miles in two consecutive days. And this speed was only accomplished *without sleds*. At all other times in the Antarctic, he man-hauled relatively light loads compared to his North Pole attempt with dogs and sledges loaded to a weight of more than 600 pounds each. Nor are Sheldon's other statements supportable.

R8 As already discussed (§Q), Cook's descriptions of the conditions on the way to the Pole *have not been confirmed* in every detail by later exploration, and the so-called "first Eskimo testimony" may have expressed his Eskimo companions' admiration for him as a sledger and a man, but the second Eskimo testimony said that Cook was "a teller of tall tales." Take your choice.¹¹¹

S Cook's Polar Notes

S1 In the fourth section, Sheldon attempts to discount the evidence from Cook's own hands, as written in his various polar notebooks. And this evidence is not limited to the tense or style of the entries, as Sheldon implies. The actual substance, including directly contradictory statements about events on the same days, completely different supposed recorded geographical positions at a specific time and date, and even different dates for the same events, not to mention contradictory insertions, deletions and substantial erasures brand this material as a fabrication. So, it is not just the fact that Cook's notebooks are written in the past tense that marks them as fakes, as anyone who reads the detailed material about them contained in *Cook & Peary* will see.

S2 Sheldon's comments, however, are limited to the style of the entries and are entirely rhetorical. He attempts to justify the use of the past tense by quoting Cook as saying he wrote his entries at the end of the day. That is irrelevant. Unlike the excerpts reproduced in the appendix of my book, which, as Sheldon notes, are mostly written in the present tense or speak of circumstantial events just past, the majority of his entries about his polar journey in his notebooks are written in what might be called "story form"; that is, they are highly organized summaries, as if the events being described were long over and done and are being recalled in a remembered, edited fashion. There is little unimportant circumstantial detail left in these entries; the detail they do contain is literary. This distinguishes them completely from Cook's genuine diary entries, like the ones made over the winter of 1907-08 at Annoatok or at Cape Sparbo over the next winter. As can be seen in the reproduced passages in my book, in the genuine entries Cook has not started to condense events in his mind — or dream them up already condensed. He is recording them fresh and unedited. Also, the format and handwriting of the fabricated portions of Cook's notebooks are too neat and well organized to have been written in the field — the same characteristics that FACS readily agrees condemn Peary's so-called polar diary as a fake. Cook's genuine field notebook entries have a totally different look about them; the handwriting is large and sprawling, not neat and compact.

S3 More important than any of this, however, are the already noted changes, erasures, adjustments, internal conflicts, and several versions of the same day's happenings in separate notebooks that differ considerably and cannot be reconciled as accounts of a single day's

¹¹¹For details see *C&P*, Cook's Speed, pp.881-82.

events. These are the badges of fraud and fantasy. Examples of some of these changes can be seen in the reproduced notes in the appendix to my book, and in its textual examples in the pages cited below. Thus, the form and content of Cook's polar diaries, not the narrow matter of tense, condemn them to even a greater extent than Peary's, which at least seems to be an actual copy of the authentic diary that Peary wrote in the field, to a point. The same cannot be said of Cook's. Even the unpublished portions of Cook's "field notes" (the balance of which were published in *My Attainment* pp.569-77) do not match his actual diary entries from the time he left Annoatok until he jumped off for the Pole from Cape Stallworthy. No amount of lawyerly rhetoric can explain away that kind of hard evidence.¹¹²

T The Westerly Drift

T1 Cook, like MacMillan in 1914, could have easily observed the westerly drift which Cook supporters have never tired of citing in his favor, and which Sheldon cites here as proof that Cook went to the Pole. MacMillan only went a little more than 100 miles to the northwest of the same starting point as Cook, and MacMillan noted that the ice was torn asunder by the action of a strong current at the point he abandoned his journey.

