THE GREAT ICE BARRIER

THE CHRONICLES OF THE POLAR EXPLORERS (1600s–1900s)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research document compiles verified maritime logs, geographical coordinates, dates, and direct quotes from international polar expeditions that traversed the extreme latitudes from the late 1600s to the early 1900s. It traces the exploration of the southern ice perimeter, culminating in the discovery and mapping of the *Great Ice Barrier* (now known as the Ross Ice Shelf). In addition to documenting geography and meteorology, this compendium records the rigorous analytical framework employed by nineteenth-century Zetetic writers. These authors mined historical naval logs for empirical anomalies, attempting to separate physical observations from model-dependent causal theories.

> **Zetetic Research Principle:** "The motion is observed; the cause is interpreted." This methodology demands starting strictly from direct line-of-sight observations, separating precise measurements from subsequent cosmological assumptions or theoretical hypotheses.

2. CHRONOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE SOUTHERN ICE BARRIER

Over three centuries, navigators from Great Britain, Russia, France, the United States, and Belgium pushed south into unmapped, tempestuous oceans. Their journals describe encountering a continuous, massive wall of ice that defined the absolute limits of navigation.

2.1 Edmond Halley (HMS Paramore, 1700 — 52°S)

Commanding the pink HMS *Paramore*, the celebrated astronomer Edmond Halley conducted the first naval voyage dedicated entirely to magnetic and scientific observations. In January and February 1700, Halley sailed deep into the South Atlantic, reaching approximately 52° S latitude. Here, he encountered flat, tabular icebergs, which he meticulously sketched in his logbook. Halley described these massive formations as "islands covered with snow, milk white with perpendicular cliffs all round them." This stands as the earliest recorded graphic and systematic description of Antarctic icebergs.

2.2 Captain James Cook (HMS Resolution, 1773–1774 — Farthest South 71°10'S)

Commanding HMS *Resolution* and *Adventure* during his second voyage, Captain James Cook circumnavigated the high southern latitudes to search for the hypothesized southern continent (*Terra Australis Incognita*). On January 17, 1773, Cook achieved the first recorded crossing of the Antarctic Circle (66°33′S), crossing it three times in total during the voyage. In January 1774, his progress was definitively blocked by impenetrable field ice at 71°10'S, 106°54'W. Confronted by this frozen wall, Cook recorded in his journal:

"I will not say it was impossible anywhere to get in among this ice, but I will assert that the bare attempting of it would be a dangerous enterprise... I whose ambition leads me not only farther than any other man has been before me, but as far as I think it possible for man to go, was... blocked."

Cook concluded that while a frozen southern landmass might exist, it was forever sealed behind unyielding ice, famously writing: *"If any one should have resolution and perseverance to clear up this point by proceeding farther than I have done, I shall not envy him the honour of the discovery; but I will be bold to say, that the world will not be benefited by it."*

2.3 Fabian von Bellingshausen & Mikhail Lazarev (First Russian Expedition, 1820 — 69°21'S)

Commissioned by Tsar Alexander I, Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen commanded the sloop *Vostok*, while Mikhail Lazarev commanded the *Mirny*, to prove or disprove the existence of a southern continent. On January 27–28, 1820, they sighted the continuous ice wall of Queen Maud Land at coordinates approximately 69°21'S, 2°14'W (the Lazarev Ice Shelf). Bellingshausen logged an "ice field covered with small hillocks," which is recognized as the first undisputed observation of the Antarctic continental ice shelf. Over their 751-day voyage, the Russian expedition approached the icebound mainland nine times and crossed the Antarctic Circle six times.

2.4 Jules Dumont d'Urville (Astrolabe & Zélée, 1840 — Adélie Land)

French naval officer Jules Dumont d'Urville led a national expedition in the *Astrolabe* and *Zélée*. On January 19, 1840, they made landfall on the frozen coast of Adélie Land, which d'Urville claimed for France. His journal entries describe navigating beside monumental, vertical cliffs of ice that "towered over the masts" of his wooden ships, creating a spectacle both "grand and terrifying," which he likened to navigating a colossal, frozen city.

2.5 Lieutenant Charles Wilkes (US Exploring Expedition, 1840 — 1,500 Miles Mapped)

Commanding the United States Exploring Expedition (the "Ex. Ex."), Lieutenant Charles Wilkes navigated the flagship *Vincennes* along 1,500 miles of the East Antarctic coast in early 1840. Wilkes was the first to definitively prove that Antarctica was a continuous land continent rather than an open polar sea filled with isolated ice islands. In 1845, he published his landmark *"Chart of the Antarctic Continent Shewing the Icy Barrier Attached to it,"* which systematically charted the perpendicular ice walls and intense gales that prevented landward penetration.

