

the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, a job he found dull and uninspiring. His 1885 trip to Nicaragua fueled his interest in exploration. By then, Peary, who had never been in the Arctic, was already toying with the idea of becoming the first person to reach the North Pole.

The authors speed through Peary's life as they describe his first expeditions to Greenland and his repeated attempts at reaching the pole. Fascinating tidbits about Peary's interest in airplanes, his Inughuit wife, and his son appear throughout the narrative. Of particular interest for Arctic experts is Kaplan and LeMoine's use of the journals of George Wardell, engineer of Peary's ship, the *Roosevelt*. These hitherto unknown documents deepen the familiar Peary narrative by clarifying the perils of muscling a ship into the far north.

The book's thematic chapters are its highlights. One showcases Peary as an innovator and adapter of Arctic survival techniques. Peary's attention to detail was legendary, whether it be his endless tinkering with sledges or ordering packing crates sized to be repurposed as the walls of weatherproof houses. He was also a clever designer, as evidenced by his lightweight, super-efficient camp stoves. Innovation also meant mapping expeditions that hopscotched between supply caches, gradually shedding the team's weakest members in order to increase Peary's chances of reaching the pole.

Kaplan and LeMoine also illuminate the men and women orbiting the explorer. Peary's wife Josephine advanced his agenda not only by providing moral support, but also by becoming a tireless fundraiser who forgave his long absences and dalliances with Inughuit women. Matthew Henson, whose grasp of the Inuktitut language far exceeded Peary's, and who was accepted among the Inughuit of northwest Greenland in a way that Peary never quite was, also features here. The authors acknowledge Peary's sometimes-shoddy treatment of his most trusted assistant, especially when Henson dared discuss his Arctic adventures in public without the boss's permission. Kaplan and LeMoine also examine how Henson's blackness shaped popular perceptions of him as little more than Peary's servant rather than as an excellent sledge driver, a mentor of Arctic rookies, and a crucial intermediary between Peary and the natives. Fans of Pearyana will find other familiar names here, including the salty captain Robert Bartlett, steadfast Donald MacMillan, doomed Ross Marvin, and tragic Romantic George Borup, who was engaged to Peary's daughter Marie before perishing in a boating accident.

Peary's Arctic Quest's two most captivating chapters approach their subject through the lenses of archaeology, anthropology, and historical memory. In one, Kaplan and LeMoine apply insights from their own archaeological missions to explore the knotty relationship between Peary's men and the Inughuit. Going beyond the usual focus on the economic relationship between the Inughuit and new arrivals, the authors delve into the ecological, demographic, emotional, and sexual consequences of Peary's presence in Greenland. In another chapter, the authors explore how the

Polar Controversy – the question of whether Peary, Frederick Cook, or neither was the first to the pole – has evolved over time. They structure this discussion around anniversaries, observing perceptions of the explorers' accomplishments at twenty-five-year intervals, in 1934, 1959, 1984, and 2009. Although the authors are more sympathetic to Peary's claim than Cook's, they avoid taking a firm stance on the question of the North Pole's "discoverer." The truth will never be known for certain, they observe.

Peary's Arctic Quest concludes with a thought-provoking meditation on the current state of the Arctic. Although it feels out of place in this narrative, it is nevertheless a solid primer on the political, cultural, and environmental challenging the region today.

Kaplan and LeMoine have written an excellent, accessible overview of Robert Peary, his methods, and the ramifications of his expeditions. Both seasoned specialists and newcomers to the field will find something of interest here. *Peary's Arctic Quest's* slick paper and lavish illustrations alone make the book worthwhile. Its maps, photographs, tinted slides, and high-quality reproductions of Arctic memorabilia should earn it a spot on every Arctic aficionado's shelf or coffee table.

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BORN TO ICE. By PAUL NICKLEN. New York: Teneues Publishing Co., 2018. ISBN 978-1-138-06087-6. 224 p., b&w and colour illus., index. Hardbound. US\$125.00

If you do not recognize his name, you have almost certainly seen some of his images. Paul Nicklen has risen to prominence as one of the world's most famous wildlife photographers. Nicklen is practically a household name for anyone with even a remote interest in wildlife; a rare feat for a photographer. But rightly deserved, his images are nothing short of spectacular as evidenced by the many prestigious awards given to him over his 25-year career. Having graduated from University of Victoria with a BSc in Marine Biology, Nicklen started his career as a wildlife biologist. But it was not until his move to professional photography that he began to truly make his mark on the discipline. Nicklen is the only Canadian wildlife photographer to become a long-time contributor to *National Geographic*, having not only produced shots that have graced the iconic yellow-bordered cover, but penned articles within. His work is dedicated to sharing the beauty of the natural world, to put faces to those hard to reach ecosystems, and use his chosen medium to express to society at large the importance of protecting it. An outcome of this noble sentiment led to the creation of the

conservation charity Sea Legacy in 2014 with his partner, and equally decorated conservation photographer, Christina Mittermeier.

