On Assignment With National Geographic: The Inside Story of Legendary Explorers, Photographers, and Adventurers

Mark Collins Jenkins
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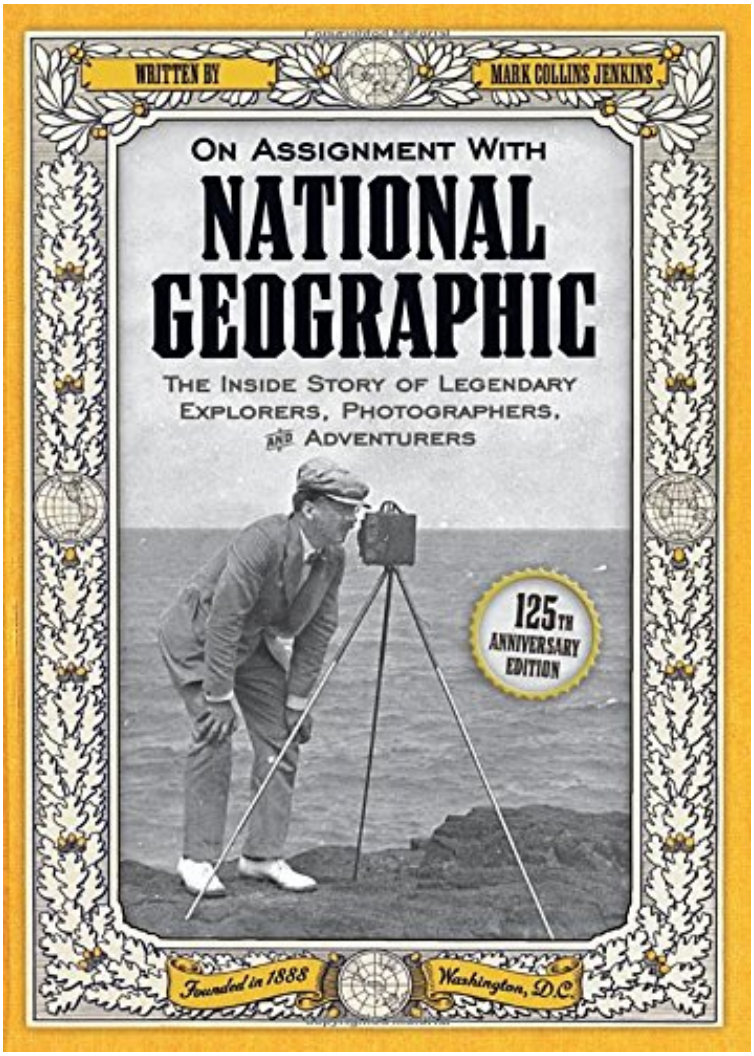

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Mark Collins Jenkins : On Assignment With National Geographic: The Inside Story of Legendary Explorers, Photographers, and Adventurers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Assignment With National Geographic: The Inside Story of Legendary Explorers, Photographers, and Adventurers:

Join National Geographic archaeologists and adventurers, explorers and scientists on this thrilling jaunt through more than 125 years of research, discovery, and unforgettable photojournalism. Featuring behind-the-scenes tales and show-stopping imagery, this book captures the heart of the Society's fascinating history, from its earliest days as a scientific club to its growth into one of the world's largest geographic organizations. It's all here, from Jacques Cousteau's pioneering underwater explorations to James Cameron's recent record-breaking descent to the floor of the Mariana Trench, the oceans' deepest point. Countless other explorers and their astounding achievements through the years are documented, including Louis Leakey, Jane Goodall, Spencer Wells, and Sylvia Earle. More than 200 photos, sidebars, and fun facts accompany these amazing stories, pulling you from one adventure to the next. It's well known that National Geographic has been to the top of Mount Everest and reached the depths of the Mariana Trench, but did you know that: A 1957 National Geographic article inspired the creator of the pink plastic lawn flamingo? A National Geographic writer on assignment found the source of the Amazon River? The world-famous photo of our green-eyed Afghan girl almost never happened?

