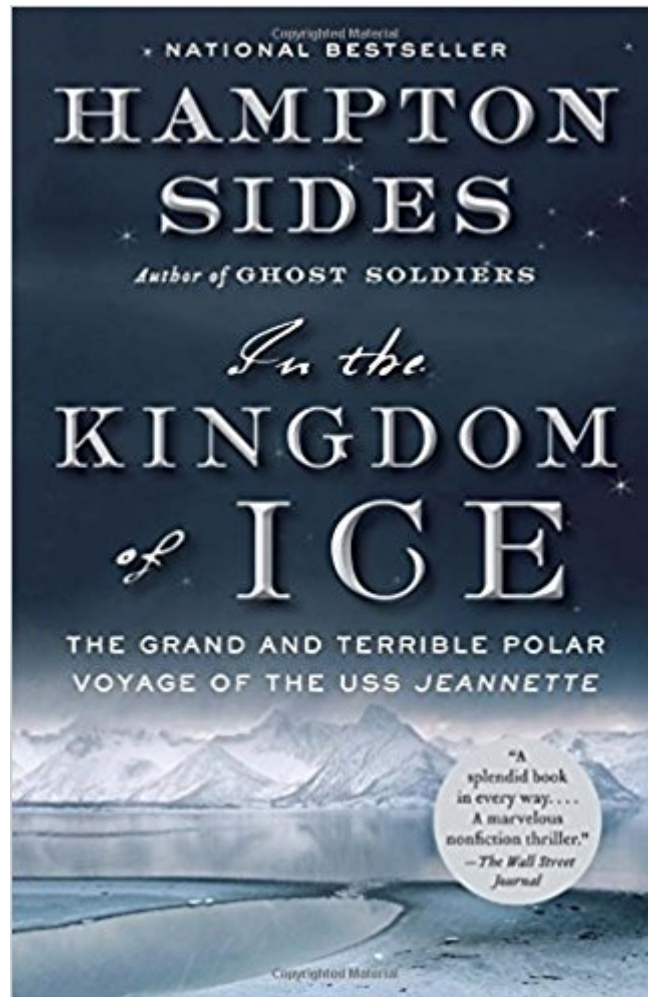


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In The Kingdom Of Ice: The Grand And Terrible Polar Voyage Of The USS Jeannette



Synopsis

A Best Book of the Year USA Today * Time Magazine * Washington Post * Miami Herald * Richmond Times Dispatch * Christian Science Monitor * Daily Beast * Minneapolis Star Tribune On July 8, 1879, Captain George Washington De Long and his team of thirty-two men set sail from San Francisco on the USS Jeanette. Heading deep into uncharted Arctic waters, they carried the aspirations of a young country burning to be the first nation to reach the North Pole. Two years into the harrowing voyage, the Jeannette's hull was breached by an impassable stretch of pack ice, forcing the crew to abandon ship amid torrents of rushing water. Hours later, the ship had sunk below the surface, marooning the men a thousand miles north of Siberia, where they faced a terrifying march with minimal supplies across the endless ice pack. Enduring everything from snow blindness and polar bears to ferocious storms and labyrinths of ice, the crew battled madness and starvation as they struggled desperately to survive. With thrilling twists and turns, *In The Kingdom of Ice* is a spellbinding tale of heroism and determination in the most brutal place on Earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I could not put this book down. This is a detailed historical account of a tragic polar expedition that reads like a psychological thriller novel. Adding to the novelistic flavor are poignant quotes from the journals and letters of the expedition's men and stories about their loved ones waiting for their return. When George Washington De Long, a young naval officer, left the San Francisco harbor on July 8, 1879, commanding the ship "Jeanette," he was already a national hero. Earnest and methodical, he was leading a handpicked, competent, disciplined crew, bound for the North Pole. De

Long and many other explorers and scientists in that era believed that the Arctic ice pack formed only an outer ring, and beyond it was an "Open Polar Sea." This "Open Polar Sea" was thought to be a large, warm water basin, that a ship might sail through right to the North Pole, possibly finding land and inhabitants at the North Pole. De Long's expedition was in search of a pathway through this ice to the "Open Polar Sea." De Long did not know, as he set sail, that data from a U.S. Bering Sea survey disproving the "Open Polar Sea" theory would reach Washington, DC after he sailed. Even after he began to suspect that the theory might be wrong, he continued pursuing his goal of reaching the North Pole and making additional discoveries in the Arctic. This was not a totally unreasonable idea -- the ship was heavily reinforced to resist the ice packs, and carried huge amounts of coal to keep the crew warm, plentiful food, dogs for hauling and an excellent navigator, an innovative engineer and a brilliant doctor.

North of Siberia, there is a chain of uninhabited, frozen islands: Jeannette, Henrietta, and Bennett. This chain is known as the DeLong islands, after George Washington DeLong. This is the story of how those islands were discovered, why they got that name...and at what price. George DeLong was a young navy captain who became entranced with the Arctic on a disastrous voyage with the *Juniata*, during the years when all the world was inspired by the race to the North Pole. He became determined to find his own ship, and take his own quest. His path intersected with two incredible characters of the time. First was James Bennett, the profligate millionaire playboy newspaper owner who once terrified New York City by inventing and publishing a story about escaped Central Park Zoo animals going on a killing spree, and whose engagement to a society girl was cancelled by her horrified family when he peed into their grand piano at a high society party. Bennett, a lover of spectacle, liked inventing news more than reporting it - and became enchanted with the idea of sending his own party out to find the North Pole. Second was August Petermann, a world famous cartographer who rarely left his living room, had never traveled, but somehow had fashioned himself as one of the global authorities on the geography of the North Pole. Petermann was convinced that just past the polar ice pack was an open Polar Sea, with its own glorious continent, and he convinced Bennett to fund the search for it - and Bennett hired DeLong to do so. What happens from there is as grand and terrible as you might expect, to quote the book's sub title. There have been lots of polar exploration stories, and I doubt any of them will ever touch one of the first, Lansing's *Endurance* and its story of Shackleton.

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