

THE MAKING OF AN EXPLORER: GEORGE HUBERT WILKINS AND THE CANADIAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION 1913–1916. By STUART E. JENNESS. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-7735-2798-2. xxii + 418 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, notes. Hardbound. Cdn\$49.95.

Hubert Wilkins, a young Australian photographer, was seconded by the Gaumont Company to Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913–16 as official photographer. Having sailed north on board *Karluk*, he joined the group led by Stefansson that left the ship to go ashore on a hunting trip after *Karluk* became beset in the ice off the North Slope. Hence he did not experience the subsequent sinking of that ship or the dramas and hardships of the survivors who made it to Ostrov Vrangelya.

Instead, Wilkins traveled widely on the mainland coast, from Point Barrow to Herschel Island. Then, having been appointed Deputy Expedition Leader, he took the schooner *Mary Sachs* north to Sachs Harbour on Banks Island, in search of Stefansson, who had set off across the ice of the Beaufort Sea to demonstrate that one could live off the land (or the sea ice). Subsequently Wilkins reached the headquarters of the Southern Party of the expedition, led by Dr. Rudolph Anderson, at Bernard Harbour.

Jenness's book is largely based on Wilkins' diaries (housed in the Stefansson Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire), from which he quotes extensively. Apart from providing a detailed picture of Wilkins' involvement in Stefansson's expedition, the book stresses the role that these experiences played in the shaping of Wilkins' character and in his accumulation of skills that later stood him in good stead in what would become a life-long career as an explorer. Highlights of that career included his flight across the North Pole with pilot Ben Eielson from Point Barrow to Svalbard in 1928, his flight from Deception Island to and around the Antarctic Peninsula, also in 1928, and his attempt to reach the North Pole beneath the ice, in the submarine *Nautilus*, in 1931, an attempt that mechanical trouble forced him to abandon at 82° 15' N.

One of the unusual features of the Canadian Arctic Expedition is that, while a whole range of scientific reports emerged from it, no general narrative of the activities of the expedition was ever published. Stefansson's book, *The Friendly Arctic* (1921), to a degree fills that gap with regard to the Northern Party, but even there details are commonly quite meagre, while until recently there was no useful account of the activities of the Southern Party. Earlier Dr. Jenness went a long way to rectifying this situation when he published the diary of his father, Dr. Diamond Jenness, anthropologist with the Southern Party of the Canadian Arctic Expedition (Jenness, 1991). Now, through this account of Wilkins' activities with the expedition, he has made a further invaluable contribution to the history of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, one which throws a great deal of light on both parties of the expedition,

and especially on the considerable frictions that developed between the two parties and particularly between Dr. Rudolph Anderson, leader of the Southern Party, and Stefansson. It also throws considerable useful light on the whaling/trapping economy of the North Slope of Alaska and the Canadian Western Arctic at this period, and on the various Inuit groups. It also provides us with a candid picture of the erratic, self-serving behaviour of Stefansson as expedition leader, as seen by somebody close to him. From this viewpoint, it is an invaluable contribution to the literature on the complex character of Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

The text is wonderfully enhanced by the inclusion of numerous excellent, detailed maps relating to every stage of Wilkins' travels, and by an impressive array of Wilkins' photographs. As an important addition to the literature on the Canadian Arctic Expedition, this book will appeal to the specialist Arctic historian, but the general reader will also find it fascinating as the account of a formative period in the career of a multi-faceted polar explorer.

REFERENCES

- JENNESS, S.E. 1991. Arctic odyssey: The diary of Diamond Jenness 1913–1916. Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization. 417 p.
 STEFANSSON, V. 1921. The friendly Arctic: The story of five years in polar regions. New York: Macmillan. 784 p.

William Barr
 The Arctic Institute of North America
 University of Calgary
 2500 University Drive NW
 Calgary, Alberta, Canada
 T2N 1N4
 wbarr@ucalgary.ca

DRIFT STATION: ARCTIC OUTPOSTS OF SUPER-POWER SCIENCE. By WILLIAM F. ALTHOFF. Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc. ISBN 978-1-57488-771-6. xiv + 355 p., map., b&w illus., appendices, notes, glossary, selected bib., index. Hardbound. US\$39.95.

Drift stations are camps placed on sea-ice floes or ice islands (the tabular icebergs that calve from the ice shelves of northernmost Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, Canada), or occasionally aboard ships placed voluntarily, or not, in the pack ice. They take advantage of the ice cover as a platform for scientific studies of the ice itself, the atmosphere above, and the ocean and seafloor below. Drift stations are primarily associated with the Arctic Ocean, but a few have been used in Antarctica. Some drift stations, typically those supporting classified research, achieve their mission in a matter of weeks. Other drift stations remain open for months to years, using the patterns of large-scale ice