

important expeditions of the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration.

Born in Macclesfield in 1852 to parents whose alliance joined one of the area's leading silk millers with a powerful family in the cotton trade, John Fielden Brocklehurst was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge, before gaining a commission in the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards (or Blues). Early in his career, he met Gordon and travelled with him to Abyssinia, a trip bonding the two men as fast friends. Gordon subsequently requested that Brocklehurst be allowed to accompany him on various assignments in Africa – including his last, to the Sudan — but each time Brocklehurst's military superiors refused.

Brocklehurst's career was one of continued upward mobility, and included service in some of the most significant actions of the Victorian era. In 1882, as a captain, he served under Sir Garnet Wolseley in the Egyptian campaign putting down the anti-European revolt under Colonel Arabi. Two years later, he joined the Gordon Relief Expedition at the special request of Wolseley, its commander. This was in part because Wolseley and Brocklehurst were Gordon's two greatest friends, the only two, he wrote, for whom he prayed every night. In 1895, as a colonel, Brocklehurst took command of the Blues, and four years later he was appointed Equerry to Queen Victoria. He had hardly settled into that position, however, before he was promoted major-general and given command of a cavalry regiment in Natal, making him the youngest general officer at the front as the Boer War began. Trapped in Ladysmith with the rest of Sir George White's troops, Brocklehurst distinguished himself in sorties outside the town, until the extended investment forced the besieged men to eat their horses rather than ride them.

Following the relief of Ladysmith, Brocklehurst returned to Queen Victoria's service, and when she died, Queen Alexandra kept him as her own Equerry. It was as such that he made his contribution to Ernest Shackleton's British Antarctic Expedition. One of Shackleton's shore party was 20-year-old Sir Philip Brocklehurst, the cousin of Johnny Brocklehurst. Hoping that royal patronage might increase donations to the expedition, Shackleton and Sir Philip approached the older Brocklehurst, whose high standing at court had been shown by his recently being named Lord Lieutenant of Rutland. Although Brocklehurst failed to gain the BAE official patronage, he did arrange for King Edward VII, Queen Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and Prince Edward (later King Edward VIII) to visit the expedition ship *Nimrod* at Cowes before she sailed.

As the royal visit ended, the King suddenly conferred upon Shackleton the Royal Victorian Order. And the Queen presented him a flag, with a note that read, 'May this Union Jack, which I entrust to your keeping, lead you safely to the South Pole.' It was the first such gesture made to a British explorer by a monarch, and it clearly had been orchestrated by Johnny Brocklehurst. As hoped,

the visit gave Shackleton a much-increased cachet with potential backers.

In 1914 Brocklehurst was created a Baron, styling himself Lord Ranksborough. The following year he was named Lord in Waiting to King George V. But there was much more to Brocklehurst than military and royal honours, and by investigating his own interests as well as his friendships with Gordon, Cecil Rhodes, Admiral Sir John Fisher, the famed newspaper editor W.T. Stead, and other key figures, this book gives insights into the imperial era and the mentalities that helped drive expansion and exploration. As such, although tangential to exploration, it is a valuable addition for those who wish to understand its background.

This book can be ordered directly from Reardon Publishing, PO Box 919, Cheltenham GL50 0AN; email: Reardon@Bigfoot.com.

THE HISTORY OF SIBERIA. Igor V. Naumov. Edited by David N. Collins. 2006. New York: Routledge. xiv + 242 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-0-415-36819-3. £75.00; \$US135.00.
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This slim book is a translation of a Russian text that originated as a series of lectures at Irkutsk State Technical University, where the author is the head of the History Department. It is notable as being almost the sole such history written by a native-born *Sibiriac*, and the author's background gives him a depth of understanding rarely equalled in writings about this vast region, which covers the entire northern part of the Asian continent.

The book is divided into eight chronological sections, and, within those, 30 chapters. As these cover the thousands of years of the region's history, from the appearance of man to the twenty-first century, the chapters are, by necessity, rather brief. This makes the book more of a primer than an in-depth investigation into any particular aspect of Siberian history, and therefore more appropriate for students and novices in the field than those with significant expertise. That said, there is a great deal of information here for anyone without extensive knowledge of Siberia, and it is produced in a very reader-friendly fashion, with numerous information boxes, maps, and photographs adding greatly to the main text (although the photographs have been printed in uniformly poor quality).

The early sections of the book, giving general information about the region and then overviews of Siberia in antiquity and in the period up to the eve of its annexation by Russia, simply fly along, because there is so much material to cover in a limited space, all being done in 50 pages. The heart of the book, occupying slightly less than half of the total, is the history of the Tsarist period, divided into three sections: the early penetration, subjugation, and exploration; the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and the mid-nineteenth century to the Russian Revolution. The section that receives the most in-depth treatment is

that about the Revolution and Civil War, three chapters being dedicated to the period from 1917 to 1922. The final section of the book, which is about the same length as that for the Revolution and Civil War, covers Siberia since the 1920s. This limited treatment is reasonable because so much more has been published elsewhere in recent years about the harsh realities of life under the rule of the former Soviet regime, the struggles and advances of the native peoples of the region, the socio-economic

and cultural changes brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and Siberia's prospects for the future.

In summary, this is a book that it is very worthwhile reading for those who do not already have extensive Siberian knowledge. Unfortunately, its price will make it more likely to be found in university or specialist libraries than in the hands of those thirsty for knowledge about this fascinating region.