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WHO? WHERE? WHY?

When Robert F. Scott reached the South Pole on January 18, 1912 he found that Roald Amundsen had beaten him there by thirty-four days. This caused him to lament in his diary - "Great God! This is an awful place, and terrible enough for us to have labored to it without the reward of priority!" Scott and four remaining companions died on the return trip when within eleven miles of their base camp and safety - perhaps as much from disappointment as freezing or starvation.

In view of this remark, was he an explorer? Obviously men had long known of the existence of the South Pole, had known exactly where it was and what might be found there. This in no way detracts from the achievement of either Scott or Amundsen, for to accomplish this feat was noteworthy for both of them. Yet the commonly accepted definition, quoting from Webster, of an explorer is - "one who travels or is sent in search of geographical or scientific information." Under this definition, one must either attempt to fill in the white spaces on the map or be in search of scientific information.

These motives had nothing to do with the reasons that impelled both Scott and Amundsen. They knew where the Pole was, they had a pretty good idea of what they would find there, and they simply sought to be the first human beings to reach that

particular spot on the globe. No particular reason to be first - just the fame that would inure to them for doing it.

If this was true of Scott and Amundsen, the same must also apply to Peary at the North Pole. Peary, however, was truly an Arctic explorer, for he had made many trips to the Arctic over a period of years, and had added substantially to the world's knowledge of that entire area. He had, for instance, established that Greenland was an island, that the Pole was located in the Arctic Ocean, that there was no land within many miles, and had mapped a considerable portion of the coast of far northeastern Canada. But the motive behind all of this exploration was not to accomplish these things, laudable as they were. His sole motive, right from the beginning, was to do something which would make him world-famous. Apparently he didn't care particularly what that might be - anything to make him famous.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the world seemed to have begun to suspect that there probably was no Northwest Passage, or if there was it would be of no practical value. But the urge to explore the Arctic continued unabated - with the motive for doing so gradually changing from a search for the Northwest Passage to a race to be first at the Pole.

While Peary was assigned by the Navy to the Panama Canal Zone, he determined that the best way to achieve the fame he wanted was to be first at the Pole. From then on, all of his efforts were pointed at that one objective. All of the trips

he made to the Arctic, all of the unquestionably valuable geographical knowledge he gained of that area, were not for the purpose of adding to the world's knowledge, but specifically and solely to help him attain his goal. Even on his first trip he had in mind the possibility of getting to the Pole, and every subsequent trip was planned with the thought that if things went well he might do it on that trip. He explored the north coast of Greenland and of adjoining Ellesmere Island for the purpose of finding the best jumping off place for the Pole.

Again, this in no way detracts from his accomplishment. It does, however, raise a question of whether he was truly an explorer in the accepted meaning of that term. Was he motivated by a genuine desire to increase man's knowledge of polar regions, or was it a single-minded determination to achieve fame by whatever means possible?

Perhaps it makes no difference. Perhaps the personal motive is entirely unimportant, if the result contributes to geographical knowledge.

What, then, of Frederic A. Cook? Frederick Cook was the man who claimed to have reached the Pole before Peary, but who was never successful in proving his claim. He had been with Peary as physician on earlier expeditions, had caught the Arctic bug, and between expeditions had continued to practice medicine. Medicine must have been a fairly lucrative profession even in those days, for he was able to finance a number of trips from

it. But his patients must have felt the lack of a long-term relationship, for in his later years he deserted that profession to become a promoter of oil wells. Several of his trips were to the northern parts of Alaska, on one of which he quite thoroughly mapped and explored Mt. McKinley, and claimed to be the first person to climb that mountain. That claim was later disputed in the course of the extensive investigation into his activities after he returned from his last Polar trip. Cook claimed to have reached the Pole some months before Peary got there, but was unable to substantiate his claim.

Cook, since he financed all of his trips himself without the help of government or other support, travelled light, with a minimum of sled drivers or other associates. When he left on the last leg of his trip he left his one American companion in Greenland and took with him only one Eskimo sled driver - a man who could not speak English, had no knowledge of navigation, and who confessed himself to be lost the moment he left solid land. When Cook got back to Greenland, he immediately got passage to Denmark in a whaler, leaving with his friend in Greenland all of his diaries, notes, navigational data and the other proof he might need. The friend was told to find some way of getting back to the United States, and to bring all of this material with him. There was, naturally, not much ship traffic from Greenland to the United States, and the only way to get back was to beg passage from whatever ship was available. As luck would have it, the only possible ship was Peary's.

