

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 61

“Terra Australis”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

Anyone who has ever studied a globe has probably noticed that the distribution of land on our planet is highly unbalanced between the Northern and Southern hemispheres. In ancient times, Greco-Roman thinkers hypothesized that the land masses of the Earth must be balanced, and therefore there must be a large, unknown land mass in the Southern Hemisphere, which came to be referred to as *terra australis*, the Southern Land.

European explorers spent centuries searching for this hypothetical land, at last all but giving up on its existence. But it was out there. It was just very, *very* hard to reach.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 61. Terra Australis.

When Ferdinand Magellan made his voyage to the Philippines as I described all the way back in episode 3, he sailed around South America through the strait we now call the Strait of Magellan. It was widely believed that the land to the south of that strait was also part of *terra australis*. When the Spanish and Portuguese reached New Guinea, this large land mass was suspected of being part of *terra australis*. When Dutch explorers discovered New Holland and New Zealand, these lands were also at first suspected to be part of a vast southern continent.

But as the Age of Exploration progressed, and more and more of the Southern Hemisphere proved to be ocean, the potential size of this hypothetical continent kept getting smaller. In 1615, a Dutch explorer named Willem Schouten rounded Cape Horn, and found that Tierra del Fuego was a relatively small island with a vast ocean to its south. In 1642, another Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman, circumnavigated New Holland and determined that there was an ocean to *its* south. In 1770, the British explorer James Cook explored New Zealand and showed that it was not part of a larger land mass.

From 1772 to 1775, Cook commanded a second expedition to the far south, and in the course of this voyage, Cook circumnavigated the South Pole at pretty high latitudes, becoming the first to cross the Antarctic Circle. He went as far south as he dared, given the icebergs and the

encounters with impassable walls of sea ice. He set a record in voyaging south when he reached 71° 10' S in 1774. Cook's expedition became the first to set foot on the island Cook dubbed South Georgia, after then British King George III. It was a desolate and inhospitable place, but there were lots of seals.

But Cook had made no sighting of any large southern land mass. He did note the existence of fresh water icebergs, and suggested correctly that these could only have come from land. He also reported seeing a white glow, low in the sky to the south. This is a phenomenon known today as "ice blink," and it is caused by sunlight reflecting off a field of ice into the clouds, and then off the clouds again, which makes the light visible at a distance much farther than the ice itself would be visible.

Cook was disappointed that he had not made a major discovery of new lands. He believed, although he could not prove it, that there was some kind of land inside the Antarctic Circle. But given the barrenness of the lands he had discovered, like South Georgia, he also concluded that this land, if it did exist, would be lifeless and perhaps not worth the trouble to discover and explore it.

Back in Great Britain, Cook's evidence of a land mass was regarded as dubious. If there were a continent-sized land mass still lurking somewhere in the southernmost reaches of the globe, it would basically have to be entirely south of the Antarctic Circle, and nearly perfectly circular, if it was going to amount to anything, almost as if someone had perversely designed a perfectly impossible to get to continent. It's hard to imagine such a thing could exist in real life. I mean, what are the odds...?

And so, the Northwest Passage attracted much more attention. At least that held out the hope of a commercially viable trade route between Europe and East Asia. The icy oceans of the far south offered...nothing.

In 1810, a British navigator named Matthew Flinders was among the first to circumnavigate what we now call Tasmania, which until then was the last piece of land known that might still potentially be part of a huge, undiscovered southern landmass. It wasn't. And when he returned to Britain, Flinders wrote a book in which he declared that the ancient concept of a *terra australis* was now demonstrably false. The closest thing to the ancient *terra australis* in the real world, he wrote, was the small continent that included the lands the Dutch called New Holland and the British called New South Wales, and therefore, the name "Terra Australis" was most appropriately applied to this land, although Flinders went on to say that he thought an even better name might be "Australia."

Well, the name stuck, and we call that land Australia to this day. Which is ironic, in view of the fact that just a few years later, Flinders' main conclusion, that the potential existence of a large, undiscovered continent in the far southern reaches of the Earth had been disproven, turned out to be...a little premature.

On January 28, 1820, the Russian explorer Faddey Faddeyevich Bellingsgauzen, or Bellingshausen, if you like, discovered what we now know to be an Antarctic ice shelf. He called it “continental ice,” since no one knew about ice shelves at the time, and you can credit him with being the man who discovered Antarctica, if you’re not picky about the distinction between discovering an ice shelf that extends from the Antarctic mainland, as opposed to discovering, you know, the land.

