

Peary&Byrd Fakes Still Obscure Amundsen First Lingering Apologia for the Byrd North Pole Hoax Myth-Cling in the Face of Diary's Unexceedable Counterproof Ohio State University Vs Ohioan Ellsworth's Achievement Fellow Pocahantas Descendants In-Denial

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[See article's end for source-abbreviations.]

A First Families

A1 In 2013 appeared a 560pp book by Sheldon Bart, stimulatingly entitled *Race to the Top of the World: Richard Byrd and the First Flight to the North Pole*, with the jacket-juiced aim of rehabbing Adm. Byrd's and co-pilot Floyd Bennett's tattered claim to have been first by air to the North Pole of the Earth, flying from Spitzbergen's KingsBay allegedly to the Pole and back on 1926/5/9 in the Fokker trimotor airplane the *Josephine Ford*. The flight occurred 3^d prior to the 1926/5/12 arrival at the Pole of the *Norge* dirigible expedition of Norway's Roald Amundsen, Ohio's Lincoln Ellsworth, and Italy's Umberto Nobile (who designed & copiloted the airship). The *Norge* reached the Pole on 1926/5/12, Ellsworth's birthday, and arrived a few days later at Pt.Barrow, Alaska. The shortest distance between KingsBay and Pt.Barrow being virtually over the North Pole, there was no doubt of the *Norge*'s success, leaving only the question of whether Byrd's in&out flight had gone far enough to hit the Pole in the short time it was out of sight.

A2 Defending Byrd's 1926 tale at this point is a Sisyphian errand, given the varied disproofs¹ revealed by *DIO* — primarily huge discrepancies between the Byrd diary's solar sextant data vs his official reports (RX p.7&§§E-F&M-N).

A3 None of these easily-indoor-fakable sextant data were shared with a companion, just like the prior polar fakes of Cagni, Cook, and Peary. On Amundsen's expeditions, by contrast, such data were taken by his co-explorers, both at the South Pole in 1911 and the North Pole in 1926. (Similarly for Scott's 1912 South Pole data.) CalTech's & *DIO*'s Myles Standish (prime creator of the world's standard solar, lunar, & planetary tables) stresses that such sextant data are trivially easy to fake. (Used for over 100^y, the standard Sumner-Line method actually *requires* faking data, to compare to sextant data.) And: **the easiest places on Earth to fake sextant data for are the North&South Poles.**

A4 Despite the foregoing problems, Bart's book is far from valueless. Same for Byrd himself, a celebrity-dynamo of skill and ambition, magnificently worth chronicling, which Bart does with exceptional readability and flair.

A5 But the book's try at rehabbing Byrd's North Pole claim dodges the hard evidence. Indeed, the clearer the evidence, the clearer the dodge. Stranger yet is the exhaustive geneological section's non-mention of what the Byrd family believed was the earliest and most imperial North American ancestor of Richard Evelyn Byrd, Jr.

B Personal

B1 From an early age, I knew of Byrd both as hero and as remote relative, since my mother mentioned on occasion that my father Lou Rawlins, Jr. (1906/6/25-1942/10/16) was a distant cousin of the Byrds. As Manager & (1941-1942) Director of Baltimore's airport, Lou knew Byrd, along with other famous flyers of that era: Lindbergh, Balchen, Earhart, Doolittle. The cousinship was through the Bolling family of Virginia. My first cousin's middle names were Bolling and Avirett (the latter in honor of my stepfather, lawyer John Williams Avirett, 2nd: 1902/5/13-1993/10/23).

B2 So when, at Ohio State University's Byrd Polar Research Center, I encountered Byrd-daughter Bolling Byrd Clarke for the 2nd time in 1997 Oct, I immediately asked her (what I'd regretted not remembering to inquire about during my more focused 1996 trip to OSU): are you descended from Pocahantas? She replied: yes, how did you know? I of course explained that, primarily, the very name Bolling had triggered the question.