Peary agreed, with much reluctance, to transport the man, but with the condition that only his own personal effects would be carried, and none of the material left by Cook. Peary was obviously not going to help his opposition, for it might just turn out that Cook would be able to prove he had been first to the Pole. These boxes of Cook's supposed proof were therefore buried in a cache somewhere in Greenland and have never since been found, leading to the supposition that there never was any such proof.

Whether simply being first to the Pole really constitutes exploration or not has never made any difference in the vehemence of the argument that still rages, although somewhat abated. For years Peary and his adherents, such as the National Geographic Society, lost no opportunity to discredit Cook and to advance the cause of Peary. The debate even reached the halls of Congress when it was proposed that Peary be made an admiral and given a pension. It was only after much discussion, some of it very acrimonious, that Peary's claim appeared to be accepted and he was given his promotion.

Cook, on the other hand, went rapidly down hill. His medical practice was gone, he tried many ways to earn a living, and finally ended up in a federal jail, convicted of being a swindler. Even then the debate did not stop, for the explorer Stefansson stopped to visit Cook in jail on his way to a banquet being given in his honor. When the sponsors of the banquet

heard that Steffansson had visited Cook, the banquet was on the verge of being cancelled until cooler heads prevailed.

Judging from this long tale, it would seem rather obvious that neither Cook nor Peary - perhaps particularly not Peary - were really interested in exploration. Rather, they sought personal aggrandizement and enhancement of their personal reputation. Peary stated, long before he first started north, that fame was his only goal. He got it, though he had to fight for it.

But there was another Cook who most thoroughly deserved fame and honor. James Cook was just another sailor in the British Navy when he was ordered by the Admiralty to go to Tahiti. Just sailing from England to Tahiti - and finding it - in 1789 was in itself no mean feat. The avowed purpose of the trip was to observe the transit of Venus. This was important for navigational and astronomical reasons, but he was also told, in secret orders, to explore that part of the world. This he did,with a vengeance. He explored the entire coast of New Zealand, the passage between the north and south islands of which was named Cook Strait in his honor, the southeast coast of Australia, and New Guinea. On his second voyage, begun only two years after he returned from the first, Captain Cook finally and definitely exploded the myth of a vast continent lying to the southeast of Australia, located Easter Island, explored and mapped much of the South Pacific, and skirted but did not explore the Antarctic continent. In fact, much of the map of the South Pacific was constructed by him.

On his third and last voyage he left the familiar waters of the South Pacific, headed northeast from New Zealand, located the many islands in that area, and mapped the Hawaiian Islands. One cannot say that he discovered the Hawaiian Islands, for the Spaniards had made that discovery long before, but they had successfully kept their knowledge from the rest of the world. The real, but secret, orders for Cook on this third trip were to attempt to find the Northwest Passage from its western end. At the same time England sent two ships to try to find the eastern end of the passage. To carry out his orders, Cook hit the west coast of North America at approximately the present location of Portland, Oregon, and proceeded north along the coast. He made remarkably accurate maps of the coast as he went, to a point he called Icy Cape, the westernmost point in North America, abutting the Bering Sea. Cook Inlet, the entrance to Anchorage, Alaska, was named after him, and he thoroughly investigated it, hoping that it would prove to be the key to the passage he was seeking. It is not recorded that he saw or investigated either the Columbia River or Puget Sound. The mouth of the Columbia could easily be missed, since it is a sandy estuary which at first glance might indicate a profitless diversion, and he might have missed Puget Sound in one of the usual fogs, or he might have gone far enough in it to where it turns south, and then abandoned the effort.

James Cook was from a different mold than most British navy men of the time. He was not born to wealth and position, nor

did he have any influential friends or relatives. He managed to enlist in the Navy, and through the force of ability gradually won promotion - often over the objections of more influential men. But his outstanding ability as a sailor and leader prevailed.

His first trip, to Tahiti, was his first command, and he discharged his orders with distinction. One very great point in his favor was that he lost not a single man to scurvy, the usual killer of large numbers of sailors on long voyages. Not only did he lose no men, he was, in spite of the iron discipline he enforced (which of course was common on all navy ships), surprisingly well regarded by his crew.

Captain Cook died on the beach at Hawaii, killed by the spear of an Hawaiian while trying to reembark his men after a skirmish with the natives. Typically, he was the last man on the beach after all of his crew had gotten into their boat.

