

A Step-by-Step Tour of Race to the End of the Earth

May 17-October 14, 2013

The exhibition is divided into the following seven sections:

1. Introduction

Visitors are transported to Antarctica's icy, windswept landscape through an immersive soundscape. A film, *Race to the End of the Earth*, briefly introduces the two leaders, their goals, and their crews, leaving visitors with the question, "Who will reach the South Pole first?" As they leave this section, visitors can pick up a "character card" featuring a Norwegian or British team member and throughout the exhibition, visitors will find clues about their character's experience en route to, and at, the South Pole.

2. First Glimpses

In this section visitors imagine the excitement of exploring the Antarctic region prior to the 20th century, when no one knew whether Antarctica was a large continent or just a large collection of islands. Objects in this section include a copy of Captain James Cook's "A Voyage toward the South Pole" and a pocket globe depicting Cook's voyages. Although Cook sailed within 120 kilometres of Antarctica, he failed to see any land and concluded that, even if land existed, no one would ever want to visit this cold, inhospitable region again. This rare book comes from the American Museum of Natural History Library's Special Collections. Also on view are paintings depicting Sir James Clark Ross's ships in Antarctic seas. Ross was the discoverer of the enormous ice shelf that now bears his name. This section also includes an interactive map that visitors can use to learn about the continent and its early visitors.

3. The Race Begins

In this section visitors get to know the explorers with highlights from Scott's and Amundsen's early years, from birth to the start of their careers. Visitors then follow each man's journey from his homeland to the Antarctic, learning about ships and crews along the way. Scott took 64 men (including 12 scientists and their assistants) on the Terra Nova, while Amundsen's Fram crew consisted of just 18 men. Scott was unaware that he had a competitor until he arrived in Australia and received a brief telegram from Amundsen, which stated that the Norwegian was proceeding to Antarctica. Artifacts featured in this section include Scott's and Amundsen's pocket watches, a replica of a scenic painting by Scott's crewmember Dr. Edward Wilson, and Fram crewmember Helmer Hanssen's violin.

4. Two Teams, One Goal

At this stage, both crews have reached Antarctica and are now setting up base camps to pass the long winter season before setting off for the Pole. Visitors learn about each team's life on the ice—what the men ate and wore, what they did in their spare time, and how they prepared for the land journey, including the depot-laying expeditions that both teams undertook to leave supplies along their intended routes. This section includes life-sized re-creations of Scott's hut at

Cape Evans, including his study and three of his crew members' living spaces, and of Amundsen's underground workrooms, where his crew was able to work on their gear protected from the extreme wind and cold outside. Visitors also learn about Scott's scientific goals for his expedition and the investigations that his scientists undertook, including collecting minerals, birds, marine mammals, and parasites; tracking temperature, wind, and weather; and studying ice and geological formations.

A highlight of this section is a diorama featuring "the worst journey in the world," Apsley Cherry-Garrard's evocative name for the dangerous five-week expedition he undertook with Dr. Wilson and Birdie Bowers in the heart of the austral winter of 1911. Their sole purpose was to collect eggs of the largest of all penguin species alive, the emperor penguin, for scientific study and analysis. The section includes an extensive array of original artifacts, including one of the Norwegian team's sledges, Amundsen's own chronometer and shotgun, a compass and other expedition gear. Artifacts from the British team include a pony snowshoe, a sledging pennant, and manhauling sledging harness gear, together with clothing items from Scott's team members—mittens, balaclava, scarf, windproof tunic, and goggles. Visitors will be able to touch actual reindeer fur, which was used to make sleeping bags, and learn about the difficulties of using a compass in Antarctica in an interactive exhibit that allows the visitor to see the dramatic "dip" of a compass needle as it nears the magnetic South Pole. With the aid of touch-screen kiosks, visitors can view photographs and drawings

5. To the Pole

This section follows each team as they made their way to the South Pole. Scott's crew initially included 16 men (five of whom would make up the final Polar party, while the men in the support parties returned to base camp), 12 sledges, two motor sledges, 22 dogs, and 10 ponies. Amundsen's crew consisted of five men, four sledges, and 52 dogs. This section includes a timeline highlighting key days along each crew's journey to the Pole. (For more information, please see the accompanying Backgrounder: Expedition Timelines.) The Norwegians relied exclusively on dogs to pull sledges; the British had always planned to conduct much of their journey by man-hauling their sledges. Using an interactive, visitors can experience how different ice conditions could make hauling a sledge easy or hard. This section also explores the food supplies that each team had available during their trip and the weather conditions they faced. Scott's daily ration provided about 4,600 calories and Amundsen's perhaps 100 calories more. By some estimates, the British were eventually burning 7,000 calories a day—or 150 per cent of what they consumed. Artifacts in this section include Amundsen's binoculars, a replica of the tent the Norwegians left at the South Pole, and a re-creation of the British team's daily rations. On December 14, Amundsen and his men became the first to reach the South Pole. Three days later, they headed back to their base camp, leaving a flag and the tent for Scott to find. The British would not reach the Pole until nearly five weeks later, on January 17, 1912.

