

## ROALD AMUNDSEN BECOMES FIRST MAN TO REACH THE SOUTH POLE, MARCH 1912.

(London) Mar. 8, 1912 —  
Dispatches have been received  
from Norwegian Captain Roald  
Amundsen confirming that he has  
reached the South Pole.

Amundsen reported that he  
had reached the Pole on  
December 14, 1911, beating  
attempts by Englishman Sir  
Robert Scott.

It has been ninety years since  
the South Pole was reached and the  
names of Amundsen, Scott, and Peary  
still stir the public imagination as  
explorers of some of the world's last  
unexplored wildernesses.

But what has been forgotten  
has been that Amundsen rode to the  
South Pole on sleighs made of  
southern hickory from Pensacola,  
Florida, secured from his first  
cousin, and Pensacola lumber  
exporter, Gus Eitzen.

In 1900, Amundsen visited  
Pensacola as owner and an officer  
aboard the Norwegian bark "Oscar."  
The reason for this trip was to  
secure enough necessary experience  
to entitle him to a certificate

permitting him to command a ship.  
During his stay in Pensacola, he  
stayed with Gus Eitzen for several  
weeks. Amundsen made many friends  
in the Norwegian community.

During a later visit, he secured  
the southern hickory from Pensacola  
which was used to build sleds, used  
first in his search for the Northwest  
Passage, and finally in his quest for  
the South Pole.

On March 9, 1911, Amundsen  
cabled his cousin, Gus, to confirm his  
discovery of the South Pole. On  
Sunday, March 10, 1912, the  
Norwegian Seaman's Church in  
Pensacola held a special service  
honoring the achievement of their  
countryman. Addresses were given  
and a special cable prepared to send  
to Amundsen. When the "Western  
Union" telegraph boy arrived to pick  
up the telegram, he had to walk  
through an aisle made up of 200  
people who formed an arch by joining  
hands above their heads. After  
picking up the telegram from the  
front of the church, and as he walked  
out of the church, the congregation  
sang the national anthem of Norway.

The cable rhymed in  
Norwegian, but basically in English  
said, "The South Pole is found.  
Norway is the victor."

--Dean DeBolt

Sources: Pensacola Evening News,  
March 8, 9, 1912.