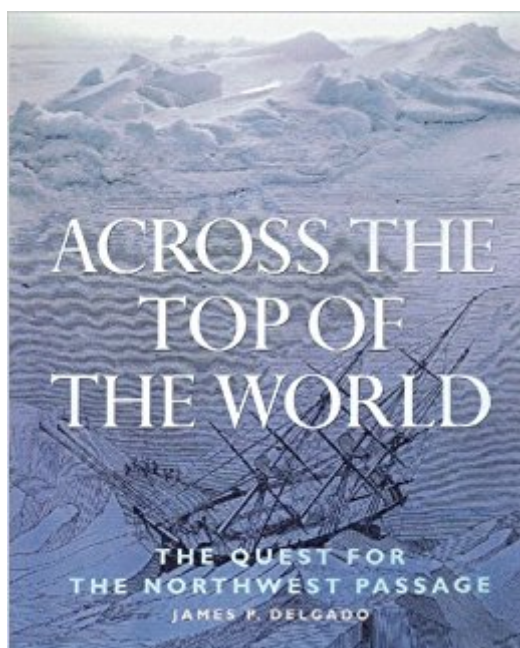


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# Across The Top Of The World: The Quest For The Northwest Passage



## Synopsis

Across the Top of the World is a vivid retelling of one of the most enduring quests in the history of exploration and discovery--the Northwest Passage. It covers the earliest endeavors in the sixteenth century, the many ill-fated expeditions that followed, the successful crossing in 1905, and the scientific work conducted in the Northwest Passage today. The book is beautifully illustrated and gives readers a true sense of the harsh realities of the landscapes and seascapes traversed. Among the book's many highlights are the use of explorers' published accounts, the ill-fated Franklin Expedition in 1845-1847, historic and contemporary color photographs of significant artifacts, and contemporary images of the Northwest Passage from the air, land, and water.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After Columbus found his voyage to Asia unexpectedly blocked by the New World, one driving goal of explorers was to find a way around it. To the south, the Strait of Magellan is one of the most difficult journeys in the world; it seemed only reasonable to expect that a more comfortable alternative would lie to the north. In the event, of course, the world is not designed for human comfort, and the Northwest Passage is incredibly arduous and not particularly useful. But the search motivated Arctic exploration and adventure for hundreds of years, and inspired many gripping or tragic adventures. Arctic archeologist James Delgado relates these tales--the voyages of the Norsemen, Henry Hudson, Sir John Franklin, and others--with a rare combination of verve, historical context, and lots of illustrations. Maps, photos, and images from different eras make *Across the Top of the World* a fascinating book for browsing or for concentrated reading. It's an invaluable

companion--reference, atlas, and history--to any other book about polar exploration and adventure.

--Mary Ellen Curtin

Like George Mallory, Sir John Franklin died at an icy extreme of the globe. The cumulative efforts of those who followed Franklin (1786-1847) into the Arctic in order to discover what became of him eventually led to the charting of the Northwest Passage, a sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the coast of North America. The history of the European quest for the Passage is full of dramatic stories of men at their best and worst in harsh conditions. Delgado's workmanlike history stretches from Martin Frobisher's voyages (1576-1578) through the doomed expedition of Franklin (1845-1847) to Norwegian Roald Amundsen's successful voyage through the Passage in 1906. The saga is filled with cannibalism, lack of foresight, heroism, resourcefulness, greed and the stiff upper lips of 19th-century British naval officers weathering the rigors of Arctic winters. Delgado, executive director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, gives blow-by-blow accounts of all the major voyages, noting those commanders, such as William Parry (1790-1855), who exhibited good judgment and a respect for the Arctic natives and those who, like Frobisher, confronted both the landscape and its inhabitants with imperial contempt. Delgado clearly did thorough research in an effort to place as many pertinent facts as possible between two covers. The result is an account of the European encounter with the Arctic that is stronger on detail than on drama. But the book is a spectacular reference. Readers who wish to read further about the Arctic would do well to have Delgado's book handy as they read Parry's journals or Barry Lopez's beautiful *Arctic Dreams*. 80 full-color photos; 100 b&w illus.; 6 maps; bibliography; index. BOMC and History Book Club alternates. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Bought this book to learn about the Arctic before going there on a cruise. It was recommended reading and I can see why. Great information and a good coffee table volume. I ordered a used book and I am not sure it was ever opened. It was in almost perfect condition (I'd say perfect but it was classified as a used book in good condition so who am I to judge otherwise). I am a very happy owner of this book. Anyone thinking of a trip to the Arctic would do well to read this one.

During my lifetime, man's endeavors at pushing back the boundaries of the unknown were attacking the sound barrier, and going into space ... culminating in landing on the moon, and equally important, the return to our diverse blue planet alive. Then ... there were the manned descents to the deepest known ocean floor .. "Challenger Deep" in "Trieste" and "Deep Challenger" for a bold

push to expand our knowledge under the sea. But, there was a time, a time spanning centuries when the curiosity of the vast unknown was not as lofty as space, nor as deep as 35,700' below the surface of the ocean. It was a shorter nautical path west ... to the Pacific, and the trade opportunities in the far east. The problem ... the newly discovered and vastly uncharted continents of the north, central and south Americas were blocking the way. There had to be a path toward the north. A pathway involving direct penetrations off the map into the dangerous uncharted cold icy unknown. James P. Delgado does a magnificent job, with excellent utilization of maps, charts, photos, paintings and drawings to lay out the historical journey of conquest; man seeking a sea passage across the often bitterly frozen and deadly north. A very good read! Great nautical history.

This is a well-illustrated and well-written account of past explorers' struggles to find a northern passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans, through the Canadian Arctic archipelago. I wish I had read this book before going on an expedition cruise through the passage. I would have been so much better prepared to appreciate the early explorers' experiences and achievements. Well done Jim Delgado!

After having successfully transited the Northwest Passage in 2009 ("The Other Side of The Ice") I bought this book to gain even more knowledge on what has to be the most amazing area of the world. Brilliant in every way. I highly recommend it! Sprague Theobald  
The Other Side of the Ice: One Family's Treacherous Journey Negotiating the Northwest Passage  
The Other Side of the Ice

Outstanding overview of early effort to find the Northwest Passage. The photos alone makes one realize how tough these early explorers were!

I found this book a very interesting read. The photos were wonderful. It covers the varied expeditions on the quest for the Northwest Passage. Lots of people lost their lives and ultimately it was not, of course, a really usable shipping route. The Franklin expedition and the various search parties is well covered. The one existing daguerotype of Franklin, which I had not seen, is included, as are the recent discoveries and theories about what happened. At a bargain price, this is a nice gift book. Mine came without the tell tale black "bargain stripe" on the spine.

An easy read on the history of the North-West Passage.

Exciting adventure from your recliner.

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