

# **In the Kingdom of Ice Study Guide**

## **In the Kingdom of Ice by Hampton Sides**

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## Summary

The Kingdom of Ice is the story of the ill-fated De Long Expedition to the North Pole that was launched with great hope and excitement from San Francisco in 1880. Little was known about the Arctic region and virtually nothing was known about the North Pole. There were what are known now to be bizarre theories that were commonly held about the Pole by respected scientists, military men and other experts.

August Petermann a world-renowned cartographer and geographer was one of many Arctic “experts” who believed that there was warm water surrounding the North Pole. These waters were referred to as the Open Polar Ocean intimating that the waters were free of ice floes and packs and were “open” to vessels that would not be encumbered by ice. The warm waters of this ocean were the result of the conflagration of the warm Gulf stream and the Kuro Siwo, the warm black current that flowed northward to the Bering Strait from Japan and Formosa.

The saga of the USS Jeannette and its crew on an expedition to reach the North Pole, a region never before seen by man, has a hint of a “perfect storm” scenario. For one, there was avid interest in exploring the North Pole from scientists, explorers and the public alike. There had been failed expeditions and tragedies like the Polaris expedition which resulted in an apparent mutiny with the commander, Captain Charles Hall, being poisoned with arsenic after the ship had been stranded in ice.

But those and other expedition failures didn’t dampen the fervor for reaching the North Pole. Multimillionaire James Bennett was the owner and editor-in-chief of the New York Herald which in the late nineteenth century was the most influence newspaper in the world. Bennett was interested in the exploration of the North Pole on an intellectual level; he was also seeking out the next hot story for his newspaper. Bennett had orchestrated reporter Sir Henry Stanley’s successful mission to locate Dr. David Livingstone who had been abandoned in Africa.

Bennett believed that by sponsoring a North Pole expedition and having exclusivity for reports dispatched from the trek would increase his readership and elevate the stature of his newspaper to a new level. He was willing to fund the entire expedition. Bennett met with Petermann to get advice about the best route to take to the North Pole. Petermann gladly cooperated and willingly provided all the charts and maps that would be necessary for such a journey.

Navy Lieutenant George De Long was an explorer at heart. He was already a celebrated American hero having saved an abandoned expedition to Greenland. He was obsessed with the North Pole and exploring it. He wanted to be the first adventurer to arrive there and proudly claim it for the U.S. De Long had the passion, Bennett had the money and Petermann had the maps. Without those three convergent drivers, the expedition would not have happened.



Reality trumps speculation every time. When De Long and his crew began to encounter ice on their journey north, they discovered that Petermann and other advocates of the Kuro Siwo and Open Polar Ocean had it all wrong. They came to realize that there was nothing but ice, fifteen feet thick at times, all the way to the North Pole. The USS Jeannette got hopelessly stuck in the ice. The men eventually abandoned ship and traveled on foot, by dog sled and by small whaling boats in an effort to reach the Siberian mainland some one thousand miles away and save their lives.



# Part One: A Great Blank Space

## Summary

In November 1974, the New York Herald, operated by owner and editor-in-chief James Bennett, Jr., was the most important and influential paper in the world. Bennett pulled off a hoax on the entire city – referred to as the wild animal hoax – which only brought him more readers and his paper more interest. Bennett had orchestrated the Stanley & Livingston event when the former found the missing Livingston in Africa. Bennett was drawn to controversial and unusual stories even if he had to manufacture them. Although Bennett had correspondents all over the world, he was most intrigued by the Arctic. The scientists and explorers who had ventured into the Ice Kingdom had intrigued the public – these men were pioneers, heroes. Bennett was sure that was where the next big story would be.

The North Pole was a mystery to the general public. As much was known about Mars and Venus as was known about the icy top of the world. The scientific world and even the general public were clamoring to know more about it. There were practical reasons to explore the North Pole – there might be minerals and resources that could be claimed and shipping routes discovered. But for explorers and adventurers it was a place that no human had ever ventured. British Naval Officer William Parry led the first expedition toward the North Pole in 1827, following by a flurry of other British polar explorations.

Attention had shifted away from finding a Northwest Passage and focused on reaching the North Pole. There was competition among America and other nations to reach to pole first. The American public was anxious for the Stars & Stripes to be planted in the North Pole first. In a sense it was part of the Manifest Destiny – the push toward unexplored area in the west.

Naval officer, Lieutenant George De Long was among Arctic explorers who threw his hat in the ring. He was already a celebrity and the toast of the nation for his daring exploration along the coast of Greenland to save an expedition party that was stranded there. Wealthy philanthropist Henry Grinnell who had funded the failed Polaris expedition was still enthralled with an expedition but was not interested in funding another trek. De Long thought of another person who might want to fund the trip -- James Gordon Bennett, Jr. After De Long contacted Bennett and made his case about a leading an expedition to the North Pole, Bennett agreed to finance it. Bennett was interested in such an endeavor and frequent reports in the Herald would bring him more readers.

Initially, De Long had no idea what an odd character that he was dealing with. Bennett was a womanizer who was known to ride naked in his carriage at night and pull table cloths off of restaurant tables crashing linen and crystal to the floor. He owned hundreds of thermometers and barometers and was fascinated with weather. He didn't allow any



man working for him to have a beard. He had countless idiosyncrasies. But he was a great publisher and had established one of the great institutions in American journalism.

De Long found the man he needed that would enable his dream. He had the money and interest to fund the expedition and had an infinite hunger for a good story.

Emma De Long found her husband to be romantic yet extremely disciplined. He was a man of contradictions. He loved operas and symphonies and adored his baby daughter and allowed Emma to run the household. However, once on his ship, he was in total command and unyielding in the issuance of stringent orders for the crew. He blamed the Navy, which was far from being a first-class power, for some of those unattractive traits. He felt he had wasted away valuable time being part of the U.S. Navy.

De Long did his homework on the impending expedition by reading everything he could find on previous expeditions. He was willing to risk his career and reputation on the expedition. It would make him one of the greatest explorers of all time. In all other attempts to reach the North Pole, expeditions had been thwarted by ice in the water that blocked them from going further. The Open Polar Sea theory held that an Arctic ice ring circled warm water beyond it. Once able to cut through this ice, the warm waters surrounding the North Pole would be exposed and allow easy access to the Pole. This process would call for a vessel with a reinforced hull that could burst through the ice.

De Long worked to collect the most up-to-date equipment and data necessary for a successful expedition. He read with great interest the theory of naval officer, Captain Silas Bent who focused on the Kuro Siwo, a black current that allegedly swept from Formosa northward to the Bering Strait. The confluence of the Kuro Siwo and the Gulf Stream was, according to those who subscribed to the theory, was what kept the Arctic Sea warm.

De Long read in Putnam's magazine about Bent's hope for an Arctic hero to come along and prove his theory about the Kuro Siwo and find the Thermometric Gateway that it helped create. The article that De Long read with great interest posited the question that perhaps a segment of humanity existed in the Arctic Circle.

## Analysis

The author provides the lead up to the De Long Expedition to the North Pole. He describes James Bennett, the somewhat eccentric editor-in-chief and owner of the world's most influential newspaper, and his role in the expedition. He was the major financier of the expedition and the reasons he was compelled to do so. There had been unsuccessful expeditions to the North Pole in the past and money was drying up for more expeditions. Bennett was interested in the exploration of the North Pole but more than that he could see his readership climb if he had exclusive frequent updates about such an expedition. He had financed Stanley's search for Livingston in Africa.

Navy Lieutenant George De Long had become an American hero after rescuing a missing expedition to Greenland. He was obsessed with the North Pole and planned an



expedition but he needed financial backing. It was the perfect storm when De Long pitched his plan to Bennett. De Long had the know-how, experience, gravitas and passion for an expedition to the North Pole. Bennett had the money and saw the expedition as great PR and a money-maker for his already influential newspaper.

After the men sealed the deal, De Long began collecting all the information and data available about the mostly unknown territory. Some believed there was an undiscovered civilization in the North Pole. De Long placed great emphasis on the beliefs of Captain Silas Bent who was an advocate of the Kuro Siwo theory. Bent believed that the Kuro Siwo, a strong current that originated from Japan, when joined with the Gulf Stream created warm, ice-free waters around the Pole.

## Vocabulary

frenetic, tyrannical, imperious, flamboyant, profligately, mercurial, excoriated, ostensible, apogee, enigma, labyrinthine, atavistic, pantheon, empirical, campanile, largesse, chastened, temerity

# Part Two: The National Genius, Section 1

## Summary

In July of 1876, the nation's 100th anniversary, the World's Fair was being held in Philadelphia. The Centennial Exhibition was host to 37 nations as part of the Fair. James Bennett made certain that the Fair was thoroughly covered by his reporters. The Herald ran stories every day about the Fair. The most popular attraction at the Exhibition was Machinery Hall that displayed machines of all kinds, most of which were American.

The most popular machine in the hall was the Grand Hall Steam Engine which was also called the Centennial Steam Engine and was the largest machine in the world and was designed by engineer George Corliss. One visitor to the Exhibition was German professor and geographer August Petermann who was astonished by what he saw. He was a proponent of the Open Polar Sea theory. His maps of the Arctic showed an area devoid of ice. He believed that steam engines would be the vessel that could break through to the polar basin of warm water. He had found the machine that was capable of such a mission in the Centennial Steam Engine.

In 1877, Bennett traveled from Paris to the hinterlands in Germany to visit Petermann at his publishing house to discuss an Arctic expedition. Petermann took pride in showing Bennett around his celebrated establishment. His map-making process was creating an accurate image of planet Earth. Every feature on the portrait was given a name and color, be it river, fjord, glacier or swamp. Sea currents and even roads and railroads were depicted. Cables and telegraph wires were represented on the map of Mother Earth. Petermann's maps were meticulously crafted and hand-colored by his dedicated staff that had to put up with Petermann's harsh treatment.

Petermann was thrilled that Bennett planned to fund an expedition. He had an intellectual, and perhaps even an emotional, connection with the Brits but they had disappointed and abandoned him. Some of his sharpest critics were British. He turned to the Americans to lead an expedition that would finally see man on top of the world. He hoped the Americans would be successful and bring as much attention to the expedition as the discovery of Livingston by Stanley did in Africa.

Bennett tried to glean from Petermann the best route for De Long to take to reach the North Pole. Petermann told Bennett about the ring of ice, also called the Paleocrystic Sea, encircling the pole. Petermann recommended an entirely new route to the North Pole than prior expeditions had traveled. De Long should take a route through the Bering Strait. The Kuro Siwo would be the warm current that softened the icy pathway that De Long's vessel would have to take. Petermann was convinced that De Long would encounter a mysterious land mass known as Wrangle Land after which he would enter open water. Petermann suggested that the Americans stop and explore the land and claim it as a US territory. Petermann promised to provide the expedition crew with a





set of charts and maps to help them navigate through the unknown waters. After his visit, Bennett had thoughts of purchasing another vessel and manning one himself to the North Pole.

Bennett convinced De Long to take a leave of absence from the Navy for the expedition. De Long was thrilled that Bennett would finance the entire journey. De Long went in search of the right vessel for the trip throughout Great Britain. After a long search, De Long decided on a sturdy little ship named the Pandora. The owner, Allen Young, was paid \$6,000 by Bennett for the ship. De Long supervised the cleaning and preparation of the Pandora. He went over every detail of the ship's refitting. He wanted to ensure that every element of the ship was in perfect working order. There had been many mishaps with ships trying to reach the North Pole in the past. Bennett wanted to change the name of the Pandora. He felt it was ominous to send a crew out on a boat named after the evils of the world. The ship was docked in France for a short period of time. De Long would sail around South America to San Francisco for more repairs to ready it for the Bering Strait and the North Pole.

Bennett was satisfied with the sturdy little ship that he purchased for the expedition. He was pleased that the expedition would make headlines. Before leaving France, the Pandora was rechristened the Jeannette after Bennett's sister. Bennett had gathered an entourage for the ceremony. Henry Stanley who had found Livingston in Africa was among the guests. De Long admired Stanley and hoped that he would have the lasting fame that Stanley had enjoyed. De Long wanted to write a book about the expedition. Bennett would feature it in the Herald.

