

Mary R. Tahan



The Return of the South Pole Sled Dogs

With Amundsen's and Mawson's
Antarctic Expeditions

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Vancouver, BC, Canada

ISBN 978-3-030-65112-1 ISBN 978-3-030-65113-8 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65113-8>

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

To Elena, Gabi, and Ralphie.

*And for all the good dogs—working and
companion.*

Preface

The Continued Accomplishments of the Canine Antarctic Explorers

The 116 sled dogs who arrived in Antarctica with the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition of 1910–1912 enabled Roald Amundsen to become the first human being to reach the South Pole. Of these canine explorers, only 39 returned alive from Antarctica. They had all achieved their important mission; they had made history for humankind; and they had served their purpose for the expedition commander. But their story did not end there. And neither did their astounding heroics, nor did their compelling personal stories. And, certainly, their adventures and interconnected relationships did not cease. These 39 brave Polar dogs went on to face more challenges, accomplish more feats, and help humanity in more ways that extended beyond the initial Antarctic expedition. It is my goal, through documenting their continued adventures and significant story, to help create a new awareness of their far-reaching achievements, to bring about a new realization of their importance, and to effect a new recognition of the tremendous contributions that these sled dogs made to human history.

This book is a detailed continuation of the story of the discovery of the South Pole and the pivotal role that the sled dogs played in it, featured in my previously published book *Roald Amundsen's Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole*, which was the first book to document, trace, name, and identify all 116 dogs who were part of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition, as well as the 17 dogs who actually reached the South Pole. It is the next volume in the documentation of the sled dogs expeditions, and it focuses on the return of the dogs on Roald Amundsen's Norwegian Antarctic Expedition of 1910–1912 from Antarctica, their undertaking of a subsequent Antarctic expedition with Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911–1914, and their additional expeditions and exploration activities, including Arve Staxrud's Norwegian Arctic Rescue Mission of 1913, wherein members of the Herbert Schröder-Stranz German Arctic Expedition were rescued. The book explores how the global field of Polar exploration and the international community of Arctic/Antarctic explorers continued to use and view the sled dogs

as vehicles of geographic exploration, scientific study, promotional publicity, and currency—both as remuneration and as reward. It delves into the surrounding controversy regarding the use of dogs as perceived by the Norwegians, Australians, and British. And it also showcases how Roald Amundsen selected to portray his views about the dogs to the geographical societies and the public, and how he utilized the dogs—both in their lives and their deaths—to propel his career and to solidify his legend and image as the first human to reach the South Pole.

As with my previous book on this subject, I use original source information from personal expedition diaries, letters, and reports to tell the story, as well as newspaper articles, institutional archival documents, news interviews, and my own interviews with descendants of the explorers. This original source material includes the personal diaries and letters of Roald Amundsen, Thorvald Nilsen, the *Fram* crew, and the members of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition and South Pole expedition party, as well as the letters of Roald Amundsen's brother and business manager Leon Amundsen. Also used are the diaries and letters of Amundsen's sponsors, rivals, professional colleagues, and contemporary expedition leaders, including Douglas Mawson, Cecil Madigan, Australasian Antarctic Expedition members, Robert Falcon Scott, John Scott Keltie, Earl Curzon of Kedleston, and Fridtjof Nansen.

The Return of the South Pole Sled Dogs presents the second part of the South Pole expedition history, detailing the ensuing stages in the Norwegian and Australian Antarctic expeditions following the *Fram*'s departure from the Bay of Whales, and describing the roles that the sled dogs continued to play in these scientific and historic endeavors. The narrative follows the Norwegian expedition and its sled dogs on their travels from Antarctica to Australia, where Roald Amundsen makes his major announcement to the world and releases the news of his having attained the South Pole, and then on to Argentina, where Amundsen uses the South Pole dogs as currency for gifts, honor, notoriety, and publicity, as well as plans to utilize them for his planned future expedition to the North Pole. The narrative also describes the return of some of the sled dogs to Antarctica, where they spend a second winter on the continent, working with the Douglas Mawson expedition and assisting his small research crew, and relays their voyage to Australia, where they are given a different kind of reception by the Australian press, Australian institutions, and Mawson's own crew than that which they had received from Amundsen. In addition, the narrative tells the little-known story of two of Roald Amundsen's Antarctic expedition sled dogs, who go on to serve as part of the Arctic rescue mission of 1913, led by the Norwegian Captain Arve Staxrud, and to rescue the German Arctic Expedition of Lieutenant Herbert Schröder-Stranz from its ice-trapped ship near Spitsbergen.

In terms of human and social impact, the book portrays and analyzes how Amundsen used the dogs to further his lecturing career and science persona; how Mawson and his stranded expedition members benefited from the dogs they inherited from Amundsen; how the British viewed Amundsen and his use of dogs, especially after the news of Robert Falcon Scott's demise; and how Don Pedro Christophersen was honored by Amundsen, who used the sled dogs to reward his benefactor for his financial rescue of the *Fram* expedition. Also examined is the propensity for the

explorers to display their sled dogs in exhibitions for the public—either as living specimens in zoological gardens or as the deceased subjects of taxidermy in museums. The final survivors from the South Pole sled dogs are tracked to their various final destinations in Norway and Australia, and a chronological summary is presented for the subsequent series of events that take place in Hobart, Buenos Aires, Adélie Land, London, Adelaide, and Oslo.