Few of the usual reasons impelled Captain Cook to be an explorer. He was a captain in the British Navy, the government wanted more information about the South Pacific and later about the Northwest Passage, the Admiralty set up an expedition, and Captain Cook was ordered to go. So he went. Exploring was not something that was in his blood, he had made no promises to himself to become famous, he earned no special rewards nor great fortune. He was simply a British sailor, and he took his ship where he was told.

Contrast the fruitful expeditions of James Cook with the rather different trips of Vitus Bering, for whom the Bering Straits and Bering Sea and Bering Island are named. Bering was a Danish navigator in the service of Peter I of Russia. In the years shortly before 1725 there was considerable interest in the Russian court as to the extent of the Russian Empire. No one really knew the eastern boundary. In fact, nobody knew whether perhaps the eastern end of the empire might not be attached to the North American continent. Bering therefore was despatched to the east to settle some of these questions. Some rather minor explorations had been made of the north coast of Siberia, and there were a few scattered settlements, notably near Kamchatka. But nobody had been particularly interested in going further. It is rather doubtful whether Bering himself really had a burning desire along these lines, but it had become a matter of prestige, and Bering saw some possible honor and furtherance of his reputation if he led such an expedition.

The expedition which Bering headed left Moscow in 1725, carrying with it every last bit of material necessary to build two ships - everything from anchors to sails except the actual wood for the hulls and spars. Every skill needed was present from carpenters to ironworkers and sailors. Just the trip from Moscow to his proposed starting point was a stupendous expedition by itself, and took slightly over two years. Everything was transported on wagons and, in the winter, on sledges. Boats were built when a river down or up which they could go was encountered.

Having finally reached the Kamchatka peninsula and having built his ships, Bering sailed north, past Bering Island, past the easternmost cape in Siberia, and some short distance westward along the coast of Siberia. He had thus proved that Siberia and North America were not connected, so he returned to Kamchatka, sent the usual dispatches, and waited for further orders. These finally came, so he returned to Moscow.

Then interest developed, spurred no doubt to some extent by Bering himself, and he was ordered to return east, build two more ships, and find and explore the coast of North America. This he had not seen on his first trip. So back he went again, once more taking everything necessary with him, and again taking two years to get there. This may today seem excessive, but this was a logistical operation of no mean dimensions, rendered particularly difficult by the vast distances, the harsh terrain, the inability to travel during many months of the year, and the unpleasant, to say the least, climate.

But Bering got there, built two more ships and started out again. He was much delayed by the usual bureaucratic lethargy, and by some other errands assigned to one of his ships, but finally the two ships departed for the North American coast. Not long after leaving the two ships became separated, and never saw each other again. Both of them, separately, found the coast of Alaska, although there is some question whether Bering actually knew what he had found. He still thought there was a faint chance that the coast of Siberia might trend sharply

northward from some point to the west of East Cape (around which he had previously sailed), then eastward again and finally south. This would of course mean that the Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea only formed a very large bay in the north Pacific Ocean. Bering apparently never settled this question to his own complete satisfaction, although his reports had left no doubt in the minds of his superiors.

Bering himself landed briefly along the coast of Alaska, but did no extensive exploration. One reason for this was that he was still looking for his other ship, which he expected to meet. Furthermore, his supplies were running low, and the weather was beginning to turn bad. He had enough experience with the stormy characteristics of the weather in that part of the world, so he turned back for Kamchatka. One terrible storm after another overtook him, and his ship was finally wrecked. Bering and the other survivors spent the ensuing winter on what is now known as Bering Island, and most of them, including Vitus Bering, died there of scurvy.

Although Bering actually added comparatively little to the world's knowledge of the geography of that area, he did establish that Asia and North America were not connected. He, or members of his party, explored some of the coast of Alaska north of the Aleutian Islands, and perhaps as far north as Cape Hope. Baranof Island and Sitka, later the major focal points of Russian Alaska, were not part of his discoveries, although his voyages

undoubtedly spurred Russian interest in the area and led to later expeditions.

In all, Vitus Bering spent some sixteen years on these two expeditions, from the time he first left Moscow until he died on Bering Island. But less than one year was actually spent sailing in the North Pacific. The rest of the time he spent travelling back and forth to Moscow, fighting the imperial bureaucracy, and making and revising the vast plans necessary for an expedition of this magnitude.

