

did so quite slowly; both ship and berg bobbed up again, without any serious damage.

In company with her sister ship, *Natsek*, *Nanok* sailed from Narsarssuaq (Bluie West 1) for home on 14 December and almost immediately ran into foul weather and heavy seas. As ice began to build up on her superstructure, Captain Magnusson set the men to chopping the ice away, working in two-hour shifts (this being the maximum period they could endure on deck). The foul weather and severe icing continued for almost a week as the ship fought her way south along the Labrador coast, through the Strait of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. At times *Natsek* was in sight, but there was no sign that her men were chopping ice, whereas *Nanok*'s men were chopping ice constantly. *Natsek* was last seen in the Strait of Belle Isle. With her entire superstructure covered with several feet of ice despite the crew's best efforts, *Nanok* became unstable and steadily developed a starboard list, until she was almost on her beam ends, still with gale-force winds and heavy seas. Water and spray flooding down the smokestack temporarily killed the diesel engine, but the engineers managed to start it again. A deck cargo of drums of fuel was washed overboard; the anemometer jammed and blew away; the radio antenna was carried away; and most of the paint was scoured by waves and ice from the ship's sides. Novak's firsthand account of a vessel coming within an ace of capsizing under the weight of ice build-up during a winter gale has rarely, if ever, been matched. His relief at surviving the experience was tempered by the fact that *Natsek* was lost with all hands, some of them his friends, near Belle Isle, presumably having capsized under the weight of ice build-up.

Novak's diary entries generally focus on less dramatic topics: sea-sickness, mail or the lack of it, missing his new bride, homesickness, endless gambling, and his desire to achieve promotion to coxswain. A striking feature is his pen-sketches of many of his shipmates. At the same time his entries sometimes display quite extensive and accurate knowledge of history: his awareness of the significance of the historic sites of Boston, for example (p. 8), or his knowledge of the history of Greenland (p. 42–43) are quite impressive. His descriptions of Greenland settlements and Greenlanders, or of the design and equipment of a kayak, are the product of a perceptive eye and an enquiring mind. And in places, his descriptions of natural phenomena, for example, his descriptions of snowflakes (p. 98), aurora (p. 99) and icebergs (p. 108), even verge on the lyrical. At other times his pronouncements are quite philosophical (if somewhat crude), for example (p. 52): "It seems the world always has more than enough pricks to go around."

In short, Capelotti is to be warmly commended for presenting to the public a fascinating journal of a little-known aspect of World War II in the Arctic, one that displays quite a surprising depth of insight and perception. The only very minor fault is that the solitary map of Greenland shows only a very few of the place-names mentioned in the text; moreover, it identifies Julianehåb as Bluie West I, whereas that designation was in fact applied to Narsarssuaq. But this is a very minor shortcoming, when

set against the value of Nowak's journal as a unique document of Arctic history.

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THE LAST EXPLORER: HUBERT WILKINS – AUSTRALIA'S UNKNOWN HERO. By SIMON NASHT. Sydney, Australia: Hodder, 2005. ISBN 0 7336 1831 6. 346 p., maps, b&w illus., index, notes. Softbound. Austral. \$35.00. (North American and British publication by Arcade Publishing (New York) and Birlinn Limited (Edinburgh) in fall 2006.)

It is ironic that a man who is described on the book's cover as "the most remarkable explorer of the twentieth century" is so little known today, either in Australia, where he was born, or in Canada, where he developed his abilities as an explorer. George Hubert Wilkins is only slightly better known in the United States where, as Sir Hubert Wilkins, he lived the latter part of his life.

Two biographies of Wilkins were published in the early 1960s, shortly after his death. The earlier one, by John Grierson, was reasonably good as far as it went. The other, by popular American radio broadcaster Lowell Thomas, was both informative and entertaining, but included a number of outrageously fictional passages. It was most gratifying, therefore, to find that a well-written biography of Wilkins, with much new factual information about his activities, has recently been published. Its author, Australian Simon Nasht, is an experienced documentary filmmaker, journalist, and former foreign correspondent.

The first two chapters tell of Wilkins's formative years—his growing up on his father's outback sheep ranch some 120 miles north of Adelaide, his home schooling, his qualifying for high school at the age of nine, his early development of responsibility and adventure, and his encounters with aboriginal people. After his father sold the ranch and moved his family to Adelaide in 1905, Wilkins apprenticed to a mechanical engineer in the mornings, took college classes in the afternoon in both mechanical and electrical engineering, and studied music during the evenings. Curiosity and chance led to his first job, looking after the electrical lighting outfit and projecting moving pictures for a traveling carnival. A year later, in 1908, he went to England and obtained employment as a moving-picture photographer with the Gaumont Company, a leading producer of documentary newsreels. From then until 1913, his filming assignments took him throughout the British Isles, around Europe, and to Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean. He even filmed and reported on a revolution in Spain in 1909 and the Balkan War in 1912. In the

spring of 1913, his company asked him to be the photographer on a major scientific expedition to the Arctic.