The theme of canine-driven Polar exploration, and its uses, achievements, exploitation, and consequences, are undertaken and analyzed in this book, with specific documentation made of the sled dogs' contributions to the Polar expeditions of Amundsen, Mawson, Scott, and Staxrud, in the Antarctic and the Arctic.

The sled dogs depicted in this story are deserving of immense credit and recognition for all that they accomplished. They were courageous animals whose lives were inextricably interwoven with the human explorers who employed them and whom the dogs befriended and protected. This is the tale of the valiant South Pole dogs and their triumphant return from Antarctica, their personal sacrifice for human lives, their reaffirmation of geographic exploration, and their profound place in history. They are—and will always be—the South Pole sled dogs.

Vancouver, BC, Canada
June 2020

Mary R. Tahan

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the National Library of Norway (Nasjonalbiblioteket) in Oslo for access to the Roald Amundsen and South Pole expedition diaries, personal letters, original photographs, and historical documents in the Manuscripts Collection, and for access to the rare photographs in the Picture Collection, with very special thanks to Research Librarian Anne Melgård for her valuable assistance and translations of letters, diaries, and documents. I would also like to sincerely thank Librarian Nina Korbu for assistance and additional translations, Research Librarians and Curators Guro Tangvald and Jens Petter Kollhøj for assistance with photographs in the Picture Collection, Curator Harald Østgaard Lund for visual analysis in the Photo Collection, Film Archivist Tina Anckarman and Stian Rishaug in the Film Section Digital Lab for original film footage still frames I selected, and film preservationist Morten Skallerud for viewing of original footage. I have been fortunate to have seen and read firsthand the original diaries and correspondence of Amundsen, his expedition members, colleagues, and sponsors, and to have viewed Amundsen's photographs, film footage, and lantern slides. My work could not have been completed without the help of these gracious and thoughtful individuals at this prestigious institution, who kindly made all information accessible to me and helped me acquire the documents, material, photographs, and film footage that I sought and needed to use in this book in order to tell this story.

My thanks also go to Dr. Jorge Rabassa, Senior Researcher and former Director of CADIC-CONICET in Ushuaia, Argentina, for recommending and believing in my series of books, and to Juliana Pitanguy, Publishing Editor at Springer International Publishing, for her encouragement and recognition of the significance of the subject matter and the story in these books.

In researching this sequel book, I consulted the archives of many institutions in addition to the National Library of Norway, and wish to also thank the following esteemed colleagues and organizations: The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in London, and their helpful staff, including my first contact Tom McEnroe and the Librarians in the Foyle Reading Room; the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, and its Archivist Naomi Boneham; the British Library in London, and its Manuscripts Librarian Zoe Stansell; the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia in Adelaide, and its Librarian Silvia Muscardin; the Mawson Centre at the South

Australian Museum in Adelaide, and its Senior Collections Manager Mark Pharaoh; and the M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark, and its Librarian & Image Archivist Henriette Gavnholdt Jakobsen.

I wish to also thank The Fram Museum in Oslo, its Director Geir O. Kløver, and its staff; Roald Amundsen's Home (Roald Amundsens Hjem), Follo Museum, Museene i Akershus, and its very helpful Curator Anders Bache; the Polar Museum in Tromsø, in conjunction with the Tromsø University Museum, and its Director Lena Aarekol; and the Maritime Museum of Tasmania Inc, and its Curator Rona Hollingsworth.

My research gave me the opportunity to meet and interview descendants of the expedition members, and I am grateful for my meetings, visits, and correspondence with them. I would like to thank Knut Wisting, grandson of Oscar Wisting, for our enjoyable and interesting conversations together in Oslo, for the family photos and artifacts he showed to me, and for the much-appreciated continued correspondence. And I would also like to thank Mercedes Christophersen, Alejandro Christophersen, and Jorge Eduardo Christophersen, descendants of the Don Pedro Christophersen family, as well as Pía Moreno Campos, for our communications and time together in Buenos Aires, for their great kindness and ongoing interest in this story, and for the original newspaper documents presented to me by Jorge Eduardo Christophersen.

I would like to express my gratitude to Stein Barli, Director of Follo Museum, for opening up Roald Amundsen's Home "Uranienborg" in Svartskog especially to me, not only once, but on two separate occasions, for a private tour, and allowing me to peruse the documents and material in Amundsen's home office and desk, which afforded me a unique insight. A thank you goes as well to Randi Eriksen, the informative guide at Amundsen's Home.

For my visit to the Obersten and South Pole Exhibit, I would like to recognize Holmenkollen Ski Museum, and also express my appreciation for later correspondence with its director Karin Berg. And for use of the Douglas Mawson photograph "Dog sledging: Madigan in front—Home and Away," I would like to extend a thank you to the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Additional thanks go to John Williamson, Head of Humanities at Fahan School in Tasmania and Lecturer at University of Tasmania's *Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies*; J. W. Madigan, Editor of Cecil Madigan's published Antarctic expedition diary; and Elizabeth Leane, Mark Pharaoh, and The Friends of the State Library of South Australia in association with the Friends of Mawson at the South Australian Museum, for facsimiles of the newspaper *The Adelie Blizzard*.

