

# Unique Polar Explorer Amundsen 1<sup>st</sup> to Each Pole

## More Pioneering Firsts Than All Other Polar Explorers Combined

### Central Rôle of Accident — in Leading On to Both Pole Priorities

www.dioi.org/rf.pdf

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#### A The Unknown Winner

**A1** Try testing friends on how well they know the giants of polar exploring, e.g., champions of the following feats:

[1] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> to winter in the Antarctic?

[2] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> through the Northwest Passage?

[3] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> to the South Pole?

[4] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> around the Arctic Ocean?

[5] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> to the North Pole?

[6] Who was 1<sup>st</sup> across the Arctic Ocean?

But the six answers are one: all six firsts were accomplished by the same peerless polar explorer. Roald Amundsen.

**A2** Most of us have heard of those legendary brave, able, & determined heroes Robert Peary and (my cousin) Richard Byrd, the US' most famous explorers of the polar regions of the Earth. But few even know the name of Roald Amundsen of Norway, whose records will forever outshine both these men and, indeed, *all polar explorers combined*.

**A3** Amundsen's career, which encompassed travel by ship, sledge, airplane, and dirigible, began when he joined the *Belgica* expedition to Antarctica in 1897, and ended when he died in 1928, trying to save the life of a then-lost competitor, intrepid explorer-engineer & my late friend, Umberto Nobile of Italy, 1926 codiscoverer of the North Pole.

**A4** It didn't help Amundsen's ultimate rep that he died bankrupt, damned for truthful heresy (§B8), cheated of his N.Pole due, resented for his invincible S.Pole success (§B4), podium-denied by exploring societies (how could the N&S Poles' discoverer possibly enlighten explorers?) thus fiscally forced by humanity to sell the very medals he'd won for contributions to humanity. [Like James Watson (made so poor, he's sold his Nobel medal) whose benevolent genetic societal advice is never debated, just banned. After all: what would DNA's codiscoverer know about genetics?]

#### B Evolution of Exploring Immortality

**B1** After the ship *Belgica*, trapped in antarctic ice for the winter of 1897-1898, finally returned to civilization, Amundsen in 1903 commanded his own expedition, taking a well-chosen crew of Norwegians on the tiny ship *Gjoa* into the archipelago north of mainland Canada, seeking the goal of centuries: a sea passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. *Gjoa* emerged in 1906-1907 not only successful but with a mountain of scientific results, especially in the area of magnetism since its path had brushed the North Magnetic Pole. While Amundsen was gone 1903-1907, Norway had in 1905 become an independent nation, soon to become proud of its now-famous hero.

**B2** Amundsen's typically-Norse childhood dream was to be 1<sup>st</sup> at the North Pole; so, aided by his *Gjoa* triumph & the support of Norway's most revered figure, polar-hero-turned-statesman Fridtjof Nansen, he secured Nansen's famous ship *Fram* & government funds, for a trip to the North Pole by deliberately (adopting Nansen's 1891 idea & 1893-1896 *Fram* try) becoming trapped in the arctic ice-pack, to drift across the Arctic Ocean right past the Pole. But as he prepared, his former *Belgica* companion Frederick Cook claimed the Pole in 1908 (fraudulently: R.Bryce *DIO* 21 ¶4). Peary more convincingly claimed same in 1909. (As the greatest U.S. arctic explorer, Peary was believed at first since he had genuinely discovered the northernmost land on Earth, Cape Jesup, on 1900 May 13, & in 1897 had brought a record-size meteorite to the American Museum of Natural History.) Realizing the North Pole had lost its inviolable glamour, Amundsen "resolved upon a coup", secretly planning to reverse his expedition's direction, aiming at the South Pole instead, which he ironically remarked was the farthest place on Earth from his childhood boreal goal.

**B3** Since Britain's doomed Robert Scott was to reach the South Pole in 1912, only the chance intercession of the Cook-Peary North Pole claims saved and created his opportunity for priority-glory at the South Pole in 1911. When Amundsen ordered a hundred prime Greenland dogs, some wondered how that comported with an ice-drift expedition. Once out of sight&reach of his creditors he wired a horrified Scott (who had few dogs): "Am going south. Amundsen."