¹F263-264; RT (www.dioi.org/j43b.pdf, *DIO* 4.3); *New York Times* 1996/5/9 p.1 (www.nytimes.com/1996/05/09/did-byrd-reach-pole-his-diary-hints-no.html); RU (*Polar Record* 36:25-50 [University of Cambridge] 2000. co-published with RX (www.dioi.org/vols/wa0.pdf, *DIO* 10).

B3 Despite my doubt of her father's 1926/5/9 claim, we always got along because [1] Bolling was an understanding and classy lady, and for a woman of her era unusually well educated: Swathmore. [2] I emphasized that on 1926/5/9 her father had gone virtually the full distance with respect to the polar airmass (which had betrayed his genuine try by contrarily moving south against him on that day). [3] I genuinely appreciated his considerable positive qualities.

B4 But her younger sister² Kate Breyer (née Katherine Ames Byrd) — and mate Robert Breyer — were determined³ to join Ohio State University (e.g., G3&57; RX ☉1) in defending the North Pole claim to-the-last. And *Race to the Top of the World IS The-Last* — the predictable fruit of their undeterable commitment.

C Byrd's Greatness & Otherwise

C1 *Race* portrays⁴ Byrd as courageous, navigationally-expert, proactive, visionary, passionate, generous, a genius, conversant with Einstein's relativity, philosophical-contemplative, deterministic, assertively useful, moral, handsome&manly, and From-Good-Stock. Much of which is justified — but it is obvious that this is not a neutral book.

C2 One of the less subtle symptoms of sidetaking: despite the book's admirable effort to be fair (compliments at, e.g., fn 6 below & BB3&251&340) to Byrd's chief 1926 PoleRace-competitor, Roald Amundsen — the greatest of all polar explorers (RX p.3) — Amundsen's kindnesses to Byrd are deemed "perfunctory" & "intoned" (BB328&403).

C3 Byrd genuinely was driven to deeds that contributed to mankind, usually speaking of how one or another of his ventures was for aviation & the future. He combined workaholicity and intelligence⁵ to a rare degree and was a leader through those skills, not by oratorical gifts (which he definitely lacked). He is now justly most-remembered for opening an entire continent to permanent access: Antarctica.

C4 But like others he could bend truth for what he thought was a higher purpose. His 1925 encounter with veteran explorer Capt. Joseph Bernier is glossed over at BB147-148; but western Explorers Club chief Richard Finnie recalled that Bernier regarded it as deliberate deceit. Dean Smith (uncited in BB), one of Byrd's top 1929 Antarctic pilots, described a clumsy deception by Byrd, to pretend he'd discovered Marie Byrd Land (F271). Smith and Larry Gould agree that Byrd did no celestial navigation in the Antarctic (RT fn 2). Byrd's good 1926/4/28 letter to his son (BB310) advises honor, even while he is on the verge of a theft of Amundsen's priority — an irony recalling Peary's parallel 1908/8/17 upright advice to his son (WP239, F208), before his own 1909 Pole imposition.

C5 That Byrd smoked&drank is noted but not emphasized at BB57, yet over-smoking was an integral part of his meteoric personality. His problem with alcohol was so well-known among colleagues that scientist Thomas Poulter said he personally destroyed all available booz during his Byrd Antarctic tenure, to protect against the men's overindulgence — and not just by Byrd. I'm old enough to have heard a Maryland Academy of Sciences recollection from the very early 1930s: when Byrd was to give a lecture locally, on arrival in Baltimore, he asked where there was a barber shop he could get a haircut at. But the MAS was so worried he'd instead go to a bar ere the lecture: they instead specially brought a barber to him.

C6 But we are only beginning to plumb the extent of the book's omissions, which are key to — among other issues — Bart's case for Byrd's NP claim. Yet, before starting into those related to aviation and polar priority, there is one missing item sufficiently peculiar to justify taking it up first.