T2 On this basis, since MacMillan noted the same westerly drift Cook reported, it would be as logical to credit MacMillan with reaching the North Pole in 1914 as to credit Cook with the same feat in 1908. Of course, that would be silly, since MacMillan never claimed he went to the Pole. But the fact remains that the westerly drift can be observed by a journey of no more than 100 miles to the northwest — exactly what Cook's diary indicates he did. On the basis of this westerly drift, the only reason to credit Cook and not MacMillan with reaching the Pole is Cook's bare word that he *did* reach the North Pole.¹¹³ Therefore, the fact that Cook observed a westerly drift supports a trip of 100 miles to the northwest, but it proves absolutely nothing about where he went after that.

U The Ice in Crown Prince Gustav Sea

U1 Sheldon then takes space to acknowledge (p.37) that "there is no question that the modern studies [Bryce] cited have indeed shown that during the years which have been investigated the pack ice of the Crown Prince Gustav Sea, Peary Channel, Sverdrup Channel and the northern segment of Hassel Sound did not melt during the summer and that [*sic*] by such an early date as June 13 in those years reflected no effects" of warmth. On this date in 1908 Cook claimed he could not return to his outward caches because of "small ice," and thus helplessly drifted south and was compelled to spend the winter away from his base of supplies. However, like all good Cook supporters, Sheldon adds the inevitable "but": "Fortunately for history and for Frederick Albert Cook, there is evidence observed and gathered during the summer of 1908 in the High Canadian Arctic which strongly indicates that the pack ice in the Crown Prince Gustav Sea and Hassel Sound did in fact melt extensively and that there was much open water there in the Summer of 1908 . . . exactly as Cook reported."

U2 This "evidence," we are told, comes from the Canadian sea captain Joseph Bernier, who was surveying the Sverdrup Islands that summer in the steamer *Arctic* in order to assert Canada's sovereignty over them. Sheldon tells us that Bernier found the conditions along his route far more fortunate than those reported by Edward Parry in 1819-20 or Robert McClure in 1851, both of whom encountered much more ice in their attempts to navigate

¹¹²See *C&P*, The Polar Notebooks, pp.893-900.

¹¹³Borup's notes of what the Eskimos said, taken down in Greenland in 1909, mention that Cook went to the northwest and that they noted a westerly drift there, but deny that he went to the Pole. These notes were taken *before* there was any opportunity for anyone on Peary's expedition to have read Cook's account of his journey where he first mentioned the westerly drift. As noted above (§L16), Ted Heckathorn cites these same notes as evidence in Cook's favor.

B3 Dr. Washburn did not "convert" me to anything, though he tried. I actually had very little contact with Washburn during the writing of *Cook & Peary*, and my portrayal of him in the book is not always flattering, nor was it of Dennis Rawlins. In fact, Dr. Washburn regarded me as a "Cookite" until after my book was published.²

B4 According to a contact within the American Alpine Club, I was under such suspicion there that even after publication, my book was being discounted as a silly defense of Cook's Alaskan claims. Perhaps this is what led to the incredibly embarrassing review of my book that appeared in the club's journal under the signature of Jonathan Waterman.³

B5 Dennis Rawlins can speak for himself, but I knew that he had dismissed Cook's McKinley claim more than 25 years ago in his book, *Peary at the North Pole: Fact or Fiction?* Although I had heard him speak on the Polar Controversy previously on two occasions, and had read his various writings on the subject, it was only when we met in the WAMU studios that I had my first extended conversation with him. I had no contact with him during the writing of my book at all, however.⁴ My contributions to his journal, *DIO*, arose out of the 1997 *Belgica* Centennial Symposium held at Ohio State University.