I would like to additionally express my sincere appreciation to Juan Lucci and the *Journal of Antarctic Affairs*, Rodolfo Werner and Agenda Antártica, and Claire Christian and the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, for their demonstrated support and interest in my work.

My gratitude also goes to the following scholars for their interest and encouragement: Harald Dag Jølle, Norwegian Polar Institute in Tromsø; Einar-Arne Driveness, University of Tromsø; and Roald Berg, University of Stavanger.

And, for their moral support and friendship, I am forever grateful to James P. Delgado, Meredith Hooper, Tor Bomann-Larsen, Lynne Cox, and Ronnie Smith.

I would like to thank professional translator Elin Melgård for translations of the expedition diaries, crew diaries, and newspaper articles. And I would also like to thank my other translators, including Pål Kvarving and Tor Rognmo, for translations of source material and original diaries.

Working and researching in Antarctica gave me a unique insight into this history, and I would like to express my thanks to the Dirección Nacional del Antártico (DNA)—the National Directorate of the Antarctic—in Buenos Aires, its former Director Dr. Mariano A. Memolli, and former Cultural Director Andrea Juan, for inviting me to the frozen continent through the artist-in-residence program of the Instituto Antártico Argentino (IAA)—the Argentine Antarctic Institute. The journey via ice cutters, Twin Otters, Zodiacs, and Hercules C-130s, as well as extended time spent living and working on the ice, allowed me to experience the Antarctic continent firsthand, and to imagine the feeling of the unknown that these Polar explorers felt—humans and canines alike.

A thank you goes as well to Mogens Jensenius, M.D., and Janike Rød, who welcomed me into their home and showed me true friendship and Norwegian hospitality.

I would like to express my appreciation to Kyle Gribskov, artist and avid reader, and to Mort Anoushiravani, P.E., Director of Infrastructure, Mercy Corps, for their continued enthusiasm and encouragement regarding my work.

And, last but not least, I would like to thank K.A. Colorado, Olga “Rosette” Tahan, Catherine “Catrina” Tahan-Corpus, and Elena Tahan Molina for their constant support and patience during my long and intense journey to document and tell the untold story of the sled dogs of the South Pole.

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Notes on the Text

Tracing the Return of 39 Sled Dogs from Antarctica

The 116 dogs chronicled in this book and my previous book *Roald Amundsen's Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole* are those who are named and described by Roald Amundsen in his Antarctic expedition diaries, official reports, letters of correspondence, and published book *The South Pole*, as well as those listed in the diaries, letters, and books of Hjalmar Johansen, Oscar Wisting, Helmer Hanssen, Sverre Hassel, Thorvald Nilsen, Hjalmar Fredrik Gjertsen, Olav Bjaaland, Kristian Prestrud, Jørgen Stubberud, Martin Rønne, and other members of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition of 1910–1912. In addition, they include those dogs referenced by members of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911–1914 in their letters, newsletters, and diaries, and by Roald Amundsen's brother Leon Amundsen in his business and personal correspondence. Newspaper articles from that time are also used. I have tracked and compiled all mentions of sled dogs in these diaries, letters, reports, newspapers, and books; have cross-referenced them with each other; and have traced the dogs' names, stories, histories, Antarctic activities, adventures, and ultimate end.

All the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition diaries, most of the letters, and some of the newspaper articles were written in the original Norwegian language, and the passages that relate to the dogs have been translated into English for the purpose of this book.

Roald Amundsen's original diaries, Hjalmar Johansen's original diaries, and all other Norwegian Expedition source material and historical documents, including official reports and letters of correspondence, used for this book, are housed at the National Library of Norway in Oslo, in the Manuscripts Collection, to which I was given access.

The other expedition members' diaries, consulted for this book, are printed and published in the Norwegian language by The Fram Museum in Oslo.

Most of the published book accounts written by the expeditioners themselves and referenced in this book were originally published in English and/or Norwegian.

Amundsen's expedition photos, which I have also consulted for identification and description of the dogs, are kept in the National Library of Norway in Oslo, in the Picture Collection.

Passages quoted from letters of correspondence and official documents housed at the National Library of Norway, in the Manuscripts Collection, were kindly translated for the author by the Research Librarian.

Translations for passages from Roald Amundsen's and Hjalmar Johansen's original diaries, housed at the National Library of Norway in the Manuscripts Collection, were provided by the author's professional translators as well as the Research Librarian.

The names, numbers, descriptions, and text quoted from Amundsen's and Johansen's expedition diaries—especially the dogs' names—are taken from the original diaries, housed at the National Library of Norway, in order to ensure accuracy.

The written Norwegian language used by Amundsen and Johansen is an old Norwegian style that was painstakingly translated; Johansen's idiomatic style and colorful vernacular were apparent throughout his diary entries, and Amundsen further added to the challenge by spelling some of his words incorrectly as well as phonetically. Some of the quoted passages, translated from the original diaries, have been paraphrased by the author in order to best convey the meaning and interpreted intent.