Spending his formative years in the small Inuit community of Kimmirut on the south coast of Baffin Island, Nicklen's title for this work is very much grounded in experience and it is little wonder much of his work has a polar slant. His latest publication *Born to Ice* is a surprisingly affordable and substantial 344 page tome, its dimensions providing an imposing presence on any coffee table or bookshelf. Covering both the Arctic and Antarctic, it is a visual feast with nearly all of the 164 colour and monochrome photographs given a dedicated double page spread. These prints deserve the coverage and are more powerful for it; however, I think the central page break does a slight disservice to the images.

Born to Ice is Nicklen's third and largest of book dedicated to the polar regions. Whereas his previous works, *Seasons of the Arctic* (2000) and *Polar Obsession* (2012), contain more in the way of text – setting his images in a context that offers the reader an appreciation of the dedication and sacrifice needed to capture these moments – *Born to Ice* is all about the visual, with each region only given a brief introduction in English, German and French. More than a few of these images appear in his previous volumes should readers wish to gain a little more background or see them printed on a single page without the vertical distraction through their centres.

This book does exactly as is intended; the reader is treated to a selection of the very best in polar wildlife photography. The book captures the beauty of wildlife in these extreme and fragile regions and reinforces the public notion of a pristine wilderness. Nevertheless, the lack of context can sometimes disappoint. One of Nicklen's photos, that of a Bowhead whale swimming along the floe edge (p. 200–201) is perhaps my favourite wildlife photograph. Sadly, there is no mention of the decimation European and American whalers caused to the populations of the great leviathans, whose oil kept the cogs of the industrial revolution spinning. However, Nicklen does acknowledge the remarkable feat of cetacean survival when presenting this image during his emotional March 2011 TED talk, which has been viewed over 2.4 million times. During this talk, Nicklen highlights his personal favourite capture, swarms of copepods under the sea ice, the very foundation of the Arctic food chain; yet curiously, this image is not featured in *Born to Ice*.

All of the images here are beautiful, which I say as somewhat of a criticism. I feel it must have been a strategic decision to focus on the pristine nature of the wildlife without depicting the harsher side of life in the polar regions. Perhaps the intention was to avoid offending readers who may never visit the regions, or possibly to avoid a repeat of the 2017, out of context, press frenzy that erupted around his starving polar bear footage, which has become one of Nicklen's most recognisable products (reaching an estimated 2.5 billion people). It may be that Nicklen intends to promote

wildlife preservation through these positive images rather than through shock. That said, Nicklen does not shy away from this difficult topic in his sometimes shocking images published through Sea Legacy, many of which highlight the consequences of human activity on wildlife.

A notable omission is the lack of humans in the volume. In the Arctic, the Inuit have an inextricable relationship with wildlife, particularly as a vital food source. The absence is surprising given Nicklen's upbringing in an Inuit community. I would have liked to have seen images documenting the role of wildlife in the Arctic not just as worthy of protecting for observation, but as sources of sustainability for the people sharing this ecosystem.

In truth, I applaud Nicklen in this and his wider work with Sea Legacy. He is reaching Attenborough levels of engagement and awareness with the world's population, spreading the message of wildlife conservation. The polar regions are subject to such rapid change at present, *Born to Ice* is not only a beautiful plea to society to protect these regions, but an important document recording these critically at-risk ecosystems for prosperity. Whether your interest lies in the polar regions, wildlife, photography or the movement toward mitigating our impact on the wider world, this book deserves a place among your library.

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JOHN RAE ARCTIC EXPLORER: THE UNFINISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By JOHN RAE, edited and introduction by WILLIAM BARR. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-77212-332-6. 688 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., index, endnotes. Hardbound. US\$24.95.

I have to begin this review with a confession. When I received this large, hardbound, 649 page volume my heart sank. Reading hundreds of pages of what I thought would probably be stiff and affected autobiography, along with presumably tedious copies of correspondence from a long career, seemed like a daunting task even if the writer was John Rae, the most formidable Arctic explorer of the 19th century. But to employ a much over used cliché *John Rae, Arctic Explorer: The Unfinished Autobiography* is indeed a page turner. Rae's life and exploits, his extraordinary travels, and his knowledge of Inuit life is unparalleled when compared to many of his hapless Arctic contemporaries and makes for an appealing read. Editor William Barr, the author and editor of over twenty books on Arctic history, has done a meticulous and masterful job with this work. Rae's straightforward yet absorbing text is edited with great thoroughness with Barr's addition of valuable marginal