D Blood & Noses

D1 *Race* so admires Byrd's race that it devotes to his lineage and "illustrious family" (BB154) much of an entire chapter (BB151-171) entitled: "F.F.V." — First Families of Virginia. (It's not a very shaky speculation that this portion most reflects the book's true intended audience: the family. Specifically Kate's branch.) This section includes a thorough trip through the family tree, e.g., Byrd's mother, alumna of the Episcopal Female Institute (BB162), and his wife, née Marie Ames, descended from the *Mayflower* of course — and, as Bart assures at BB186, possessor of "a

²Byrd had 3 children: Richard the 3rd, Bolling, & Katherine. The 1st I never met, and was sad to hear that he lived not successfully & died badly c.1 mile south of where I live in Baltimore. Both daughters I met simultaneously at Ohio State University on 1996/4/10 (one day before finding the diary evidence ending their father's NP claim), and was charmed by both, and especially noted immediately how much Kate looked like her dad.

³The analogy to Robert Peary's two acknowledged progeny is striking: Robert Jr. believed his father's 1909 N.Pole claim but didn't argue it. The other side of the family ("Snowbaby" Marie Peary Stafford Kuhne and son Ed Stafford) was adamant: never gave up fighting doubters.

⁴Respective cited Byrd virtues are found at BB BB169&178&183-184&237&485, 230, 207, 471, 186&192, 311&448&452, 216, 179&294, 166&421, 148&165, 221, 164&187, 3&154, 151-171.

⁵In addition to his strength in math (BB179) and chess (BB301), Byrd showed mental agility in emergencies — like deftly concocting a fraud on the spur of a "hair-raising moment" (BB398) when in 1926 a motor began leaking (RX§B5), and tossing flares to crucially aid Balchen's perfect water landing of Byrd's airplane *America* in 1927 (BB483). Byrd was also a formidable testifier to Congress (BB257). He enjoyed performing magic tricks (BB301), and he invented imaginative fairytales not just for NGS' ambitions but for his children's happiness (BB35).

straight nose”. (For contrast, rival explorer Amundsen’s nose is described as massively “curved”).⁶ The book’s family-ancestry record starts centuries back — but, once we’re past ancestors among the Vikings, the Battle of Hastings, Britain’s Edward III, a Continental king & emperor, Charlemagne, etc, and finally get to 1630 and the arrival of Byrd-One-in-Virginia (BB154), we’re already past princess Pocahantas (1595-1617) and her father Powhatan. (Who is identified as an “emperor” on Pocahantas’ portrait.) Yet, despite my §B2 face-to-face confirmation of the sisters’ belief in their descent from Powhatan and Pocahantas — the remotest recorded First Family of Virginia — this connexion⁷ is totally left out of the book’s minutely, lovingly detailed Byrd geneology. The omission only becomes starker when we find that the book says (BB444) boozier and Byrd-transAtlantic-flight companion Bert Acosta’s Indian genes help expain his volatility & free spirit. Further, the book mentions (BB36) that Byrd’s frequent home-away-from-home in the 1920s was named for his imperial ancestor: the Powhatan Hotel on Pennsylvania Ave in Washington, one block from his workplace at the Old Executive Office Building (now a Trump luxury hotel). On 1996/4/10, both sisters answered my query about whether he was a loving dad by laughingly telling me [RX p.7]: yes — when he was home! Indeed, any measure of Byrd the man shouldn’t miss the book’s rich documentation (e.g., BB186-187, 308-310) of his pure and touchingly idealistic love of his wife & family. BB174 notes that he and Marie had known each other as friends since age 7 ! — and were close to an ideal love-story but for his adventurous absences.

E The Experts

E1 We precede analysis of the Byrd-defense’s omissions regarding aviation by weighing the reliability of the author’s science and that of the experts he cites, including Byrd.

E2 The expertise of Byrd is critically discussed at, e.g., RX§§G&P, where it is demonstrated that he knew navigation in theory (RX fn 21) but was prone to several types of serious miscues in practice. These were not responsible for his 1926/5/9 shortfall — but they were critical to undoing his later attempts to hide it: RX§G6.