If you *are* picky about the distinction between discovering an ice shelf that extends from the Antarctic mainland as opposed to discovering, you know, the land, then you might have to credit the Royal Navy Captain Edward Bransfield, who, following up on a report on the discovery of what we now call the South Shetland Islands, came across the Trinity Peninsula, the northernmost tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, and therefore the northernmost point of the Antarctic mainland. He reported sighting two mountains, one of which is today called Mount Bransfield. Bransfield made this sighting on January 30, 1820, just two days after Bellingshausen’s find, which, of course, Bransfield had not yet heard about.

And if you’re an American, you’ll want to give credit to the New England sea captain and seal hunter, Nathaniel Palmer, who discovered the Antarctic Peninsula again the following summer, which is why Americans long have called it the Palmer Peninsula, although I guess Antarctic Peninsula is now the preferred name. The first human being to set foot on Antarctic soil is probably John Davis, another New England sea captain seal hunter, who did so the summer after Palmer’s discovery.

And so Antarctica was discovered, although for decades to come, the best most explorers would do was to each discover a little piece of Antarctic coastline, which is why, if you look at a map of Antarctica, what you mostly see are labels all around the coast, named after or by explorers. Enderby Land. Ellsworth Land. Queen Mary Land. George V Land. Hey, there’s even a Kaiser Wilhelm II Land.

[sound effect: cheer]

Anyway, exploration of Antarctica was limited to this nibbling at the coastline, as it were, and as late as 1895, there were those who speculated that what we were dealing with here might actually be more of an archipelago of large islands in a frozen sea, rather than a true continent.

The Northwest Passage continued to attract more interest and more explorers throughout the 19th century, as we saw in episode 59, although there were occasional investigations of the Antarctic. There were also hunters. Seal hunters and whale hunters, who were mostly British, with the Americans joining in later, who ventured into the Southern Ocean far more often than explorers did.

At first it was the seal hunting that brought them. Pelts from fur seals were a valuable item in London or Boston. It was tricky getting to the fur seals in the far south of the globe, but once you

got there, hunting the seals was child's play. Antarctic seals have no natural predators, and so, when human beings appeared, the curious animals would waddle over to them to investigate. And then the humans would club them to death. Seals were so easy to kill that shooting them was usually considered wasteful. It was much easier to walk up and down the beach and club the seals to death, over and over and over, stopping only when your arm got too tired to lift the club.

The pelts of females and young seals were more valuable, so they would be killed in preference to fully grown males. Needless to say, this kind of hunting is entirely unsustainable. It began in the 18th century, in places like the Falkland Islands and the southern coasts of New Zealand and Tasmania, but the number of fur seals in those places—the easiest ones to reach and the easiest ones to camp out on—quickly collapsed to levels where seal hunting was no longer economical. So the hunters moved to islands farther south. After James Cook returned to London in 1775 and reported large numbers of fur seals on South Georgia, hunters descended on that island. By 1822, after an estimated one million seals were killed on South Georgia, the animals were all but extinct there, and hunters were already venturing farther south, to the South Shetland Islands.

It's entirely possible that some seal hunters had discovered the Antarctic Peninsula before Bransfield and Palmer, although if they did, they kept it quiet for commercial reasons. But it's a possibility.

After the fur seals disappeared, the seal hunters next turned their attention to elephant seals. These larger animals were stronger and more dangerous and harder to kill, but their blubber could be cooked down for valuable oil. One large male elephant seal can be rendered into a barrel or more—that's 55 gallons, or over 200 liters—of high-quality oil, as good as whale oil. And so the seal hunters hunted the elephant seals until they disappeared, too.

And speaking of whales, there was also whale hunting. Whale hunting was a tricky business in the 19th century. I mean, have you ever read *Moby Dick*? Yeah, me either. But I hear it doesn't end well.

At that time, whalers were hunting from small boats rowed with oars and using hand-thrown harpoons. Whales had been known to capsize the boats, even sink the wooden sailing ships they had come from. And even if you got a harpoon into one, it might tow you along for a day or more before expiring, and you would have to ride along and hope you didn't wreck your boat or lose your catch; the so-called "Nantucket sleigh ride."