If James Cook made three trips to the Pacific because he was so ordered by the British Admiralty, Vitus Bering made two trips to the North Pacific because he was told to do so by the Russian government, in whose employ he was. While apparently little of the impetus for Cook's trips came from Cook himself, Bering saw the advantages of exploration in that area (at least partly because it might add to his prestige), and did much to bring these to the attention of the government, and to have himself appointed as the leader. Both died on the homeward voyage.

Orders from government were a major factor in almost all true explorations in the Arctic but there were a number of exceptions. One of the most fascinating exceptions was Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian born in 1861. Nansen was educated as a zoologist, interested primarily in the observation of animal life in high latitudes. This interest took him on several expeditions to Spitzbergen, Iceland and Greenland. As a result

of these trips, he became thoroughly familiar with life in Arctic regions, the methods of travel and the ways in which life could be sustained in some degree of comfort and safety under the extreme conditions. At the age of twenty-seven, Nansen and three companions made the extremely difficult landing on the east coast of Greenland, where there are no harbors and a constant flow of ice along the coast. He then crossed Greenland over the inland ice. This trip was made on skis and snowshoes, dragging sledges. Frequently the wind was so strong that Nansen and his companions sat on the sledges, raised sails and literally flew over the ice. Little was known of Greenland at the time, and there were only scattered settlements along the coasts, mainly on the western side.

This early expedition was followed by many trips to various areas in the Arctic. Nansen gradually developed the theory that there was a current in the Arctic ocean that flowed from the northern coast of Siberia, starting roughly near the mouth of the Lena River, running north over the Pole and thence south along the east coast of Greenland, emerging into the Atlantic through Denmark Strait between Greenland and Iceland. He evolved this theory to a large extent from driftwood found along the coast of Greenland - wood from trees that grow only in Siberia. There were also some relics from the wreck of the JEANNETTE, the ship lost in the ice north of Siberia by Captain G. W. DeLong in 1881.

On the basis of this evidence, and to test his belief that the Pole could be reached by simply getting locked in the ice at the right place, Nansen designed and built the FRAM. The FRAM was not just an ordinary ship. It was not only strongly built, but the hull design was such that pressure of the ice would tend to lift the ship rather than crush it. She was outfitted for an excursion to last up to five years. During this time, of course, there would be little for the crew to do beyond the constant meteorological observations, so there were all kinds of preparations for the crew to pass the time, such as a complete machine shop, woodworking equipment and exercise devices.

This rather unusual expedition came off almost exactly as planned, except that Nansen found that the current would not take him exactly over the Pole. The current was there, but whether he caught it slightly too far east or whether it changed direction slightly, it took the FRAM somewhat to the southeast of the Pole. So, because the Pole was then only about three hundred miles away, Nansen and one companion left the FRAM. Walking across the polar ice cap was nothing new to Nansen, and "living off the land", which of course was only ice, presented no problems to him. For over a year these two men existed entirely on what they found. For the winter they holed up on a small island slightly north of Jan Mayen where they build a cabin of rocks covered with the skins of walrus and seals they had shot, and the meat of which provided all the food they needed.

The FRAM, meanwhile, continued to drift across the polar ice. She finally broke loose of the ice almost exactly at the location estimated near the east coast of Greenland. Nansen meanwhile had found a party of British ornithologists near Jan Mayen, and had been given passage back to Norway on their ship. Amazingly, Nansen and the FRAM arrived home within a week of each other, neither of them having actually reached the Pole.

This voyage of the FRAM was strictly a scientific affair. Nansen was a zoologist and oceanographer, interested in the scientific as well as geographic knowledge to be gained by such a voyage. Although his trip was financed in part by the Norwegian government, it was not a government project. Nor was he interested in simply getting to the Pole or being the first man to reach that objective. At the time of his trip, which lasted from 1893 to 1896, the main thrust of polar exploration was still the search for the Northwest Passage. Shortly thereafter the emphasis changed, and the race for the pole was on. Nansen, however, was not entirely immune, and having drifted somewhat north of the "farthest north" achieved by Lockwood, of Greeley's disastrous expedition, some years earlier, he started off on his side trip.