Wilkins's three years on the Canadian Arctic Expedition, well condensed in chapter 3, provided him with a wide variety of experiences, as well as many opportunities for discussions with the leader, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, which stimulated his interest in further polar exploration and a life of adventure and exploration.

By the time Wilkins finally left the Arctic in 1916, however, Europe was deeply involved in World War I. He first sailed to England to report to the Gaumont Company, then to Australia to visit his family. Eager to serve his country, he soon obtained a commission in the Royal Australian Air Force and returned to England. Within a short time he was posted to France, with instructions to photograph battlefield scenes along the Allied front using both aircraft and observation balloons. His photographic efforts frequently put him at great risk: he was wounded in action several times and subsequently was awarded the Military cross and bar.

After the war, Wilkins participated in expeditions in 1920 and again in 1921 that were intended to explore Antarctica. The expeditions were unsuccessful, but while on South Georgia Island during the second one, Wilkins made a fine collection of birds, which he presented to the British Museum. This gift led to his selection, on behalf of that museum, as leader of a small scientific expedition to northern Australia from 1923 to 1925. This expedition proved highly successful, and Wilkins returned with hundreds of specimens for the museum.

He next turned his attention to flying over the polar region from North America to Europe. He and Stefansson had discussed polar flight in 1915 while briefly housed in a snow house on Banks Island, and Wilkins now intended to prove its feasibility. After several near-fatal attempts, he and his pilot, U.S. Army Lt. Ben Eielson, finally succeeded in flying nonstop from Point Barrow, Alaska, to the Norwegian archipelago of Spitsbergen in 1928. He was knighted shortly afterwards by King George V of Great Britain, thereafter becoming known as Sir Hubert Wilkins.

Wilkins's sudden international success brought financial backing from newspaperman William Randolph Hearst, which permitted him to return to Antarctica in charge of a small expedition. Operating from a base on Deception Island in the South Atlantic Ocean, he made two long airplane flights to the southern polar continent, mapping nearly 1200 miles of its coastline and taking the first aerial photographs of it. He returned the following year, hoping to establish an air base on that continent from which he could fly across it and scout for localities where weather stations could be established. He was unable to accomplish either of these projects, but he did map several hundred more miles of Antarctic coastline.

In the months between those two Antarctic voyages, Wilkins flew around the world as a passenger on the new German airship, *Graf Zeppelin*, and married an Australian actress then on the New York stage.

Next he initiated another polar scheme he had first discussed with Stefansson in 1915, the exploration by submarine under the polar ice to the North Pole, and perhaps also across the Northwest Passage. Convinced of the feasibility of both activities, he purchased an old U.S. submarine from World War I, had it extensively renovated, renamed it the *Nautilus*, rounded up a capable crew, and in 1931 headed across the Atlantic Ocean for Spitsbergen en route to the polar ice beyond. A series of mechanical failures subsequently forced him to change his plans drastically, but he did succeed in getting his submarine briefly under the polar ice and completing a number of scientific experiments before returning safely to Bergen, Norway. There he was informed that his submarine's ice-battered hull and unreliable engine rendered it unsafe to cross the Atlantic to the United States, and he was forced to scuttle it in the deep water outside Bergen.

Financial difficulties stemming from his unsuccessful submarine venture prevented Wilkins from undertaking any further expeditions of his own. He did organize and manage an expedition to Antarctica in 1933 for Lincoln Ellsworth, a wealthy American; however, he got little satisfaction from this supporting role.

In 1937 Wilkins responded to an urgent request from his friend Stefansson and the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. to lead a search of the Beaufort Sea for six Russian flyers whose aircraft had disappeared while they were attempting a flight from Moscow to New York. Using a flying boat, he navigated many long-distance flights from Coppermine (now Kugluktuk) and then Aklavik over vast areas of frozen sea and adjoining Arctic islands, without encountering any sign of the missing flyers. His subsequent flights from Point Barrow, Alaska, proved equally futile.

We learn little of Wilkins's activities during World War II, when he served as a scientific advisor on polar conditions to the U.S. military. After the war Wilkins worked periodically designing equipment at an Army research laboratory in Natick, Massachusetts, but managed several brief trips back to Antarctica, the last being in 1957, the year before his death.

Wilkins died on 30 November 1958, alone in his hotel room near the Army laboratory, the victim of a heart attack. The following March the U.S. nuclear submarine *Skate* carried his ashes to the North Pole, where it surfaced. The crew then held a brief ceremony on the ice, during which one of the crew scattered Wilkins's ashes to the four winds.