Bennett supplied three crew members for De Long's trip to San Francisco where his wife and daughter would disembark. De Long would evaluate their sailing skills and decide whether to hire them for the trip to the North Pole after they reached San Francisco. De Long issued a strange order – no one could disembark from the Jeanette until it reached San Francisco some 200 days after setting sail. The ship successfully navigated past the Canary Islands to the open Atlantic Ocean. The weather was fair and the seas were calm. George and Emma spent hours reading books about the Arctic from the ship's library. There were no worries or regrets.

## Analysis

In this chapter, the author brings together many of the principals that were behind the De Long Expedition to the North Pole. Without the collaboration of these people, there would have been no expedition. The World's Fair of 1876 was held in Philadelphia. Its most popular exhibits were in Machinery Hall which displayed newly invented machinery. German professor and geographer August Petermann, who was obsessed with the exploration of the North Pole, believed he saw the perfect machinery that could propel a vessel through the ice barrier to the North Pole at the Fair.

Petermann was a world-famous mapmaker and was visited by The New York Herald's editor-in-chief, James Bennett who was financing the expedition, to learn the best route



for George De Long to lead his expedition to the North Pole. Petermann promised to provide the expedition with all the charts and maps they needed. Petermann's maps were meticulously created with much attention to detail. When it came to the North Pole and Arctic area, much of mapmaking was guess work since no one in the history of the world had set foot in that area.

Petermann believed that there was a ring of ice on the outer edges of the Arctic region that once broken through would give a ship access to open warm water without icy barriers to impede their progress. Petermann called this "warm ocean water" that encircled the Pole the Paleocrystic Sea. He also believed there was another continent within the Arctic Circle which he called Wrangle Land.

This is an important aspect of the story of the De Long Expedition. Much of the planning and preparation was based on faulty information that originated from speculation, wishful thinking and tall tales told by adventurers, explorers and natives in the north. De Long and his crew would face unexpected problems due to this misinformation.

## Vocabulary

soliloquy, behemoth, efflorescence, grandiose, indefatigable, milieu, masochistic, netherworld, salacious, misanthrope, alacrity, assiduous, Anglophile, xenophobia, maelstrom

## Part Two: The National Genius, Section 2

### Summary

The Herald ran a lengthy feature article about August Petermann and his theories on the Arctic and the North Pole and his hopefulness about the expedition. He predicted smooth sailing for the Jeannette and that there would be some surprises after reaching the North Pole – perhaps even a new civilization. Bennett anticipated the excitement that reports from the Jeanette would cause.

The Jeannette encountered a vicious storm off the coast of Brazil causing some damage to the ship. Emma clutched her daughter certain they would not survive. But the ship and its passengers and crew all made it to the next morning when they assessed the damaged and began clean-up and repairs. Two birds of an unusual species flew on-board during the chaos of the storm and remained becoming the ship's mascots.

One of the mates, Master Danenhower confessed to De Long that he had a history of depression. He had been committed to the Government Hospital for the Insane and was treated like a lunatic. His parents had connections in the Navy and finally got him released. He told De Long that he was mentally as sound as anyone. De Long admired his candor and decided to hire him for the trip north.

The Jeannette traversed some rough waters and cold winds during their trek around South America. They ran into a squall on the coast of Chile that severely threatened the ship which listed and nearly turned sideways. But the squall passed by quickly. Weather improved and the waters warmed as they passed the tropical coasts of Peru and Ecuador. After passing the Mexican coast and Baja, they were in waters off California and their destination was near.

Once in San Francisco, De Long went over the ship with a fine-toothed comb. He noted every scrape and dent and tested every valve and fitting. The ship was in fine shape. He wondered where her weakness was. De Long and his crew would be heading toward the Bering Strait and the North Pole in a matter of months. There were a lot of preparations to be made. Major reinforcements would have to be made to the Jeannette's hull.

The ship was moored on Mare Island and inspected by a special board of naval engineers for its sea-worthiness in the harsh waters of the north. The board concluded that the Jeannette needed considerable enhancements especially to her hull if she was to survive the icy waters. Their recommendations were sweeping and encompassed nearly every corner of the ship. De Long envisioned that the board's recommendation would cost upwards of \$50,000. He feared that Bennett would drop the project at such an expense. De Long tried to convince the board members to keep the expenses down when possible. He didn't want the expedition to be aborted.



De Long traveled to Washington, D.C. to gather the latest information about the North Pole from the government and from institutions like the Smithsonian. De Long thought long and hard about the men needed for the expedition and began hiring his crew. He took on the responsibility of gathering all the gear and equipment that would be needed on the long journey. By the time De Long returned from Washington, the Jeannette had been revamped and refurbished and passed a review by the board with flying colors. During May and June the equipment and gear that De Long had ordered began to trickle in. The last items to be loaded were the food, drink and medical supplies. De Long ordered enough supplies to accommodate the crew of thirty for three years.

Bennett convinced the Navy Secretary to order De Long to stop along the route to the North Pole to search for the missing crew of a Scandinavian expedition led by scientist Adolf Nordenskiöld which had not surfaced after a long year. De Long feared such a side-trip would take valuable time away from his expedition.

Bennett had planned to attend the launching but had been delayed in Europe. De Long was disappointed, taking Bennett's absence as a bad omen. Bennett sent a congratulatory telegram wishing an American success for De Long and his crew. De Long was angered that the Navy vessels that were to escort the Jeannette to open waters were cancelled because no ships were available. Bennett hired a private ship to escort the Jeannette.

On the day of launch, on July 8th, storm clouds loomed over the San Francisco Bay. Crowds gathered on the piers and wharf held back by police barricades. The focus of those gathered was the sturdy little craft that bobbed in the choppy waters and flew the American flag. A fleet of private yachts appeared en masse to escort the Jeannette to open waters. The Jeannette would begin its trek at 3 p.m. Thousands of excited fans greeted De Long when he arrived at the dock. Emma would stand at De Long's side on the Jeannette to the Golden Gate Bridge where she would be transferred to one of the escort yachts.

De Long was nearly moved to tears by the show of support from the crowd and escort ships. He was disappointed that there was no showing of the U.S. Navy although several of their vessels were docked nearby. The Army was on hand and fired an eleven-gun salute from the Presidio army base to which De Long dipped his colors in response. Emma and De Long said an emotional good-bye. The newspapers chronicled the event. The return of the USS Jeannette was expected in about three years.

## Analysis

De Long may have given false hope by the stellar performance of the Pandora, renamed the USS Jeanette, from France where it was moored for a short time to San Francisco. It was a long and arduous trip during which De Long, his wife and young daughter and crew faced vicious storms and high winds. But the Jeannette made the trip with little damage and in record time. By performing so well in the squalls and gales



De Long and his crew encountered, he felt that the ship would stand up well in the expedition to the North Pole.

In this section, De Long was portrayed as a dedicated ship commander and leader. He was unrelenting in his dedication to properly equipping the ship for the long journey, making sure it was fit for a trek through icy waters and that he hired the right crew for the journey. He was meticulous in his preparations for the trip even traveling to Washington, D.C. from San Francisco to get the latest information on the North Pole from the government and from the Smithsonian Institute. By elaborating on the care that De Long took in his preparations which ultimately took years, the author underscores that De Long had no fault in the ultimate problems that the crew was to face.

Bennett, the editor-in-chief of the New York Herald is seen as duplicitous. While he is interested in the exploration of the North Pole for its scientific value, he is also interested in a good story, a scoop. Bennett had no hand in the actual preparations of the expedition; he had completely funded it. His side-interest in a good story had nothing to do with the misinformation that was supplied to De Long about the region.

## Vocabulary

chagrin, apocryphal, acrimonious, contrivance, incandescent, formidable, raconteur, dilettante, loquacious, incognito, caveat, opulent, hubris



# Part Three: A Glorious Country to Learn Patience In

## Summary

As the Jeannette made its way north to the Bering Strait the Vega, another vessel, with Adolf Nordenskiöld in command, was heading south from Siberia to Japan where he would announce his amazing accomplishment – he had led the first expedition to complete the Northeast Passage. It was a journey that encompassed a trek north of Eurasia and along the 8,000 mile Russian Arctic. It was quite an accomplishment. Adolf Nordenskiöld and his crew were safe but De Long had no way of knowing it. A ship commissioned by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey collected data on an expedition to the Bering Strait. They determined that the Kuro Siwo was not nearly as warm as predicted. Cold water currents heading south overwhelmed what warmth it may have held. The data, which was developed after the Jeanette's launch, concluded that there was no "Polar Sea" that was free of ice. The report called into question many of the theories that the Arctic trip had relied upon. The Bering Strait was a "cul-de-sac" and did not lead to open ocean.

The Jeannette dropped anchor after thirty-five days and 3,000 miles in Alaska at a trading post named St. Michael. De Long wanted to give his crew a little free time on land before they encountered icy waters and the end of civilization as they knew it. It wasn't a pleasant place and smelled of decay. De Long wondered if the crew would one day look back at St. Michael as a kind of paradise.

As they pushed north they began to encounter more and more ice in the waters. The weather had turned sharply colder. They encountered a squall that left them coated in icy snow. De Long noted that large floes as thick as seven feet seemed to close in around them. Herald Island – no connection to Bennett or his newspaper – was spotted in the Chukchi Sea. Petermann's mythical Wrangle Land was supposedly near the island. Some of the men swore they saw land but it was a mirage created by the fog, snow, ice and wind. The chunks of ice that they continued to encounter were larger and larger. The ship was sustaining cuts and scratches from the ice. The ship had to carefully navigate through gaps in the floes. There was ice as far as the eye could see. As soon as they pushed through a floe, De Long noticed that the gap they made immediately sealed up behind them. There was no retreating.

The ship was shaking violently with the slabs of ice that were larger and larger. As they pushed on they were encountering ice that was estimated to be 15 feet thick. The hull would sometime lurch on top of the ice and then slide back down into the water. Despite the icy obstacles, the Jeannette remained strong with no serious damage. On September 7th, the Jeannette was shoved on top of a large ice floe; ice tightened up around the ship, imprisoning it.



James Bennett was sailing that fall but it was off the coast of Newport, Rhode Island, as he romped with the elites. He became involved in the founding of the Newport Casino which would be home to competitive tennis tournaments. Tennis was a popular sport in England; he wanted to bring it to America. His focus was on the sport of tennis not the Jeannette that was stuck in ice as hard as concrete.

The Jeannette was trapped in ice for all of September and October. De Long faced reality and took the necessary steps to protect his ship and crew. The Jeannette was on a large slab of ice that drifted in a northwesterly direction. It shifted constantly sending the ship in a circular motion that ultimately returned it to its original position. There were many sightings of Wrangel Land but there was no way to reach it. De Long observed that Wrangel Land was a large island and not a continent as Petermann had theorized. A second important discovery was that there was no warm current flowing into the Arctic waters – no Kuro Siwo. De Long began to recognize that the entire Polar Cap was probably covered in thick, unyielding ice. They may reach the North Pole but they would not be sailing on open waters.

On November 16th, there was 24-hour darkness and would remain so for the next six months. When darkness set in on the Jeanette, the ice began to move. The ice slabs were in combat with one another and with the Jeannette, scraping and gouging at it. The deafening grinding and crushing sounds woke the crew early on a cold day in November. Huge slabs of ice were being pushed about like toys. The sled dogs on board howled at the unnerving screeches and shrieks of the ice. The ice began to squeeze the ship causing tar and pine to ooze from its oaken seams. The decks actually bulged from the force of the crushing ice. De Long prepared to abandon ship because a crisis could occur at any moment. He set aside thirty days of provisions. The ice gouged a hole in the side of the Jeannette. De Long was uncertain how much longer the ship could survive the punishment it was taking.

On Christmas morning, the winds were howling and loosening bolts and metal clasps on the ship. It was the dreariest day that De Long had ever experienced. Unknown to him he had been promoted to Lieutenant Commander but that really was meaningless at this juncture. His spirits were lifted when the men surprised him with a Christmas feast and celebration. The crew put on a musical variety show celebrating the last day of 1880.