B6 After my debate there with Sheldon S.R. Cook, I offered to show the original of Cook's summit photo to anyone who wanted to stay. Only Randall Oszcewski and Dennis Rawlins remained to see it, and both were immediately struck by the conclusive evidence of Cook's fakery it contained. No one from FACS, including the three critics who are the subject of this response, cared to see it. Out of this grew the invitation to write the articles for *DIO*. I had no contact whatever with Bradford Washburn at any time during the writing of these articles, and it was only after the proofs were ready that Dennis Rawlins sent a copy to Dr. Washburn, asking his permission to use the photographs they contained that are his intellectual property. After reading the proofs, Dr. Washburn made various comments and provided additional relevant photos; some of these photos were included in my finished articles and *DIO* 7.3 ‡9's commentary.

B7 As for Dennis Rawlins's writing, Russell Gibbons characterizes it as "infantile terminology" and "nasty rhetoric." [Also hate-filled: ‡6 fn 46. Hmmm. *DIO* recalls a letter in which this paragon of mature humor & anti-hate asked DR to join him at Cresson "in the Peary park and write graffiti on the statue."] I am already on record in my book as saying that I think Rawlins's style often interferes with the acceptance of the substance of his message. In fact, in reviewing the *DIO* proofs, I asked him to remove specific statements of his that, because of their positioning, might possibly have been mistaken for something I had written, which he did. My contributions were strictly confined to the two articles under my signature. Having said that, I will also say that I do agree with the substance of his arguments [actually joint KP-DR] in the *DIO* editorial at the issue's end, if not always with the rhetoric. In fact, I was unable to detect any substantive errors in the facts presented there.

B8 One final implication by Gibbons that should be clarified appears in the box on page 39 of the 1998 issue of *Polar Priorities*. Yes, I did receive \$750 from FACS on September

²Unlike FACS, Washburn got no advance summary of my book's conclusions. This regard came from my refusal to accept Cook's climb as a hoax, *prima facie*, as he thought I should. I only did so after a careful scholarly review of the primary documents in the case, as set forth in Chapter 28 of *Cook & Peary*, many of which no one, not even Dr. Washburn, was aware of until my book was published.

³*American Alpine Journal*, [1998], pp.379-81. His review said the book is full of "absurd pro-Cook theories" and that it treats Cook's climb as substantial truth. Not even Ted Heckathorn could find such "useful facts" [for FACS's working definition of "useful facts" see §D18] among my writings. No doubt FACS will be quoting Waterman's review in Cook's favor for all time. The AAC printed a lame "apology" (*AAJ* 1999 p.452). According to *AAJ*'s editor, Waterman "stands by his review" [see ‡6 fn 57], despite what the journal itself creditably acknowledges was a "misrepresentation". Editor Christian Beckwith to RMB, Oct. 17, 2000.

⁴I did write him a letter in 1990, but I never got a reply. [*DIO* note. DR does not recall such a letter — but has no doubt that it was sent. The temporary breach thus evidently created should have closed the first time RB met DR, at the Byrd Center symposium on Cook (1993/10/22) and asked about the DR contribution's contention [‡4 fn 101] that there was no "magnetic meridian".]

‡5 Resistance of Resolution

FACS vs the “Washburn-Rawlins-Bryce Troika.”

by Robert M. Bryce

A Defending Against *DIO*

A1 No sooner had I finished editorial work on the various FACS criticisms of my book, when a whole new set arrived in the form of its annual publication *Polar Priorities* for 1998. Fortunately, although the issue is 65 pages long, it will not require anything near that much in rebuttal, since there is little new in it that needs addressing, and because FACS continues to avoid all discussion of substantive issues. The strategy remains: undermine the opposition’s credibility with innuendo, cite positive opinion and personal fantasy as favorable evidence, divert attention from embarrassing facts, and just ignore or deny everything else.

A2 Three articles, one each by our now-familiar stalwarts, and various editorial comments by Russell Gibbons that appear in this issue use these tactics to try to counter the devastating double issue of *DIO* that restates and expands the documentary case originally presented in *Cook & Peary, the Polar Controversy, Resolved*, and which further demolishes Cook’s credibility in regard to his claim to have ascended Mount McKinley to its summit in 1906.

