

From Davis the History of The New York Times:

Page 291 - "If one single news story published in The Times in this period were to be marked out as more famous than all the rest, it would have to be Admiral Peary's story of the discovery of the North Pole. Before Peary started North on his final trip The Times had arranged for exclusive news publication of his story in New York and had agreed to act as his agent in selling other rights. It had advanced \$4,000 to him, as he needed that much to make the expedition possible; to be repaid out of profits from the sue and sale of the rights to Peary's story of the trip. As it turned out, Peary's story sold so well that he realised through The Times nearly three times this amount.

It was, accordingly, a good deal of a disappointment to the conductors of The Times, when early in September, 1909. Peary, ~~he~~ being still absent beyond communication in the north, the little known Dr. Frederick A. Cook suddenly appeared en route to Copenhagen and announced that he had discovered the Pole on April 21 the previous year.

The Times's reaction to the news was, however, about the same as the reaction of nearly everybody else. It was inclined to give Dr. Cook the benefit of the doubt, and, when more details of his alleged exploit began to come in and proved to be vague, (292) confusing and rather suspicious, The Times was still, like more other people, inclined to wait for proof before discrediting the story.

But all this was changed when on September 6, while Cook was dining with the King of Denmark and receiving all the honors that Copenhagen ~~was~~ could bestow, Peary reached Indian Harbor and sent word ~~that~~ to The Times by wireless and cable that he had found the Pole. Everybody believed Peary; he was an explorer and scientist of the highest standing and the whole world took his word. The trouble began a day or two later when Peary informed his family and the public, that Cook's story need not be taken seriously. By that time Cook had sold the right of publication of his narrative to the New York Herald, which had syndicated it everywhere. It turned out to be a bad bargain in more ways than one. Aside from the price

he received - which according to rumor, was, through a mistake in cable transmission, ten times what he had asked, but which James Gordon Bennett seemed not exorbitant for what Cook had to offer p he found at once a large number of newspapers enrolled on his side and compelled in their own interest to advocate his claims to the very last.

It may be said that The Times was in luck and The Herald out of luck. But it was not a question of luck. The Times has reason for putting up money for Peary story before he started north, for he was the most experienced and probably the most renowned of Arctic explorers. In so far as success in reaching the Pole was not a matter of chance, (293) Peary was a better bet than anyone else. Bennett's purchase of Cook's story, after Cook had asserted that he had discovered the pole, was natural enough, for nobody knew much about Cook. It must be regarded as an unfortunate lapse from impartiality of judgment however, that the papers which had published Cook's story for the most part felt that they had to believe it, or at any rate to pretend that they believed it.

Peary's detailed story came through by wireless rather slowly and was published in The Times on September 9, 10, and 11, 1909. In the meantime a correspondent of The London Chronicle, Philip Gibbs, who was to become famous as a war correspondent a few years later - and more famous through the American publication of his work in The New York Times and papers which brought the news from The Times, than even his home paper made him - had subjected Cook and his story to an intensive study, and had come to the conclusion that there was nothing in it. For a few days Gibbs was almost alone in saying this outright, but Peary's heated denunciation of Cook forced the issue, and the world-wide civil war was on. In the promotion of domestic strife in every nation, in the setting of households against each other and bringing not peace, but a sword to every breakfast table, Cook and Peary did better than Lenin and Trotsky ever dreamed of doing.

That war is ancient history, and there is no longer any doubt as to

was right, The Times, which had obtained the North Pole story on its own initiative, was equally successful in obtaining the (294) accounts of the ~~SouthxPolexstory~~ discoveries of the South Pole by Amundsen and Scott, though both in both cases it could do no more than buy the American rights from the British owners p in the case of Scott, the Central News; in the Case of Amundsen, The London Chronicle.....