## Analysis

This chapter focuses on the great pressure that was on Commander George De Long because of the unexpected terrain that the expedition encountered. Firstly, he was disturbed that his crew had to make stops in search of the Nordenskiöld expedition which was apparently missing. He felt it took precious time that could not be recovered from the small window they had for “good” weather in the Arctic north. But De Long was a Navy lieutenant and the order to look for the lost expedition was issued by the Secretary of the Navy. There was no way that a disciplinarian and loyal officer like De Long would disobey orders from the civilian head of the Navy.





Unfortunately, the timing proved to be very bad for De Long and his crew. The missing expedition was alive and well and on its way back south. They had been the first to traverse the Northeast Passage. They discovered that the Kuro Siwo was not warm as it was touted to be and was no match for the frigid currents moving southward. They had also debunked the myth that there was an open Polar Sea, devoid of ice, that encircled the North Pole. Had De Long had this information before the Jeannette sailed off for the North Pole, perhaps they wouldn't have gone.

On September 1880, the ship was stuck hopelessly in ice. The pressure was on De Long to protect his ship and crew. He developed a crisis plan to abandon ship. He set aside enough food and supplies for the thirty-man crew for thirty days. De Long had to experience a measure of bitterness about the information that he had been given. The difference between what Petermann told him about the Arctic region and the reality that he and his crew were experiencing were worlds apart. There would be no warm waters that encircle the Pole. There was no warm current to combat the ice that was estimated to be fifteen feet thick.

All the preparations in the world didn't prepare De Long for what the ship and crew encountered. The hull had been reinforced to blast through ice – but not the ice that the Jeannette crew had to deal with. Although De Long's log did not reflect anger or even frustration, he and his crew were sent out on a small boat that was ill-equipped to deal with the reality of the Arctic North.

## Vocabulary

harbinger, floes, lexicon, aberration, provocateur, insularity, carapace, vagaries, laconic, leviathan, pernicious



# Part Four: We Are Not Yet Daunted

## Summary

A year later, in December 1881, the same Christmas feast and New Year's minstrel show was repeated with the addition of one of the men putting on a performance as a drag queen. Nothing had changed. The ship was stuck in ice. There had been a small window of opportunity in August when it seemed the ice was giving a bit but it wasn't enough to move the ship.

The ice shifted but it only seemed to move them in a circle which frustrated De Long. He tried to present a positive attitude and on New Year's Eve 1880, he attempted to inspire his crew with hope. The men greeted his short speech with cheers.

Through the Spring of 1881, the Jeannette continued to drift in a northwesterly direction. There were signs of cracks and fissures in the ice. Dunbar on the crow's nest called out that he saw land on the starboard side. It was a volcanic island which was not noted on any of the maps. De Long named it Jeannette Island. A few weeks later, they spotted another island that was larger than Jeannette Island. DeLong named it Henrietta Island.

As the ship drifted closer to the island, they began to capture its unique features in drawings. The men hoped that there would be wildlife in the island's interior. They had missed getting close enough to Jeannette Island to come ashore. De Long hoped that the ship wouldn't drift past Henrietta. Although it was risky with the cracking ice, De Long decided to send a small reconnaissance party ashore to evaluate the possibility of the crew taking up camp there. Melville was selected to lead the group to Henrietta Island that appeared to be about twelve miles away. They headed out with a team of dogs hopeful that the island would save them.

It took the landing party five days to reach the island. It was slow-going for the dogs who fought and constantly snarled up their lines. On the fourth day, Melville decided to take only a day's worth of supplies with them and make a run for it. The men stuck a black flag in the small boat and the supplies they left behind so they could find them on their return. By the next morning they were close to the island. Dunbar had suffered a serious case of snow blindness. Melville ordered him to sit in the sled but he refused. He begged to be left behind but Melville refused.

On June 2nd the six men reached the island. They were exhausted but elated. They walked on land for the first time in 647 days. Melville and his team were apparently the first humans to set foot on Henrietta Island, a volcanic island that was five hundred million years old. Melville was moved by the moment of discovery. He claimed the island a possession of the United States. They pitched a tent and slept on the good earth that night.



The lead poisoning was reaching a crisis status on the Jeannette. Ambler and De Long had to find the source of the poison and quickly. More crew members had become ill. Ambler figured out that canned tomatoes had become contaminated by a reaction between the acid in the tomatoes and the lead solder that sealed the cans. The tomatoes were thrown out and the crew slowly recovered.

On the morning of June 5th, the Melville was finally seen heading toward the ship. De Long and the rest of the crew were thrilled that they were safe and anxious to hear what they had found. Unknown to De Long and the crew there would soon be relief ships – the Corwin, Alliance and Rhodes – searching for them.

The Jeannette drifted and Henrietta Island faded on the horizon. Melville had learned that had been no human habitation of the island and that there were no large animals to hunt and no driftwood to burn. The ice was getting soft from the warming waters. The crew began to see patches of moving water. De Long calculated that the Jeannette was only seven hundred miles south of the North Pole. He still had dreams of making it there.

On June 11th, the big event occurred. The ice cracked and opened up and the Jeannette slipped into moving water. After almost two years, the ship was floating in water. Amazingly, the Jeannette was solid, structurally sound and was not taking on significant water. Melville took an official photo of the USS Jeannette after it was freed from its icy grip. It was the last photo of the ship. But joy was short-lived. The ice floes began to crush in on the Jeannette with more fury and power than ever before. The decks were buckling up and cracking. The ship was being “pinched” from two different sides and two different floes. The ice made a huge hole in the starboard coal bunker. De Long ordered the crew to abandon ship.

De Long took a few moments to be alone with his dying ship. He had been its only commander and his life for the past three years. He braced for criticism he would receive for having a failed expedition and losing his ship. After he leaped off and onto a large floe, he issued orders that no one was to re-board the Jeanette. The ship sank completely at four in the morning. The men were completely isolated and a thousand miles from the nearest landmass – the Arctic coast of Siberia. Siberia was largely uncivilized and presented a rugged terrain even if the men could drag their supplies and gear that far.

Despite the odds they faced, the men were happy to no longer be unconfined. They were anxious to start moving south in an effort to survive.

## Analysis

The lapse of time that the crew is literally stuck is dramatically portrayed when the author writes that the celebrations for Christmas and New Year’s 1881 were the same as those for 1880. Reality came in the form of the ice the Jeannette encountered on their way north. Some of the earlier ice they encountered was believed to be seven feet



thick; later ice packs were estimated to be more than twice that thick. De Long and crew reluctantly came to the only decision they could.

Like the Nordenskiöld Expedition learned, De Long and his crew came to the realization that the North Pole was encompassed in solid ice. This reality was undeniable by even the most optimistic crew members when the Jeannette became stuck in ice. It was hopeless and it was never freed from its icy grip. The ice ultimately destroyed the ship and it sunk as the men watched from the ice pack. How the men kept their sanity while being stuck in ice in the desolate, dangerous Arctic north is a testament to their strength of character.

The author wrote his account based on recovered ship logs meticulously detailed by De Long and by the survivors of the Jeannette. Unless De Long was being less than candid, he wrote that the men were surprisingly positive and optimistic about their chances of survival even though they would henceforth be on foot, small boats when possible and on dog sleds and that the closest land mass – Arctic Siberia – was a thousand miles away.

## Vocabulary

languor, affinities, turbid, maudlin, rhapsodic, idyll, weebegone, herculean, presentiment, stalwart, sojourner, mendacity, vehement, quixotic



# Part Five: The End of Creation, Section 1

## Summary

While the *Corwin* was cruising around the North Atlantic and Arctic regions looking for the *Jeannette* and its crew, De Long and his men were walking across the frozen ocean toward Siberia. De Long and Dunbar, equipped with compasses, led the rest of the crew. It was a long and dangerous undertaking. Collectively the sled dogs were pulling eight tons of provisions and equipment. The crew was towing three rickety boats which they used when cracks in the ice exposed large expanses of water that they could traverse. The men were exhausted and often suffered from hypothermia but, other than six men who were still sick from lead poisoning, they were generally healthy and positive about their chances.

The men saw beautiful and unusual sights along their trek and were comforted by the rhythmic sound of sea water that constantly sloshed underneath the floes. Their first destination was the New Siberian Islands then on to the Siberian coast. They walked at night and slept during the day to avoid the harsh sunlight that could cause snow blindness and overheating. The thirty-three men were divided into three groups of eleven men each. Each party had a boat and a sled. De Long felt that men in small groups would more likely develop close relationships and strong loyalties. He wanted to avoid the tragedy of the *Polaris* when crewmen turned on each other. De Long was most concerned with Collins who still sulked and Danenhower whose physical and mental health was always a worry. His bad eyes caused him to stumble often. The survival of the men was in their own hands. They would be fighting for their lives. Chipp was the sickest and weakest and Dr. Ambler feared that he may not make it.

The time they had to reach their destination was limited. Their supplies would last sixty days after which they could eat their dogs. They would have to reach Siberia before winter. De Long relied on Melville the most – if he stayed strong so would De Long. De Long took readings on his sextant and found that the party was far north of where he expected them to be. He thought they had been traveling south but apparently the ice pack that they were traveling on was out-pacing their walking and had moved them twenty-eight miles to the northwest. He did not share this information with the men so as not to demoralize them. He told only Dr. Ambler and Melville who concluded that their situation was hopeless. De Long concluded that if they continue on in their present direction, they will never get out.

De Long and his crew were a thousand miles northwest of Wrangle Island near the East Siberian Sea. They had been walking for more than two weeks. It was July 4th and the men attempted to celebrate America's birthday but morale was sagging along with their soaking wet clothing. They were spent emotionally, mentally and physically. There were so many complaints of aches and pain that Dr. Ambler was running out of pain medication. Chipp had nearly died of lead poisoning. Some men had convulsions and others seemed to be going mad. They were running out of food and water. Their



equipment was suffering as well; their small boats were scuffed up and damaged and probably wouldn't float. The dogs were starving; some ate their leather harnesses. The dogs were dying of starvation; some had epileptic fits. Some of the men could no longer stand or walk and mutiny was in the air.

One day in mid-July Dunbar spotted something – it looked like a mountainous island. He saw it for a fleeting second and then it disappeared behind the fog and snow. The next day the men clearly saw the island. De Long rerouted the party to arrive at this land mass. As they neared the island, they observed that wildlife was abundant. They were nearing the land mass. One day a butterfly fluttered by which told them they were indeed close to land.

As they staggered toward the island, Danenhower fell ill. His eye was re-infected and could require surgery. He claimed he could see just fine but he was slow and stumbled often. He was encumbering their progress. De Long finally put him on the sick list and would not assign him any tasks and ordered him to ride in the sled. Dr. Ambler was upset with Danenhower for lying about his condition when De Long hired him. De Long looked on his map and determined that they were probably heading for one of the Lyakhovsky Islands. If so, the map was about 100 miles off. If not, perhaps it was a new island.

On July 28th they were within a mile of the island. There were birds by the thousands. A loud buzzing told the men that there were swarms of bees. The island was teeming with life. On the 29th when they actually set foot on the island, they determined it was an undiscovered island and took possession of it in the name of the President of the United States. They made camp and started a fire. American flags were flying.

After an exhaustive search, Hooper gave up his search for the Jeannette and its crew. He headed west for the Bering Strait where he would turn south toward San Francisco. Sadly, had he continued west instead of turning south, he would have encountered the Jeannette crew.

## Analysis

The tragedy of the De Long Expedition is exacerbated by the search that was underway led by the Corwin to find the Jeannette and its crew. While the Corwin was cruising from one village to another, the men of the Jeannette were walking on ice in hopes of winding up on the Siberian mainland some 1,000 miles away. In 1880 when the De Long Expedition was launched there was no way to communicate ship to shore. There were telegrams but in the uninhabited and desolate Arctic region there was no way to send a telegram.