About the AuthorMARK COLLINS JENKINS is the former chief historian of the National Geographic Society's archives and has, in all likelihood, read every article ever published by the National Geographic magazine. He is the author of High Adventure, National Geographic 125, Worlds to Explore: Tales of Travel and Adventure, The Book of Marvels, and Vampire Forensics from National Geographic.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.The members of our Society will not be confined to professional geographers, but will include that large number who, like myself, desire to promote special researches by others, and to diffuse the knowledge... so that we may all know more of the world upon which we live. --Gardiner Greene Hubbard From the top of Mount Everest to the depths of the sea, from the world beneath the microscope to the stars in distant galaxies, the National Geographic Society has reported on the world and all that is in it for over a century. More than eight million members and an ever increasing global audience turn to the National Geographic Societys magazines, books, television channel, educational products, and website to increase their understanding of earth, sea, and sky and to spark their sense of wonder. The seed for this global audience was planted in Washington, D.C., on January 13, 1888. A group of 33 of the citys scientific and intellectual leaders met at the Cosmos Club on that chilly night to consider the advisability of organizing a society for the increase and diffusion of geographical knowledge. They were energetic men with widely ranging professions as geologists, geographers, meteorologists, cartographers, bankers, lawyers, naturalists, soldiers, and sailors. What they had in common was the desire to promote scientific study and make the results available to the public. Many were in their 20s and 30s and actively pursuing careers that took them to places far removed from the smoky, high-ceilinged Cosmos Club. They wandered far and wide in the pursuit of science, but each autumn they returned to Washington from fieldwork posts in the deserts of the West, the forests of Alaska, or far out on the oceans. Washington, D.C., was home to most of the federal governments leading scientific bureaus: the U.S. Geological Survey, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Navy Hydrographic Office, and the Smithsonian Institution, to name a few. In such places they analyzed their data, wrote up their results, and sought funding for another season in the field. They helped transform wintertime Washington into a vibrant city of intellectual activity. The founders certainly embodied the spirit of adventure and discovery that has come to be associated with the National Geographic Society. Among their ranks was John Wesley Powell, famous for his pioneering exploration of the Grand Canyon, and Adolphus W. Greely, chief signal officer of the U.S. Army and a noted polar explorer who in 1881 had led an expedition to Canadas Lady Franklin Bay. Though one of his men achieved a new farthest north mark, Greelys expedition ended tragicallyjust 5 of 25 men survived being marooned for three years without being resupplied, and Greely himself was rescued within hours of certain death. Grove Karl Gilbert, the nations leading geologist, was also at the Cosmos Club meeting, as was Henry Gannett, a distinguished cartographer. George Kennan, a former telegraph operator and Russian explorer, had spent years living in Siberia and wrote a book about the experience. Kennan was the lone representative of a profession, journalism, that likely most of the others thought would be of little relevance in the new organizations future. Two weeks after the first meeting at the Cosmos Club, the founders elected lawyer and financier Gardiner Greene Hubbard the first President of the fledgling Society. Although not a scientist himself, Hubbard had a keen interest in science and was a staunch supporter of scientific research; most notably, he financed and promoted the experiments of his son-in-law, Alexander Graham Bell, a teacher of the deaf who had invented the telephone in 1875. In his introductory speech, Hubbard emphasized his lack of scientific training, declaring, by my election, you notify the public that the members of our Society will not be confined to professional geographers, but will include that large number who, like myself, desire to promote special researches by others, and to diffuse the knowledge so gained, among men, so that we may all know more of the world upon which we live. As the new Society set these lofty goals, the United States was about to enter a great era of innovation and discovery. In 1888 Thomas Edison invented the kinetoscope, a prototype for motion pictures, and George Eastman perfected the box camera and black-and-white roll film. Automobiles and airplanes would soon become new means of transportation, and telegraphs and telephones were beginning to change the way people communicated. Though much of the world remained to be explored, scientists were amassing knowledge on a tremendous scale. An enormous amount of energy and optimism was afoot, as was the

passionate belief that science had the power to correct many of the social and economic defects of a society entering the modern era. The new National Geographic Society would be a force in this scientific evangelism. Many scientific associations of the period shared this vision. What would set the National Geographic Society apart would be its century- long appeal to the explorer in all of us. That has allowed it to become what it is today: one of the largest scientific and educational associations on the globe, providing a window on the wonders of the world and influencing the lives of millions.