B “*DIO*’s Denali Derision,” by Russell Gibbons

B1 As usual, Russell Gibbons leads off with a few of his conspiratorial imaginings, alleging that my and Dennis Rawlins’s joint appearance on the nationally syndicated “Diane Rehm Show” in February 1997 amounted to “two would-be debunkers join[ing] forces to front for a third party who has made his lifelong obsession the denial of Cook on the summit of Mt. McKinley.” The “third party” being, of course, Bradford Washburn, director emeritus of the Boston Museum of Science. He goes on to say, “thus did Bradford Washburn . . . find two converts in his grand crusade.”

B2 These are amusing fantasies, but what are the facts? Ms. Rehm’s producer, Darcy Bacon, independently made the selection of her guests, which also included Will Steger, taking the pro-Peary side. Ms. Rehm had previously interviewed Dennis Rawlins in connection with Peary’s claim, and he lives in the reasonable proximity of WAMU, where the show originates. Perhaps these factors led to his invitation as the anti-Peary guest. Apparently, the National Geographic Society suggested Steger. When asked, I suggested that she invite a pro-Cook person to participate. But at the time Ms. Rehm had not read my book, and probably did not know as much about Cook. Perhaps this is why my suggestion was not taken up. However, both Russ Gibbons and Ted Heckathorn phoned in during the broadcast, and I said on the air that I was glad to hear from them, as the book was more about Cook than Peary. So, although Gibbons now tries to link the whole process to Bradford Washburn, he had nothing to do with it, nor had I had any contact with Dr. Washburn in well over a year at the time of the show’s airing. Furthermore, although Gibbons now contends this was the watershed event of my “entente” with Washburn, Mount McKinley was not taken up in any detail during the whole broadcast hour on WAMU.¹

¹ A tape of the broadcast of February 25, 1997, is available for purchase from WAMU. Call: 1-800-433-8850 during business hours, Eastern Time.

the Northwest Passage. He infers from Bernier’s report “from Lancaster Sound west to McClure Strait that the pack ice had largely melted and that even in segments of the Passage where ice was generally solid and thick, such as McClure Strait, there was open water.” Sheldon then cites the ice-less photograph of McClure Strait taken by Bernier on August 27, 1908, showing open water “as far as the eye can see” as “clear and convincing evidence that the ice conditions in the Canadian High Arctic were most unusual in that summer.” Yet, at the same time, he acknowledges that “Bernier did not get as far north as Crown Prince Gustav Sea and thus there is no report from him specifically on ice conditions there.” So much for the “evidence” being “clear and convincing.”

U3 Sheldon quotes Bernier: “No ice was visible to the westward, but heavy Arctic ice was seen to the southward; we were then about half-way through McClure Strait . . .” And indeed, Bernier turned back at the middle of McClure Strait for winter quarters, a point nowhere near the area critical to the Cook narrative. Fortunately for history, but not for Frederick Albert Cook, Bernier’s report still has an important implication.

U4 The same source that Sheldon accepts “without question” concerning the typical ice conditions in all of the areas through which Cook passed,¹¹⁴ says this about ice conditions in McClure Strait in a typical year:

The ice in the western end of this strait moves throughout the winter because it is in contact with the ice in the Arctic Ocean. Early in July the ice in the western third of the strait has broken and this break-up continues toward the east until the entire area may be broken by late August.

U5 In other words, even today, *ice-free conditions are typical from the middle of McClure Strait westward at the time of the year Bernier was there in 1908*. Notice that Bernier says that although the strait ahead was ice-free to the west, heavy ice was visible to the south. Therefore, the ice conditions he reported were not “most unusual” at all; *they were typical*. Of the other places Sheldon mentions that Bernier visited, our unquestionable source says Lancaster Sound breaks up entirely early in the summer. Cook himself confirmed this. It was Cook’s intention to try to link up with the Scottish whalers, who visited the sound nearly every year, and return to Europe with them. Again, 1908 was *typical*. Viscount Melville Sound is generally clear of ice in August, with the center breaking last, and Barrow Strait usually begins to break up at the beginning of August and has an ice-free passage along the shore of Bathurst Island, but rarely is ice free in the south. In short, 1908 seems to have been *a typical year* in all these areas, and as Sheldon himself acknowledges, in *a typical year* the ice never breaks up in June in the areas Cook said he was adrift and prevented from reaching his outward caches by large expanses of open water. Therefore, as Sheldon himself says, “On this basis, it would follow logically that Cook was not in the Crown Prince Gustav Sea at the position which he specifies on June 13, 1908.”