The men who had been given absurd and false information about the region, were stranded in an unkind and unyielding environment that had them icebound. They had to walk, sled and sail their small boats when there was a break in the ice in an effort to survive and save their lives. More frustrating than the thousand mile walk was the reality



that the huge ice packs that they traveled upon were constantly moving and shifting, sometimes in the opposite direction than the one they needed to head for. There were estimates that the men had actually traveled 2,500 miles due to the shifting ice packs.

Not surprisingly, the men were deteriorating physically, mentally and emotionally. There were issues with frostbite, exhaustion, depression, scurvy and lead poisoning contracted earlier but still having a devastating impact on some of the men. They were running out of time – winter was going to hit although a case could be made that the Arctic region is a perpetual winter and that it was difficult to tell the difference between summer and winter there. They were also starving having to consider eating their sled dogs and munching on their leather clothing. They had not bathed in a year and were living like animals but there was a lack of prey in the frozen tundra. They discovered several islands which they claimed in the name of the U.S. but the icy, glacier-filled islands were of no benefit to the men. There was really little hope of survival.

## Vocabulary

plumes, systematic, speculation, laudanum, bewhiskered, jibboom, treachery, gyre, hummock, hypothermia



## Part Five: The End of Creation, Section 2

### Summary

The island displayed a diverse terrain that included volcanic cones and glaciers. There were signs of a robust animal population. De Long named the island Bennett Island. It is known in current times as Ostrov Bennetta and is one of the largest of the De Long Islands. De Long would have liked to stay longer and learn more about the island but they had to move south before winter hit. They spent eight days on Bennett resting up for the next leg of their venture. While there, the crew collected artifacts and gathered geological specimens and repaired their boats. On August 6th, the crew launched their three boats into the frigid waters off Bennett Island. De Long left a note in a cairn on Bennett Island on the status of the Jeannette crew.

The ice was too soft for the men to sled on; the water was filled with too many ice floes to sail. They fought the elements for fifteen days, sometimes having to carry their boats between one water-filled expanse to another. The boats were so laden down with the weight of the men and their supplies that there was danger of tipping over when they encountered rough open waters. They had to reduce their weight and tossed out everything that wasn't absolutely essential. The sleds were the heaviest pieces of gear. Giving up the sleds meant that all progress would have to be made in the water or by foot. They were moving south so the prospect of needing to move across large expanses of ice was reduced. However, it was still a risk to abandon the sleds.

Danenhower's eye continued to worsen. Ambler would only treat it with iodine and quinine. The doctor knew that Danenhower's eye needed to be removed but it couldn't fathom doing that out in the wild. Oddly, Danenhower still lobbied to lead one of the boats and wouldn't admit that his eye was a problem.

On August 20th, they came to open water and the end of having to deal with ice floes and slabs. They spotted land to the southwest. De Long was certain that it was the Island of New Siberia and was about twenty miles away. Petermann had told him that the island was uninhabited but had been visited by Russian fossil hunters looking for mammoth tusks. They camped on an ice pack that night and when they woke were faced with an ice field as far as the eye could see. Their pathway to the island was completely blocked. They had only boats – no sleds and no dog teams. All they could do was hope for a wind shift that would send the ice in another direction.

The crew was stuck in the ice for a week – wasting time and using up their supplies which were quickly being depleted. Although they were stuck on the ice nine days, the ice pack they had camped on was moving in the right direction – south. The island of Faddeyev in the New Siberian archipelago was sighted. They were able to beach on the desolate island. There were deer and hare to hunt and ducks to shoot. They found the fossilized bones of a woolly mammoth. They discovered the old hut where the Russian hunter, Faddeyev – who the island was named after – had stayed.





After camping on Faddeyev for the night, they sailed their boats south hugging the coast of the island for the next three days. The constant bailing of the water was required to keep the boats from flooding. On September 4th they encountered a large block of ice forcing them to haul their heavy boats to the next expanse of seawater. They beached at a neighboring island, Kotelny, for two nights. Driftwood was in abundance which the crew used to make a huge fire that night. De Long was suffering from chilblains, a circulation problem that caused painful sores on the feet. Others were ailing with frostbite.

On September 6th, they shoved off from Kotelny to face strong winds and icy, choppy seas. Navigating through these waters was challenging and the men, for the first time in years, had to prove their mettle as sailors. The boats nearly capsized during the rugged ride that lasted more than a day. On September 8th, the men climbed onto a floe so that they could try to dry out; they'd been in soaking wet clothes for days. They were only a hundred miles northeast of Siberia. They faced a mad dash across dangerous waters to the Siberian mainland. The boat that Chipp commanded was the weakest and the slowest of the three which caused De Long great concern.

It had been ninety-one days since the Jeannette was destroyed. They had traveled on foot, by sled and by boat more than 500 miles. They had not lost one man. They left the next morning to calm seas and a mild 31 degree temperature. They sailed their boats close together and hoped it would take just one night in the sea to make it to Cape Barkin in Siberia. If the boats got separated, the men were to fend for themselves and not back track to find a missing boat. De Long's barometer told him that a storm was coming. They hurried and headed out.

They attempted to stay together but Chipp's boat was predictably the slowest. Melville's boat was the fastest, sometimes passing De Long in the lead boat. By nightfall the sea was swelling, pummeling the boats with wave after wave. Chipp's boat had vanished from view. De Long feared that he and his men wouldn't make it. De Long thought he saw a capsized boat but couldn't be sure. He also lost sight of Melville's boat. De Long and his 13 men knew they were on their own.

## Analysis

After thinking that they had traveled far enough south that they would have open waters again, the unrelenting Arctic north tricked them again. When they went to sleep one night in a camp on an island, the water before them was open and ice free. They looked forward to sailing on the last leg of their trip. However, when they woke the next morning, there was only ice as far as the eye could see. They would be walking again and even though it was "summer" there was no way to estimate how long they'd still be on foot on the ice. Many of the men were suffering from frostbite in their feet making every step they took painful and miserable. Yet the spirit of survival of clinging to life spurred them on.





Amazingly, the men found their way to the coast of an island that was 100 miles across the ocean to the Siberian coast. The men were elated because they were almost on solid land. But they had to cross the dangerous ocean waters on their three rickety whaling boats. The men split up in three groups of eleven each. De Long ordered the men that if the boats were separated, that no one was to turn back to try to find a lost crew. It was a matter of life and death and death was looming dominantly with every passing day.

When they began their jaunt across the one-hundred mile channel to Siberia, the water was calm and the temperature relatively mild. At mid-point a squall blew up which ultimately caused the three boats to be separated. Each of the groups were on their own.

## Vocabulary

juxtaposition, entrepreneurial, vagabond, diurnal, archipelago, impervious, pemmican, shaman, palisade, atmospheric, cairn, promontory, labyrinthine, formidable, sanguinity, incongruous, sojourn



# Part Six: The Whisper of the Stars, Section 1

## Summary

De Long's ship was battered throughout the night. The mainsail was ripped in two. His crew rode it out as best they could. Nindemann crafted a device that served to balance the ship through the punishing gale. They had to constantly bail out the water or they'd sink. De Long and crew came to the conclusion that the other two boats had capsized and that all 19 men had perished. The 14 men on De Long's boat were apparently the only survivors. Sleep was impossible in the tossing and turning boat. By the next morning, the seas and winds had calmed and De Long and crew proceeded to the coast of Siberia.

Nindemann spotted a small gray patch in the distance. It was not an illusion – it was Siberia! They looked for a delta into the Lena River but saw none. As they neared the coast, they began to encounter fresh water ice and had to walk their boats ashore. Ambler inspected their feet after they'd been in frigid water all day. He was alarmed that they may have developed frostbite. They slept in the boat and resumed dragging it to shore the next morning but progress was slow.

De Long made the decision to abandon ship and carry ashore what they could. De Long clung to his daily log and journals as the only proof of their ordeal. An hour later they were on dry land. They hobbled ashore all stricken with various degrees of frostbite. From the spot where the Jeannette had sunk, they had covered 1,000 miles. Counting the miles they'd been backtracked by ice packs, it was more like 2,500 miles. There were no signs of human activity and no signs of the other two boats. The area they reached was a desolate, unpopulated region.

The next morning the men walked south over the delta wastelands. They marched for two days across the soggy terrain not knowing if they were walking in the right direction or following the right river. Ice was building up and would eventually cause great flooding in the delta area. It was the worst season to be tromping through the soggy terrain. They found two abandoned dwellings. The starving men were treated to reindeer steaks that night after a successful hunt. They took a two-day break in hopes that the frostbite victims could recover a bit. De Long left a note behind about the crew's progress and a Winchester rifle as payment for their two-day stay.

They began their walk again and found another abandoned lodge where they stayed several days. They raised a flag made from a blanket and built a large fire in efforts to try to draw someone's attention. Dr. Ambler amputated several of Erichsen's toes and feared that his feet would have to be partially or completely amputated. He was near death.



Unknown to the crew, they were being followed by two Yakut hunters from the village of Zemovialach. They took the rifle that De Long left in the hut. The hunters became fearful that De Long and his men were smugglers and decided not to deal with them. De Long decided they needed to cross the river to find a settlement. With Erichsen on a sled made from driftwood, the entire party made it across the river. They trudged through thick woods over the next several days. They moved in a southward direction in hopes of finding a settlement before they ran out of food. Hunting forays were unsuccessful and their provisions were dwindling. The men were starving. They had no choice but to shoot their last dog for their sustenance. Erichsen began hallucinating from a high fever and a few days later he died. De Long decided to send Nindemann and Noros, who were in good physical condition, ahead to find help.

Nindemann and Noros traveled across rugged terrain and had to withstand below zero temperatures. They went for miles without seeing anyone or any sign of civilization. They ate what they could trap and shoot and slept in crevices in trees and on the ground. After a week, both men had grown too weak to continue and stumbled into an abandoned hut. They had traveled 129 miles. They found and devoured molding dried fish and became violently ill with dysentery.

A man named Ivan came by the hut. The men were in tears when they saw him. He gave Nindemann a new pair of deerskin mukluks after he noticed how worn his boots were. Through pantomime, Nindemann and Noros attempted to tell Ivan their story but he didn't understand. Ivan left but returned that evening with two other men on sleighs pulled by reindeer. They brought fresh fish and gave them deerskin coats and blankets and took them to their camp. They were going to be saved. The men had been rescued by Yakuts who were hunters and fishermen. They could not understand their story or that other crew men needed to be rescued. The men wrote a statement about what happened to them and that De Long and his men needed to be rescued.

Kuzma, a Russian from another village, came to the celebration. He was apparently a thief who'd been sent to Siberia but was savvy and sophisticated. As soon as he saw the men he said, "Jennetta? Amerikanski?" He knew who they were! He didn't speak German or English but seemed to get their story. Inexplicably, Kuzma took the letter that Nindemann had written, refused to give it back and left the settlement.

Nindemann and Noros and the Yakuts arrived in Bulun on October 29th. The people gave them a warm reception and they were given their own hut to stay in. One night someone cracked open their door. They could not see the visitor well in the darkness. But when he boomed, "Noros!" and stepped out of the shadows they could see that it was Melville.

## Analysis

The story of the De Long Expedition is written as a mystery. Who survived and who didn't? How did the men perish? How did others find their way back? Unless a reader is



familiar with the story, it will keep the reader on the edge of his seat until the very end to the conclusion of the story and the book.

In this section, the men are separated. They had all been together so long. They were as one with each other. But there were three small whaling boats that could only hold up to 12 or 13 men. There were 33 men so De Long did the practical thing and split the group up into three teams of eleven. They were finally on open water and just 100 miles away from a land – the Arctic Siberian coast. The thought was that they would find people there who could help them. Have food and dry clothing and a warm place to stay.

The order from De Long was that if the three whaling ships were separated on the 100-mile trek to Siberia, no team was to turn around and try to find a missing boat. The crew was thus fragmented for the first time and the three teams were virtually on their own.

In this section it is only De Long and his men who make it ashore. It is unknown what happened to the other two crews at this point. But reaching the shore was not nirvana by any stretch of the imagination. It was winter and no one was around. They were on foot without a sled or boat. They were at the mercy of the environment and the environment had no mercy. They were sick, in pain and starving.