The rest of the crew diaries, published in the Norwegian language by the Fram Museum and consulted for content, were translated for the author by a professional translator.

Certain original documents by Australian, British, and other Norwegian explorers were also used to tell this story, including letters and diaries from the Douglas Mawson expedition, the Robert F. Scott expedition, the Royal Geographical Society leadership, Fridtjof Nansen, and some of Amundsen's colleagues and sponsors.

Newspapers from Argentina have been translated from the original Spanish.

Identifying the dogs who made the actual South Pole trek was a sleuthing endeavor that required comparing and compiling all the accounts written by the expedition members, reading letters written by other individuals after the return of the expedition, and then fitting all the pieces of the puzzle together, thus determining who made it to the South Pole and who returned.

Similarly, identifying the 39 dogs who returned from Antarctica required matching their names and descriptions in the diary entries, personal correspondence letters, newspaper articles, and other documents.

Some of the dogs' names referenced in the original source material were listed in a multitude of spellings—sometimes by the very same person—and are given in this text in their most popular spelling, with a note about their variations. Definitions of the names are also given in the text whenever possible.

The city names given in the text include the names used at that time, during the early 1900s, and the names by which they are called today: Flekkerö is Flekkerøy Island, Christiansand or Christianssand is Kristiansand, and Christiania or Kristiania is Oslo. The Antarctic's Great Ice Barrier is today called the Ross Ice Shelf. Both

the terms “sledges” and “sleds”, used by various expedition members and in various source materials, refer to the vehicles pulled by the sled dogs or sledge dogs.

It is my belief that a significant understanding of the strategy used to discover the South Pole can be obtained through reconstructing the role that the animals performed in this historic feat. By naming, identifying, and relaying the individual accomplishments of the sled dogs, recognition of these beings is rightfully given, and the story is told in its true totality.

It is also evident, through the research contained in this book, that the sled dogs’ work did not end with the discovery of the South Pole, but that it continued after their return from Antarctica. These animals contributed to both the comprehension and promotion—as well as expansion—of geographical exploration, through a study of their role and presence on this expedition. Some of them also participated in new expeditions to pursue science and to save lives. For these reasons, it is important to tell their story in its entirety, and to continue the documentation that brings due acknowledgement to the achievements of these sled dogs.

Mary R. Tahan

Chapter 1

Introduction: Roald Amundsen and the Sled Dogs



Abstract This introduction is a brief summary of the state of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition of 1910–1912, as of January 26, 1912, following the return of Roald Amundsen, his sled dogs, and his party from the South Pole—where they had been the first to reach that coveted geographical destination—and just prior to the preparation for their departure from Antarctica. The chapter summarizes highlighted points from the author’s first volume of this history, *Roald Amundsen’s Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole*, and prepares the reader for the second part of the story.

January 1912: The Final Pull

At the edge of the Great Ice Barrier, along the icy sea terrain known today as the Ross Ice Shelf, the ice-anchored Polar vessel *Fram* received its passengers, from whom it had been separated for nearly a year (Tahan 2019).

Up the side of the ship, one by one, were hoisted 39 canine explorers, each dog’s four legs flailing as the winch carried them vertically along the hull and onto the deck. Seeing them dangle helplessly and endearingly above the ice, one could imagine their hanging by their harnesses over yawning ice crevasses, for they had just accomplished the never-before accomplished: They had helped discover the South Pole. Indeed, 11 of them had been to that very Pole. Now they and their wintering party of 9 men boarded their ship once more to sail back to society and to proclaim the momentous news. They had more than satisfied their commander. They had exceeded the expectations of the famous Polar explorer. They had pulled him to greatness, and now they were being pulled up onto the ship and to the destiny and destinations that awaited them. For the future—and their history—still lay before them, there, beyond Antarctica.

September 1909: The Quest for Greenland Dogs

As researched and documented in the first volume of this written history, *Roald Amundsen's Sled Dogs: The Sledge Dogs Who Helped Discover the South Pole*, dogs were the key to Roald Amundsen's success in attaining the South Pole and achieving the historical feat of becoming the first human to step foot at the southern axis of the Earth (Tahan 2019). It was the husky dogs who led him there and who made his triumph possible.

One hundred good Greenland dogs were purchased by Roald Amundsen from the Royal Danish Greenland Trading Company in Copenhagen, Denmark in September 1909, ostensibly for a North Pole expedition, but secretly to use to reach the South Pole. Amundsen knew that his success relied upon utilizing sled dogs, and Greenland dogs, in his informed opinion, were the finest to accomplish the work he envisioned.

Amundsen considered these dogs his expedition's "equipment". He was an extremely complicated character in a very different time. And he compulsively pursued his mission. His actions perhaps are seen differently from the twenty-first century perspective and in light of evolving attitudes toward animals, especially dogs. But his single-minded quest at that time was to reach the South Pole employing Greenland dogs. The dogs indeed would bring about the realization of Amundsen's exploration goal and would help humankind discover the final undiscovered part of our world. They would, however, pay the price for their accomplishments.