V Randall J. Oszcewski’s Review

V1 To this date, the only dissenting view of my book from its own that FACS has printed is that of Randall J. Oszcewski, a Canadian student of the Arctic.¹¹⁵

V2 Unlike FACS’s, his is a true review of *Cook & Peary*, and in my opinion, the best written by anyone. However, in printing it, Russell Gibbons (he of the “journalistic standards”) ran six banner excerpts throughout its text, each of them taken out of context to imply the worst possible connotations from Oszcewski’s favorable text. What further evidence would anyone need of the blatant bias of this group of boosters, family members and implicated partisans which make up the Frederick A. Cook Society? Anyone reading

¹¹⁴ Lindsay, D.G. *Arctic Islands Sea Ice Movements: Analysis from Ice Reconnaissance and Satellite Imagery Data*. A.P.O.A. Project No.92, Ottawa: January 1976.

¹¹⁵ *Polar Priorities*, v.17 [1997], pp.39-41.

those banners would think the review was negative. However, all who read Mr. Oszcewski's entire review will not possibly miss that he thought very highly of my book. In the interest of "balance," here is a brief excerpt to illustrate to FACS what a real review looks like:

In the first part of the book, Bryce reviews the lives and exploring careers of two extraordinary men. . . . I cannot do justice to these 750 pages in a few sentences. I can only say that although I longed desperately to peek ahead at the final third of this eagerly-awaited book, Bryce's story of Cook's rise and spectacular fall and of Peary's frustrations and failings, held me firmly to its pages.

Part Two is a fascinating and disturbing mystery story. The evidence, old and new, is presented and examined. . . . [Here] Bryce finally lays out his cards. It looks to me like he has a winning hand.

Must Cook supporters "read 'em and weep," or is the game not really over? Some of the regulars at the table claim it was a misdeal. Russell Gibbons, Sheldon Cook and Ted Heckathorn panned the book in the April issue of the *Frederick A. Cook Society Membership News*. They questioned Bryce's methodology and his ability to be as impartial and objective as he claimed to be. I do not agree with their tone of general condemnation. Robert Bryce's book most certainly deserves to be read and studied by everyone who is interested in this great controversy and the lives of two great men.

V3 Oszcewski goes on to lodge his own criticisms against *Cook & Peary*, some of them valid.¹¹⁶ In the end, however, he concludes: "No polar collection should be without [*Cook & Peary*]. Besides being a fascinating story, it is a rich source of information and controversial conclusions that should fuel lively debates for years to come. Don't be left out."

W Summary and a Conclusion

W1 Now that the confusing facts of the Polar Controversy have been untangled and the falsity of Dr. Cook's claims have been documented by evidence, much of it from Cook's own hands, it is hard to believe that anyone can any longer believe that Frederick Cook reached either the summit of Mount McKinley or the North Pole. It is also difficult to believe that anyone will ever again take a simplistic view, good or bad, of the very complex man who made these fabulous claims. However, no one should expect the defenders of Dr. Cook to admit defeat.

