

the processing technology and the development of spice plants, and the strategy of the development of China spice plant resources. The second part is the special issues, including a total of 134 kinds of commonly used spices, and more than 200 spice plant species. For each spice plant species, the ecological environment, history of use, chemical ingredients, comprehensive methods of use, exploitation of related products, standardization and cultivation techniques, and so on were comprehensively introduced. The typically introduced spice plant species in this part include *Capsicum frutescens*, *Allium sativum*, *Aglaia odorata*, *Allium cepa*, *Allium fistulosum*, *Allium porrum*, *Allium sativum*, *Artemisia vulgaris*, *Illicium verum*, *Foeniculum vulgare*, *Levisticum officinale*, *Mentha haploca-*

*lyx*, *Pimpinella anisum*, *Sesamum indicum*, *Zanthoxylum bungeanum*, *Zanthoxylum simulans*, and *Zingiber officinale*, among others.

The book was well written with few errors, in a style of writing that can be easily understood by non-scientists. As a comprehensive book, it is suitable for anyone who is engaged in the various areas of research and application of spice plants.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### Arctic Hell Ship

By W. Barr. 2007. University of Alberta Press, Ring House 2, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E1. 318 pages, 34.95 CAD Cloth.

More of a human history than a natural history book, this tale covers part of one of the great sagas of Canada's north. The Franklin Expedition left Britain with high hopes and the best resources available — well almost. It vanished in 1845 and spawned at least two dozen searches to solve the mystery of the disappearance. These efforts in turn have led to a flood of books and scholarly articles.

So do we need another treatise? The answer is yes in this case. Barr's contribution covers the 12<sup>th</sup> search by Captain R. Collinson aboard the *HMS Enterprise* with Robert John Le Mesurier M'Clure, as second in command, on the *HMS Investigator*. Barr gives us an extremely detailed description of life on one of Her Majesty's ships in the 1800s. So often the other books concentrate on the leaders and their accomplishments, so we learn little of how the crew fares. Barr remedies this by telling us about many of the individual sailors. The "story" is very simple. This was a voyage that produced limited results and suffered a lot of bickering between the officers. As a result, the ship's, logs and letters contain irritating daily details that show what life was really like.

Collinson was a good seaman and surveyor, but he was clearly not a leader. He picked on very minor transgressions and turned them into major disciplinary actions. He sowed unnecessary seeds of discord, interspersed by bouts of humanity. In hindsight, his biggest failure was that he did not do enough. He was charged with rescuing Franklin's men and given the resources to do it, and yet he spent a lot of time sailing back and forth, unable to make a clear decision. His sledging trips were too little and too late. The other ships in his command (which got "separated" early in the expedition) went farther and did more. When

Collinson did make progress he found notes from either M'Clure or Dr. John Rae showing that they had searched the area earlier. In the tough conditions on board ship during an Arctic winter this debilitating caution and indecisiveness coupled with petty decisions on discipline must have made an unhappy ship full of exasperated people.

Collinson returned to Britain, having failed to solve the Franklin issue, demanding courts-martial for his officers. The lords of the Admiralty wisely declined to take action. Public exposure of such silly shenanigans would do the service no good.

The most notorious British naval captain of this era is Bligh. In spite of the fact that his reputation owes more to the movies than reality, Bligh was a superb navigator, excellent seaman and a relatively humane captain. He personally intervened in the trials of the captured mutineers, got some set free and obtained reduced sentences for others. He died as a Vice-Admiral. Collinson's dithering and his stubborn need for absolute discipline would have made him a better candidate for Hollywood's spite, yet even this would be unfair. How would we all fare under such harsh conditions?

Collinson did make Vice-Admiral, after serving at Trinity House, the establishment that maintained the aids to navigation, where he rose to deputy master. He remained at Trinity House until retirement, clearly a better bureaucrat than expedition leader. Perhaps the error lies with the lords of the Admiralty. They fell into that awful trap. They promoted a very technically competent person to a supervisor, a move that does not always work. In particular, voyages to the Arctic, even today, need competent leaders. Collinson did not come close to Nansen, Shackleton, Amundsen, or even Scott in his ability to deal with people.