**B4** The model of efficiency&speed, guided by celestial navigation (ms calculations: *DIO* 2.2 p.69, incl. sphtrig via logs, halving such for a key square-root), Norway's tiny 5 man team of expert dog-sledge-drivers, skiers, & navigators, Amundsen, Oscar Wisting, Helmer Hanssen, Sverre Hassel, Olav Bjaaland, attained the South Pole a month ahead of England's massive&costly multistage disaster. (Whose photos [later found with Scott's body] of Amundsen's S.Pole tent restored polar exploration's cred after the hideous Cook-Peary brawl. For which only *DIO* 22 fn 39 has ever expressed any gratitude to Scott&Amundsen.) England has never forgiven Amundsen: never stopped denigrating & exiling him. Magnificent exception: in 2000, Cambridge Univ's Scott Polar Research Institute published the final quietus to Byrd's theft of Amundsen's priority, *Polar Record* 36:25-50 (expanded edit: www.dioi.org/ja01.pdf, 2000).

**B5** Since Peary's North Pole claim was seemingly certified, few even contemplated going there for 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Which protected it from everyone but the most able experts such as Ernest Shackleton & Amundsen, who suspected Peary hadn't made it, so that 1<sup>st</sup> place was still possible. Again, if the chance Peary-factor hadn't worked in Amundsen's favor, the North Pole could have been genuinely attained and taken off the table before World War 1.

**B6** Following the War, Amundsen's new ship *Maud* (named for Norway's queen) attempted his original drift to the North Pole by entering the Arctic Ocean north of Norway. The design failed, but when he left the Arctic through the Bering Strait in 1920, he realized that by becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> explorer through the Northeast Passage (north of Siberia), he'd also become — given his prior Northwest Passage — the 1<sup>st</sup> circumnavigator of the Arctic Ocean.

**B7** Amundsen next began buying airplanes towards subduing the Pole — but instead subdued his own wealth. Broke&despairing, he was rescued by a phonecall from a young, adventure-seeking Ohio millionaire, Lincoln Ellsworth. Together with navigator-explorer Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen and others, they flew north from Spitzbergen in two Dornier-Wal flying boats in 1925, landing at latitude 87°44'N, on ice too rough to fly from. After a month of smoothing a runway by hand, they took off in the less-damaged plane, returning to a shocked but elated world which had thought them dead. Had they indeed died, Amundsen's chance at his double-Pole vision would have vanished.

**B8** From Italy's Mussolini, Ellsworth in 1926 bought Amundsen a dirigible, designed by Umberto Nobile & rechristened *Norge* ("Norway"). On May 7, *Norge* reached Spitzbergen, already invaded April 29 by Richard Byrd, who'd been suddenly bankrolled by the Rockefellers&Fords right after Amundsen had in January publicly doubted the 1909 latitude of long-accepted Pole-discoverer Peary. The US feared a challenge if Amundsen reached the Pole 1<sup>st</sup>.

**B9** In a Fokker trimotor airplane named the *Josephine Ford*, Byrd flew out of sight on May 9<sup>th</sup> after midnight, returning with a visibly leaking starboard engine, just 15<sup>h</sup>1/2 later (www.dioi.org/by.pdf, §F3), not enough time to reach the Pole in an 85 mph craft (*DIO 10* Fig.3), but claiming its attainment anyway. Oddly, Byrd had, while filming for U.S. audiences the bare ice below him when at his farthest north, uniquely (in all of exploring history) failed to lay the national colors on the goal allegedly achieved (*DIO 10* Ⓞ2), neglecting to drop the blizzard of 100 American flags he'd taken along to mark the Pole. (With the *Norge* due to head north soon after, any flags seen by its people would tell how far the *Jo Ford* had gotten.) Whatever his private doubts, Amundsen good-sportingly congratulated Byrd, & the *Norge* departed 2 days later, carrying also Ellsworth, Nobile, Riiser-Larsen, and 1911 South Pole veteran Oscar Wisting. It reached the North Pole on 1926 May 12, Ellsworth's birthday (and then continued right across the Arctic Ocean to Alaska). At this grand moment, Amundsen & Wisting emotionally embraced, privately knowing that both had achieved polar exploration's seemingly impossible dream: the same men who were 1<sup>st</sup> at the South Pole of the Earth were 1<sup>st</sup> at its North end, too: the grandest double in the history of exploring. But they also knew that the truth would be hidden by interested institutions until all the partipants who deserved honors (or disgrace) were long dead.