W2 In his opening remarks to FACS's *Membership News* [April 1997], Russell Gibbons states that he has marshaled more than 100 years of research and publication experience to write a three-part "critical review," which dismisses my book as biased and inaccurate. This is perfectly understandable. Imagine the resulting unwillingness to accept, after acknowledging spending more than an average human lifetime without being able to discern fact from fiction, that all that effort has been wasted on belief in a man who was unworthy of it. It must be very difficult to admit to an aggregate 100 years of delusion. Certainly no one in their position would welcome the resolution of the Polar controversy as revealed in *Cook & Peary*. Given this and FACS's "critical review," it is safe to say that partisans like its three critics will never admit their error. "There will be a 'Cook Party' to the end of time," one editor declared in 1909, "no matter how strong the evidence brought against him in the future, no matter if he made public confession to fraud . . . this sentiment of personal devotion and championship once aroused is one of the most powerful and indestructible of human motives."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶He is the only reviewer to point out in print an important factual error in the book; however, when corrected, it actually *strengthens the case against Frederick Cook*, instead of diminishing the book's credibility.

¹¹⁷"Psychology of the Cook Fake," *Independent*, December 30, 1909, pp.1513-14.

Y3 Gibbons, in his most recent editorial, says my method of combating FACS is to "reduce your opponents as off-the-wall partisans or true-believers and zealots." I have not had to make that reduction; they prove what they are themselves by nearly every argument they make. The society's reputation, which had been on the rise recently with its creditable symposium mounted in co-operation with the Byrd Polar Research Center in 1993 and its subsequent placement of its portion of the Janet Vetter papers in the Ohio State University Archives, can't help but have been seriously compromised by the barrage of boosterism that each new issue of *Polar Priorities* contains in the wake of *Cook & Peary*.

Y4 As I said in my introduction to *Cook & Peary, The Polar Controversy, Resolved*, "Those who are convinced need no conviction; those who have faith and believe do not need the truth," and the tripartite "critical review" of my book by FACS illustrates, if nothing else, the truth of my statement. In it, three faithful followers of Frederick A. Cook try to persuade their readers in four pages, without any original documentary support to the contrary, why those same readers should not believe the conclusions set out in detail in a 1,133 page book supported by 2,040 notes largely based on previously unavailable primary documentation, most of which none of these three have ever examined at all. Obviously, this was an unequal task, but no matter how much they had written and no matter how much documentation they had at their command, I feel confident that the unconvinced, having read both, could not agree with their interpretations of my book's methods or its content.

Y5 By its very length and scope, by its thoroughness and the openness of its documentation, it leaves little room for selectivity, bias or falsehood to hide. Therefore this paper has not been a defense of my book, but an exposition of the desperate futility of the type of attacks made against it by FACS. I do not have to defend *Cook & Peary*. Its integrity speaks for itself. That is why I encourage anyone who is interested in the truth about Frederick A. Cook and the truth of what the society which bears his name has said about my book, to read *Cook & Peary* carefully and fully, then decide for himself whether my book is fair, based on solid evidence and comes to supportable conclusions or whether it is biased, incomplete or written with the preconceived purpose to vilify Frederick Cook as Russell W. Gibbons, Sheldon S.R. Cook and Ted Heckathorn variously claim.

Y6 They are partisans, whose own biases are now starkly clear. For them, the Polar Controversy will never be resolved unless it is resolved in Dr. Cook's favor. But I did not write *Cook & Peary* for the partisans; they will never be convinced. As Franz Werfel said, "For those who believe, no proof is necessary; for those who do not believe, no proof is possible." No, I wrote it for everyone else for whom truth matters, no matter what the truth might be.

Y7 Read *Cook & Peary* so you can decide for yourself. As Dr. Cook said at the end of his book, and as I might have said at the end of mine, "In this book I have stated my case, presented my proofs . . . I shall be satisfied with your decision."

[*DIO* notice on Brad Washburn's long-awaited full analysis, *The Dishonorable Dr. Cook*, and the BBC series, "The Mountain Men".]

[In 2001 Autumn, the Mountaineers published *The Dishonorable Dr. Cook*, by Brad Washburn & Peter Cheric, a gorgeously illustrated book,¹²² undoing Cook's McK hoax in expert detail, and including Brad's now-famous photographs, perfectly matching every one of the controversial 1906 photos in Cook's 1908 book.]