While Barr has produced a minutely detailed document, using all available evidence, rather than a dis-

tillation of the key events, it is those details that give the book its appeal. I found I wanted to read just one more paragraph each time before I put the book down. I was surprised when I realized I was over half way through the book and it seemed I had just started. As I stated initially this is really a history text, but it covers a key era in the story of Canada. The only important

note of natural history concerns the surgeon, Edward Adams, for whom the Yellow-billed Loon was named *Gavia adamsii*. It is well worth the read if you love the Arctic, enjoy history or are a Franklin buff.

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### **Eighteenth-century Naturalists of Hudson Bay**

By Stuart Houston, Tim Ball and Mary Houston. 2003. McGill-Queen's University Press, 3430 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1X9. xxiv + 333 pages 49.95 CAD Cloth.

In 1959, C. Stuart Houston and Maurice G. Street began to introduce prairie naturalists to the pioneering contributions of employees and other associates of the Hudson's Bay Company and to expand our understanding of the natural history of Canada's Arctic and prairie regions (Houston and Street 1959) in the first of a long series of articles, books, notes and papers by Houston and numerous colleagues on biographies of specific contributors and the history of various aspects of these contributions. In this volume, Stuart and his chief collaborator (Mary I. Houston) bring many of the details of their earlier publications together, expand on the European collaborators of these naturalists and compare the Hudson's Bay contributions with approximately contemporary efforts in South Carolina. They also collaborate with Timothy E. Ball in outlining the contributions of H.B.C. officials in documenting climatological details at various sites and their changes over a long time period and with Arok Wolvengrey and Jean Okimasis in documenting Cree names for numerous natural history species in the lands of the vast territory formerly controlled by H.B.C.

The book opens with a series of introductory sections, including a list of McGill-Queen's "Native and Northern Series" (of which this is the 34<sup>th</sup>), a dedication to William B. Ewart (whose efforts led to the moving of the extensive Hudson's Bay Company archives from England to Winnipeg), lists of contents, illustrations and tables, eight colour plates of birds originally published in two of four 1743-1751 volumes by George Edwards, acknowledgments, a list of supplementary documents available through the internet, a list of abbreviations and a foreword by the Keeper of the Hudson's Bay Archives, Judith Hudson Beattie. The main text of the book (pages 1-142) consists of an unnumbered introductory chapter, followed by 12 numbered chapters. Seven appendices occupy almost as many pages (pages 143-251). About 40 pages of footnotes, 25 pages of references and a 14-page index close the book.

The main text starts with a short outline of the history of Hudson's Bay Company activities in North America and the role of HBC officials in documenting natural history features of much of the prairie prov-

inces, Ontario, Quebec, Nunavut and adjacent areas in collaboration with native North Americans and European scientists. The first numbered chapter consists of brief biographies of seven European scientists who received and/or examined animal specimens collected by HBC personnel, described and often named them, and wrote the first accounts of their behaviour and other natural history features. The role of these specimens in developing Linnaeus's system of classification of plants and animals is outlined. Eight chapters follow on the contributions and efforts by eight specific HBC officials (Peter Fidler, Andrew Graham, Samuel Hearne, Thomas Hutchins, James Isham, Alexander Light, Humphrey Marten and Moses Norton). The tenth numbered chapter summarizes these contributions, lists Hudson Bay area bird species mentioned in ten early manuscripts, provides several background details and notes several corrections and omissions in earlier publications. The eleventh chapter, based primarily on four years of archival research by Ball, outlines weather, climate and climatic changes in the area, as documented through records of 30 or more years at 30 HBC posts. The final chapter outlines early contributions to North American natural history by early settlers of Charles Town, South Carolina, when that area was still a British colony. Brief biographies of two contributors of meteorological data and two natural history collectors are included, as well as a list of species named as new in Mark Catesby's 1729-1747 two-volume treatise on the birds of South Carolina (58 from "South Carolina," seven from other parts of eastern U.S. states, seven from the Caribbean, and one from "Quebec.")

Seven appendices cover about 100 pages. The longest (about 50 pages) by the Houstons, Jean Okimasis and Arok Wolvengrey lists words used in the eighteenth century in four Cree dialects for various taxa that live in the territory controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company. Another lists departure and arrival dates and the captains of ships sailing between York Factory and Europe from 1716 to 1892.

Smiles will cross the faces of Saskatchewan naturalists, long aware that two of their most prominent members (Margaret Belcher and Mary Houston) were sisters, when they read that one of two ships captained by a Belcher (twice) was "Mary." A two-page appendix by Deirdre Simmons outlines the history of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Others concern ten man-