The preferred whale was the right whale. Yeah, that's what they called them, right whales, as in, the right kind of whale to hunt. Right whales swim slowly enough that humans rowing boats can keep up with them, and they bear a lot of blubber, which can be rendered into whale oil. Sperm whales were also especially sought after, because they bore the mysterious ambergris, a valuable ingredient you don't want to know too much about; suffice it to say that sperm whales have it and perfume makers are willing to pay a lot of money to get some. Whale bones were used to make corsets and umbrellas in the 19th century.

Still, the battle between the hunter and the whale could be seen as something close to a fair fight until 1870, when the balance tipped dramatically in favor of the humans. That was when the Norwegian whaling magnate Svend Foyn (I'm sure I'm pronouncing that wrong) developed cannon-launched explosive harpoons. These weapons, mounted on steam-powered ships, made it feasible to hunt and capture even the largest and fastest whales at much less risk to the crew.

Norwegians joined the British and the Americans in the whaling business, and after Norway became fully independent in 1905, the new nation began exploring and staking out territorial claims in the Arctic and Antarctic. By this time, whaling was a huge business, and the barren and unassuming island of South Georgia, claimed by Britain on the basis of James Cook's landing, became a world whaling center, with multiple settlements on the island for the processing of whale carcasses. In 1909, the British government put South Georgia within the governance of the Falkland Islands, as well as laying claim to the South Sandwich Islands, South Orkney Islands, and South Shetland Islands. Britain in fact claimed all lands and seas south of the 50° S parallel and between 20° and 80° W longitude, based on her explorers' voyages. The major part of Britain's interest in the region was in regulating and taxing whale hunting, though she was also making a territorial claim on Antarctica itself, like a slice of a pie, all the way to the South Pole.

[music: *Phantasie*]

In 1838, a French explorer, Jules Dumont d'Urville, explored a portion of Antarctic coast and named it after his wife, Adélie Land. During this same time, the young United States commissioned a scientific expedition of six ships under the command of the young US Navy Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, known as the United States Exploring Expedition, although it is often called the Wilkes Expedition for short. This was a major undertaking for the still small and new United States, and many naval officers were offered the command declined, which I guess is how a young lieutenant ended up in charge of it.

The Wilkes Expedition spent four years exploring the Pacific and the Southern Oceans, and was a boon to American science. For our purposes today, though, I'll just note that one of the expedition's accomplishments was a survey of some 1,500 miles of Antarctic coastline, a region now known as Wilkes Land. Impressed by this long stretch of unbroken coastline, Wilkes would become the first to describe Antarctica as a "continent."

In spite of the expedition's successes, however, there were some blots on the record. The Wilkes Expedition had come across d'Urville's ship, during its Antarctic explorations, but had sailed on without making any attempt to communicate, which was taken as a snub by the French, leading to some diplomatic tension between the two countries. Wilkes was a harsh commander, too fond of flogging his crew, and the desertion rate got pretty high. Wilkes was also accused, unfairly, of falsifying his maps and of responsibility for the loss of one of the ships. He was court-martialed on his return to the US, and though he was acquitted of the other charges, he was convicted of excessive cruelty to his men.

Wilkes, by the way, is also noted for being the US Navy captain at the center of the *Trent* affair in 1861, when the now-Captain Wilkes stopped the British packet ship RMS *Trent* and forcibly removed two would-be Confederate diplomats on their way to Britain, thus precipitating a diplomatic crisis between the United States and the United Kingdom. It might have led to war, but the Lincoln Administration disavowed responsibility for Wilkes's actions and released the two Confederates to the British, much to the disappointment of Captain Wilkes, who probably would rather have flogged them.

The next expedition to Antarctica, from 1839 to 1843, would be British, and would be commanded by Captain James Clark Ross, already a veteran Arctic explorer. Ross took two specially constructed ships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, specially reinforced to protect against damage from sea ice. And why, yes, you're right, I *have* mentioned these two ships before. They would later convey the ill-fated Franklin expedition, and be lost while exploring the Northwest Passage, as I described in episode 59. But before they went on Franklin's unlucky expedition, they were the ships that carried Captain Ross's much more successful expedition to Antarctica.