The procurement of dogs was made under the administration of Inspector Jens Daugaard-Jensen, and 100 of the best dogs on the West Coast of Greenland were sought and purchased. They came from the three districts of Egedesminde, Godhavn, and Jakobshavn—known today by their Greenlandic names as Aasiaat, Qeqertarsuaq, and Ilulissat. The dogs who were selected were each between the ages of 2 and 3, and a percentage of 90% males and 10% females was allocated for the group—although, in actuality, the actual percentage of the dogs that were female was approximately 16%. The 100 dogs were transported from Greenland to Norway the following year on the Danish steam ship *S/S Hans Egede* during an approximately 2-week summer voyage that proved rough and turbulent. The exhausted and weary dogs were offloaded at Flekkerö (Flekkerøy) Island near Christianssand (Kristiansand) on July 18, 1910, and were housed in the ruins of a medieval fortress called Fredriksholm. Two of the dogs had perished *en route*, and one perished soon after arrival, and so 97 dogs dwelled on the island awaiting their destiny.

August 1910: The 97 Sled Dogs of the Expedition

The sled dogs' names, which would be given to them by Amundsen and his crew after they had boarded the ship, were (Author's research presented in Tahan 2019): Fix (also Fiks), Lasse (also Lassesen), Snappesen (also Snuppa), Rasmus, Jens, Ola, Tor (also Thor), Odin, Uranus, Neptune, Maren, Katinka (also Tinka), Mylius, Ring,

Zanko, Hök, Togo (also Tago), Hai (also Haika), Rap, Helge, Bone (also Bona), Lolla (also Lola), Obersten (“The Colonel”), Majoren (“The Major”), Suggen, Arne, Adam, Brun (“Brown”), Lurven (also Lurvaroff), Per, Hans, Bella (also Bolla), Tomm (also Tom), Mikkell, Ræven (“The Fox”), Mas-Mas (also Masmass), Else (also Elisa), Balder, Svartflekken (“The Black Spot”), Peary (after Robert Peary), Svarten (“Blackie”), Suvarow (also Suvaron), Ajax, Karenius, Sauen (“The Sheep”), Schwartz, Lucy (also Lussi), Sara (also Sarikken), Skøiern (also Skøieren), Mons, Ulven (“The Wolf”), Camilla (also Kamilla), Liket (“The Corpse”), Vulcanus (“Vulcan”), Gråen (also Gråenon), Klöverknekt/Knegten (“Jack of Clubs”/ “The Jack”), Tigeren (“The Tiger”), Uroa (“Always Moving”), Rotta (“The Rat”), Maxim Gorki (after Maxim Gorky), Emil, Skalpen (“The Scalp”, also Skelettet—“The Skeleton”), Hellig, Dæljen, Grim (“Ugly”, formerly Sundbäck), Cook (also Kock, after Frederick Cook), Lazarus, Samson, Kvæn (also Kvajn), Lap (also Lapp), Pan, Gorki (after a Russian), Pus (“Kitty”), Jaala (“Heart”), Olava, Frithjof (also Fridtjof), Idioten (“The Idiot”, also Ideal), Knut, Fisken (“The Fish”), Finn (also Fin), Dødsengelen (“The Angel of Death”), Knud, Ulrik, Kaisa (also Kajsa), Jakob (also Jacob), Isak (also Isaac), Nigger [sic] (only once spelled Niger), Jeppe, Busaren (also Beiseren), Bjørn (“The Bear”), Fuchs, Rex, Hviten (“The White”), Ester (also Esther), Eva, Klokkeren (“The Bell Ringer”), and Aja (Tahan 2019, 55–57).

These canines, soon to be explorers, were chained among the fortress ruins, and were looked after by three of the expedition members as well as by a young girl mentioned in the diary of one of the crewmen as Lolla. The dogs were fed and watered and cared for, but also endured chained captivity, dirt and heat, and an uncertain future. They did not know that soon the Polar vessel *Fram* would come to collect them to travel south to Antarctica, where they would make history.

The men serving on the ship and in the expedition were: Roald Amundsen, captain and commander; Thorvald Nilsen, lieutenant and second in command; Kristian Prestrud, second officer and lieutenant; Hjalmar Fredrik Gjertsen, first mate; Fredrik Hjalmar Johansen, veteran Polar explorer and former captain; Helmer Hanssen, lead sledge dog driver and ice pilot; Sverre Hassel, expert sledge dog driver (boarded at Kristiansand); Olav Bjaaland, champion skier; Jørgen Stubberud, carpenter and crewman; Oscar Wisting, veterinarian and sledge driver; Adolf Henrik Lindstrøm (Lindström), steward/cook and zoologist (boarded at Kristiansand); Martin Rønne, sail-maker; Andreas Beck, ice pilot; Ludvik (Ludvig) Hansen, ice pilot; Oscar Eliassen, crewman (discharged at Kristiansand); Knut Sundbeck (Sundbäck), first engineer (joined at Kristiansand); Jakob (Jacob) Nødtvedt, second engineer; Anders Sandvik, assistant cook (departed in Madeira); Karinius (Karenius) Olsen, ship’s cook; Halvardus Kristensen, third engineer; Adolf Schrøer, oceanographer (departed in Bergen); and Alexander Kutschin, oceanographer.