E3 BB370 cites such seemingly trustworthy pro-Byrd navigators as J.Portney (late Pres. Emer. Institute of Navigation), experienced longago Air Force navigator W.Molett, and non-positional OSU astronomer G.Newson, though their embarrassingly obvious blindnesses (e.g., not noting his sextant overprecision: §F6) and errors were set forth in detail at RX Figs.11-13 and §§L5-L6. All must resort to the transparent speculation of “confusion” (BB372) or somesuch by Byrd, to explain away the gross disagreements between his diary sextant sunsights & those his report sent to SecNavy & National Geographic. Well, apologists could line up ten times as many tractable Expert-Certifiers — but such political illusionism can’t even dent the devastating evidence. E.g., obviously (RX§L7) a “confused” navigator won’t find the Pole. Further: for each of the diary sunshots (4:39&7:07) why erase just the observation & contingent calculation *but not erase the corresponding chronometer time & equation of time?* — a distinction plainly indicating that the suppressor was planning (until learning his eraser wasn’t sufficiently effective) to not only remove each real observation but to replace it *for the same UNERASED time* and **right at the same place on the page**, writing (over the real data) a fake “observation” consistent with a higher latitude. Bart’s various (sometimes contradictory: RX ☉6) Experts all discount the actual record (Byrd’s on-site hand-written diary), preferring to believe his much-later-typed report’s figures, allegedly (RX§L11&BB372) written on loose pieces of paper. Which disappeared before anyone ever saw them. (Stolen by Martians?) Obvious fact: in the real world, you will never get stronger evidence of exploring fraud than exists — and exists broadly & variously — in the Byrd 1926 North Pole case. Lesson learned: given their customary fiscal and/or careerist priorities, consultants — no matter how eminent — will tell you whatever you want.

E4 Sheldon Bart, *Race*’s able author, has exploring experience and is on several prominent boards. But he does not help himself with his opening chapter’s defense (BB9) of Byrd’s fellow National Geographic Society polar hero, Robert Peary, whose faked 1909/4/6 North Pole claim Bart accepts (BB118&355). Bart supports Peary’s 1907-reported 1906 distant-double-sighting of non-existent “Crocker Land” by quoting Peary’s descriptions of its topography, citing them to the 1906/6/24&28 entries in Peary’s on-site diary. But both of these quotes are actually not from the diary but from his 1907 book (*Nearest the Pole* pp.202&207) — as my book *Peary . . . Fiction* induced (F73) back in 1973 even *while* I was barred by the Peary family from access to any of his diaries. Bart says (BB368-369) he disbelieves my book, yet his Crocker Land fumble shows he never read it — or *DIO*, which quotes (RX§B2) Peary’s actual 1906/6/24 entry in his diary (now at National Archives): “No land visible”.

E5 However, none of this should detract from our gratitude to Bart for his book’s treasure of intimate facts relating to Byrd’s career, challenges, & flying machines — most helpfully Bart’s detailed reconstructions (e.g., BB393) of Byrd’s

⁶ Part of Bart’s largely admiring picture of Amundsen at BB314: “His most prominent feature was his nose, a large protuberance as bold and curved as an eagle’s beak. The size of Amundsen’s nose has actually been recorded. A Seattle sculptor measured the explorer’s physiognomy for a bust that was completed after the subject went north in 1926. The nose was three inches long. Amundsen’s face, the artist declared, was ‘one of the strongest that I have ever modeled.’ He was a striking figure.”

⁷ *Washington Post* 1995/7/9. Even if Bart has reason to believe that the Byrd-Pocahantas relation is unverified, the family’s private acceptance of it is worth mention as a biographical item.

