

Topic Page: [Franklin, Sir John \(1786 - 1847\)](#)

Definition: **Franklin, John** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

English naval explorer who took part in expeditions to Australia, the Arctic, and northern Canada, and in 1845 commanded an expedition to look for the Northwest Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, during which he and his crew perished.

The 1845 expedition had virtually found the Passage when it became trapped in the ice. No trace of the team was discovered until 1850. In 1984, two of its members, buried on King Edward Island, were found to be perfectly preserved in the frozen ground of their graves. Knighted 1829.

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Franklin, John

Summary Article: **Franklin, Sir John**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1786–1847, British explorer in N Canada whose disappearance caused a widespread search of the Arctic. Entering the navy in 1801, he fought in the battle of Trafalgar. On his first overland expedition (1819–22) in N Canada, his party crossed the barren grounds from Great Slave Lake to the Arctic coast at the mouth of the Coppermine River and explored eastward along the coast for c.175 mi (280 km). In his *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (1823, repr. 1969), Franklin describes this journey. On his next expedition (1825–27), the party descended the Mackenzie River and surveyed another long stretch of the Arctic shoreline, westward to Return Reef (c.160 mi/260 km from Point Barrow, Alaska) and eastward to the mouth of the Coppermine. By way of the Coppermine he went to Great Bear Lake, where he built Fort Franklin (now Déline). Franklin's *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (1828, repr. 1968) is an account of these feats. On both of these expeditions he was accompanied by Sir George Back.

After serving (1836–43) as governor of Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), Franklin set out in the *Erebus* and the *Terror* in 1845 to search for the Northwest Passage. When, three years later, no word from him had been received, there was dispatched the first of the more than 40 parties that in the following years were to search the Arctic for traces of the expedition. Although the geographical knowledge gained by the searchers was immense, no certain clues as to Franklin's fate were revealed until John Rae, in 1853–54, and Sir Francis McClintock, between 1857 and 1859, found evidence of the great arctic tragedy. The latter expedition, fitted by Lady Franklin, found records at Point Victory that established that Franklin's ships had been frozen in the ice between Victoria Island and King William Island. After his death in 1847, the survivors had abandoned ship in 1848 and had undertaken a journey southward over the frozen wastes of Boothia Peninsula toward civilization. Of the entire expedition of some 129 men, not one is known to have survived. Relics and documents of the Franklin party and of later search expeditions were found into the late 20th cent., but not until 2014 was the wreck of the

Erebus found, in the E Queen Maud Gulf off the Adelaide Peninsula. In 2016 the *Terror* was found off SW King William Island.

See biographies of Franklin by A. H. Markham (1891) and H. D. Traill (1896);
the life, diaries, and correspondence of his wife, Lady Franklin (ed. by Rawnsley, W. F. , 1923);
Collinson, R. , *Journal of HMS Enterprise on the Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin's Ships*
(1869, repr. 1976);

Nantor, P. , *Arctic Breakthrough* (1970);

Neatby, L. , *The Search for Franklin* (1970);

Brandt, A. , *The Man Who Ate His Boots: The Tragic History of the Search for the Northwest Passage* (2010);

Watson, P. , *Ice Ghosts: The Epic Hunt for the Lost Franklin Expedition* (2017).

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New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from
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