An interesting result of Nansen's many trips in the Arctic, when he existed largely on fresh meat which he shot, was that on no occasion did he or any of his companions suffer from scurvy - the normal scourge of such voyages. Nansen attributed this to the fact that they ate few provisions from home - no

salt pork or salt beef. This anti-scorbutic effect of fresh meat was also later confirmed by Steffansson. To prove it, Steffansson later lived in New York City for a whole year eating nothing but fresh meat, and exhibited no signs of scurvy.

Nansen was an explorer. But he was more than that. He was a zoologist, and professor of oceanography, the first Norwegian ambassador to Great Britain, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922 for his efforts in repatriating prisoners of war and for his efforts to alleviate the famine in Russia.

What then, motivated Fridtjof Nansen in his polar explorations? It can have been nothing but scientific curiosity and the desire to add to the world's store of knowledge of that area. As the dictionary says - "he travelled in search of geographic and scientific knowledge."

Probably one of the most famous Arctic expeditions was that of Sir John Franklin in 1845. Franklin had participated in or had led, several previous expeditions to the Arctic, all under the orders of the Admiralty, between 1818 and 1827. He was governor of Tasmania from 1836 to 1843, and was recalled from that post to lead what the Admiralty confidently expected would be the final and definitive search for the Northwest Passage.

This was a particularly well equipped expedition. Two ships, the EREBUS and the TERROR, had been thoroughly rebuilt to withstand ice, were manned by unusually able men, and for

once the British Navy secured good supplies instead of the moldy bread and wormy meat usually given such ventures.

These two ships were sighted off the coast of Greenland later in the summer of 1845 - and were never seen again, nor were any of the men, nor were any positively identified remains ever found.

If the story stopped there, Franklin and his expedition would soon have been forgotten. But Franklin was a particularly able and popular man. His wife was a wealthy and influential woman. So the Admiralty mounted one relief expedition after another, and Lady Franklin personally financed and despatched others. While Franklin himself found nothing - or at least didn't live to tell of his discoveries - the many expeditions sent in search of him mapped a large part of the northern coast of Canada. The effort put forth greatly expanded knowledge of that part of the world. The total of thirty-nine separate relief expeditions was also a tribute to the high regard in which Sir John Franklin was held - and to the forcefulness of his wife.

Sir John Franklin was a man very much in the mold of Captain James Cook. He was different from Cook in that he, Franklin, came from a wealthy and respected family instead of the humble surroundings from which Cook sprung. But they were alike in their utter devotion to duty and the Admiralty. They both went wherever they were told to go, and conducted the business

of the government with ability. That Cook was successful where Franklin failed reflects the hazards of the mission rather than the efforts or the ability expended.

Franklin, like Cook, was an explorer because his government ordered him. He was not motivated by a personal itch to go exploring, but entirely by the orders he was given. Unquestionably, the Admiralty picked men to head these expeditions who demonstrated a personal interest, or who at least were favorably inclined toward them. But the initiative and the directions came from government. Therefore, they met the definition - they were sent in search of geographical knowledge.

When one considers the unsuccessful Arctic excursions, one cannot forget the disastrous operation of Adolphus Washington Greely. Greely was a signal officer in the U.S. Army, having served his entire career in the far west fighting Indians. When the U.S. Government wanted to cooperate in the International Geophysical Year of 1881, A. W. Greely was picked to head an expedition which would establish a base as far north as possible on the coast of Greenland, or on Ellesmere Island, across Nares Strait. They would stay there one year, and make a number of assigned observations.

From the start this was a textbook example of how this sort of thing should not be handled. Greely and all of his men (with the exception of one who was shot for mutiny) were able and devoted soldiers - but their abilities did not lie in the field of Arctic exploration, nor even in the field of survival in the

Arctic. They lived through a long and horrible ordeal - at least some of them did. Relief expeditions failed to find them, supplies ran out, the usual and expected game was not found, the ice came earlier than usual. Everything went wrong. Greely himself and six men out of an original party of twenty-three were finally rescued, and when found not one could so much as raise a hand. They had spent the last winter in a hut which was not high enough for them to stand up, and in which the temperature was never above freezing and rarely above zero. Of all the records of scientific observations made over a three year period none were saved. All except Greely's personal diary were lost in the last desperate effort to leave the Arctic.

Greely undoubtedly had no personal desire to go exploring in the Arctic. He was a signal officer fighting Indians, a job at which he acquitted himself well. But for some reason the Army picked him, so he went. Therefore, he too was an explorer.