Ross sailed south from Tasmania, which put him roughly in the same region of Antarctica that d'Urville and Wilkes had just finished exploring. Ross was reportedly irked that a couple of foreigners would have the nerve to explore what were clearly British waters. Wilkes actually left Ross some charts to help him find his way; the ungrateful Ross complained the charts were inaccurate, which is how Wilkes ended up getting in trouble and a charge of false reporting added to his court martial. (And, just a reminder, Wilkes was acquitted on that charge.)

You can tell just by looking at a map how important Ross's voyage was. He pushed south through what we now call the Ross Sea, and discovered what he named Victoria Land, after the Queen. At the southern end of the Ross Sea, the expedition encountered what Ross named the Victoria Barrier, an awe-inspiring wall of ice that rose straight up out of the water, hundreds of feet in the air, far above the masts of Ross's ships. He called it "a mighty and wonderful object far beyond anything we could have thought or conceived." It was also preventing him from sailing any farther south. As Ross put it, "There's no more chance of sailing through that than through the cliffs of Dover." But Ross had reached a latitude of 78° 10' S, a new record, and one that would stand for 60 years.

I've already alluded to these ice shelves. They are a phenomenon unique to Antarctica. You find them all around the circumference of the continent, but the Ross Ice Shelf, as it came to be called, is the granddaddy of them all. 188,000 square miles it extends. It's about the size of France. These ice shelves are permanent features, although the ice itself is always moving. They are fed from glaciers on the continent and are constantly moving outward. Occasionally pieces of the outer edge break off and become icebergs. Some of these icebergs are the size of small countries.

The expedition also discovered two mountains, which Ross named after his ships: Mt. Erebus and Mt. Terror. Mt. Erebus overlooks an inlet, which Ross called McMurdo Bay, after one of his officers, Lieutenant Archbald McMurdo.

These three expeditions, d'Urville's, Wilkes's, and Ross's, came back with a lot of scientifically interesting information, but the picture of Antarctica was discouraging. There was no plant life, so animal life apart from sea animals like seals and penguins, and any mineral wealth the continent might have was buried under ice hundreds of feet thick. Long-term human habitation of Antarctica seemed out of the question. These facts, plus the intriguing mystery of the Franklin expedition, led to the world focusing its attention to the north, and further exploration of Antarctica was abandoned for some fifty years.

[music: *Phantasie*]

By the 1890s, after steel-hulled, steam-powered ships had replaced wooden, wind-powered ships for good, there was a revival of interest in exploring Antarctica. These new ships would be safer, more reliable, and more comfortable in polar weather. In 1893, our Norwegian friend Svend Foyn, now rich from revolutionizing whale hunting, funded a whaling expedition that landed a shore party on continental Antarctica. Some argue that these men were in fact the first people to set foot on the mainland, although that seems unlikely. The three men who made the landing, however, would spend the rest of their days making competing claims about which one of them was the first one off the boat. Oh, well.

A Belgian expedition visited Antarctica in 1898. The leader of this expedition, Belgian naval officer Adrian de Gerlache, recruited an international team of explorers and scientists, including a 25-year old Roald Amundsen, who, you'll remember from episode 59, would later be the first person to navigate through the Northwest Passage and would fly over the North Pole, but that's still in the future for this young man. Right now, he is embarking on his first polar exploration. After the Belgian expedition's first doctor quit the project, de Gerlache hired an American to replace him, another name you'll remember from episode 59, Dr. Frederick Cook, who, in another ten years, is going to claim to have reached the North Pole and not be believed. That hasn't happened yet, either. Right now in 1898, Cook is already a veteran of one of Robert Peary's explorations and is therefore a seasoned polar explorer.

De Gerlache wanted to winter over in Antarctica, something no human had ever done before. No one else in the expedition wanted to try this, surprise, surprise, but it became a moot point when de Gerlache was too slow about setting sail for home. Their ship got trapped in sea ice and they were stuck. Whether this was an accident or de Gerlache's plan all along is an open question. Either way, it was a risky endeavor, but the expedition did survive, despite problems with scurvy. Dr. Cook urged the men to eat penguin as a dietary supplement, a source of vitamin C. Even Cook admitted that penguins taste awful, but it worked. The expedition survived the

winter, including ten weeks of night, and the following spring, they were able to cut their ship free of the ice and return home.

Cook wrote a popular account of the expedition, and singled out young Roald Amundsen for praise, calling him “the biggest, the strongest, the bravest, and generally the best dressed man for sudden emergencies.” The know-how Amundsen gained from the Belgian expedition would serve him well in the future, like when he tries to sail through the Northwest Passage, and when he tries for the South Pole, which we will talk about next week.