[BBC-TV has completed a 2001 film, "The Mountain Men", which checks out Cook's 1906 McKinley hoax, including a filmic-visit to the lofty top of Fake Peak, plus on-site vista-comparisons, verifying the Washburn-Carter-Okonek identifications of the sites of Cook's 1906 photos.]

¹²²[*DIO* note: Data on the forthcoming Washburn-Cherici book: 192 pp, 80 photos, 8-page photo insert, 6 maps: ISBN 0-89886-804-1, \$29.95, www.mountaineersbooks.org, tel 800-553-4453. (The book's biographical section has some debts to uncited Bryce 1997; see, e.g., p.64 & Bryce p.428.)]

any serious non-fiction book. That is because real historians know that librarians make the writing of such books possible for them.

X4 The acknowledgement by David McCullough [formerly a Cook sympathizer: see *DIO* 2.2 fn 22], in his Pulitzer Prize winning *Truman*, might be considered a good example of what real historians think of real librarians:

The staff archivists, librarians, and other specialists at the Harry S. Truman Library have been helpful in countless ways, instructive, patient, generous with their time, generous with ideas and advice Though they are in no way responsible for any errors of fact or judgment in these pages, there is no part of the book in which they have not played a rôle, but in what they have helped to uncover in the library collection and in what they themselves know of Truman's life from years of interest and study. . . . I am grateful to them all.¹¹⁹

I am grateful to my fellow professionals as well; that is why I dedicated my book to librarians and archivists.

X5 Although I am not a polar historian, I am a very thorough scholar of the incident in polar history that has come to be called the Polar Controversy. My evidence of this is represented in the content of my book, and especially in the 2,040 source notes it contains and from which its text was constructed. I am confident that real historians and scholars, now and in the future, will be impressed, not by its bulk, but by its substance.¹²⁰

Y Finis, but Never a Finish

Y1 Even my declination to respond to the many unwarranted statements made in FACS's publications up until now has been termed arrogance, when it was simply a practical decision on my part, considering the thankless task of responding to such a voluminous barrage of baseless innuendo and fallacious reasoning. Nothing I have had to say here will make any difference to the partisans of FACS, anyway. Nor did I write this response for them. Truth does not matter to the faithful of FACS, but it may to others.

Y2 In his message to the Society's members in the April 1997 issue of *Membership News*, FACS's president, Warren B. Cook, Sr., predicted in the wake of its criticisms of my book, "naturally, we will be accused ourselves of partiality." If the trend of the many letters I have received is any indication, this is exactly what people who have read both my book and their "review" think. I will quote just one:

"Russell Gibbons' review . . . was and is nonsense. He avoided all mention of Cook's deceit in his review and is critical of you for not referring to the secondary authors. He is dead wrong. Your book has merit because it is based on the documentary sources themselves, the writings, diaries, field notes and observations of Cook and Peary, many of them in print for the first time Your book is a great documentary source on Peary and Cook. The research is amazing, the writing style excellent, the conclusions fair and logical."¹²¹

¹¹⁹ *Cook & Peary* p.993.

¹²⁰ [Apparently they are impressed. Bryce was personally requested by the Librarian of Congress, the Honorable James H. Billington, to write a contribution dealing with his work with the Cook papers to be included in the special issue of the Library's journal, commemorating the Library of Congress's bicentennial: *Civilization* 7:53-68.]

¹²¹ Letter Robert Fuit to RMB, no date, but postmarked October 8, 1998, possession of author, written in response to Gibbons's review in *Arctic* [v.50, no.4, December 1997, pp.369-370.], which is a condensed and toned down repetition of his views expressed in the "critical review." My rebuttal was published in *Arctic* in June 1998.

