

# Basic Detail Report

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**00039598**

**Title**

Shear stone on the ramp

**Date**

1910-1914

**Medium**

Cardboard, silver gelatin photographic print.

**Dimensions**

90 x 170 mm

**Name**

Stereoscope card

**History**

The search for the great landmass at the bottom of the world really began in the early 18th century. In 1773 Captain James Cook was the first to cross the Antarctic Circle but it wasn't until 1820 that the elusive Antarctic continent was finally seen, probably by English sealer Edward Bransfield. The first to set foot on the white continent was the Norwegian Henryk Bull, landing at Cape Adare on 24 January 1895 while hunting for new sealing and whaling and this sparked a series of national expeditions which sailed in search of profitable whaling and sealing grounds. Many sought to be the first to find the South Pole. The heroic age of Antarctic exploration was imminent. For Britain it was a matter of national pride to be first to reach the South Pole. In July 1901 a British Antarctic expedition sailed under the command of Robert Falcon Scott to march into the icy continent's heart. Just 660 kilometres from the Pole at 82°17' South, he had to turn back due to illness and insufficient supplies. On 30 July 1907 another British Polar hopeful and rival, Ernest Shackleton, set sail for Antarctica where he and his men reached 88°23' South - remarkably just 156 kilometres from the Pole. Shackleton's Nimrod expedition achieved significant Antarctic 'firsts' including the ascent of Mount Erebus and locating the South Magnetic Pole. Scott's new expedition (1910-1912) aimed 'to reach the South Pole for the Empire'. He received news that the professional Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen was also heading to Antarctica. The race for the Pole had begun. Accompanying Scott to the Pole were Wilson, Oates, Evans and Bowers. With meager rations they struggled to haul their sledges, sustained by the hope of getting to the Pole first. On 17 January 1912 they reached the Pole only to find Amundsen had beaten them. Robbed of their prize, morale was low and the return journey formidable. Marching for two and a half months had taken its toll. Evans suffered a collapse and died. Oates' feet were gangrenous and he could not continue. Waking on his 32nd birthday he said 'I am just going outside and may be some time'. His body was never found. On 19 March Scott, Wilson and Bowers were trapped in their tent by blizzards, at the end of their food and fuel yet only a day's march from 'One Ton' depot and survival. They died from starvation and hypothermia. Scott's final diary entry was dated 29

March 1912. After receiving no word from Scott and the polar team, a search party led by Dr Atkinson of the remaining expedition team, set out on 26 March 1912. They were however thwarted in their attempt by extreme temperatures, weather and limited daylight, making further progress south impossible. The remaining expedition members spent the winter by continuing their scientific work, and at the arrival of spring, another search party was sent for the Scott expedition, departing on 29 October 1912. On 12 November the search party discovered the tent containing the bodies of Scott, Wilson and Bowers and collected Scott's diaries and personal effects, erecting a cairn to mark the place of the tent. A cairn was also erected further south, near where they believed Oates had died. Scott was later accused of poor logistical planning, including his refusal to take dogs, but he also encountered unseasonably cruel weather. With little room for error in the harsh Antarctic environment, a run of bad luck and a few bad decisions proved fatal.