De Long wisely sent the two most able-bodied men ahead to find help. These men, Nindemann and Noros, were astonished when they met up with Melville who had commanded one of the other whalers in an obscure native settlement.

## Vocabulary

ingeniously, contrivance, wallowing, sediment, odyssey, subsidiary, affable, dilapidated, promontory, sloughed



# Part Six: The Whisper of the Stars, Section 2

## Summary

It had been 51 days since the crews on the three boats were separated during the gale. The men were overjoyed to see Melville – they had already mourned his passing. Melville had his own tale of survival to tell. On September 12th the eleven men in Melville's boat had pulled away from De Long's slower boat. Melville and his crew thought they were the only survivors. They had to fight the punishing sea swells and furious wind, bailing seawater throughout the night. There was no land in sight and they had no compasses. Melville's boat took a different route than De Long had taken. He found an open channel into the river. He and his crew were on the river for days, suffering from ill health, exhaustion and different stages of frostbite. What kept them together was the suffering they shared.

On September 19th, they spotted a settlement of the Evenk tribe. They spent a few days with the Evenk tribe. They needed the rest and the natives treated them with great care and shared their food with them although Melville worried about its freshness. Their lives depended on the kind men and women of the Evenk and Yakut tribes. Melville was worried about one of his men, Cole, whose mental health was slipping dangerously. Another crew member, Leach, was deteriorating physically. His frostbitten feet kept him in excruciating pain; he had a raging fever and was listless.

One day, the entrepreneurial Kuzma happened by the settlement. Melville was able to communicate with Kuzma enough so that the Russian understood about the shipwreck and the other members of the crew that Melville and his team had been separated from. Melville offered to give Kuzma their whaleboat and 500 rubles if he brought them supplies and a reindeer team and spread word to everyone he knew about the USS Jeannette crew. An additional 1,000 rubles would be paid to anyone with news about their other crewmates.

It was two weeks after Kuzma left on his mission that he returned to the village. But his return was without equipment and a reindeer team. But he had amazing news to share. He had found one of Melville's lost mates. He proved it by handing Melville the crumpled up letter that he snatched from Nindemann. Kuzma did not understand that Nindemann and Noros had left 11 crew members behind in search of help. Nindemann and Noros were in Bulun recovering. Melville left immediately to reunite with them.

Nindemann and Noros were overjoyed when they learned from Melville that the other crew members of his team had survived. After hearing their story, Melville made immediate plans to rescue De Long and his surviving crew members. He composed an urgent message to be sent by telegram to the London Offices of the New York Herald, U.S. Minister in St. Petersburg and to the U.S. Secretary of State.



Melville was venturing back to the Lena delta in the midst of the most dangerous of all Siberian seasons. He was in a poor state of health himself, suffering from exhaustion, frostbite and starvation. The distance and terrain he was to travel presented a challenge with odds that were heavily against success. But the hope of finding De Long and his men alive compelled him to do whatever he could to rescue them. It was also important that he find and preserve any documents that De Long had brought with him. Melville found the spot on the beach where De Long had buried some of the ship's papers.

By November 20th, they had found no trace of De Long; Melville was ready to give up. The Siberian winter would take them victims if they stayed much longer. Melville and the others prepared to travel south by reindeer team to Yakutsk to join their crewmates there. They would regroup and make plans to search for De Long and Chipp and their men in the spring.

In response to Melville's telegram, the U.S. government sent orders to find the missing men at all costs. James Bennett immediately sent \$6,000 to the U.S. Minister in St. Petersburg and would send more as needed. Melville met with the highest Russian authority in the Siberian capital of Yakutsk, Governor-General George Tchernieff who assured Melville that he had the entire Russian nation at his back.

Melville received a telegram from the Navy Department with orders to send the survivors south to a warmer climate so they could prepare to go home. They would travel through St. Petersburg to London and then home. Melville, Nindemann and crewman Barlett would stay behind to lead another search of the delta.

Melville, Nindemann and Bartlett left for the Lena delta accompanied by a retinue of soldiers and guides. Russia really did have his back. On March 23rd, Melville spotted a dark object in the snow just ahead. It was one of Alexey's hunting rifles rigged up like a marker. He tripped over a frozen arm protruding from the snow. He found a notebook that was in De Long's handwriting.

The notebook was the final document written by De Long and it told of the suffering, illnesses and starvation of De Long and his men. De Long kept a log of when each man died. His final entry was on October 30th, the day he must have died. There was evidence that Dr. Ambler was the last to die. Melville and his laborers found the body of most of the crew members. They could not locate Alexy's body. Had the others eaten him?

On May 5, 1882, Melville wrote a dispatch from Yakutsk indicating that he had found the De Long party and that all were dead. The men were buried together on Kuyel Khaya a small mountain near the village. Melville called the burial site Monument Point but the Yakuts referred to it as "America Mountain." Melville and his team searched for another month for Chipp and his men but to no avail.



## Analysis

Melville filled Nindemann and Noros in on the struggle that his team had all of who had survived. The link to Nindemann and Noros being found was through a Russian who first met the two De Long crew members and connected them to Melville when he met him. As soon as he realized that De Long and the others were still out in the wild and needed to be rescued, he took actions to prepare for a mission.

Melville sent a telegram to the U.S. Minister in St. Petersburg, the U.S. Secretary of State and the New York Herald. For the first time in two years, there was at last information on the fate of the USS Jeannette and its crew. There weren't any conclusions yet but it came to be known that some of the crew had survived.

Melville set out with two guides up north to the Lena delta to try to find De Long and his crew and Lieutenant Chipp and his crew. Although the search was exhaustive, Melville could not find any trace of the men. The U.S. Government and the Russian Cossacks both provided support in the search. It was a time that America and Russia cooperated on an urgent matter to save the lives of crew members on a ship that was used for an expedition to the North Pole. There was no hesitation and no concern about geopolitical positioning.

The State Department ordered a second search which Melville also led. This time they found the bodies of De Long and his crew members except for one man whose body they could never locate. They searched for the Chipp crew but never found a trace of them.

## Vocabulary

contrivance, impervious, quagmire, vanguard, putrefied, hyperbole, manifested, dysentery, nadir, odiferous, quixotic, odoriferous, implacable, nihilist, privation, incubus



# Important People

## George De Long

Prior to the launching of the trip, George De Long had become a national hero, something he had not contemplated. Newspapers across the nation sang his praises and predicted that his efforts would result in one of the most brilliant adventures in history. He had rescued the men of an expedition who had been stranded on Greenland.

De Long looked at the expedition to the North Pole as a way to stand out and advance in rank, be placed in command of a ship and achieve a measure of fame. George De Long was born in New York City in August 1844. He was bullied by other kids for his aloof demeanor. He became a bookworm and was drawn to history and stories of great leaders. He became interested in the U.S. Navy during these early years. He met his future wife, Emma, during his early years in the Navy.

Even at a young age De Long was fascinated with tales of the North Pole. He remained obsessed with the North Pole the rest of his life. After plans were announced for an expedition led by De Long, the newspapers were lavishing attention on him and his preparations. A voyage to the pole by the *Polaris* had been a tragedy and failure. De Long wanted to claim the North Pole as a prize for the Navy and the U.S.

Wealthy philanthropist Henry Grinnell who had financed the failed *Polaris* exploration summoned scientists and others including De Long to his home to discuss the next expedition. Grinnell treated De Long as the leader of the next attempt to reach the Pole. De Long had done research and determined that reaching the North Pole through Greenland was not the optimum route. Passage through the Bering Strait would be much less challenging although it was a route that had never been attempted before.

George De Long needed funding and knowing that New York Herald editor-in-chief was interested in the North Pole and in a good story, he visited Bennett in early 1874. Bennett became engaged with De Long's pitch. An expedition to the North Pole needed private financing. Bennett saw the opportunity as a way to engage more readers with a series of reports from the exploration. Bennett agreed to finance the entire expedition and embed a Herald reporter who could file reports. De Long's job was to find a ship that could withstand the brutal northern seas. Bennett would gather information from experts about solving the Arctic problem. The two men would never let go of their dream of reaching the North Pole.

De Long's expedition to the North Pole was launched from San Francisco in 1879. The ill-fated expedition got stuck in the ice as it pushed northward from the Bering Strait. The men abandoned ship eighteen months later when the ship began to sink. De Long and the crew of the *USS Jeannette* began traveling on foot, by dog sled and by small





whaling boats to the Siberian coast which was one thousand miles away. There were some survivors. De Long and two-thirds of the crew perished.

## James Gordon Bennett

James Gordon Bennett, Jr., was the owner and editor-in-chief of the New York Herald, the world's most influential newspaper in the late nineteenth century. Bennett was always interested in a scoop for his paper to grow readership. He had orchestrated the famous Stanley-Livingstone incident and chronicled it in his paper. He had an avid interest in the North Pole on an intellectual level and also as an opportunity for his newspaper to run frequent articles about the progress and success for such an expedition. For these reasons, he financed the entire De Long Expedition to the North Pole that was launched in 1880.

James Bennett's father, James Gordon Bennett, Sr., was an immigrant from Scotland who founded the Herald 16 years after arriving. His paper attacked politicians and businessmen and exposed Wall Street fraud. He named names often incurring death threats and beatings. His reporters went after the scandalous and salacious. His paper became the largest in the nation and made him a multimillionaire. His money didn't buy him into the high society that shunned him. He fell in love with a woman half his age. Henrietta was a beautiful Irish girl who completely captivated the eccentric loner. They married and had James Gordon Bennett, Jr., and a daughter named Jeannette. One evening when Bennett the elder was nearly beaten to death, Henrietta was through with New York. She took her children and moved to Paris and the couple rarely saw the other. James, Jr., grew up as an expatriate in Paris.

As James, Jr., matured, he began to visit his father on a frequent basis. His father wanted him to take over the operation of the Herald and wanted him to learn the business. But James, Jr., was a playboy and wasn't interested in any kind of work. When the Civil War broke out, James, Jr., bought himself a commission in the Navy as a second lieutenant and donated the family yacht, the Henrietta, for service. His service wasn't lengthy but it forged a relationship between him and the Navy that lasted decades. He began to have an interest in the newspaper business.

After his father died, in 1872, James took over the operation of the paper and increased its distribution. He had great instincts for a good story and spent huge amounts of money to get the story. He was unique among his peers.

## Emma De Long

Emma De Long was George's loving and dedicated wife. He had courted her for years before her father would accept him. The couple married, had a daughter, Sylvie, and settled into a happy relationship. Emma and Sylvie accompanied George on the long trip from France where the USS Jeannette had been moored to San Francisco where the North Pole expedition would be launched.



After having been on the Jeannette for such a lengthy trip, Emma knew every inch of the ship and was a good partner for De Long in discussing preparations for the trip. She understood her husband and his obsession about reaching the North Pole. Emma was startled by George's comment that she would make a pretty widow. She was afraid that he might have a breakdown on the trip.

After the launching of the expedition, there was no way real way to communicate with George. Emma wrote scores of letters to George during the expedition most of which he never saw. Emma found it difficult to concentrate on anything but the fate of her husband. A few letters from De Long were received. He told her how much he missed her and wrote about the progress of the expedition. A letter dated August 27th was the last letter she would receive from him.

## August Petermann

August Petermann was a celebrated German professor and geographer. He was also the top cartographer in the world. Petermann was obsessed with the Arctic and had controversial beliefs about the region. He believed that a warm current that originated in Japan called the Kuro Siwo created warm open waters beyond a circle of ice that surrounded the North Pole. He believed that after pushing through this ice barrier, that the warm waters of the Open Polar Ocean would greet explorers seeking to reach the North Pole. Petermann was a vocal advocate for an expedition to the North Pole and believed that a successful one had to be led by an American.

Petermann also toyed with the idea that there was a lost civilization that lived in the North Pole or even underneath it. He also believed that there was another continent in the Arctic Region called Wrangel Land. However, years later many of his theories and recommendations about the North Pole were found to be absurd and were debunked. As evidence mounted that some of the beliefs he held about the North Pole were groundless, he defended them more stubbornly. Unfortunately, his resolution about the accuracy of his maps led several expeditions to disaster.

