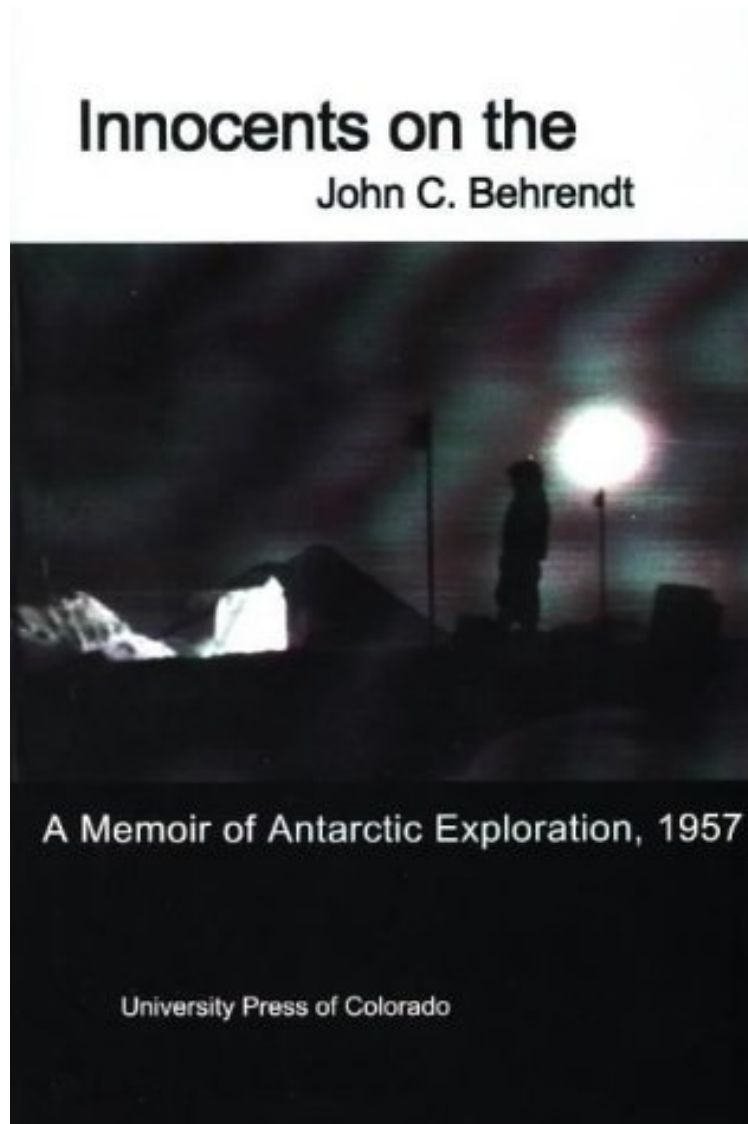


[Mobile library] Innocents on the Ice: A Memoir of Antarctic Exploration, 1957

Innocents on the Ice: A Memoir of Antarctic Exploration, 1957

John C. Behrendt

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John C. Behrendt : Innocents on the Ice: A Memoir of Antarctic Exploration, 1957 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Innocents on the Ice: A Memoir of Antarctic Exploration, 1957:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I think it is great because I wrote it. !By John C. Behrendt I admit I am biased toward this book. I It won the Colorado Book award for non fiction in 1999.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. When military authority goes wrong ...By norabaron The book is reasonably well-written