While the Belgian expedition was struggling to survive the Antarctic winter of 1898, a Norwegian named Carsten Borchgrevink, who was one of those three men each claiming to be the first to set foot on continental Antarctica during that previous Norwegian expedition, was spending his time in Britain, raising money for his own expedition to Antarctica. He got it from Sir George Newnes, a wealthy magazine publisher, who had gotten rich by creating a magazine called *Tit-Bits*, which was a sort of Victorian English version of *Reader’s Digest*, and totally not what you’re thinking it is, so get your mind out of the gutter.

Anyway, Borchgrevink’s expedition would be the first to bring sledge dogs to Antarctica. Borchgrevink, nine other men, and 75 dogs would be let off on that same stretch of coast Borchgrevink had visited four years ago from their ship, *Southern Cross*, and they would become the first to construct buildings and winter over on the Antarctic mainland, in 1899. *Southern Cross* would return from Australia in the spring and pick up the nine survivors. (One man had died over the winter, becoming the first human to be buried in Antarctica.) The ship then sailed farther south to investigate the Ross Ice Shelf, discovered 60 years ago and not visited since. They found an inlet in the ice and were able to sail a little farther south than Ross had. The expedition then found a place where there was enough slope to make it possible to climb up onto the top of the shelf, which three of them did. They traveled a few miles farther south on the top of the shelf, reaching 78° 50’ S, a new record.

This expedition returned to Britain and gave a more optimistic assessment of Antarctica’s potential. Borchgrevink felt he had proved Antarctica was habitable, and its mineral wealth might some day be reachable. But by the time he had returned, another expedition was preparing to leave, and drawing public attention away from the *Southern Cross* expedition. This expedition would also come to be known by the name of its ship, and be called the *Discovery* expedition, and it would be led by a 33-year old career Royal Navy commander named Robert Falcon Scott.

Life isn’t always fair. The *Southern Cross* expedition, led by a foreigner and funded by an eccentric magazine publisher just didn’t get the public love that the *Discovery* expedition, led by a dashing young Royal Navy officer and funded by the Royal Society, the Royal Geographic Society, and the British government got. The new King, Edward VII, was on hand to see them off when they left England in August 1901. This expedition also approached Antarctica via the Ross Sea, now known to be the water route that reached farthest south. They explored the entire

front of the ice shelf, naming the land at the eastern edge, where the shelf met land again, King Edward VII Land. Scott went up in a hydrogen balloon, to try to gauge how far south the ice barrier extended, but found only that it extended as far as he could see.

The expedition then headed back along the ice barrier to the western end, where it meets Victoria Land, and chose that spot to set up. That's where Mt. Erebus and Mt. Terror stand, overlooking McMurdo Bay, which is where they chose to settle in. Only, they found that the two mountains are not part of Victoria Land; they actually form a separate island, which they named Ross Island, and McMurdo Bay was renamed to McMurdo Sound, and McMurdo Sound has been the favored point of access to interior Antarctica ever since.

When spring came in November, a party consisting of Scott and two other men plus sledges and dogs, climbed onto the ice shelf with the intention of traveling as far south as they could, to the Pole if possible. Unfortunately, none of them had much experience working with sledge dogs, and it didn't work out so well. The ugly truth about using dogs in a polar expedition, which I have been keeping from you until now, is that part of the strategy is that as you use up supplies and your load gets smaller and lighter, you begin killing the weaker dogs and feeding their meat to the others to keep them going. Yeah, Scott didn't like that, either. And there seems to have been friction among the men. They became the first to cross the 80° S parallel and reached as far south as 82° 17' S, about 530 miles from the South Pole. A combination of bad weather, illness, disagreements, trouble with the dogs, and a looming mountain range forced them to turn back. On the way back, the last of the dogs died and one of the men, Ernest Shackleton, got too sick to pull a sledge. So all in all, a disappointment.

A relief ship came with supplies, but *Discovery* was frozen in a huge field of ice, and the decision was taken to stay over a second winter, 1903, although some members of the expedition were sent home, including Shackleton, who had wanted to stay, but was not allowed to.

