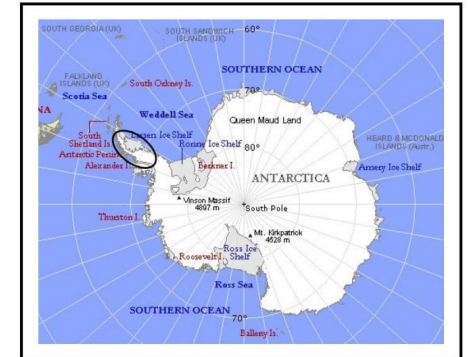


# Finding Antarctica - Then Finding More Of It

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exhibit is to present postal material that documents the initial discovery and confirmation of the Antarctic continent, followed by the further discovery of its land mass and environment.

**Background:** Though timidly approached for hundreds of years, it was not until the early 19th C. that human beings could approach Antarctica close enough actually to discover, then begin probing it for a greater understanding. It was a strange, dangerous and exciting geography for scientists and explorers. They gradually gained knowledge of this place, what it contained and what it could offer, during what now is called the "Heroic Age" of Antarctic history (up to 1924). First there was revelation, followed by gradual exploration along its edges, culminating in bold advances inland. Uniquely inquisitive, courageous, bold individuals produced these achievements - and its mail whose character is equally elusive and often also unique.

**Importance:** The "Heroic Age" is the first and most significant in the three periods of polar history. This is paralleled by its postal documentation that represents most of the gems in polar postal history.



## First to cross the Antarctic Circle

**Captain James Cook, RN** (7 November 1728-14 February 1779) became the first to cross the Antarctic Circle on 17 January 1773, when he did so on his second exploratory world cruise (1772-75), supported by the Royal Society in 1772. He did not sight the Antarctic continent, but came the closest to doing so at that time. Cook later claimed Antarctica's South Georgia for Great Britain.

**A memorial Cook bronze medal**, by L. Pingo in London, in 1779. Recto with profile bust of Cook facing right within the words. Reverse (scan) with figure of Fortune leaning against a naval column with rudder on globe within the letters.

This medal was struck in commemoration of Captain Cook by fellow members of the Royal Society of London. Some 577 in bronze were issued, 322 in silver and 20 in gold.



## References - from the books I have used I would like to mention:

*A Chronology of Antarctic Exploration*-Robert Keith Headland,  
*Essence of Polar Philately*-Hal Vogel,  
*Deutsche Südpolar-Expeditionen vor 1948*-Gerhard Trögel,  
*Ahead of the pack*-Hal Vogel and Serge Kahn,  
*German explores at the poles*-Siegfried Nicklas,  
*The Swedish South Polar Expedition 1901-1904* - Stefan Heijtz, F. Goldberg,  
*Postcards of Antarctic Expeditions, a catalogue: 1898-1958* - Margery Wharton

(NOTE: Scanned and photocopied ancillary images [maps, portraits, paintings, etc.] are from publicly sharable sources and are only for illustrative or decorative purposes).

## Plan of the Exhibit

### Penetrating the Unknown

- 1820-21 Winship and the first official mail from Antarctica
- 1821-22 Discovery of South Orkney Island-letter from Pendleton
- 1825-39 Enderby Antarctic Expedition
- 1837-41 French naval expedition
- 1838-42 Wilkes Antarctic Expedition
- 1839-43 British (Ross) Antarctic Expedition
- 1872-76 Challenger world circumnavigation
- 1882-83 1st International Polar Year
- 1879-80 HMS Comus rescue Expedition
- 1897-99 Belgian Antarctic Expedition
- 1898-99 German Deep-Sea Expedition
- 1899 7th International Geographical Congress

### 1. Edging Beyond the Edge

- 1901-03 First German Antarctic Expedition
- 1901-04 First Swedish Antarctic Expedition
- 1901-04 British National Antarctic Expedition
- 1902-04 Scottish National Antarctic Expedition
- 1903-05 French Antarctic Expedition
- 1904-08 Argentinian Antarctic Expeditions