1926 cockpit procedures, along with Bart's own photos of the *Jo Ford's* interior. However, to defend the 1926 claim, Bart goes down a variety of argumentative avenues (e.g., BB356&360) to promote Byrd's arrival at the North Pole, but virtually all of them are timeworn and/or ambiguous, long since obsolesced by the hard-data diary revelations of 1996 (ultimately reported in full by RX). And his book contains several indicia that, though experienced with aircraft, he is less so with navigation and with science in general. E.g., the naïve estimate (BB402) that "From [the airplane's height of] two thousand feet, one distant mile on the surface below looks about six inches long." And, e.g., his BB398-399 discussion of the A.Hinks-G.Littlehales method miscalls solar declination as solar latitude, while misstating that the difference between it and an observed solar altitude produces the observer's distance from the Pole in nautical miles, when that difference is instead the Sumner Line's distance from the Pole. BB400-401 fails to realize that the moment when the *Jo Ford* is aimed at the Sun was no more informative than any other time for using a sun-compass (RX ☉11). BB329 describes a 1926/4/29-30 scene as Byrd's ship *Chantier* anchored "with the sun and moon facing one another across the bowl of the sky". But from the ship's arrival at 1926/4/29 16^h (BB311), all the way to the morn of 1926/5/7, the Moon never got above the horizon at Kings Bay, Spitzbergen. Two days later when the *Jo Ford* took off, BB2 still has the Sun&Moon on opposite sides of the sky, the latter "a pale and ghostly oval" though in reality it was only 36° of azimuth distant from the Sun and (as just noted) not even visible at all. An astronomer would have easily checked these points. At BB252, we learn that the Ice Pole is "400 miles west of the North Pole" which is patently impossible since all points are south therefrom. (He means that the Ice Pole was 400 mi to the west of Byrd's poleward path.) BB282 weirdly says H.Wilkins "surveyed 100 miles of territory" in 1926. BB361 accepts Byrd's report that the *Jo Ford* got faster as its weight decreased in flight, though (RX fn 48) maximum-fuel-efficiency cruising speed actually decreases as a plane's weight of course diminishes during a flight.

F Evidential Lacunae

F1 Let's start with *Race's* simplest evidential dodge (which should have been faced at BB292&350&414). On 1926/5/11 the *NYTimes* reported (F264, RX ☉2) that, though *Jo Ford* had carried "a hundred small and several large American flags" Byrd&Bennett has been "too busy" to remember to drop ANY OF THEM at their turnaround point though not too busy to take movies of the flat colorless ice. Is it credible that publicity-savvy Byrd, in-debt and a professional flagwaver (who in 1927 named his airplane the *America*, and in 1929 re-christened as "Little America" Amundsen's old "Framheim" Antarctic base) somehow — for 13 consecutive minutes — FORGOT, when filming, to drop their own pre-planned American-flag blizzard at the Pole, for profitable US audience-entrancement? The oddity's actual explanation is obvious: remember that the "Norge" was about to cover the same route, so if the *Jo Ford's* farthest-north actually wasn't 90°, dropped flags might get spotted at an embarrassing latitude. But enjoy the inevitable changing-the-story, later-concocted alibi (MM63&G54n.17&BB292): flags were just brought along as souvenirs for backers. (Would dropping a single flag, thereby diminishing the souvenir-flags-load by less than 1%, have undone Byrd's support?) Which verifies *DIO 22's* test for apologists-when-cornered: their dependable preference for the inherently improbable over the obviously likely (www.dioi.org/jm02 §B3; www.dioi.org/jm03 §A1[B]). My 2000 comment (RX *loc cit*): "Just imagine what observers would have thought if Scott found nothing of Amundsen's at the S.Pole in 1912, but Amundsen said: well, actually, we just took our tent and flags home with us — to give to backers as souvenirs. . . ?!"

F2 BB363 rightly criticizes Balchen's dying exaggeration of what his friend Bennett told him, but ignores Balchen's much more contemporary diary from the 1920s recording his recent chat where Bennett said the truth of the 1926 trip "would shock you through your heels" (RT§A3 & fn 6; RX fn 13).

F3 Bart argues (BB355f) the case for the Byrd-Bennett flight lasting almost 16^h, as against his skeptics' and most original reports' contention that it was about 15^h1/2. This matter is thoroughly analysed at RX§K, based on all reports, as well as the surviving record (G158) of the flight's barograph (manufactured by the family of my later-nextdoor-neighbor Lucien Friez), and the truth is much nearer 15^h1/2. In this connexion, Bart lavishly speculates (BB361f) on *Jo Ford's* speed, to argue that, during his postulated 16^h, the plane was fast enough to go the full 768 mi or 668 nmi (RX fn 24) to the Pole&back. Yet he ignores — *as do all of Byrd's published reports* — the definitive figures, 8^h1/2 northward time (from takeoff) and airspeed 85 mi/hr, written in Byrd's in-flight diary (G79&96, RX§D7 & Fig.3), which are used — *after* turning south (RX§D7) — in Byrd's arithmetic, to compute (on the same diary-page) how far he had gone "before we turned around" (the revealing phrase Byrd tried to erase from his diary; details yet to come at §F5): 8^h1/2 times 85 mph = 722 1/2 mi, which is about 45 mi short of the 768 mi distance from KingBay to the Pole, not even accounting for the headwind (obvious from both his earlier sextant shots of the Sun: RX§§13-14) which reduced his 85 mph airspeed to 70 mph groundspeed.

