

pected, most of the participants represented either Swedish or Norwegian institutions, although Peter J. Capelotti, an archaeologist from Pennsylvania State University, and Cornelia Lüdecke, a historian from Munich, both contributed articles.

The first part of the book is divided into six papers, only three of them in English. The two key papers are those by Capelotti and Urban Wråkberg, the organiser of the symposium and editor of the book. Capelotti is an expert on Walter Wellman, the American journalist who made three attempts to fly to the North Pole in a hydrogen airship. Wellman used Andrée's site as his base on three different expeditions, and there are at Virgohamna a mixture of items remaining from the expeditions of both explorers. Capelotti uses the archaeological evidence at the sites to examine several hypotheses, particularly to assess whether changes in the hydrogen-generating techniques used by the two explorers indicate that technological evolution was proceeding at an extremely rapid rate between 1896 and 1909, and what the methods used by Wellman suggest regarding claims he made about the elements involved in the hydrogen-producing process affecting the success of his mission.

In 'Andrée's folly: time for reappraisal?' Wråkberg examines the critical evaluations of Andrée that have been advanced through the years, many of which, he argues, have 'been based on simple hindsight and the fallacies it produces in any historical interpretation' (page 56). By a careful study of the state of knowledge at the time of Andrée's flight, Wråkberg methodically disputes the reasoning behind a series of common assessments about Andrée, his logistics, and his technology. He concludes that the expedition was actually an impressive example of attempting to pool all available polar experience whilst trying rationally to combine it with state-of-the-art and much-needed innovative technology.

The second half of the book presents five papers looking at current research in the Arctic. In one, Lyder Marstrand surveys the cultural heritage of Svalbard and explains how it is managed. Some potential issues for future work are then briefly mentioned. In 'Problems for further research on the history of science of the polar regions,' Lüdecke takes a wide-ranging look at potential research projects, from the study of the economic and political aspects of polar exploration and the medical and social questions it involves, to international cooperation in polar research and its institutionalisation.

Sue Barr, for years the expert on history for the Norsk Polarinstitut and now with the Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage, examines the needs for, and problems with, writing the history of polar research institutions. Using the Norsk Polarinstitut as an example, she looks at the problem with such institutions documenting their own history, but, similarly, of outside organisations doing so. She then mentions the diversity of related themes that must be part of such a study, including the international, national, and internal politics faced by these organisations;

the diversity of tasks and areas in which polar institutions are actually involved; and the associated histories that must be considered. It becomes obvious why so few serious studies of such institutions have actually been produced.

In summation, this is a significant work in not one, but two, areas. It not only presents much of the latest data and opinions about one of the more controversial Arctic explorers, but it also gives direction on where future research could, and perhaps should, be headed. (K.B. Shabby, History Department, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA.)

'BOSTON MEN' ON THE NORTHWEST COAST: THE AMERICAN MARITIME FUR TRADE, 1788–1844. Mary Malloy. 1998. Fairbanks and Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press (Alaska History No 47). 232 p, hard cover. ISBN 1-895901-18-9. \$US28.00.

This book adds to the existing literature, which is considerable, on the history of the sea-otter trade of the northwest coast of North America. It provides a new and systematic focus on American traders, 'Boston Men,' and their activities on that coast from the inception of American trade to the decline of that branch of marine commerce. In two long and detailed chapters, full of all sorts of insight, the author explains the importance of the Boston trade and explores the nature of shipboard society and northwest-coast Indian society.

In the balance of the book, part two, the author gives a listing of American vessels in the trade, 1790–1844, listed by ship name and not by year or years of an individual voyage or voyages. This part of the book also provides a northwest-coast gazetteer. Accompanying the text are various notes, arranged by chapter as endnotes (it is a great pity that these could not have been footnotes, as this is such an important reference book). Acknowledgements and an index complete the work. There are no illustrations other than a map, derived from Captain George Vancouver's 1798 chart showing part of the coast of northwest America as used by the Boston brig *Griffin*, with 40 place names of the period added. This map is highly useful to the armchair geographer attempting to piece together the particulars of an individual voyage. A bibliography would have added to the value and importance of this work.

This book stands apart from the general literature on the subject because it updates the list of American ships in the trade as given in F.W. Howay's assorted publications, 1930–34. It also provides fresh insight into American relationships with northwest-coast Indians. Future students working in these interrelated fields will be grateful to the author for the painstaking attention given to the documents and historical reports for each and every voyage of these remarkable ships, captains, and crews. This book will long remain the preferred reference for the history of a significant branch of American seaborne commerce. (Barry Gough, Department of History, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3C5, Canada.)