

THE BEST JOURNEY IN THE WORLD: ADVENTURES IN CANADA'S HIGH ARCTIC. By JIM LOTZ. Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia: Pottersfield Press, 2006. ISBN 1-895900-76-X. 224 p., 3 maps, 31 b&w illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

This entertaining book is the third to appear as a result of the Defence Research Board (DRB) activities in northernmost Ellesmere Island. First, in 1974, came Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith's *North of Latitude Eighty*, which summarized the research carried out by the DRB over an 18-year period. This was followed in 2002 by Ian Jackson's *Does Anyone Read Lake Hazen?* This is the story of the four-man team, led by Dick Harington, that overwintered at the DRB base beside Lake Hazen during the 1957–58 International Geophysical Year (IGY), as part of Operation Hazen. Jim Lotz's book, *The Best Journey in the World*, summarizes his experiences between 1957 and 1960 on four summer expeditions to northernmost Ellesmere, three of which he spent near Lake Hazen working as a glacial meteorologist on the Gilman Glacier. In 1959, Lotz served as Canadian liaison officer as well as glacial meteorologist on a U.S. Air Force expedition to the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf, the largest of the ice masses fringing the north coast.

But this book, by a self-professed jack-of-all-trades, is much more than a description of the author's experiences on these expeditions to the High Arctic. In the Prologue and Chapter 1, "Occupation – Explorer," we learn about Jim Lotz's background: his growing up in Liverpool, England, summers spent in his mother's home village in Scotland during World War II, service in the Royal Air Force, 1947–49, and geographical studies at Manchester University. After graduating in 1952, Lotz joined the United Africa Company and worked as a trader in Nigeria. There he met Brian Sagar, later a participant in Operation Hazen. Back in England by late 1953, Lotz found job prospects bleak, so he emigrated to Canada, landing at Pier 21, Halifax, in the spring of 1954. Following a short stint with Canadian Aero Services and other temporary work in Ottawa stores, he was hired in 1955 by Professor Ken Hare to be a meteorological observer with McGill University's Subarctic Research Laboratory in Schefferville, Quebec. This station was operated by McGill's Department of Geography under contract to the federal Department of Transport, an arrangement that gave graduate students a chance to do field work for MSc theses, as well as gain practical experience as meteorological observers. In Jim Lotz's case, this job also led to an invitation from McGill professor Sverre Orvig to join Operation Hazen as a meteorological observer on the Gilman Glacier, where the DRB planned to have a summer camp during the IGY, in addition to the main, year-round base camp at Lake Hazen. The DRB's Arctic operations were under the overall direction of Trevor Harwood, with glaciologist Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith serving as the field leader. Chapter 2, "Going to Extremes," gives the historical background to the

exploration of northern Ellesmere Island, and Chapter 3, "Into an Unknown Land," describes planning and the trip north. One impressive story reported in this section is about a single Army Sergeant, Dave Engel of the Royal Canadian Engineers, who was sent north with the first group in April 1957 to prepare a runway on Lake Hazen capable of receiving Flying Boxcars (C-119s). Engel did the job alone, in temperatures of  $-20^{\circ}$  to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , with the help of a huge TD-9 bulldozer! In this chapter we also learn how to set up a pyramid tent on a sloping glacier surface, in a wind!

In Chapter 4, "Companions: Humans," I enjoyed the colourful descriptions of various expedition members, as several are or were friends of mine as well. The vital role played by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in supporting and supplying the expedition is detailed here. Chapter 5, "Companions: Canine," is amusing, and will be especially appreciated by anyone who has tried to work with dogs. In Chapter 6, Lotz recounts his daily routine at the Gilman Glacier camp, a site described by Sverre Orvig from a fly-over as, "You looked like fleas on a bedsheet." Lotz made meteorological observations three times a day, and the camp was even equipped with a meteorological mast 10 m high for gathering data on wind speed and temperature at 10 cm, 1 m, 3 m, and 10 m above the glacier surface. This chapter also includes entertaining sections on clothing, meals, problems engendered by the arrival of the melt season on Gilman Glacier, and "Staying Sane." Chapter 7, "Discoveries and Mysteries," reviews highlights of the various fields of research: glaciology, wildlife, botany, archaeology, meteorology, and climatology, as well as fish and sedimentology in Lake Hazen. Chapter 8, "Departures," describes the winding up of the two summer seasons, 1957 and 1958, with evacuation provided by the USCGC *Eastwind* (1957) and USS *Atka* (1958), as well as an RCAF Canso flight from Lake Hazen to take out the last personnel in 1958. The book concludes with "Epilogues After Hazen," which describes the post-Operation Hazen activities of numerous participants, and "Sources," a three-page reference list.