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Visitors will continue to follow the timeline and discover how each team fared on their return journeys. Amundsen and his crew arrived back at base camp 10 days ahead of schedule on January 26, 1912, and four days later set sail to tell the world of their victory. Scott and his men were not so lucky, facing many hardships on their way back: food and fuel shortages, snow-blindness, frostbite, and extreme temperatures. The British began slowing down, and the winter season hit in full force. On February 20, Petty Officer Edgar Evans died; his was the first death of the expedition.

Although Scott's men began to lose hope, they continued to take temperature readings daily and carried geological samples, including 30 pounds of coal, limestone, and quartz, believing them to be of scientific importance. In March, Captain Oates, suffering from severe frostbite on his feet, decided to leave the tent during a blizzard so he was no longer a burden on the others; he was never seen again. The remaining men finally perished after becoming trapped in a nine-day blizzard without food or fuel, about a day's march away from a well-stocked depot. Amundsen and his men reached Australia in March 1912, and newspapers worldwide trumpeted the news that the Norwegians had reached the Pole first. The world did not learn about Scott's fate until almost a year after he perished: in November 1912, Scott, Wilson, and Bowers were found frozen in their sleeping bags, each having written farewell letters to loved ones. A standing room-only memorial service for Scott and his men was held on February 14, 1913 in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, with King George V in attendance.

Visitors will also learn how the survivors of these expeditions fared during the rest of their lives. Artifacts in this section include a number of objects found in the tent at Scott's last camp: one of the final letters written by Scott, and geological samples the team had collected during the journey. Also in this section is a video recounting the end of each team's journey.

7. Antarctica Today

The final section, begins with a timeline highlighting some of the events that have taken place in Antarctica in the century since the race (for more information, please see the accompanying Backgrounder: Highlights of Antarctica's History after the Race) and continues with a look at the continent now. Using a dynamic, multi-user interactive map of modern Antarctica, visitors will visualize weather systems and ocean currents, watch an iceberg calve, and find out how scientists think the warming of this area will affect the rest of the planet. Antarctica's 14.2 million square kilometres are like nowhere else on Earth, with no native inhabitants or governments. Its only long-term occupants—4,000 in the summer and 1,000 in the winter—are researchers, students, and support staff.

The Royal BC Museum has added a photo and video presentation to the "Antarctica Today" area featuring the work of its own Conservator and Exhibit Arts Technician Jana Stefan. Stefan has worked for two seasons in Antarctica as part of an international effort to preserve the world's most remote historic sites, including R.F. Scott's Expedition Hut. Four expedition parties built bases in the Ross Sea Region of Antarctica. The bases still stand and are cared for on behalf of the international community by the New Zealand-based Antarctic Heritage Trust.

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Stefan's work as a conservator focused on prolonging the lifespan of historical artifacts. During her two six-month conservation trips to Antarctica, she and her colleagues cleaned, repaired, and stabilized objects, and made repairs to the huts to create a healthy long-term environment for them.

Also on display in this section are present-day garments issued to personnel going to Antarctica: balaclava, boots, goggles, mitts, and bib pants. There is also a prefabricated igloo, a portable hut nicknamed "The Apple," that can be transported by helicopters and used as sleeping quarters, a lab, or as an emergency weather shelter.

Although the continent is uninhabitable for most land animals and plants, the ocean around it teems with life and many creatures exhibit amazing biological adaptations to extreme cold and limited sunlight. Visitors come face-to-face with a full-scale model of a leopard seal and can view stunning underwater footage of emperor penguins, sea anemones, and fish that have adapted to living in extreme conditions. On display are casts of fossils found in Antarctica, including the cast of a 240-million-year-old fossil relative of reptiles, *Procolophon*. Similar fossils are also found in South Africa, evidence that Africa and Antarctica were once connected.

An interactive map of Antarctica scans what lies below the ice and highlights ocean currents and weather systems. Visitors can take a personality test inspired by those used for actual expeditions to imagine how they might fare in an extreme environment over long periods of isolation. The test includes questions such as, "Research stations have energy and water conservation programs. Could you get by with only two, two-minute showers a week?" and "Winds of up to 300 kph have been clocked in Antarctica, and the sound is intense. Would this bother you?"

The exhibition ends by introducing visitors to some of the men and women working in Antarctica today, including a biologist studying how fish have adapted to Antarctica's freezing waters, a waste management specialist whose job involves shipping out waste generated at his station, and a sous chef who says, "There is something particularly magical about skimming across the waves in a Zodiac and climbing out to scramble across the Antarctic islands with penguins and seals."