although in a strange style: a mixture throughout of diary entries from 1957 and current commentaries. The narrative about the science and logistics is interesting enough, but the real heart of the book is the battle between the scientists and Captain Finn Ronne of the U.S. Navy. Captain Ronne, who wrote his own version of the IGY expedition at Ellsworth Station, appears to have been a completely arbitrary martinet, a self-serving dictator and political string-puller, and a bad-tempered paranoid and coward. He repeatedly put the expedition in danger by his refusal to provide equipment. He censored much of the communication in and out. He insisted that the scientists share dishwashing and other duties even when they were barely able to complete their scientific assignments. He evidently believed that the Navy support team of 30 or so men had more important things to do than assist the scientists, even though the sole purpose of the whole expedition was scientific. The sad tale of how he killed two emperor penguins 'in the most brutal way imaginable' is enough to turn one's stomach. There are parallels, as Behrendt notes, with Captain Queeg of the *Caine Mutiny*. Unfortunately in the nonfictional world of the Navy, Ronne's outrageous behavior, although known to his superiors, apparently went unpunished. The characterization of other individuals in the book is rather thin. But I would strongly recommend the book. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. What actually happened at Ellsworth Station IGY? By A Customer The title is very appropriate for Behrendt's diary of events at Ellsworth Station on the Weddell Sea margin of the Filchner Ice Shelf and their long geophysical traverse as far south as the Dufek Massif during IGY (1956-1958). The diary, that of a graduate student geophysicist and neophyte Antarctic, is made much more interesting by the running commentary from one of Antarctica's most accomplished, still active, scientists. The underlying plot describes a group of young scientists trying to cope with a system designed for the Navy and the harsh realities of exploring an unknown part of Antarctica. Many of the stories are amusing and almost unbelievable; they show the stress of wintering over and working in harsh conditions. I am amazed at how much was accomplished by Behrendt and other pioneers in the IGY program who worked with the relatively primitive equipment of the time. We need to hear more of their stories!

Innocents on the Ice is based on the author's experience and writings as part of a U.S. Navy-supported scientific expedition to establish Ellsworth Station on the Filchner Ice Shelf. This expedition, undertaken from November 1956 to early 1958, coincided with the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958) which initiated the "scientific age" in Antarctica. Behrendt describes the stress of experiencing the dark Antarctic winter of 1957, during which intense personal conflicts arose at the most isolated of the seven U.S. Antarctic stations. The tension was unrelieved by contact with the outside world, since there was no mail for the 9 civilians and 30 Navy men living beneath the snow and only occasional radio contact was made with families for a year. The author also describes his explorations with four others of the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf system during the following summers of 1957-1958. Along the hazardous 1300-mile oversnow traverse in two Sno-Cats, the field party measured ice thickness and snow accumulation as part of an international effort to determine the balance of the Antarctic ice sheet, and they also made the first geological observations of the spectacular Dufek Massif in the then unexplored Pensacola Mountains. Finally, Behrendt draws upon his 40 years of continual participation in Antarctic research to explain the changes in scientific activities and environmental awareness in Antarctica today.

"A gripping tale of young scientists pursuing their calling while under the command of a vindictive, paranoid naval officer. Denied radio contact with their stateside mentors, some were threatened with Court Martial for insisting on doing what they were sent to do. Fortunately, it is the scientists who triumph after a rough winter." -- Charles Swithinbank, author of *FORTY YEARS ON ICE* "Behrendt skillfully describes the tension between the scientist's passion for research and their leader's paranoia, which at times threatened to bring the isolated base to the brink of instability and mutiny. . . . [A] welcome and long-overdue addition to the literature of the continent." -- J. McKim Malville, author of *PREHISTORIC ASTRONOMY OF THE SOUTHWEST* "A richly detailed insider's look at the realities of the last real exploration of the Earth. It shows all the complex glory and trouble of high-tech exploration in the 20th-Century: Personality conflicts, tensions, pratfalls and the transcendent experience of setting foot on unknown lands. A fine mix of science, adventure, and human drama." -- Michael Parfit, author of *SOUTH LIGHT: A JOURNEY TO THE LAST CONTINENT* and scriptwriter for the IMAX film *Antarctica* About the Author John C. Behrendt is an internationally known scientist who has made 12 trips to Antarctica and traveled there in every decade since the 1956-58 International Geophysical Year expedition described in this book. He returned to the Weddell Sea and the Filchner Ice Shelf in 1958-59, and made pioneering aerogeophysical surveys over the Transantarctic Mountains and the West Antarctic Ice Sheet from 1960-64. In 1960-61 he led an oversnow traverse party to the southern Antarctic Peninsula and the Behrendt Mountains, which were named for him as a result of his work. He also led geophysical research programs for 31 years at the U.S. Geological Survey. Behrendt is currently a Fellow at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research at the University of Colorado, where he is investigating volcanoes under the West Antarctic Ice Sheet using airborne geophysical surveys.