Considered an expert on the Arctic North, Petermann was contacted by James Bennett who was financing the De Long Expedition to the North Pole. He recommended that De Long travel through the Bering Strait and crush through the ring of ice to the open waters which would enable him to sail freely to the North Pole. Petermann provided numerous charts and graphs for the expedition, some of which were misleading and inaccurate.

Petermann was suffering from depression, health and personal problems. He was found hanging from a rope in his villa on September 25, 1878. He would never see the expedition that he had so longed for completed.



## **Sir Clements R. Markham**

While August Petermann had a strong following relative to his Open Polar Ocean theory, there were skeptics. Sir. Clements Markham was the secretary of the Royal Geographical Society. In his book, *The Threshold of the Unknown Region*, he called the Open Polar Sea theory a “mischievous” idea and believed it could damage to the advancement of exploration and discovery. He was astounded that anyone ascribed to the theory.

## **George Melville**

George Melville was hired by George De Long to be the chief engineer on the USS *Jeannette* for the expedition to the North Pole. Melville was a descendent of Herman Melville the famous author. Melville was a sturdy man who seemed oblivious to the frostbite and other ails that plagued most of the *Jeannette* crew. De Long stated that he relied on Melville to keep his own spirits up. It was Melville who led two searches in the dangerous and frigid Lena River Delta region of Siberia in search of missing crew members of the *Jeannette*.

## **Dr. James Ambler**

Dr. James Ambler joined the crew of the USS *Jeannette* on its expedition to the North Pole. He became a friend and confidante of Commander De Long who relied on Ambler to keep the crew healthy and happy. After the ship sank and the men traveled on foot, in small boats and by dog sled Ambler was greatly concerned about the signs of frostbite and other conditions that the men developed during their long trek to save their lives. Ambler treated John Danenhower’s infected eye that he eventually lost and cut dead skin and toes off of Hans Erichsen whose frostbite turned into gangrene.

## **William Nindemann and Louis Noros**

After the De Long crew reached the Siberian beach, most of the men were suffering from exhaustion, frostbite and other ails. Seamen Nindemann and Noros were largely unscathed by the ordeal they’d been through and were in good condition. De Long sent them ahead to try to find help for the rest of the crew that was starving and dying. Nindemann and Noros were suffering from exposure after being in the mean Siberian terrain for a month. They were discovered by a native named Ivan who arranged to take them to their settlement and feed and care for them. Although they tried, the men could not convey to the natives that they had left behind other men who needed help. Eventually, Nindemann and Noros met up with Melville and his crew and were among the survivors of the USS *Jeannette* disaster.



## Jerome Collins

Jerome Collins was hired by De Long to be one of the ship's scientists. He was a meteorologist and correspondent at the New York Herald. As time went by, De Long began to question Collins' qualifications to be one of the ship's science officers. He was a better jokester and storyteller than he was a scientist. Collins began to rebel against De Long's orders and ship rules. Collins's frustration could have stemmed from his ambiguous status. He ate with the officers but was not commissioned. He felt he should have been excused from Navy discipline because he was the most highly educated man on board.

De Long hoped for the best when he asked Collins to string Edison's arc lights up because of the total darkness setting in. Although the lights worked in San Francisco they didn't work on the ship. Ship engineer Melville who was unable to fix them concluded that they got wet during one of the squalls. But De Long blamed Collins who became despondent over the failure. He remained sullen and isolated himself during the rest of their time on the Jeannette.

## Master John Danenhower

John Danenhower accompanied De Long and his family on the trek from France to San Francisco. He asked to be considered for the North Pole expedition. He was honest about his history with depression but claimed he was fully recovered and as mentally rugged as anyone. De Long admired his honesty and hired him for the expedition as the ship's navigator.

What he wasn't honest about was that he had contracted a venereal disease which later showed up in a severe eye infection. Danenhower told Dr. Ambler the truth but kept it from De Long for a while. His eye continued to be a problem and eventually Ambler knew that the eye had to be removed. After having his eye patched and forced to wear goggles, Danenhower still claimed he could see well enough to fulfill his responsibilities. But De Long ordered him to remain in his cabin. He was isolated from the rest of the men for most of a year.

Danenhower's disease spread causing lesions on his legs and mouth. He was going blind in his left eye. Dr. Ambler probed his eye to try to remove some of the fluid. He had to operate several more times to drain the eye. Ambler told De Long about the syphilis. De Long was angry that Danenhower had kept it from him. It explained his physical problems and bouts with depression. But Danenhower hung in there and was surprisingly one of those who survived the expedition.

## Charles Chipp

Charles Chipp was the second in command of the USS Jeannette. He was the ship's Executive Officer and a graduate of the Naval Academy. De Long came to admire Chipp



for his calm manner and his ability to make fair judgments. Chipp led one of the three small whaling ships across the 100-mile channel to the Siberian mainland. De Long and Melville lost track of Chipp's boat as they approached land. Chipp and his crew were never found.

## William Parry and Charles Hall

William Parry led a successful expedition to the Arctic but did not reach the North Pole. He did advance to 82°45' North latitude which was a record achievement that held for decades. Charles Hall was the commander of the *Polaris* which got stuck in the ice on its expedition to the North Pole. The *Polaris* crew blamed Hall for their dilemma and poisoned him with arsenic. The crew was later rescued. Hall was the *Polaris* Expedition's only casualty.

## John Whipple

A friendly competition between James Bennett, the New York Herald editor-in-chief, and another member of New York's elite society illustrates Bennett's erratic and unpredictable behavior. Bennett who was in average physical condition made a bet with professional speed walker, John Whipple, that he could outpace him in a walking race. Whipple, a short, sturdy man who loved sports, took him on. The purse that Bennett put up was \$6,000.

On May 5, 1874, some of the city's elite met on Fifth Avenue. John Whipple awaited the arrival of Bennett who was his competition in the walking race. A ten-mile walking course had been plotted out. At the end of the first mile, Bennett had edged ahead. At one point Whipple became so winded that he had to take a break. Bennett beat Whipple across the finish line by seven minutes. Beating a professional racer was another feather in Bennett's hat.

## Kuzma

After Nindemann and Noros were rescued by natives, they became acquainted with a Russian named Kuzma. He was not a native and thought to be a convicted thief who had been banished to Siberia. It was obvious that he was more savvy and sophisticated than the natives. He grabbed a statement that Nindemann had written about the missing crew members of the *Jeannette* and refused to give it back. As it turned out, he shared this with Melville who he had encountered earlier in another village. Melville was convinced that Kuzma had found Nindemann and Noros because he recognized Nindemann's handwriting. Melville immediately traveled to the village where his two colleagues were and joyfully reunited with them.

## Calvin Hooper

Calvin Hooper was the captain of the Corwin. He was a commissioned officer of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service which later was renamed the U.S. Coast Guard. Hooper's responsibilities included delivery and pickup of Arctic mail, safety checks on U.S. whalers and monitoring marine traffic for illicit trade of firearms and alcohol. But in 1881, his most important responsibility was to search for the USS Jeannette and its crew. After a thorough and exhaustive search of the Arctic region, he turned back toward San Francisco. Experts believe that had he continued his search a few more weeks, he probably would have found the crew.



## Objects/Places

### The Wild Animal Hoax

One night in November, the Herald was poised to publish an incredible and tragic story with a headline that would draw attention: “A shocking Sabbath Carnival of Death.” A rhinoceros at the Central Park zoo had escaped and gored one of its keepers to death. Other animal keepers were naturally distracted by the event and in the chaos, other animals escaped including a polar bear, panther, lion, hyena, and tiger. The animals attacked each other and then turned on pedestrians who they mauled and dismembered. In an effort to save some of the victims, a number of amputations were performed in nearby hospitals. At press time, some of the animals were still on the rampage. The mayor issued a curfew. For once Bennett made no changes to the lead story.

The story was a fraud which was pronounced at the end of the article. Bennett had ordered that the story be created to demonstrate that the city had no real evacuation plan and to underscore that the cages in the zoo were in need of repair. The Central Park Zoo should be made into a world class exhibit.

Most people did not read the article through to the end and a state of panic set in. Some people fled the city; others remained indoors. Some were awaiting a confrontation with a wild beast with loaded rifles. Later editions provided more details about the animals that were still at large. Competing news organizations like the New York Times were angry that they were caught flat-footed and missed the remarkable event. Later, they excoriated the Herald for their irresponsible actions but the Herald’s readership increased. The public seemed to enjoy the joke and the cages in the zoo were repaired.

### The Polar Problem

The phrase the “Polar Problem” referred to the obsession that people – scientist and the public alike – had for the North Pole. People just had to know what was up there. It was the “unattainable object” of dreams. A German geographer compared the strange curiosity that people had for the pole to a home owner who doesn’t know what’s in his attic. This pressure undoubtedly led to James Bennett’s interest in financing the De Long Expedition so that his newspaper could run exclusive accounts of the expedition.

### Manifest Destiny

The obsession that many Americans had for a successful sojourn to the North Pole was attributed at least in part to Manifest Destiny. The phrase refers to the early pioneering days of America during which there was a drive to conquer the west. The pressure to explore the North Pole was considered an extension of that early pioneering spirit, or





Manifest Destiny. The North Pole was one of the last regions on Earth yet to be discovered. Americans wanted it claimed as a U.S. possession.

## **The New York Herald**

In the late nineteenth century the New York Herald was the most important and influential newspaper in the world. It was run by owner and editor-in-chief James Bennett, Jr. His father had emigrated from Ireland and had established the newspaper but his son took it to new heights. The Herald was known for its exciting stories that were entertaining as well as informative. Bennett was always looking for a scoop and an exclusive for his newspaper to increase the already robust readership. Bennett financed the De Long exhibition at least in part so he could run exclusive reports in his newspaper.

## **Stanley and Livingstone**

When Dr. David Livingstone was lost in deep Africa, James Bennett, owner and editor-in-chief of the New York Herald decided that finding Livingstone would make great press for his newspaper. He hired British reporter Sir Henry Stanley to push deep into the African jungle to find him. Stanley was of course successful and it made a great series of articles for the Herald and greatly increased its readership and stature. The New York Times called the rescue a stunt.

## **The Polaris**

The Polaris, lead by Captain Charles Hall, was a failed expedition to the North Pole. The Polaris ran aground and got stuck in the ice. The men placed the blame on Hall and it was mutiny on the Polaris. The men, who were later rescued, poisoned Hall with arsenic. Hall was the only casualty on the Polaris expedition.

## **Nordenskiold Expedition**

While in St. Michael, De Long made inquiries about Adolf Nordenskiold's ship but no one had any information about it. Hanging heavy on De Long was his responsibility to try to locate the missing Scandinavian crew. The order to look for the men and ship was issued by the Secretary of the Navy so De Long wouldn't think about ignoring it.

De Long would have liked nothing better than to find these men but it would take days, perhaps week and would delay their narrow window into the waters of the Arctic summer. De Long was furious; the success of the expedition was being put at risk. De Long planned to make only cursory stops at a few coastal villages in his "search" for the missing crew.





On August 21st, the Jeannette sailed west toward the Siberian coast in search of the missing ship. The Jeannette hit powerful gale when crossing the Bering Strait causing flooding in De Long's room. De Long sent a party ashore at St. Lawrence Bay to inquire about the missing ship and crew. No one knew anything about them.

De Long headed for East Cape which was the easternmost point on the Eurasian continent. After crossing the Arctic Circle, the ship stopped at Cape Serdtse-Kamen where they found remnants of a camp where the Swedish crew had stayed. He concluded that the Nordenskiold party was safe and felt he had fulfilled his duties.

## **Kuro Siwo**

George De Long took great interest in the theories of Captain Silas Bent who believed that the Kuro Siwo, a black current that originated in Formosa northward to the Bering Strait created warm open waters that surrounded the North Pole. His theory held that when the Kuro Siwo merged with the Gulf Stream their collective warm temperatures created an Arctic Sea that was warm beyond an ice barrier that encircled the region. Bent believed that once a vessel broke through the ice it would have access to the warm open waters of the Arctic Ocean and have clear sailing to the North Pole.