Wilkins started to write his own autobiography several times, but never completed the task. As Nasht observed, "His was a life so full of incident that the man himself struggled to remember it all" (p. 14–15). Fortunately, Nasht has done a fine job of retelling Wilkins's remarkable life in this, his first book. His brisk, detailed, and down-to-earth style of writing holds one's interest from beginning to end, and his many informative endnotes reflect the depth of his research. The book contains few typographical errors; the three maps are clear, though somewhat stylized; and the photographs, all from the Byrd Polar

Research Center at Ohio State University, are well captioned. Unfortunately, they do not include identifying catalogue numbers.

Nasht's book has deservedly been selected by the South Australia Big Book Club as its April 2006 Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. I heartily recommend it to all who are interested in Arctic and Antarctic explorers, exploration, and history.

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**THE DIARY OF ABRAHAM ULRIKAB: TEXT AND CONTEXT.** Edited by HARTMUT LUTZ, with foreword and cover art by ALOOTOOK IPELLIE, and photos by HANS-LUDWIG BLOHM. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2005. ISBN 0-7766-0602-6. xxviii + 100 p., b&w illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$29.95.

In 1880, Adrian Jacobsen, working on behalf of Carl Hagenbeck, who ran Hagenbeck's Zoo in Hamburg, Germany, recruited two Labrador Inuit families to accompany him to Europe and participate in shows featuring "exotic" people. One family consisted of Abraham, his wife Ulrike, daughter Sara, baby Maria, and Ulrike's nephew Tobias. Abraham was a respected member of the Moravian community in Hebron, and he agreed to travel abroad over the objections of the Moravians. The second family was from the Nachvak area and consisted of Terrianiak, his wife Paingo, and their teenage daughter Noggasak. This group was not affiliated with any church and practiced shamanism. The families were distrustful of one another; though the heads of both families saw the venture as an opportunity to erase debts they had accumulated while trading at mission stations and Hudson's Bay Company trading posts. Unfortunately, smallpox claimed the lives of the eight Inuit within five months of their voyage across the North Atlantic. They contracted this disease because of their employer's unforgivable delay in having them vaccinated.

Once in Europe, Abraham wrote letters to a former teacher and kept a diary chronicling the group's experiences. While the original diary has not been located, a missionary's transcription of 14 pages of the document survives in the Moravian Archive in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The Greifswald University projects that resulted in this book were built around that document and Abraham's letters. Abraham reports that the two families were exhibited in Hagenbeck's zoo and in various cities throughout Europe, where thousands of curious people paid money to

see them. Soon after their arrival in Germany, both families came to regret their decision to spend a year abroad. Abraham wrote that the Inuit found the crowds unpleasant, tired of their duties, suffered mistreatment at the hands of their employers, caught a variety of ailments, and were desperately homesick.

Professor Lutz and his students located a number of other documents that provide additional information about this sad chapter in Inuit-Western history. The documents include Moravians' letters expressing concern about the Hagenbeck arrangement, newspaper articles reporting on the Inuit exhibition, the physician Rudolf Virchow's paper detailing physical and behavioral attributes of individual family members, and clothing advertisements making reference to the Inuit's attire. These documents, along with Abraham's letters and diary, have been translated into English and form the body of the publication. Historic drawings and photographs of the eight Inuit and Alooook Ipellie's cover artwork complement the text and reinforce Abraham's first-person voice.

In essays at the beginning and end of the book, Professor Lutz and his students tackle a number of difficult topics in a straightforward and sensitive fashion. They discuss late 19th century racial beliefs, scientific perspectives regarding indigenous peoples, and Moravians' attitudes about converted and pagan Inuit. The book makes clear that there is an extensive history of exhibiting indigenous people in zoos, sideshows, world fairs, and museums throughout Europe and the United States for the entertainment and edification of the masses. Also, the publication provides a window into the social disruptions wrought by missionaries and traders, who in Labrador insisted on the separation of Christian and "heathen" Inuit and encouraged a dependency on trade goods, disrupting the social and economic lives of families and communities.

Unfortunately, the design of the central part of the book presents the reader with unnecessary challenges. The introductory section of the work, set in a two-column format, is attractive and very readable. The problem emerges in the section featuring the translated documents, beginning with a letter from Abraham to Brother Elsner. The text of Abraham's letter is printed over eight pages. The text is centered in the top two-thirds of each page, framed by black photograph corners. A series of letters written by Moravians is printed along the lower third of each page, in a two-column format. The pieces are juxtaposed to reinforce their relationship; however, it is difficult to read two documents running concurrently over multiple pages. In order to read Abraham's letter to Brother Elsner in its entirety, the reader has to ignore the Moravians' correspondence at the bottom of eight pages. To read the correspondence, one has to flip back to the page where the letters begin and read the next 12 pages of text, ignoring Abraham's letter and the beginning of Abraham's diary. If that is not confusing enough, translations of newspaper articles and advertisements interrupt the flow of the diary and correspondence. The reader is forced to work hard,