And, so, Amundsen began his Norwegian Antarctic Expedition of 1910–1912 with 97 sturdy canine souls, who were taken aboard the *Fram* near the coast of Christianssand (Kristiansand), in Southern Norway, on August 9, 1910. He admonished his crew to place the dogs as their priority, for they were the key to reaching the expedition’s goal. And so the crew’s lives revolved around feeding and caring for the sled dogs in addition to making the voyage.

Through births and deaths on the ship during their 5-month journey south, the dogs' number swelled to 116 upon arrival in Antarctica. They were tended to by the 20—then later 19—men of the expedition on board the vessel. Adult dogs and newborn puppies alike withstood the roller-coaster ride of the *Fram* on the ocean waters, the heat of the tropics near the equator, the incessant rains that were their enemy, and the freezing winter of Antarctica. Taking into account the birth of puppies on the ship and at their Antarctic home Framheim, the actual number of dogs involved in this significant moment in history more than doubles to far exceed 200. But, after initially nurturing and protecting the dogs, Amundsen proceeded to cull them throughout the expedition, slaughtering those he deemed unnecessary or weak, and destroying those who had served their purpose. He began by drowning the female puppies born on the ship—all but one—and keeping the male puppies born on the ship—all but four.

Of the 81 puppies born on the *Fram*, 50 were killed by Amundsen and his crew—46 of them female, and 4 of them male, all of whom were tossed over the ship's rail and into the open sea—thus leaving 31 puppies who were allowed to live. Most of these male puppies thrived, but 8 of them died from an illness, attack, or accident. This brought the number of surviving puppies to 23—with only one of them being female.

Of the 97 adult dogs taken on the sea voyage, 4 died—Klokkeren from an unknown sickness, Eva from exhaustion after giving birth, and Maren and Balder from being swept overboard. This brought the number of adult dogs to 93.

Together, the 93 adult dogs and 23 young puppies made up a community of 116 dogs aboard the *Fram*.

December 1910: The 23 Puppies Born on the *Fram*

As of the end of December 1910, just prior to seeing their very first iceberg, the Norwegian Expedition had welcomed 23 new puppies on board their ship, born to most of the 16 female adult dogs aboard the *Fram*.

The puppies' names and identities were (Author's research presented in Tahan 2019): Kamillo (also Camillo, after his mother Camilla/Kamilla); Funcho (also Funko, after birthplace Funchal, born to Maren); Madeiro (after birthplace Madeira, born to Maren); Lillegut/Smaaen (also Småen, "The Little One", "Little Boy", or "The Small One", possibly Katinka's); Kaisagutten (also Kaisegutten, "Kaisa's Boy", most likely after his mother Kaisa); Sydkorset ("Southern Cross", most likely after the ship *Southern Cross* in the British Antarctic Expedition of 1898–1900, possibly born to Bella); Storm (born during a storm at sea, to Else); Lussi (also Lucy, the only female puppy allowed to live on the *Fram*, most likely born to Lucy); Pasato (possibly born to Sara); Tiril (possibly born to Olava); Lyn ("Lightning", possibly born to Ester); and Sara's, Eva's, Olava's, Camilla's, and Lolla's remaining 12 puppies (males identified by their mothers' names) (Tahan 2019, 201).

January 1911: The Arrival of 116 Sled Dogs in Antarctica

Comprised of 93 adults and 23 puppies, a total number of 116 sled dogs reached the Great Ice Barrier in Antarctica on board the *Fram*, which anchored in the Bay of Whales in January 1911. A death among the puppies on the ship—Tiril, who had been doing poorly and had to be put down—brought the total number of dogs to 115, who by early February all took up their residence in a winter base camp that the adult dogs helped to build. The wintering party of nine men were Roald Amundsen, Kristian Prestrud, Hjalmar Johansen, Sverre Hassel, Adolf Lindstrøm, Helmer Hanssen, Oscar Wisting, Olav Bjaaland, and Jørgen Stubberud. They lost no time putting the dogs to work. Amundsen's team of sled dogs negotiated their very first steps on the Antarctic ice and immediately pulled the first sledge loads of supplies from the ship.

The first sled ride was a precarious one, and a painful one for the dogs, wherein Amundsen fumbled to gain choreography and command, as well as to implement a harnessing technique that was familiar to the dogs. Trial and error ensued, yet the dogs tried to make do, and some attempted to take the lead. The harnessing was the problem. Finally, Amundsen and his men decided on the Greenlandic fan hitch style formation, and the dogs worked well with this.

A spacious wooden house and 14 sturdy tents were erected to house the wintering party—the nine men lived in the house while the dogs lived in nine of the tents. One tent was a dedicated maternity ward and nursery for pregnant females and newborn puppies who would tenaciously pursue life in the frozen desert. The other tents were used to store supplies and food, for which the sled dogs took the men on seal hunts, and a plentiful supply of seal meat was stockpiled to sustain the men and dogs throughout the freezing winter—approximately 60 tons, for which over 150 seals lost their lives. The sled dogs lived together as teams; one team to a tent; and roamed their environs for extra food, play, and companionship. They helped the men around camp and guided Amundsen in the dark nights. The winter base camp, named Framheim, was situated at 78° 38' South.