F4 As evidence of Byrd's genuineness and generosity, BB360 says that, after the *Jo Ford's* flight, he gave a magnetic variation chart to Amundsen's co-captain Ellsworth, showing what he had found on the 1926/5/9 trip. But no such

chart has ever been found because it never existed. The chart cited was just the 1913 standard U.S. Hydrographic Office chart, printed long before the trip. An identical copy still exists (RX fn 48) in his National Archives file. Unmentioned in *Race*: Bennett reported that, during *Jo Ford's* flight, the magnetic compasses fluctuated uselessly (RX fn 48).

F5 *Race* brushes off the glaring reality that Byrd's two surviving 1926/5/9 sextant observations — both of which (on his meridian) put him over 100 mi south of where his report (TA) to SecNavy&NGS claims he was at the two times — are nearly erased. Bart goes with the apologists' speculation that Byrd was just getting rid of bad data. Omitted are the following slightly relevant facts: [1] except for those suspect places, Byrd never erases in the diary, he *writes-over* his miscues (e.g. RX§E1 & Figs.3-5, G84-86&88&96). [2] Each of the two diary pages containing 1926 sextant observations displays plenty of blank space, had Byrd wished to enter a hypothetical corrected observation. He didn't. [3] None of this desperate alibiing explains why Byrd tried erasing not only sextant data but also his question (written to Bennett: since neither could hear in the noisy *Jo Ford*, they communicated in writing): "How long were we gone before we turned around?" Not: how long did it take to get to the Pole? Does this sound like the question of a navigator who's just spent 13^m circling the Pole (according to Byrd's later story)? How would such an erasure relate to any of the apologia for sextant data? Excusing this would require a fresh alibi, and multiplying theories typically defies Occam's Razor. *Race* doesn't mention the point.

F6 TA's raw (unreduced) sextant data are all given *to the arcsec*, at least 10 times better precision than possible (RX§G) on Byrd' standard Navy sextant. (When calculating [faking] these "observations" indoors after the flight, Byrd forgot to round them to the 1/2 arcmin precision of all his previous real observations in the diary: *ibid* §G6.) After submitting his 1926/6/22 report (TA), Byrd was horrified to realize this — so he deleted all these giveaway-overprecise TA raw data from his revised report, TD, ere sending TD on 1926/11/24 to ultra-archon Izzy Bowman (head of AGS). BB366 says TD was a "slightly more descriptive version" of TA (1926/6/22 to SecNavy&NGS). To the contrary: TD is a *trimmed* — bowdlerized — version of TA, with not only all raw data excised (RX Fig.7) but also *whole sections removed* (& thus, as noted at *idem*, adjacent sections renumbered), when Byrd realized these could be problematic (as carefully demonstrated at RX ☉7). Byrd does not tell TD's reader of either alteration.