### 2. Pushing Inland

- 1907-09 British "Nimrod" Antarctic Expedition
- 1907-09 SWEDISH MAGELLANIAN EXPEDITION
- 1907-09 South Georgie "Swinhoe" Commercial/Surveying Exp.
- 1908-10 "Charcot" French Antarctic Expedition
- 1910-12 Norwegian "Fram" Antarctic Expedition
- 1910-13 British (Terra Nova) Antarctic Expedition
- 1911-13 German South Polar Expedition
- 1910-12 Japanese South Polar Expedition
- 1911-14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition
- 1914-17 (British) Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition
- 1915-16 US Carnegie Antarctic Expedition
- 1915-16 Offshore Auckland's General Grant Expedition
- 1914 (aborted) Austrian Antarctic Expedition
- 1921-1922 Shackleton-Rowett Antarctic Expedition

## First Sighting of Antarctica

The youngest ship captain in the Stonington, Connecticut, USA, sealing fleet (**Nathaniel Brown Palmer**) barely saw land off the Antarctic continent on 16 November 1820 while looking for new sealing grounds. It was not realized until much later that he and two other sightings around this same time (by an Englishman and a Imperial Russian explorer) had found "**Palmer Land**" at the tip of the 7th continent (see map above-marked with black ellipse).



No mail related to **Palmer** exists from his earliest time, though some is known to him later as his fame grew, such as this New Haven, CT., 30 August posting to him in Stonington. This style postmark was used there between 1847 and 1851.

## Exceptional items of the exhibit

Although most of the displayed pieces are exceptional, as would be much from the "Heroic Age" of polar exploration, the more exceptional ones are highlighted with **brown-colored explanatory text**. I would like to draw your attention mainly to: The first mail from the Antarctic region from 1821 from the **captain Winship**, a recently discovered mail from **B. Pendleton** in 1822, a mail from the **Ross Antarctic Expedition** from 1843, covers from the **Belgian Antarctic Expedition** from 1897-99, the only preserved postcards with photos of the Antarctic region from the **German Deep-Sea Expedition** from 1899, the unique letter shipped aboard a ship under the **First German Antarctic Expedition** from 1901, unique letters from **R. F. Scott**, **E. Shackleton**, **R. Amundsen** and other world famous polarists.

**Specialized European Stamp Championship Exhibition and Polar Salon****Finding Antarctica - Then Finding More Of It**

This exhibit shows the history of the discovery of "Unknown Southern Land" -Antarctica. It describes the course of successive expeditions sailing to the southern hemisphere and their search and discovery of new straits, islands, coves, bays and new lands.

These explorers were the heroes of that time, because they didn't only acquire new territories, but also, in the interest of science, published all their knowledge so that they could provide their sovereigns, statesmen and their homelands with the most complete information about this part of the world. These were times in which a lot of these expeditions came into situations that exceeded human abilities and it is a wonder that the bulk of the expedition participants survived, considering what hardships and adversity they encountered.

This exhibit contains the first preserved letters from the beginnings of Antarctic whaling and sealing expeditions. In the early 19th century the first expeditions discovered Antarctica. This period finished with a race to reach the South Pole, which was achieved on 14 December 1911.

In the course of these expeditions there were sent letters, telegrams and postcards, which are include this exhibit. Of course don't missing non philatelic material from this period. The collection contains rare items such as medals, food labels, cards, postcards and of course letters written by the polar explorers themselves, etc.

**Exceptional items of the exhibit**

Although most of the displayed pieces are exceptional, as would be much from the "Heroic Age" of polar exploration, the more exceptional ones are highlighted with red-colored explanatory text. I would like to draw your attention mainly to: The first mail from the Antarctic region from 1821 from the *captain Winship*, a recently discovered mail from *B. Pendelton* in 1822, a mail from the *Ross Antarctic Expedition* from 1843, covers from the *Belgian Antarctic Expedition* from 1897-99, the only preserved postcards with photos of the Antarctic region from the *German Deep-Sea Expedition* from 1899, the unique letter shipped aboard a ship under the *First German Antarctic Expedition* from 1901, unique letters from *R. F. Scott*, *E. Shackleton*, *R. Amundsen* and other world famous polarists.