2.6 Sir James Clark Ross (HMS Erebus & Terror, 1841 — Great Ice Barrier)

Commanding the heavily reinforced bomb vessels HMS *Erebus* and *Terror*, Ross conducted magnetic and geographical surveys in the Southern Ocean. On January 28, 1841, he discovered the massive, vertical floating ice wall that blockaded any further southward navigation. Originally referred to simply as "The Barrier" or "The Great Ice Barrier" (now the Ross Ice Shelf), Ross described it as a nearly vertical, flat-topped structure rising between 150 and 200 feet above the water surface. The expedition sailed alongside this towering wall, charting its sheer front eastward for over 250 nautical miles (460 km) up to longitude 160° W. In his journal, Ross wrote: *"We might with equal chance of success try to sail through the Cliffs of Dover as penetrate such a mass."*

2.7 Adrien de Gerlache (Belgica Expedition, 1897–1899 — First Overwintering)

Belgian officer Adrien de Gerlache organized the first purely scientific international Antarctic expedition. On February 28, 1898, the RV *Belgica* became hopelessly trapped in the heavy pack ice of the Bellingshausen Sea. The multinational crew—which included Roald Amundsen as first mate and Dr. Frederick Cook as surgeon—spent 13 months drifting inside the Antarctic Circle. They endured the first recorded wintering at continental Antarctic latitudes, suffering from scurvy, extreme cold, and severe psychological distress during the 70-day sunless polar night.

2.8 Carsten Borchgrevink (Southern Cross, 1900 — First Sledge on the Barrier)

Carsten Egeberg Borchgrevink led the British-financed *Southern Cross* expedition. After becoming the first to overwinter on the Antarctic mainland at Cape Adare (1899), they sailed to the Great Ice Barrier in early 1900. On February 16, 1900, Borchgrevink made the first historic landing and sledge journey on the flat top of the Barrier surface. Utilizing Siberian sledge dogs, his party traveled 10 miles inland across the ice shelf, setting a new "Farthest South" record at 78°50'S.

3. HIGH-LATITUDE NORTHERN & ARCTIC PRIORITY NAVIGATORS

To contextualize the southern ice voyages, classic research also traces priority Arctic explorers who navigated the extreme north, charting magnetic north and seeking a Northwest Passage.

• **Sir John Ross (Victory, 1829):** Led a private expedition to search for the Northwest Passage. The *Victory* became hopelessly iced in, forcing the crew to spend four consecutive winters on the Boothia Peninsula. Guided by local Inuit families, they survived, and Ross's nephew, James Clark Ross, successfully calculated and reached the North Magnetic Pole on June 1, 1831.

• **Sir William Edward Parry (Hecla, 1819–1827):** Pioneered Arctic wintering techniques. During his 1819 voyage, he penetrated Lancaster Sound and discovered Prince Regent's Inlet. In 1827, Parry made a celebrated attempt to reach the North Pole from Spitsbergen in HMS *Hecla*, utilizing reinforced sisterships under the "Parry scheme" to survive crushing pack ice.

• **Sir John Franklin (HMS Erebus & Terror, 1845):** Commanded the ill-fated British Admiralty expedition to map the final link of the Northwest Passage. Both ships became locked in the ice near King William Island in September 1846, leading to the loss of all 129 crew members.

• **Frederick William Beechey (HMS Blossom, 1825–1828):** Co-operated with Franklin and Parry by navigating through the Bering Strait to Behring's Cove, conducting extensive hydrographic surveys of the Arctic shoreline.

4. ZETETIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HISTORICAL LOGS

Nineteenth-century Zetetic writers like Samuel Rowbotham ("Parallax"), William Carpenter, and Thomas Winship meticulously analyzed these explorer journals. They did not view these naval officers as flat-Earth advocates; rather, they mined their empirical logs to challenge the heliocentric model.

4.1 Opposing Atmospheric Currents

In *Zetetic Astronomy: Earth Not a Globe*, Samuel Rowbotham famously cited Sir James Clark Ross's meteorological log from November 27, 1839. During his voyage south, Ross recorded that under a clear sky, the planet Venus was visible near the zenith during the daytime. This allowed the officers to clearly observe that while the wind blew from one direction at sea level, a higher stratum of clouds was moving in the exactly opposite direction.