W3 But the evidence in *Cook & Peary* offers any non-partisan, open-minded person the opportunity to decide individually the true merits of Frederick Cook's claims for the first time, and it will always offer that opportunity to anyone wishing to do so. Once read, now, or a century from now, for any objective reader, the Polar Controversy will be resolved. The Cook partisans realize *that* is "the significance of this book to its members and associates." They should also realize that it will remain forever as an insurmountable impediment to FACS's goal "to gain official recognition for the scientific and geographic accomplishments of . . . Dr. Frederick Albert Cook." Now that *Cook & Peary, the Polar Controversy, Resolved*, exists, that can never happen.

W4 The bankruptcy of the arguments of FACS's "critical review" doubly guarantees it. Its failure to refute even a single significant point of the documentary evidence that *Cook & Peary* contains only proves that the 100 years of biased research and baseless opinion Gibbons cites, which has been aimed at proving, at all costs, a predetermined outcome, no matter if all evidence weighs against it or if all reason would dictate another, is no match for 8 years spent by a professional researcher studying the primary sources in this near-century old dispute, all the while, as Dennis Rawlins says [*DIO* 7.3 ¶9 fn 42], "listening to the evidence, not talking to it."

W5 This evidence said clearly that Cook was a fraud in his claims at Mount McKinley and the North Pole, and a generally dishonest man throughout his life. But it also said that he was a complex man of immense personal magnetism and charm; a near genius capable of uncommonly deep thoughts and unusual understanding of human psychology, and also that he was a real explorer with real, if not so spectacular as he claimed, achievements for which he should be given full credit.

X Postscript: Of Real Historians, Real Editors and Real Librarians

X1 *Cook & Peary* should have resolved the Polar Controversy. But it will never be resolved for some, because they do not want it to be resolved. Their empty and inaccurate arguments will never end, although in the wake of my book, the audience for them should be severely diminished. Though still unable to refute the book's evidence, Gibbons continues to attempt to cast doubt on my credentials to write it. In a piece entitled "Frederick A. Cook and 'Psychohistory': a discussion,"¹¹⁸ the opening sentence is "'I am not a historian, but a librarian,' admitted Cook critic Robert M. Bryce after a scheduled exchange with Sheldon S.R. Cook" at the *Belgica* Symposium at Ohio State in September 1997.

X2 The statement quoted was made voluntarily to correct a member of the symposium's audience who had made the logical assumption, based on my book, that I was an academically trained historian. But I have never claimed to be a historian, in the academic sense, to anyone, anywhere. In making the quoted statement, therefore, I did not "admit" to anything. I simply stated my true occupation. An admission would be Sheldon saying, "I am not a historian, but a lawyer." An admission would be if Ted Heckathorn said "I am not a polar historian; I am a real estate agent," since both bill themselves as the former everywhere they go without any additional disclaimer as to how they actually earn their livelihoods.

X3 In the same article, Gibbons describes Sheldon, unambiguously, as a "long-time historian for the Society and a published advocate for the explorer's prior attainment of the North Pole." Perhaps Gibbons feels that it is better to pretend you are a historian than to "admit" you are a librarian, just as he pretends that publication in the house organ of FACS makes you a "published" author. I disagree; real historians and real editors with real integrity and real journalistic standards understand the invaluable rôle of librarians and respect their real professional research abilities. Rather than being arrogant, librarians are characteristically generous with their time and open in sharing their knowledge. As a result, librarians and archivists stand at the head of almost every acknowledgement list in

¹¹⁸ *FACS Membership News* v.4, no.3 [December 1997], p.6.



Figure 5:

The full, uncropped version of Cook's "Bradley Land" photograph. Original print: 3 1/4 in x 5 5/8 in. Courtesy the Library of Congress.
[Allegedly taken at 85°N, 102°W, where no real land exists within 200 mi. The Eskimos said (Herbert 1989 p.316) that the land in the photo is west Axel Heiberg Land.]
[Print found at the Library of Congress by Rob't Bryce. For *DIO* inductions from the image, see below at ¶6 fn 65.]