

prowl constantly through the narrative's pages. It is structured so that chapters resemble short episodic diary entries. It is also well served by two maps, the author's own photographs, and an appendix replete with details of the ship's crew. If this book lacks a certain amount of careful polish (for example, Nicholas is first spelled correctly, but misspelled a page later, and there are a few grammatical slip-ups), it nevertheless retains a clarity and crispness not dulled by the passing of almost 50 years. (Ian Higginson, Centre for the History and Cultural Studies of Science, Physics Laboratory, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NR.)

#### BRIEF REVIEWS

**FIFTY YEARS BELOW ZERO: A LIFETIME OF ADVENTURE IN THE FAR NORTH.** Charles D. Brower, in collaboration with Philip J. Farrelly and Lyman Anson. 1994. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press. xxvi + 324 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-912006-68-3. US\$20.00.

This is the third book to appear in the University of Alaska Press Classic Reprint Series. It comprises the memoirs, heavily rewritten and edited, of Charles Brower, who, for more than 50 years to 1945 when he died, lived at Point Barrow, Alaska. The book was first published in 1942 and has been reprinted very many times, so that it is one of the best-known volumes of Arctic reminiscences. The present edition has, as well as the original introduction by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a useful and interesting preface by Terrence Cole, general editor of the series. The book is valuable both because of the intrinsic interest in the information presented — notably that relating to the Alaskan people — and as an example of a journalistic style of writing now almost extinct, although common in the 1940s and 1950s. This was largely due to the collaborators: Brower freely admitted that his 'spelling was bad; and...punctuation...worse,' and that his work required rewriting 'by someone that knows how.'

The book is attractively presented, and the contemporary photographs are interesting in their own right and serve to illuminate the narrative. However, the two maps are very similar; the first is rendered redundant by the second. *Fifty years below zero* is highly recommended to those who do not know it already.

**TO THE ARCTIC: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAR NORTHERN WORLD.** Steven B. Young. 1994. New York, Chichester, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore: John Wiley and Sons Inc. 354 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-471-62082-3. US\$16.95.

This is the paperback edition of Steven Young's well-researched and informative guide to the Arctic regions that was released in hard cover in 1989. It is a book aimed at the general reader, containing sections on flora and fauna, polar weather systems, glaciology, and polar ecology. The final chapter assesses the archaeological evidence for when and where the first people came to the Arctic regions.

**VERTEBRATE TAPHONOMY.** R. Lee Lyman. 1994. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xxvi + 524 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-521-45840-4. £24.95; US\$34.95.

One of the excellent Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology series, *Vertebrate taphonomy* has been published simultaneously in hardback and paperback. Taphonomy is the "transition of organic matter from the biosphere into the organic world", and this concise volume, containing up-to-date techniques of analysis, will be of value to palaeobiologists and zooarchaeologists working all over the world at archaeological sites containing human or animal matter. Although none of it relates specifically to the polar regions, the manual outlines the basic techniques of taphonomy, how to interpret the accumulation and dispersal of skeletal remains in the field, and the effects of biostratigraphic factors such as butchering, weathering, burning, and burial practices. Lyman's textbook on taphonomic processes will be a valuable contribution to any archaeologist working in the polar regions wishing to interpret skeletal material.

#### Publications received

**DIE ERSTE DEUTSCHE NORDPOLAR-EXPEDITION IM JAHRE 1868.** 1993. Karl Koldewey. Gotha: Justus Perthes Verlag. x + 77 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 3-623-00750-1. 56 DM.

**LAND RIGHTS AND MINORITIES.** Roger Plant. 1994. Brixton: Minority Rights Group. 42 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-897693-35-4.