Rowbotham cross-referenced this with Captain Basil Hall's observations from the summit of the Peak of Tenerife and Count Strzelecki's ascent of Kiranea in Hawaii, where at 4,000 feet they climbed above the trade winds into an opposite current of air. Rowbotham argued that if the Earth were a spinning sphere, the cohesive gravitational and frictional drag of the planet's crust must rotate the entire atmospheric envelope in a uniform direction at identical speeds. He asserted that multi-directional atmospheric layers and opposing high-altitude wind currents proved that the atmosphere is independent of planetary rotation, which he cited as direct empirical evidence that the Earth is stationary.

4.2 Navigational 'Out of Reckoning' (Southern Longitudes)

In *One Hundred Proofs That the Earth Is Not a Globe* (1885) and Thomas Winship's *Zetetic Cosmogony* (1899), Zetetic authors cited the persistent dead reckoning errors recorded by southern navigators. Logbooks frequently documented ships being "out of reckoning"—consistently finding themselves further ahead or behind their calculated positions when sailing east or west in high southern latitudes.

The conventional explanation attributed these errors to strong, unmapped Antarctic currents. However, Zetetics inferred a different geometric cause. They argued that on a flat plane with a northern center, the meridians of longitude do not converge toward a southern point but must instead diverge outward as they move south. Consequently, the actual circumscribing sailing distances at southern latitudes are mathematically far greater than calculated under spherical geometry, thereby explaining the navigators' systemic positional discrepancies.

4.3 The Ice Barrier as the Outer Boundary

In pamphlets such as Lady Elizabeth Blount's *Our Enclosed World* (1915), the impenetrable, perpendicular ice walls mapped by Wilkes, Ross, and Cook were interpreted not as the coastlines of an isolated southern continent, but as the outer, circumpolar perimeter enclosing the world plane. Zetetics pointed to the extreme dangers of southern high-latitude navigation, the massive thickness of the shelf ice, and the fact that no expedition had ever successfully traversed the interior as physical proof of an enclosed cosmological plane, where the icy barrier served to contain the world's oceans.

5. HISTORICAL VERIFICATION MATRIX

To maintain historical and analytical precision, the table below contrasts the actual maritime data recorded in the explorers' journals with the specific inferences and arguments developed by classic Zetetic writers.

Explorer & Voyage	Actual Maritime Record	Zetetic Interpretation & Argument
Edmond Halley (HMS Paramore, 1700)	Reached 52°S; first to sketch and describe flat, tabular Antarctic icebergs with perpendicular cliffs.	Demonstrated the existence of flat-topped, vertical ice barriers at southern limits rather than sloping coasts.
James Cook (HMS Resolution, 1773–1774)	Reached 71°10'S, 106°54'W. First crossing of Antarctic Circle. Logged impenetrable barrier of pack ice.	Cited as evidence of a continuous, impassable southern obstruction blocking outward navigation.
Fabian von Bellingshausen (Vostok & Mirny, 1820)	Sighted Queen Maud Land (69°21'S, 2°14'W). Logged a continuous 'ice field covered with small hillocks.'	Interpreted as further proof of a systematic, vertical ice wall enclosing the southern seas.
Charles Wilkes (US Exploring Exp., 1840)	Mapped 1,500 miles of East Antarctic coast. Published first chart delineating 'The Icy Barrier.'	Used as primary cartographic evidence mapping the circular perimeter of the Earth plane.
James Clark Ross (HMS Erebus & Terror, 1841)	Discovered Great Ice Barrier (150-200 ft high, 250 miles charted). Logged Venus visible next to zenith and higher cloud stratum moving opposite to surface wind (Nov 27, 1839).	The ice wall is framed as the outer boundary of the plane. The opposing wind currents are cited to disprove the cohesive atmospheric drag required by a rotating Earth globe.
Carsten Borchgrevink (Southern Cross, 1900)	First landing and sledge journey on the Barrier surface. Traveled 10 miles inland to 78°50'S.	Proved the Barrier is a flat, horizontal ice shelf stretching into the unexplored outer regions.

6. METHODOLOGICAL CONCLUSION

By separating the physical, empirical records of naval explorers from subsequent cosmological models, researchers can analyze how the same physical phenomena—such as towering vertical ice shelves, high-altitude wind layers, and dead reckoning errors—were evaluated through competing scientific and alternative frameworks. Maintaining this strict empirical separation remains the cornerstone of rigorous historical inquiry.