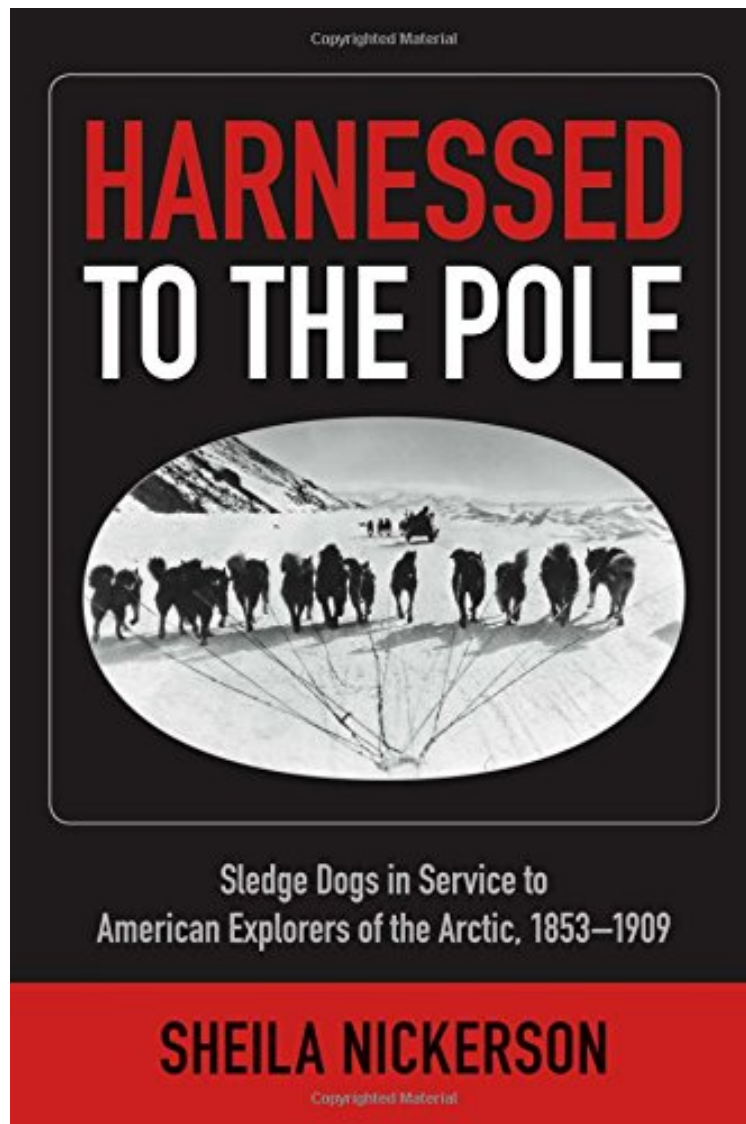


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Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in Service to American Explorers of the Arctic 1853-1909

Sheila Nickerson

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Sheila Nickerson : Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in Service to American Explorers of the Arctic 1853-1909 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Harnessed to the Pole: Sledge Dogs in Service to American Explorers of the Arctic 1853-1909*:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, an epic race was underway in some of the most brutal stretches on the planet. Explorers from around the world hoped to stake their claim on the Arctic, with the North Pole being the ultimate prize. Those with the greatest success found that the fastest way to travel was on four legs using a team of hardworking sledge dogs. *Harnessed to the Pole* follows the adventures of eight American explorers and their dog teams, starting with Elisha Kent Kane and ending with Robert Peary, controversial claimant of the title of first to reach the North Pole. While history has long forgotten these little camels of the north, Sheila Nickerson reveals how critical dogs were to the Arctic conquest. Besides providing transportation in extreme conditions, sledge dogs protected against wolves and polar bears, helped in hunting, found their way through storms, and provided warmth in extreme cold. They also faced rough handling, starvation, and the possibility of being left behind as expeditions plunged ahead. *Harnessed to the Pole* is an extraordinary and unflinching look at the dogs that raced to the top of the world.

Nickerson again proves herself an enchanting storyteller. She covers an era when American attention shifted from finding the Franklin Expedition to Arctic discoveries and attaining the North Pole. The accounts of hardship and survival are fascinating, and those of disaster are spellbinding. Readers unfamiliar with Arctic history will be mesmerized by the death march of De Long's men into Siberia. Even more astonishing is the narrative of the crew members of the *Polaris* who were marooned the entire winter of 1872-73 on an ice floe. Miraculously, all survived. Even those familiar with these tales will be gripped anew by Nickerson's retelling. In the end, however, this book belongs to the dogs, which Nickerson calls the Sherpas of the Arctic . . . a team pulling a sledge overladen with hope and ego, each dog named and known to its driver, each a distinct personality, all hauling toward an uncertain and often fatal destination. *Theirs* is a story worth learning.