Bent based his belief on the work of American oceanographer and meteorologist Matthew Fontaine Maury of the Naval Observatory who was near obsessed with the Open Polar Sea theory based on his study of the Gulf Stream. Bent believed that the Kuro Siwo was as powerful as the Gulf Stream. There were numerous theories and beliefs about the nature of the North Pole and the Arctic Ocean that surrounded it.

## **The World's Fair**

The 1876 World's Fair was held in Philadelphia. There were 30,000 exhibitions and by the end of the fair, ten million people visited the Centennial Exhibition. The most popular display was the Machinery Hall where New inventions including the typewriter, calculator and telephone were previewed. Of all the invention displayed, the Centennial Steam Engine was the most popular. President Ulysses S. Grant who was dwarfed by the five story-high machine started it in motion on opening day. Scores of articles and stories were written about the amazing machine which astonished foreign visitors. The machine marked the emergence in American of automated manufacturing. The British largely ceded their position as the world's leader to America. August Petermann, a world-class cartographer and geographer, was at the Fair and viewed the Centennial Steam Engine as the perfect machine to drive a vessel to the North Pole. And he believed that such an expedition would only be successful if an American commanded the expedition.



## The Bennett-May Affair

James Bennett was a multimillionaire playboy. After many dalliances with show girls, the New York Herald owner and editor-in-chief became engaged to a proper debutante named Caroline May. For a while, Bennett abandoned his drinking and carousing. He burst into a gathering at the May residence and inexplicably relieved himself in full view of the guests into the workings of the family's grand piano. The family notified him that the engagement was off. The incident haunted him; his friends and colleagues as well as the general public distanced themselves from him. Caroline's older brother beat him with a horsewhip because he had dishonored the family. He sustained serious injuries and a few days later challenged the May brother to a duel.

In 1877, dueling was illegal but a location was secretly arranged for the duel. May took the first shot but his revolver misfired. Bennett took his time and aimed and nicked May in the shoulder of his pistol arm. The duel ended. Bennett claimed he purposely winged May. The Herald didn't report this story but the Times did noting that it ended amicably. The duel resolved nothing. The May family did not forgive him for his odd behavior. Invitations from other elite families dropped off. If New York society was going to shun him, he would move to Paris and run his empire from there. He remained a bachelor most of his life and never lived in New York again.

## Wrangel Land and Jeannette and Henrietta Islands

During the USS Jeanette crew's trek to save themselves after the ship sank, they discovered what August Peterman had referred to as Wrangel Land. Petermann claimed it was an unknown continent in the Arctic Region. However, the land mass was actually a large uninhabited island and not a continent. The men also discovered additional islands that were also uninhabited. They were unknown and not shown on Petermann's map. The men of the Jeannette named them Jeannette Island and Henrietta Island and claimed them for the U.S.

# Themes

## The Man and Money Behind the Expedition

Early on November 8, 1874, the New York Herald was abuzz with a story they knew would be a sensation. It was a story that was the brainchild of owner, publisher and editor-in-chief James Gordon Bennett, Jr. At the time the Herald was the most influential newspaper in the world and was known for being entertaining and informative. The paper had spent more than its competitors on its telegraph and transatlantic cable system to ensure that the Herald got the scoop. Bennett hired the best writers in the country including Mark Twain and Walt Whitman.

Bennett's contribution to modern media was his contention that news organizations should not only report the news they should create drama about it to engage the reader from day to day. In 1870, Bennett had dispatched Henry Stanley to Africa to find David Livingstone which caused an international sensation. Critics called such events as stunts; however, Bennett believed that his reporters, if given the freedom to investigate an event, would turn in interesting stories.

That night in November, Bennett had orchestrated what became known as the Wild Animal Hoax. The Herald reported that a rhino from the Central Park Zoo had escaped and gored its keeper to death. In the chaos that followed, other dangerous animals escaped and mauled, dismembered and killed pedestrians. The Mayor issued a curfew and the public panicked. Once the truth came out, the people seemed to enjoy the joke, the zoo cages that were in need of repair were fixed and the Herald's readership increased.

Bennett had an avid interest in the Arctic and particularly in the North Pole. There had been failed expeditions to the Pole in the past. Bennett believed that a successful expedition that he funded would be a remarkable feat for science and mankind and a great opportunity to have exclusive rights to the story which would increase his readership. Bennett funded the entire De Long Expedition in hopes that it would result in the first exploration of the Pole and that exclusive updates in his paper would increase circulation. The De Long Expedition would have never taken place without the financial backing of Bennett.

## North Pole Myths and Expeditions

There were a number of failed expeditions to the North Pole over the years prior to the De Long exploration mission. They were ambitious plans with eager commanders who had little knowledge about what to expect or about the dangers that lurked. In 1819, William Parry discovered a channel to the Northwest Passage. In 1827 he led one of the first expeditions to the North Pole but made it only to 82°45' North latitude which was



considered a huge achievement. He lost no men on his journey. It was a record that stood for decades.

The Franklin expedition headed for the North Pole in 1845. The two vessels of that expedition and the 129 man crew were never seen again. The daring Elisha Kent Kane an American Explorer launched a rescue mission in 1853 to find the Franklin expedition. In his travels he found what he termed “open ocean” where seals and water fowl frolicked. He thought he had made an amazing discovery which served to support the theory of the Open Polar Ocean. But Kane had just come across a small expanse of water and misunderstood or exaggerated its actual size.

Dr. Isaac Israel Hayes, another American, led an expedition in 1860 to rescue Franklin and to find the Open Polar Ocean. The Polaris expedition in 1873 was a total disaster. The ship slid up on a huge ice pack and was frozen in the snow. The crew was bitter and blamed their commander, Captain Charles Hall for their fate. He was poisoned with arsenic and died. The Polaris was rescued with only one dead crew member – Captain Hall.

Most of the speculation about the North Pole, which was all explorers had to go on, was based on lore and myth. The Vikings referred to a place in the northern rim as Ultima Thule which according to lore was where the oceans all emptied into a huge hole at the top of the earth which replenished the streams and rivers of the earth. The Greeks believed in Hyperborea which was due north and a place where the sun never set and where griffins ruled the land. There is also Old Saint Nick who lives in the North Pole and presents no danger or fear to anyone who may finally discover him.

More than a few early scientists believed that the two poles had giant vortices that were the sources of thermal or electromagnetic energy which escaped from them. Even Newton had a theory of “flattened poles” which cause the North and South pole to be closer to the equator and thus the warmest spots on the planet. Famed British astronomer Edmond Halley believed the earth was hollow and emitted gases which explained the aurora borealis.

There were theories about the Open Polar Sea that dated by to the Vikings and were found in the work of lawyer and naturalist Daines Barrington who apparently relied on a tall tale from the 1600s about a Dutch whaler who supposedly sailed to the North Pole and back. John Cleves Symmes toured the U.S. in the 1820s espousing the theory that there was a subterranean civilization that joined the North and South Poles. Jules Verne – Journey to the Center of the Earth – published in 1864 renewed some of the speculation about the North Pole that had died down.

When De Long left on his expedition, one of the most popular theories among Arctic experts was the Open Polar Ocean. The theory held that water warmed by the Kuro Siwo, a black current from Japan, joined the Gulf Stream which traveled under a ringed barrier of ice into the Arctic region making the waters surrounding the North Pole warm and without ice floes or packs to traverse.



## Icebound

On September 7, 1880, the USS Jeannette slid atop a large ice pack. In Arctic whaler parlance, the ship was “nipped.” The ship was stuck in a slant; the crew was unable to stand erectly. De Long wondered where the Kuro Siwo with its warm streams was. The Open Polar Sea was nowhere in sight. They were icebound. He was angry that they had wasted time looking for the missing Nordenskiöld Expedition ship and crew. He hoped that a blast of warm temperature from an Indian Summer would free them. He accepted that the ship was locked in place for the coming winter. Two whaling ships ten miles to the south saw the struggling steamer. They reported their observations when they returned to San Francisco. It was the last sighting of the USS Jeannette.

While their ship was frozen in ice some of which was 15 feet thick, De Long brought as much normalcy to the crew’s daily routine as possible to keep them distracted from the peril they were in. The crew was up by seven and on board and doing chores after breakfast. They took excursions on foot in snowshoes for exercise and exploration purposes. Dinner and supper were at regular times. The nights were filled with entertainment; navigation classes were conducted by Danenhower .

Certain crew members were given specific tasks over and above regular chores. De Long kept a watchful eye on the physical, mental and emotional health of his crew. Some of the men fished and hunted for birds and seals. The crew seemed surprisingly content; however, a measure of boredom set in which was natural under the circumstances. The ship’s executive officer, Lieutenant Charles Chipp, helped make the daily routine run smoothly. De Long relied on George Melville to fix things that went wrong. He was amazing at repairing or rebuilding machinery that malfunctioned.

Amazingly, De Long and his trusted second officers were able to keep the crew relatively happy and healthy in the year and a half that the ship was stuck in the ice. De Long and his team did so by keeping the crew busy and feeling they had purpose and goals. He kept their morale up by hiding his bitterness and fear and inspiring them that there was hope and that they’d one day return to their loved ones.

## The Relief Ships

Rescue was one of the main themes of this story. De Long had rescued a stranded exhibition on Greenland. When De Long was leading the USS Jeannette to the North Pole, he was ordered to stop and search for the missing Nordenskiöld party. The entire world was watching when De Long and his crew left for the North Pole. When no word was forthcoming, the world demanded to know what happened to the ship and crew.

When De Long and his men were facing their impossible walk to Siberia, another American vessel, the Corwin, was heading up the eastern coast of Siberia across the Bering Strait. The commander was Captain Calvin Hooper who was a commissioned officer of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service – a predecessor of the U.S. Coast Guard. They were tasked with among other duties the delivery Arctic mail, checking on the



welfare of whalers and intervene in the smuggling of alcohol and firearms. The Chukchi natives told Hooper that an American vessel was stuck in the ice hundreds of miles up the coast. He was told that the ship had been crushed and that there were corpses strewn about the wreckage.

Hooper took the story about the corpses lying around the wreckage of an American ship with a grain of salt but did wonder if it could be the Jeannette they were talking about. He headed north to try to see if there was any veracity to this story. Newspapers had been calling for a rescue mission to learn the fate of De Long and his crew. The public was demanding to know what happened to them. Many experts assumed that they had rammed their way through the ice and were on their way to the North Pole in the warm waters of the Open Polar Ocean. But the U.S. Congress was deluged with demands to learn the fate of the Jeannette. Congress appropriated \$200,000 to equip relief vessels in an attempt to rescue them. Bennett would provide more funds as necessary. Relief vessels started their journey in the Spring of 1881. The Corwin was one of relief ships along with the Alliance and the Rodgers.

The ships would search for De Long and his men and would put out the word to all whalers, sealers and traders to be on the lookout for them. Corwin's mission was to reach the Bering Strait and head for Wrangle Land. On board the Corwin was botanist John Muir who was an expert on glaciers. The Corwin was given an enthusiastic send-off in San Francisco similar to that for the Jeannette. Part of their mission was to first make several stops in the Aleutian Islands. They also made stops in the Pribilof Islands and visited several Chukchi settlements on the coast of Siberia.

Hooper had been the leader of the rescue mission but after searching for many weeks, he finally gave up believing that De Long and his men were stranded on Wrangle Land. The weather and choppy, icy seas precluded the Corwin from trying to reach Wrangle Island. Cooper turned the Corwin west toward the Bering Strait where turned south for San Francisco. It was later estimated that had he continued traveling west for a short period of time, he would probably have discovered the Jeanette crew.

## **The USS Jeannette (née The Pandora)**

After his North Pole expedition was funded by newspaperman James Bennett, George De Long's main focus was to find the right ship for the journey. He narrowed his search to the yachts and schooners in the British Islands. It was in the ports of Scotland that he found the best choices. But the whalers who owned these ships were reluctant to sell them. He was finally able to locate the perfect vessel in Cowes, a yachting capital on the Isle of Wight in the English Channel. He loved the sturdy little ship named Pandora that was a former Royal Navy ship. But its owner Allen Young didn't want to sell. He was an eccentric man who had many memorable experiences with the ship including towing a polar bear that he captured and plied with alcohol and opium in an effort to make it the ship's mascot. Young had bonded with the ship. A year later, Young had a change of heart, contacted Bennett and sold it for \$6,000.