F7 Byrd sent TD to Isaiah Bowman, the obsessively⁸ anti-Boshie & anti-Jewish chief of the American Geographical Society, which kept the report secret (RX fn 83) since Byrd had gotten Pearyishly shy about his records, writing Izzy (BB367): "Do you not think that perhaps it would be better for me to preserve to myself the privilege of giving out the data . . . ? Should I not [ignore] applications from enquirers from certain European countries who have already shown⁹ themselves to be ill-wishers; and certain would-be explorers (whom we know) who have declared themselves very much on the other side of the fence [BB360]. Should I not protect myself from academic discussions with such people. . . ?" Bowman's cooperation in helping NGS hide the Peary 1909 (F292-294) & Byrd 1926 records for decades enabled the long survival of two grand exploring frauds, and doubtless such willing aid to establishments helped Bowman onto the board of AT&T (chief stockholder: the Grosvenor family that ran NGS), the sort of connection that presumably paved the way to his 1935 appointment as President of Johns Hopkins University. He suppressed leftist dissent at JHU for a decade and a half before retiring, with the suggestion (reported to DR by old hands at the *Baltimore Sun*) that the ideal successor would be a Baltimorean, a Johns Hopkins graduate (class of 1926, just ahead of Lou Rawlins' class of 1927), and a pure WASP: no other than Alger Hiss! W.Chambers' testimony revealing Hiss as a Soviet spy broke in time to head off potential public announcement, but the private disappointment may've weighed on Bowman, who died early in 1950. But he wasn't without humility: when asked to help carve up Europe after WW2, he wondered aloud why anyone would seek wisdom from those who bungled the post-WW1 1919 carving at Versailles.

F8 RX ☉8 notes that, after the *Jo Ford* returned, Byrd didn't right away say he'd navigated by sunshots via sextant — possibly hoping at first that he might get by with a dead-reckoning location of the North Pole? (Which is how he estimated reaching the vicinity of the South Pole in 1929.) This point connects with another oddity of Byrd's 1926 account: he reported (BB399-401) that his sextant had fallen and broke just after the *Jo Ford* had turned south, thus halving the number of sextant data that he needed to report. So here we must believe a string of unlikely happenstances:

⁸A half-century ago, after initial frostiness, I became friends — due to a burglary, of all things — with Explorers Club archivist Mabel Ward, formerly Bowman's AGS secretary. After Bowman left AGS to become Johns Hopkins University Prez, he wrote her a recommendation of her merits, and this, given Bowman's high eminence, was her most valued document. But shortly after Bowman's death, a burglar got into her apartment and stole her box of private papers. While researching the Bowman Papers at JHU two decades later, I ran across a copy of the recommendation and made a photocopy, thinking it might have a little sentimental interest for her. During my next visit to the Explorers Club, I slid a copy onto her desk and got more than I expected. She dropjaw-exclaimed: *HOW* did you *GET* this?! (Maybe she thought for a moment that I'd been the burglar?) After I told her it was just a byproduct of research she was so grateful that she recalled plenty about the personality of the highest archon among those "academics" who, for careerist priorities, suppressed for the better part of a century the truth of National Geographic's polar hoaxes. Two oddities among her recollections: he once boasted to her of having just burned a copy of Rabelais on his home hearth as a dirty book. And whenever receiving by mistake a letter addressed to anything like "Isidor Berman" he was farked for the day. Ever since hearing this, I've tweaked Bowman's shade by calling him Izzy.

⁹Though you'd have hardly known of European doubts of Byrd's Pole-attainment from reading the US' Free snicker Press. The *New York Times* even tampered with the text of a 1926/5/28 London *Times* story, to kill verbiage that was insufficiently rock-certain of Byrd's success: RX ☉8.

[1] The ever-provident (BB207&229&449) explorer had placed his most precise navigational instrument in a precarious spot, at the moment of his life when he was most dependant on it. [2] The instrument happened to fall. [3] It would happen to hit the floor such that it would break. [4] He never thought to bring along a 2nd sextant though (RX ⊙5) he had at least two available — and (RX ⊙8; BB401) he took off for the Pole with 2 sun-compasses, 3 magnetic compasses, at least that many chronometers. And, after all, 3 engines — precisely because (RX§B4; G55-56; BB218&269&435) he believed in fail-safe backups.

G Time-Travel Imprimatur: Date-Doctoring Covers for Data-Doctoring

G1 BB362 says that, regarding Byrd's 1926 North Pole flight, "The imprimatur of the National Geographic Society ensured the popular acceptance of Byrd's claim" — so we should examine just how careful NGS' exam was. The truth is that NGS never even had a chance to reject Byrd's claim. Before it or anyone had seen a digit of his data, a moguls-backed celebration was underway in New York City (RX ⊙17), starting the morning of 1926/6/23, honoring Richard Byrd — brother of Virginia's Governor, Harry. (Their parents had three boys: Tom, Dick, & Harry!)