It was not only governments that sent out exploring parties. James Gordon Bennett apparently decided that the Arctic could provide headlines and sell newspapers, just as he had earlier decided that Africa could. So he bought a ship - the JEANNETTE - which he had completely rebuilt and outfitted, and then turned over to the Navy for Arctic exploration. The basic idea, whether Bennett's or that of the Navy, was to start from the north coast of Siberia to go to the North Pole. In 1879 there was a theory that there was an ice-free current in the Arctic Ocean, and that it started north of Siberia and would provide a quick and

easy path to the Pole. As Nansen subsequently demonstrated, the theory of a current over the Pole was substantially correct, but it was far from ice-free. The Navy placed in charge an able and respected officer by the name of George Washington DeLong. The JEANNETTE sailed north through the Bering Straits in July of 1879, then west along the coast of Siberia, following more or less the route of Vitus Bering who traversed this area one hundred and fifty years earlier. But unlike Bering, DeLong never returned. Fairly soon after turning north some distance west of the Bering Straits, he was frozen solid in the ice. Two years later, having been carried both north and south by the ice, as well as some distance west, but never released from it, the JEANNETTE was finally crushed. DeLong himself and two-thirds of his crew perished in the attempt to regain solid land.

The definition of an explorer does not state that he must be successful or even that he must live to tell his tale, it only says he must be sent in search of knowledge. For that reason, one can call DeLong an explorer, although he discovered nothing and made no scientific or geographical strides. He was a capable officer of the Navy, and went where he was told. In this, of course, he was exactly like Greely - and like Cook and Franklin.

The Northwest Passage was the subject of song and story and of many major expeditions for hundreds of years. And by the time it was finally negotiated by one ship on one continuous voyage in 1903, it was fairly generally conceded that while

such a passage did exist, it would be of very little value. The waters in this passage are narrow, shallow, and plugged with ice most of the year. It was traversed once by a huge supertanker shortly after the discovery of oil on the North Slope of Alaska in an effort to determine its value from bringing that oil down south. Even the enormous expense of the Alaska pipeline was seen to be more economical than negotiating this route by tankers. It is used today only by occasional ships of the Canadian Coast Guard.

Roald Amundsen, the same man who subsequently was the first man to reach the South Pole, was the man who finally mastered the Northwest Passage. While a student in medical school, he found that the lure of the sea, of the Arctic, and of exploration, was greater than the lure of medicine. For some years he led the life of a sailor and finally, in 1903, he bought a small ship - the GJOA. With six companions he set off to find and traverse the Northwest Passage. By this time, most of the route was fairly well known, but had never been actually followed from end to end. Where large and fancy expeditions had failed, Amundsen succeeded. He not only made the entire passage, but on the way he accurately fixed the position of the north magnetic pole. In doing all of this, he of course relied heavily on the vast amount of work that had preceded him.

Seven years later Amundsen outfitted a ship with the announced purpose of going to the North Pole. Shortly before he was to depart - in the same ship that Nansen had built to be

frozen in the Arctic ice - he heard that Peary had reached the Pole. So, he suddenly and without fanfare turned south instead of north, and became the first man to reach the South Pole, giving rise to the remark in Scott's diary.

For the rest of his life Amundsen continued to travel around in the Arctic, and was the first man to fly over the Pole in a dirigible. Amundsen not only used Nansen's ship - the FRAM - he was also convinced that Nansen's theory of a current of ice that flowed over the Pole was correct and that a ship could cross the Pole by being frozen in the ice. So he too bought a ship for the purpose. He found, as Nansen had, that the Polar stream existed, but was entirely irregular and unreliable. When the Italian General Nobile's airship was wrecked on the return from its successful flight over the Pole in 1928, Amundsen set off in search of him, and was never heard from again.

Norwegians apparently don't have to be sent by their government to go exploring. They just go, and pay for it from private resources or finance it from contributions. Since such a large part of Norway is semi-Arctic in climate, and since they are accustomed to living and working in this climate, they seem to find it entirely natural to go travelling in what we might consider to be unfriendly territory. Exploring, furthermore, is in their blood, and has been ever since - and perhaps before - Eric and other Vikings covered much of the territory bordering the North Atlantic. Many, of course, were impelled by trade and conquest. Others like Nansen and Amundsen seem to have been impelled by a thirst for exploration and discovery.