**Personal research**

The focus of my research is mainly to identify and confirm the date of mail sent from the individual expeditions (mainly from the Antarctic region) listed on the correspondence and also to check whether the postal value corresponds to a given period and place. The information is derived mainly from foreign literature, magazines with polar themes issued by polar clubs in England, the USA, the Czech Republic, etc. The cooperation with foreign collectors such as H. Vogel, S. Heijtz, S. Kahn, S. Nicklas, F. Goldberg († 2017) etc. is equally important.

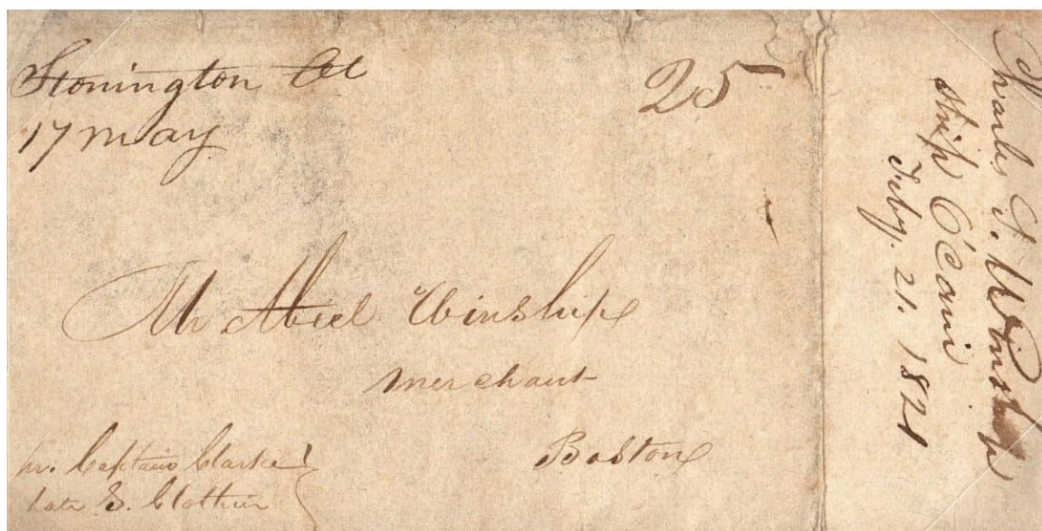
My work also includes articles in philatelic magazines about these expeditions. In them I try to pass on my experiences to other collectors in the context of describing the expeditions' journeys and the different rates for mail sent from various stops (on the way to and from Antarctica) by crew members.



## There are two unique examples of polar history:

The first official letter from Antarctica recognized in the study of the Antarctic region

**Captain Charles Jonathan Winship** writes to his father (manuscript) from Potter Cove on 21 February 1821, the South Shetlands that he arrived at **O'Cain** Harbor (named after his ship) earlier to begin sealing.



Double-weight rated ( $12\text{-}1/2\text{c} \times 2 = 25\text{c}$ ) for a distance between 80 and 150 miles (1816-45). Either a returning tender did not submit for a SHIP fee or it was delivered by a US Navy vessel that was not authorized the SHIP fee.



Headed **H.M.Ship Erebus** letter sent by **Richard Wall** from Port Louis, the Falkland Islands, to his wife in England. Concessionary Soldier's and Seamen's 1d prepaid rate to Great Britain (1795-1850). London General Post single ring Paid 11 FE 1843 marking + octagonal PD FE 11 1843 marking.

This is the earliest known concessionary letter from the Falkland Islands and one of the earliest known letters from Antarctic expeditions.