After weathering the winter of 1903, Scott and a small party embarked on a second journey, to climb the mountain range along the coast of Victoria Land and see what lay beyond, and to take a stab at reaching the South Magnetic Pole. They didn't manage that, but they were the first people to reach the Polar Plateau that lies behind the mountain range. You see, it turns out that the interior of Antarctica is mostly one huge plateau that rises 8-12,000 feet above sea level, which is part of what makes Antarctica so inhospitable. If polar weather isn't cold enough for you, you're in luck; it's polar weather at a high elevation, with all that implies: thin air, even colder, and roaring winds.

They also discovered a couple of dry valleys, "dry" in the sense of "no ice," which is rare in Antarctica, but occasionally the mountains shield the land from the snow and the glaciers and it actually allows bare soil to show. One of the men declared these valleys "a splendid place for growing spuds," which was perhaps a trifle optimistic.

It had been a punishing trip, and the three men had almost lost their way, in which case, I would now be telling you about how they were never heard from again. Still, this second overland expedition managed to cover 700 miles round trip, at a much better pace than last year's attempt to reach the South Pole, and they had done it without dogs, using sledges they dragged along themselves. Scott was satisfied with the outcome, although perhaps he should not have been, because the trip had been demanding and dangerous, but from this experience, Scott concluded that human-drawn sledges were the way to go, and would abandon the use of dogs.

The expedition had also experimented with cross-country skiing, but Scott also gave up on that. Understand that at this time, cross-country skiing was practically unknown outside of Scandinavia, and in its more common form, it involved propelling yourself along through the snow with one long pole, as opposed to using two shorter ski poles, one in each hand, as is the prevailing method today. Scott and his men experimented with this one-pole method, and Scott judged it not worth the trouble.

Discovery was still locked in ice the second time the relief ships came, but this time there were two ships, and Scott's orders were to end the expedition and come home, even if they had to abandon their ship. As it turned out, though, Scott and his men did manage to free *Discovery*, and all three ships returned home in 1904.

Scott was hailed as a hero. The *Discovery* expedition had made a number of important finds, including one I haven't mentioned yet: a fossilized leaf, evidence that Antarctica had not always been a frozen wasteland. There were two disappointments, though. Scott had not been able to reach either the Geographic or the Magnetic South Poles. Those would have been the icing on the cake.

The United Kingdom has had a continuous presence in the southern oceans for nearly a hundred years by now, and some will soon begin to dream of the British Empire claiming the entire continent of Antarctica for its own. Scott might have helped seal the deal on such a claim, if he had managed to conquer the interior of the continent and travel all the way to the Geographic South Pole, but, alas, that didn't happen...not yet.

Scott wrote an account of the expedition, entitled *The Voyage of the Discovery*, which was well-received by the public. Except for one member of the public. That was Ernest Shackleton, and Shackleton was not at all pleased with Scott's account of their failed attempt to reach the South Pole, because he felt that Scott was blaming him for the disappointing outcome.

We'll have to stop there for today. I've heard from some Canadian listeners about last week's episode, and I need to make a clarification and a correction regarding what I said about Canadian currency. I had said that Canada discontinued the practice of putting the Monarch's portrait on its paper currency in 1972. The clarification is that I was speaking only of paper currency. The Monarch's portrait still appears on Canadian coins, as always. The correction is that the Monarch's portrait also continues to appear on the Canadian \$20 bill. So, my apologies for that

error and for any confusion I created. I guess what it all means is that it's been too long since I visited Canada. And obviously, the next time I go, I need to spend more money.

I'd also like to thank Jack and Anthony and Frank for their recent contributions to help keep the podcast going, and whether or not your money has a portrait of the Queen on it, if you have a bit of it to spare, come on by historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and help support the podcast.

Thanks for listening, and I hope you'll join me next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we continue the story of the conquest of the Antarctic, and how not one, but two of the explorers we've already met end up in something like a race for the South Pole. Sadly, it does not all end well. That's next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. There were a few other Antarctic expeditions from other countries in the early years of the twentieth century, and I didn't have time to name every one of them, but I would like to note the German expedition, which took place at the same time as the *Discovery* expedition, and was responsible for discovering and naming Kaiser Wilhelm II Land. The Kaiser funded the expedition, and naming the land after him may have been meant to induce him to fund a second Antarctic expedition. If so, it didn't work. Also at this time was the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, notable for a number of accomplishments, not least of which was a member of the expedition becoming the first human being to play bagpipes on Antarctica. In a kilt, no less.

[music: Closing Theme]