An explorer of a somewhat different variety was Vilhjalmur Steffansson - who was not, as his name might imply, a Norwegian. He was a Canadian of Icelandic descent, educated in theology and anthropology at the University of Iowa and at Harvard. His interest was Eskimos and their mode of life. Steffansson made many trips to Iceland, Greenland and the farther reaches of Canada's Northwest Territory. His only trip of a strictly geographic exploration nature was a four-year one north of Bering Strait. The purpose of this was not so much to discover new land as to determine whether any land existed between Bering Strait and the North Pole, and to study the native races. Part of the objective was simply to spend a considerable period in the Arctic, with the native races, and to adopt their way of life. It was as a result of this trip that he came to the conclusion that it was perfectly possible for men to exist in good health and comparative comfort on the Arctic ice without vast stores of supplies - living almost exclusively on seals. At one time his party lived for eight months on an ice floe about five miles across while it drifted some four hundred and fifty across previously unexplored parts of the Beaufort Sea.

Steffansson's name is not associated with any specific discovery or any particular area. He simply proved, by doing it, that life could be sustained in these climates, and in the course of doing that he greatly increased knowledge of Canada's northern borders, discovered a large number of islands, and did prove conclusively that there is no land north of the Bering

Straits. As early as the time of Vitus Bering this had been in doubt, and this determination had been one of the reasons for Bering's voyages.

When asked whether he had been to the North Pole, Steffansson replied - "No, I am a scientist, not a tourist."

For some reason, the Northeast Passage, from Europe across the roof of Asia to the Pacific, never stirred men's souls to a similar extent. Ships were accustomed to going south around Africa from the Atlantic to the Pacific for the treasures of Cathay, and few attempts were apparently made to find a northern route.

The man who finally accomplished this passage was, as one might expect, a Scandinavian - Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiold. He was the son of a mineralogist and traveller. Nordenskiold was a geologist and traveller, and so was his younger brother. Whether they were more interested in geology or travel is immaterial, for they all did much travelling, and all were noted geologists. Nils Nordenskiold, the son, made numerous trips to Greenland, Iceland and Spitzbergen, and on one of these trips he conceived the notion of attempting the discovery of the Northeast Passage. So in June of 1878 he set out from Karlskrona, was duly frozen in the ice north of Cape Chelyuskin during the winter of 1878-79, and in the summer of 1879 completed the trip through the Bering Straits. Today this northeast passage is a regular trade route for Russian ships, but surprisingly it had not been during the years of Russian

domination of Alaska. Nor, apparently, had Russia made any concerted effort to find such a passage.

While Nordenskiold achieved some fame for this accomplishment, he had not spent years working at it. He was primarily a geologist investigating Arctic lands, mainly Greenland and Iceland, and subsequently became a professor of geology. His trip was a far cry from the hundreds of expeditions sent in search of the other way around. There was, of course, the advantage that while the Arctic Ocean north of Canada is a maze of islands with permanent ice all around them, the sea north of Russia and Siberia has very few islands, and during the summer there is a comparatively wide band of open ocean. There is the constant risk of being frozen into the ice during the winter and being carried north by the current and then being crushed in the ice, as DeLong discovered. One can only assume that the Russians felt no need to explore this route to the far East, and other nations had no sufficient reason. So, why did Nordenskiold seek to investigate it? It was not in his area of geological interest, and as far as has been reported he did no geological field work on this trip. Obviously, therefore, the answer is simply that he knew such a passage must exist, and he had the true explorer's curiosity.

The man who first climbed Mount Everest was asked shortly after he returned why he had made that trip. The answer was simple - "Because it is there". To a man like Edmund Hilary, the question was silly. He was curious, and it was a challenge.

It is the same motive that impels most of us when we are walking around a strange city or are boating on a new and unknown, to us, river. We want to know what lies around the next corner, or where the next bend in the river will take us. The only real difference is that most men are rather easily satisfied, whereas the true explorer cannot stop. The next corner, to most men, is about two blocks away. To others, it is half a world away, and hard to find.

Governments, of course, are impelled by the possibility of conquest or trade advantages. But even a governmentally sponsored voyage of exploration must be led by one man, and that one man must, if the trip is to be successful, have the true explorer's curiosity. Many of them must more than once have shared Scott's feelings when he said, "Great God! This is an awful place."

Whether the objective is Mount Everest or the North Pole or the interior of Australia or the islands of the Pacific, men go there because it is unknown territory - because it is there - because their government orders them - because they seek fame - or simply because they are curious. Some are tourists, some are gentlemen adventurers, and a select few are truly explorers.

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