*The Best Journey in the World* is printed on good quality white paper with wide margins, making it easy to read. Most of the photographs are quite good; the best is perhaps the RCAF oblique photo of the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf on p. 121. An oblique air photo of Gilman Glacier, such as that used in Hattersley-Smith (1974) or in an earlier co-authored report on meteorology by Lotz himself, would have enhanced this volume as well. The maps (pages 38, 182 and 184) could have been improved. The first one is not easy to read, especially the differentiation between ice and land, and the maps on pages 182 and 184 have uneven grey tones and are not sharp. Then, unfortunately, there are a number of errors: p. 39 – Canada's Arctic Islands extend well south of  $74^{\circ}\text{N}$ , but the northern tier of islands, the Queen Elizabeth Islands, do indeed lie north of  $74^{\circ}$ ; p. 42 – ice cores from Agassiz Ice Cap show that the early Holocene was warmest and that cooling went on until

approximately 2500 years ago (Koerner and Fisher, 1990); p. 44 – Amund and Ellef Ringnes islands were named for Norwegian, not Danish, brewers—major supporters of Otto Sverdrup’s 1898–1902 Expedition; p. 55 – I do not concur with Lotz’s view of the “amateur explorers” at Oxford and Cambridge—much excellent work has been done in Svalbard, Greenland, Iceland, and Ellesmere Island by expeditions from these universities and others (for example, the methods of field survey developed by Michael Spender and John Wright); p. 57 – the site of Krüger’s last camp may have been found on Axel Heiberg Island (Brooks et al., 2004); p. 107 – Fosheim Peninsula is on western, not eastern, Ellesmere Island; p. 112 – is it correct to state that “the Lake Hazen basin, with its balmy summer is an exception to the barren and lifeless land that is the High Arctic”? I think not, for there are numerous well-vegetated valleys and “oases”; see, for example, the volume by Svoboda (not Sboda!) and Freedman (1994) in Lotz’s reference list; p. 120 – the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf, according to Jeffries (2002), is formed from sea ice (not glacier ice), whereas the Milne Ice Shelf is glacier ice, and the Alfred Ernest Ice Shelf is composite; p. 162 – May 17th, not 18th, is Norway’s National Day; and finally, p. 183, it is incorrect to state that “Greenland ice spread across Ellesmere Island and merged southwards with the Laurentide Ice Sheet....” The Innuitian Ice Sheet, a separate entity, covered considerable areas of the Queen Elizabeth Islands, between the two larger ice sheets (Blake, 1970).

Despite these slips, this well-written and often amusing volume is a valuable source of information about the early research carried out in northernmost Canada after World War II. Lotz credits Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith for his excellent and understanding leadership, and the kudos to Geoff are well deserved. It is equally important to stress, as Lotz does, that various components of the military played an essential role in the post-war expeditionary work in Arctic Canada. In those early days, there were no commercial air routes into the northern islands of the Arctic Archipelago, and there was no Polar Continental Shelf Project to provide logistical support for scientific endeavors. For anyone interested in the trials and tribulations of getting a major expedition into the field and becoming operational and successful, this book makes very good reading indeed. At Cdn \$19.95, it is a real bargain!

#### REFERENCES

- BLAKE, W., Jr. 1970. Studies of glacial history in Arctic Canada. I. Pumice, radiocarbon dates and differential uplift in the eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences* 7:634–664.
- BROOKS, C.R., ENGLAND, J.H., DYKE, A.S., and SAVELLE, J. 2004. Krüger’s final camp in Arctic Canada? *Arctic (InfoNorth)* 57:225–229.

- HATTERSLEY-SMITH, G. 1974. North of Latitude Eighty: The Defence Research Board in Ellesmere Island. Ottawa: Defence Research Board. 121 p.
- JACKSON, C.I. 2002. Does anyone read Lake Hazen? Occasional Publication Series No. 53. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI) Press. 164 p.
- JEFFRIES, M.O. 2002. Glaciers of the Arctic Islands: Ellesmere Island ice shelves and ice islands. In: Williams, R.S., Jr., and Ferrigno, J.G., eds. Satellite image atlas of glaciers of the World – North America. United States Geological Survey Professional Paper 1386-J:147–167.
- KOERNER, R.M., and FISHER, D.A. 1990. A record of Holocene summer climate from a Canadian High-Arctic ice core. *Nature* 343(6259):630–631.

*Weston Blake, Jr.*  
*Research Scientist, Emeritus*  
*Geological Survey of Canada*  
*615 Booth Street, Room 249*  
*Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*  
*K1A 0E9*  
*weblake@nrcan.gc.ca*

- NORTHERN ETHNOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPES: PERSPECTIVES FROM CIRCUMPOLAR NATIONS. Edited by IGOR KRUPNIK, RACHEL MASON and TONIA HORTON. Washington, D.C.: Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 2004. Distributed by University of Alaska Press. ISBN 0-9673429-7-X. xvi + 415 p., maps, b&w illus., 20 contributions, index. Softbound. US\$22.50.

When I was conducting my PhD fieldwork in Estonia, I happened to overhear a conversation between two Russian-speaking teenagers. They were standing before a curated space: the ruins of a building that had been fenced off. A sign in Estonian, Russian, and English explained that the Soviet forces during World War II had bombed the city, killing its inhabitants, and leaving the city in ruins. Reading the sign, the one remarked to the other in a sarcastic tone: “Didn’t the Germans bomb and kill the city during the War?” At play were the essentials of cultural landscapes and how the meaning of space is disputed: the state was trying to present a certain interpretation of the ruins that it was actively maintaining, that of Soviet (read Russian) invaders and colonizers. The boys were challenging the state’s interpretation of the space and suggesting an alternative reading in which the Soviets/Russians were liberators who freed Estonia from the Nazis.

When the boys walked away, the space and the sign remained; however, the boys’ reading remained with them and with the eavesdropping anthropologist. The editors and authors of the collective work *Northern Ethnographic Landscapes* have the audacity to confront the principal challenge: how do you manage ethnographic and cultural landscapes while being respectful of communities and the