February 1911: Depot-Laying Excursions and a Disastrous False Start

Three depot-laying tours took place during the autumn months of February, March, and April. These were intensely exhausting and oftentimes fatal excursions for the dogs, who pulled heavy sledge loads of 200 to 300 to 450 kilos in severe weather of -40°C and below, while being allowed only half a kilo of rations per day, and who endured marathon missions that lasted up to 1 month. Amundsen's team, in particular, took on the greatest number of casualties, as he seemed to struggle with his dogs more than the other drivers did, and he whipped them to no end, losing all but one of his dogs during the second depot excursion. Eleven dogs died during the depot tours

as a result of being overworked, being starved, or accidentally falling into a crevasse. These dogs were: Jens, Ola, Rasmus, Tor, Odin, Lurven, Ulven, Emil, Hellig, Cook, and another dog from Jørgen Stubberud's team. They had paid the ultimate price. But they, along with the surviving dogs, had all succeeded in establishing depots at 80° South, 81° South, and 82° South, depositing approximately 3 tons of food and provisions. These three fully stored depots would make the actual trek to the South Pole possible.

Though considered a happy home to dogs and men, Framheim was not without its dangers. Many bottomless crevasses surrounded the camp, through which several of the dogs fell—some of them narrowly escaping, and others never to be seen again. These included Madeiro, Tømm, and Idioten. Other dogs died of illness or were put down to prevent any possibility of disease. These included Jeppe, Dødsengelen, Sydkorset, Jakob, Knægten, and several puppies.

A premature start to the Pole in September, prompted by Amundsen's impatience, was a near catastrophe that almost brought the entire expedition to an end. All of the dogs served on this march, which began too early in the spring in the too-cold conditions of -56°C (-68°F) temperature. Everyone suffered. Amundsen pressed on until he had to admit that it would be better to turn back. Wise in his retreat, he was nonetheless too hasty in racing home ahead of everyone else and nearly caused even more casualties among both the men and the dogs. The premature start claimed the lives of seven dogs, who died from either extreme cold or injury, or who were executed as nuisances. These were: Kaisa, Sara, Adam, Lazarus, and Camilla's three puppies born in Antarctica. The premature start also claimed the relationship of Roald Amundsen and Hjalmar Johansen, the latter becoming *persona non grata* as a result of criticizing the chief publicly. Only one of Camilla's Antarctic-born puppies, born in the winter, in April 1911, survived—he was Stormogulen.

October 1911: The 52 Sled Dogs of the South Pole Trek

Amundsen began his South Pole trek on October 20, 1911 with 52 brave canines, and returned from the Pole with 11 sled dogs, as a result of unnatural, forced attrition. Twenty-four of the dogs were slaughtered in a mass killing at Butcher's Shop, after having successfully taken the men over the mountain peaks and to the Polar plateau. They were butchered not because they were weak, but because the men had intentionally not brought enough food for them, using them as motive power to climb the mountains and then as nutrition to feed to the remaining dogs. The men themselves ate two of the dogs, not out of necessity but for a change of diet.

Frequently throughout the South Pole trek, the dogs were nearly starved; at times when they were fed, it was the flesh of their fallen comrades they were given to line their empty stomachs. And yet the dogs all performed their roles brilliantly, even when death was their reward. They climbed and pulled their sledges up along the Transantarctic Mountains, reaching approximately 11,000 feet in altitude. They pulled heavily loaded sledges weighing over 400 kg. They worked and toiled in

freezing temperatures that sometimes dipped to -28° Celsius. And they traveled countless numbers of miles. The surviving South Pole sled dogs who returned to Framheim traversed 1,860 miles over the ice during the South Pole trek alone, trekking diligently for 99 days.

The 52 dogs who began the South Pole trek were: Mylius, Ring, Zanko, Høk, Togo, Hai, Rap, Bone, Uroa, Helge, Isak, Busaren, Tigeren ("The Tiger"), Mikkell, Ræven ("The Fox"), Mas-Mas, Else, Ajax, Knut, Svarten ("Blackie"), Nigger [sic], Ulrik, Bjørn ("The Bear"), Suvarow, Peary, Svartflekken ("The Black Spot"), Obersten ("The Colonel"), Majoren ("The Major"), Suggen, Arne, Per, Rotta ("The Rat"), Uranus, Neptune, Lasse (Lassesen), Fix, Lucy, Rex, Hans, Kvæn, Lap, Pan, Gorki, Jaala, Karenius, Sauen ("The Sheep"), Schwartz, Frithjof, Fisken ("The Fish"), Samson, Fuchs, and Knud. They pulled four sledges and five men—Roald Amundsen, Helmer Hanssen, Sverre Hassel, Oscar Wisting, and Olav Bjaaland—who made up the human contingent of the South Pole party.