G2 The NGS report appeared in the 1926 September *National Geographic* — with two tiny deletions: the dates. What was the point? Simple: to hide the fact that NGS' gold medal was given Byrd by President Coolidge the evening of 1926/6/23 at NGS, while its (rushed thus flawed)¹⁰ alleged verification "in every particular" (RX§M4) of the Byrd report's data wasn't completed (RX§M & ⊙17) until 1926/6/28! Indeed, it is unclear (RX§M5) whether ANY meaningful exam had been accomplished before the medal was given the night of 6/23, since the report was completed on 6/28 (so signed by NGS' rulers: G141) after "devoting five consecutive days to the work" (G141; RX§M4), but that tells¹¹ us the real exam started 6/24, the day *after* the medal was awarded. Nothing of NGS' time-travel and document-doctorings appears in *Race*.

H How Could Byrd's Soul Steal Credit from Genuine Discoverers Amundsen, Ellsworth, & Nobile?

H1 How did an ethically-bred gentleman end up hoaxing the world? Potential partial answers: a combination of debt (F262; BB278&286&426), ambition (BB195&221), & belief (F270; BB367) that hiding data was justified in the cause of promoting aviation. And Byrd. His conscience might be assuaged by the thought (RX§A9) "that he and the airplane were the scientific future of polar exploration, while the legendary Amundsen (like his dirigible) was the past."

H2 Byrd wrote (BB444) "the unconquerable spirit of man's soul . . . will not admit defeat." When the *Jo Ford* fell short of the North Pole, he&NGS didn't.

References & Abbreviations

BB = Sheldon Bart 2013. *Race to the Top of the World* Wash DC.

Bowditch = *American Practical Navigator* (perennial).

Rob't Bryce 1997. *Cook & Peary: the Polar Controversy, Resolved*,¹² Stackpole Books.

TA, TB, TC, TD = Byrd 1926 Navigation Report typescript, 4 versions 1926/6/22-1926/11/24.

BS = Richard E. Byrd, Jr. 1928. *Skyward* [Ghosted by Fitzhugh Green] NYC.

D = Byrd 1925-1927 Diary (Ohio State U Archives) pre-printed pagination.

d = same document, but counting pages in reverse from back (no printed pagination).

G = Raimund Goerler 1998. Ed. *To the Pole*, Ohio State Univ.

MM = Wm Molett 1998. *Mercator's World* (Mar-Apr):58.

MO = Richard Montague 1971. *Oceans, Poles, & Airmen*, NYC.

NARA = US National Archives & Records Administration, Wash, DC.

PA = Jos. N. Portney 1973. *Navigation: J. Inst. Nav.* 20.3:208.

PB = Jos. N. Portney 1992. *Navigation: J. Inst. Nav.* 39.2:255.

F = D. Rawlins 1973. *Peary at the North Pole, Fact or Fiction?*, Wash, DC.

RS = D. Rawlins 1991. DIO 1.1 †4 www.dioi.org/j114.pdf

RT = D. Rawlins 1994. DIO 4.3 †12 www.dioi.org/j43b.pdf

RU = D. Rawlins 2000a. *Polar Record* 36:25-50.

RX = D. Rawlins 2000b. DIO 10 www.dioi.org/vols/wa0.pdf

¹⁰Various NGS errors detailed at RX Fig.1 comments & ⊙17. The NGS report's merit: *ibid* ⊙4.

¹¹Wed (6/23), Thu (6/24), Fri (6/25), Sat (6/26), Sun (6/27), Mon (6/28): six days, not five. G141 displays a photocopy of the NGS report where we can compare the contradictory statements: "five consecutive days" vs "examination began at 10 a.m. on June 23 and ended at 5 p.m. on June 28." US Coast&Geodetic Survey Director E.Lester Jones dated the typed report by hand (G141): "June 28 1926". (Not the 1st time USC&GS took pseudo-data too seriously: see www.dioi.org/hay.htm#sctc.)

¹²An admirably super-complete index to *Cook & Peary* is available from Bryce; email beeabo@gmail.com.