The Pandora was renamed the Jeannette, after Bennett's sister. There was a claim among some sailors that a ship should never be renamed. Jeannette was not a commanding choice for a ship that was to break through the Arctic circle and sail to the North Pole. But the trend was to name ships after the female relatives of ship owners. Bennett's sister, Jeanette, attended the christening smashed the champagne bottle across the ship's hull. She was registered as an American ship and flew the American flag.

De Long was scrupulous about preparing the ship for the expedition. He thought of everything his crew would need for the long journey from a essentials like food and safety equipment to items with entertainment value like a well-stocked library and a small organ for musical concerts. He procured two of Alexander Graham Bell's experimental telephones in hopes of having long-distance communication capabilities. He contacted Thomas Edison who provided the ship with some arc lighting which would give the crew some light during the long days of night that they would encounter in the Arctic.

The hold had been shored up with double trusses and iron box beams to withstand the crush of ice in the Arctic waters. Everything on the ship had been repaired, enhanced or replaced. The living quarters had been retooled for the comfort of the crew. In the end, the Jeannette was the strongest ship that had ever adventured to the Arctic. De Long and a group of board members took the Jeannette out in San Francisco Bay to test her new engines and power. She passed with flying colors.

The ship, while the sturdiest to ever travel in the Arctic, was not prepared for the reality of what the expedition would be faced with. This miscalculation was not due to a lack of preparation on De Long's part. The misinformation that was provided to De Long about the Arctic region and the ice packs and floes that it would encounter was to blame.





# Styles

## Structure

The Kingdom of Ice is separated into six major parts. Part One: The Great Blank Space describes the environment leading up to the De Long expedition. Part Two: The National Genius tells of the planning and preparation for the expedition. Part Three: A Glorious Country to Learn Patience In describes the life of the crew after it was literally stuck in ice for almost two years.

Part Four: We Are Not Yet Daunted tells of the last days and sinking of the USS Jeannette. Part Five: The End of Creation describes the crew's one-thousand mile trek toward the Siberian mainland in an effort to survive. Part Six: The Whisper of the Stars tells of the challenges that the harsh Arctic Siberia posed to the men. This last chapter reveals which of the crew members survived and which ones perished.

Unless the reader knows the story of the De Long Expedition, the Kingdom of Ice tells the tale like a mystery. It does not reveal what happened to the men until the very end. De Long's captain's log is quoted throughout the story which tells the reader that these logs did survive the disaster but the question lingers: did the captain himself survive? There are maps throughout the book to illustrate the land and seas that the men were traversing as well as photos and paintings of some of the principals and events described in the book to help in understanding the complex story. There are also a number of letters mainly those exchanged between George and Emma most of which were never received and read by the addressee.

## Perspective

The Kingdom of Ice by Hampton Sides is a factual account of the De Long Expedition, an exploratory trek to the North Pole that was launched from San Francisco in 1880. There was very little known about the Arctic region at the time and virtually nothing known about the North Pole. The story is told in the third person narrative and from an historic perspective based on the ship's records and accounts ran in the New York Herald newspaper which was the most influential newspaper of its time. It was owned by editor-in-chief James Bennett who was an eccentric and flamboyant multimillionaire who was always looking for the next story. He had orchestrated reporter Henry Stanley's discovery of the missing Dr. David Livingstone in Africa. It made great copy for Bennett's newspaper.

Bennett was very interested in the exploration of the Arctic region and in particular the North Pole. His interest was two-pronged: it intrigued him on both an intellectual level and professional level – a scoop by his newspaper on such a story would grow his paper's influence and readership. Bennett fully funded the De Long Expedition with





hopes that it would reach the Pole and that his paper would run frequent updates about its progress and success.

The story is also based on the accounts of the survivors of the USS Jeannette, the vessel that was selected for the expedition. Additionally, Captain George De Long kept meticulous daily logs about the events and progress of the mission most of which survived. When the ship sank and the men had to walk or travel by small boat and dog sled, De Long left updates about the fate of the crew in cairns on the various islands that they encountered on their trek to survive.

## Tone

The saga of the USS Jeannette and its Commander, Navy Lieutenant George De Long, and crew is told in an even-toned factual manner. It is a tale of the harshness of nature and the challenges and impossible odds that it presents to mankind. It is a battle that is lopsided at best and provides little chance for man to be victorious.

There is no demagoguery in tone in the writing of this long and heart-rending tale. Demagoguery was not necessary; the true story stands on its own and could not be more compelling. The story does not require a writer's enhancement or dramatization.

This non-fiction story was based on the actual captain's logs that George De Long kept during the three years of the Jeannette's expedition which turned into an ordeal rife with suffering and disappointment and disillusion that ultimately led to tragedy. After the sinking of the Jeannette and the men were basically on foot, De Long left messages about their progress and status in cairns on the various islands they encountered. He was ever mindful of the historic nature of their ordeal and whether they survived or not, he wanted their story to be told.

Hampton Sides has had success at penning other factual accounts of real events and people. He is the author of the best-selling, non-fiction works *Hellhound on his Trail* and *Blood and Thunder*.



## Quotes

Man will not be content with a mystery unexplored, will not rest with a perpetual interrogation point at the end of the earth's axis, who's query he cannot answer."

-- The New York Times (chapter 2 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This New York Times editorial captures the mystique and curiosity that the North Pole held for the public and media.

The American invents as the Greek sculpted and the Italian painted: it is genius."

-- The London Times (chapter 6 paragraph 10)

**Importance:** This was the reaction in a London Times editorial to the Corliss machine that was a sensation at the World's Fair in Philadelphia in 1876.

The filling up of the blank spaces of the unknown in the maps had such a fascination for him that rest seemed impossible to him while any country remained unexplored."

-- J. G. Bartholomew (chapter 6 paragraph 14)

**Importance:** J. G. Bartholomew who was a renowned British cartographer reacted to fellow map-maker and theoretical cartographer, August Petermann's ability to create maps of unexplored locations and the confidence he had in his work. His maps were used in the Bennett expedition to the North Pole.

The polar project would entail enormous risks, he admitted. There was no getting around the fact that men would probably die in the process of reaching the pole, but the benefits to society made such a hazard worthwhile. Sacrifice for the sake of discovery was infinitely more rewarding to humanity than sacrifice in battlefield trenches."

-- Narrator (chapter 6 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** August Petermann who was a world-class cartographer advocated the exploration of the North Pole. He felt it was important for understanding the workings of the world. He tried to convince others by comparing the losses that such a voyage would result in to the many more losses in warfare that the world never seemed to question.

A small omission now may cost us the success of the expedition in the end."

-- George De Long (chapter 15 paragraph 9)

**Importance:** George De Long was dedicated to making sure that every detail of the Pandora, the vessel he would command, was perfect before setting out for the long journey. There had been many failed expeditions and even disasters on previous attempts to reach the North Pole.

The Sage of Gotha was excited by the possibility that De Long would find human civilization at the North Pole. 'I should not be at all surprised,' he said, 'if Eskimos were



found right under the Pole. It is not at all unlikely.”  
-- Narrator/Petermann (chapter 11 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** Famed cartographer August Petermann, referred to as the Sage of Gotha, was considered an expert on the Arctic and the North Pole. However, as the above quote illustrates he had some strange theories about the region that would be debunked as soon as an expedition reached the pole.

When you sail I intend for you to have the same power that is conferred upon admirals commanding fleets. This expedition must succeed, and you shall be forearmed against all disaffection, insubordination, and disaster.”  
-- Secretary of the Navy (chapter 13 paragraph 27)

**Importance:** While offering his support and elevating De Long to admiral, Secretary of Navy Richard Thompson pointed out the perils that could spell disaster.

He [James Bennett] yearned for the shadows, like the owls that decorated his villa, his yachts, his newspaper offices. He was incapable of doing anything directly or earnestly. Bennett really was a phantom – and an impossible patron for a straightforward man like De Long to figure out.”  
-- Narrator (chapter 14 paragraph 23)

**Importance:** James Bennett, owner and publisher of the New York Herald, was a secretive man who financed the voyage of the U.S. Arctic to the North Pole. George De Long was the ship’s commander. The two men couldn’t have been more different. It was impossible for the open and direct De Long to understand his boss’s obsession with secrecy.

I’ve been thinking what a pretty widow you would make.”  
-- George De Long (chapter 15 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** These less than comforting words were spoken by George to his wife, Emma. They capture De Long’s unexpressed concerns about the inherent danger of the expedition to the North Pole.

Put her into the ice and let her drift, and you may get through. Or, you may go to the devil – and the chances are about equal.”  
-- Captain Nye (chapter 15 paragraph 39)

**Importance:** An old whaling captain tells De Long about his chances for navigating through the icy Arctic waters. He did not give a robust endorsement for the expedition’s success.

I pronounce a thermometric gateway to the North Pole a delusion and a snare.”  
-- George De Long (chapter 20 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** When De Long and his men were literally stuck in the ice he was able to



debunk the theory that many experts held that there were warm waters surrounding the North Pole once a ship burst through an ice ring and gained entry to the mythical Open Polar Ocean. He was bitter because he had based much of his preparations for the expedition on such false claims. His ship and crew were at great risk thanks to these absurd theories.

The ship.... had finally been ‘released from her icy fetters’ and ‘floated calmly on the source of the beautiful blue water... a small pool in which she could bathe her sides.’  
-- Narrator (chapter 26 paragraph 18)

**Importance:** De Long and his crew were tremendously excited and relieved when the Jeannette was finally freed from the death-grip that the ice had on the ship. After nearly two years, the ship was in the water again. It was a momentous moment for the crew that gave hope to their survival.

The men stared at the hole where the Jeannette had been. Nothing was left of her but a wooden chest floating upside down in the water.”  
-- Narrator (chapter 27 paragraph 47)

**Importance:** After the Jeannette sank after a vicious clashing of ice floes, the men had no vessel. It was a pivotal moment in their ordeal; they would be on foot and traveling south to save their lives.



# Topics for Discussion

## 1

What drove the interest that James Bennett had for the exploration of the North Pole? What famous historical event did Bennett arrange that made good copy for his newspaper? Why could he be considered a duplicitous individual?

## 2

What is the Kuro Siwo and the Thermometric Gateway and what was the theory that was commonly held about it? What speculation and lore existed about the North Pole in the late 1800s?

## 3

What impact did the 1876 World's Fair held in Philadelphia have on polar exploration? What was the most popular exhibit at the Fair and what were some of the inventions displayed there? Why did America emerge as the world's new innovative leader as a result of the Fair?

## 4

Describe George De Long's efforts in finding the right ship and making sure that it was fit for the expedition to the North Pole. Why did he travel to Washington, D.C. in preparation for the trip?

## 5

Why was the Pandora renamed and who was it named after and why was it considered a poor choice? What superstition was there about renaming a ship? At the launch of the USS Jeannette, what did De Long view as a bad omen for the trip?

## 6

What experience gave De Long false hope about the seaworthiness of the Jeannette and why? What misleading information was De Long given about the trip? Why was the timing of the Nordenskiöld expedition's return unfortunate for De Long and his crew?



## 7

The USS Jeannette was stuck in the ice for almost two years before it was destroyed by ice floes and sank. Although it was stuck, De Long referred to the ship and men moving great distances. Explain what he meant and how they moved.

## 8

How did De Long keep his men occupied and feeling as though they had purpose after being stuck in the ice for so long? The Captain's logs describe a mainly satisfied and happy crew. Is that likely true? Why or why not?

## 9

What conditions plagued the crew of the USS Jeannette in their long sojourn north and their trek to the Siberian mainland? How did Dr. Ambler treat these conditions?

## 10

How did Melville find out that Nindemann and Noros were in a remote village in a desolate part of Siberia? What support did Melville have in his search for De Long and the other missing crew members and how is it a lesson for today's world?