Of the 52 dogs who began the trek toward the South Pole, 2 turned back early and remained alive—these were Peary and most likely Fix; 5 were left behind or abandoned the party—these were Neptune, Karenius, Sauen, Schwartz, and Majoren; 24 were slaughtered at Butcher's Shop—these included Zanko, Togo, Høk, Isak, Busaren, Tigeren, Mikkell, Ræven, Mas-Mas, Ajax, Knut, Svarten, Ulrik, Bjørn, Suvarow, Lap, Pan, Gorki, Samson, Fuchs, Knud, Rex, and Hans; and 11 were killed by Amundsen and his men while trekking to, remaining at, and returning from the Pole—these were Bone, Uranus, Jaala, Lucy, Else, Helge, Lasse, Per, Svartflekken, Nigger [sic], and Frithjof.

The 17 sled dogs who reached the South Pole on December 15, 1911 (December 14 when adjusted for the International Date Line) were: Mylius, Ring, Helge, Rap, Hai, Rotta ("The Rat"), Lasse (Lassesen), Obersten ("The Colonel"), Suggen, Arne, Per, Uroa, Svartflekken ("The Black Spot"), Frithjof, Fisken ("The Fish"), Nigger [sic], and Kvæn (Kvæn).

After Helge was slaughtered at the Pole, 16 sled dogs began the return trek from 90° South on December 18 (17), 1911.

The 11 dogs who returned alive on January 26, 1912 were: Mylius, Ring, Rap, Hai, Rotta, Uroa, Fisken, Kvæn, Obersten, Suggen, and Arne. They were the surviving South Pole sled dogs.

November 1911: The 17 Sled Dogs of the Eastern Expedition

A separate and concurrent expedition to King Edward VII Land, made from November 1911 to December 1911, employed 16 sled dogs. These were Vulcanus, Snuppesen, Brun ("Brown"), Dæljen, Liket ("The Corpse"), Camilla, Graaen, Smaaen/Lillegut ("The Small One"/ "Little Boy"), Finn, Kamillo, Maxim Gorki, Pus ("Kitty"), Funcho, Storm, Skøiern, and Mons. They were joined by a 17th dog, Peary, who had returned early from the South Pole trek, and who now worked as part of the Eastern Expedition, led by the three men Hjalmar Johansen, Kristian Prestrud,

and Jørgen Stubberud. The 17 dogs pulled two sledges weighing 600 lb each and loaded with provisions, instruments, medical supplies, and equipment. The Eastern Expedition explored and surveyed the unknown terrain of King Edward VII Land, and all of its members returned to Framheim, safe and alive.

Meanwhile, at Framheim, approximately 35 sled dogs who had remained after the departure of both the South Pole and Eastern Expedition parties had now dwindled down to 11. The missing dogs—adults and older puppies—had been lost by cook and handyman Adolf Lindstrøm and now roamed the ice, not returning to Framheim. They had become inhabitants of Antarctica, and no longer part of the expedition. But the 11 dogs who remained at Framheim helped Lindstrøm keep the house and camp fully provisioned for the return of the Eastern Expedition and South Pole parties. They awaited the return of their fellow sled dogs. And they were there to greet them when the Eastern Expedition and South Pole parties returned.

January 1912: Preparing to Depart from Antarctica with 39 Sled Dogs

And, so, 39 Greenland sled dogs remained as part of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition as of January 26, 1912, the date that the South Pole party returned to Framheim. Of these, 11 had pulled Amundsen and his 4 men all the way to the South Pole and back, 17 had made the first exploration of King Edward VII Land, and 11 had worked at the home at the base camp Framheim.

Roald Amundsen had successfully used sled dogs to attain the South Pole, and these canines would now become part of his communication of this historic feat. But that is not all that awaited the successful sled dogs, for before them lay a future of additional Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, significant global activities, and important events through which they would continue to make an impact on Polar exploration. Their crucial role would further define the geographical and environmental aspects of the world.

But, for now, their ship awaited.

And, so, the return of the 39 sled dogs commences.

DOG CHARTS: Dog Chart 1: The Names of the 97 Greenland Dogs Who Boarded the *Fram* in August 1910

One hundred dogs were taken from West Greenland in late June/early July 1910 via the S/SHans Egede steam ship, to be delivered to Roald Amundsen in Norway for his Polar expedition.

The 97 Greenland dogs who arrived at Flekkerö Island (Flekkerøy) near Christianssand (Kristiansand) in July 1910, later to be boarded onto the Fram and given their names, are:

(All the dogs' names were compiled by the author, through the author's research of source material, including personal letters of correspondence and all Roald Amundsen and Norwegian Antarctic Expedition member diaries)

Fix (also Fiks)

Lasse (also Lassesen)

Snappesen (also Fru Snappesen—"Mrs. Snappesen", and Snuppa; also nicknamed Amalie med kula—"Amalie with the ball")

Rasmus

Jens

Ola

Tor (also Thor)

Odin

Uranus

Neptune

Maren

Katinka (also Tinka and Cathinka; formerly known as Afrodite—after Aphrodite, the Greek goddess)

Mylus

Ring

Zanko

Hök

Togo (also Tago)