## C The Fall of the Fakes

**C1** Cook's 1908 claim fell 1<sup>st</sup>, before the end of 1909, primarily because (unlike Peary&Byrd) he knew nothing in the area of math or celestial navigation. From unfamiliarity with a reflecting artificial horizon, his alleged sextant observations of the Sun for 1908 April 8&14, which he published in support of his 1908 northward trek, make the Sun half its actual diameter and so place him on the planet Vesta (*DIO 21* ‡3 §C7, 2017). Further evidence of flying-saucer travel appears in his "North Pole" data, for which he clumsily misused Peary's atmospheric refraction (*idem*); if real they'd show he hovered 4 nautical miles (nmi) sunward of the Pole for over a day, while the Earth spun beneath him.

**C2** Various experts (e.g., C.&A.Markham, R.Plaisted, Sir W.Herbert, R.Bryce) deem incredible Peary's claim of hitting smack-on the Pole 1909/4/6-7 after zigzagging over 400+ nmi of extremely rugged floating ice-cakes, without a single longitude observation. (*See pure FACT-BOMBS* unloaded on Peary's hoax at www.dioi.org/EMS-facts.pdf, with appended analysis, by E.M.Standish, designer of world-standard *Astronomical Almanac*'s orbits.) Equally strange was Peary's tale that, with fully-loaded dog-sledges, his speed doubled once he had freed himself of the burden of his last navigator-witness at "Bartlett Camp" on All Fools Day 1909, while at least 135 nmi from the Pole; & he claimed to have doubled that to **50 nmi/day** whizzing back from "the Pole" to Bartlett Camp, April 7-9. (*DIO 1.1* ‡4; *DIO 10* p.5 fn.) His 1909 diary-cover & handwritten list of companions' farthest-norths (in degrees&minutes) both give his own top latitude as "—". That Peary had earlier faked his Peary Channel, Jesup Land, & Crocker Land is now as widely recognized as his Pole hoax. (Which once-supportive National Geographic judiciously refused to defend on the 2009 centenary. The *NY Times*' Science Dep't abandoned it 2009/9/8.) Peary said he saw Crocker Land from Ellesmere in 1906 June, but his long "lost" diary for the discovery-date&place says "No land visible" (www.dioi.org/cot.htm#pdrn), & there's no documentary mention of it until he discovered in 1907 that he had discovered Crocker Land in 1906.

*For high-academe's secret files on its dishonest protection of Peary's Pole hoax for decades: see www.dioi.org/jo00.pdf.*

**C3** The Richard Byrd diary was hidden for nearly 70<sup>y</sup>. When it surfaced in 1996, its 2 sextant observations of the Sun's height (which he tried unsuccessfully to erase) both placed him over 100 nmi south of where his official report put him at the corresponding times. His diary's 7:07:10 AM GCT observation disagreed by over a degree from the solar altitude in his official report. Erasures were alibied by apologists as just deleting bad data (no one has ever found a diary with the "good" data), but not even that lame excuse explains his erasure of the diary's revealing written question to co-pilot Floyd Bennett during the return: "how long were we gone before we turned around?" Not: how long did it take us to get to the Pole & circle 13<sup>m</sup>? Byrd's official June 22 report's alleged Sun-sights were given to 1", at least 10 times more precise than could be made on his sextant, presumably because he forgot to round his fabricated "observations". (*The easiest places on Earth for faking celestial sextant data are the North&South Poles: www.dioi.org/by.pdf, §A3.*) After discovering his blunder, he stripped out all these giveaway overprecise numbers before sending a bowdlerized edit to the American Geographical Society on Nov 24 (before-vs-after text-comparisons: *DIO 10* Fig.7, 2000) & getting AGS to (cooperate with him & NGS and) secrete his data (www.dioi.org/by.pdf, §F7; www.dioi.org/ja01.pdf, fn 83), so institutions helpfully hid his lie from the public for 70<sup>y</sup>. On the basis of *DIO*'s 1996 report, the *NY Times* bailed out of backing the Byrd claim, on 1996/5/9 p.1.

**C4** Unlike Cagni, Cook, Peary, & Byrd, Amundsen shared sextant-sights at both of his Pole attainments, which is what honest explorers always do. He is oft criticized for his 1910 secrecy (§B2), yet no other explorer ever died during a heroic attempt at rescue&reconciliation with a former enemy. And, most important of all for an explorer, no one has ever even accused him of exploration's mortal sin, which each of the 3 prior North Pole claimants is now exposed at:

the crime that betrays the very code of the explorer, the crime of *swearing he had been where he had not*.