

Richard Sterling Finnie  
28 Eucalyptus Road  
Belvedere, California 94920

10 February 1971

NEW HAMPSHIRE 03755

Prof. Fridtjov Isachsen  
Department of Geography  
University of Oslo  
Blindern 1042  
Oslo 3, Norway

Dear Professor Isachsen:

Although your question was addressed to Dennis Rawlins and my old friend G. R. L. Potter, via the editor of Polar Notes, I thought you would enjoy the enclosed items. I have never been particularly interested in the North Pole controversy, but have been exposed to it to some extent for many years.

You may be interested to know, incidentally, that my late father, O. S. Finnie, was the original director of the Northwest Territories and Yukon administration of the Canadian Government and purchased the papers and maps of Otto Sverdrup relating to the islands he and his party explored during the Fram expedition. This transaction, which took place more than forty years ago, was (as I recall) intended in part to dispose of any claim that Norway might have made to the Sverdrup Islands.

Sincerely,

*Richard S. Finnie*

February 4, 1971

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Sincerely yours,

*Erika S. Parmi*  
(Mrs.) Erika S. Parmi, Librarian  
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February 4, 1971

Mr. Richard S. Finnie  
28 Eucalyptus Road  
Belvedere, California 94920

Dear Mr. Finnie:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter concerning Mr. Potter's and Professor Rawlins' article on Peary. Perhaps you know Professor Isachsen.

The article referred to is a favorable one to Peary. Based on the length of marches made by the Fram expedition and the attention paid to scientific observations, the author believes Peary could have made the long marches claimed. He emphasizes that Peary's only goal was to get there, so he was not slowed down by scientific observations such as those made by the Fram expedition.

I am sure that the Geographical Review is available near your home, if you wish to read the entire article. If not, we will be glad to send you a copy.

Have you received the copies of Polar Notes?

Sincerely yours,

*Erika S. Parmi*  
(Mrs.) Erika S. Parmi, Librarian  
Stefansson Collection



Mrs. Erika S. Parmi  
Librarian, Stefansson Collection  
Dartmouth College Library  
Hanover, N. H. 03755

10 February 1971

Dear Mrs. Parmi:

Thanks for the three copies of Polar Notes, which arrived after your letter of 4 February. I trust that by now Guy Potter has received his six copies, which should please him after so long a wait.

My home is in a suburban community where I am sure no 1929 copy of the Geographical Review is to be found, so I should be grateful for a Xerox of the article in question, as no doubt would be Mr. Potter, whose address is 151 Stanley Avenue, Ottawa 2, Ont., Canada.

I am not acquainted with Professor Fridtjov Isachsen, who is presumably a son of Gunnar Isachsen, or a grandson, in which case he could be expected to side with his distinguished relative pro or con Peary. (I have Sverdrup's two-volume account of the Fram expedition: New Land.)

I have no idea whether Mr. Potter ever saw the 1929 Geographical Review containing Gunnar Isachsen's article, or whether he would recall it now, after forty years, if he did. Anyway, his study and the resulting paper may have been completed beforehand. If you send a copy of the Review article to Mr. Potter, he may enjoy writing to Professor Isachsen about it.

Not being responsible for Mr. Potter's arguments any more than Mr. Rawlins', I won't comment beyond suggesting that even if Peary traveled as fast as he said he did, his navigating was so poor that he could have hit the North Pole only by sheer luck at any speed.

I am confident that Dennis Rawlins will digest the Review article with gusto (if it is new to him) and that he will write to Professor Isachsen without retreating one inch.

This is good fun, and I hope that Messrs. Potter and Rawlins will keep us informed of any developments.

By the way, at a meeting of the Los Angeles group of The Explorers Club last week (we missed the earthquake) I had a brief conversation with Rear Admiral Reid P. Fiala at the suggestion of Dr. E. M. Weyer, who remembered that Fiala's late father -- a distinguished Arctic explorer -- had been sceptical of Peary's North Pole discovery. The admiral confirmed this, saying, however, that his father was a kindly man who chose not to take any public stand against Peary. The admiral recited several of the familiar criticisms, as expressed privately by his father, and then urged me to look up a book by Nansen on the subject. I don't know of it.

Sincerely, *Richard Finnie*