

Trial by Ice: The True Story of Murder and Survival on the 1871 Polaris Expedition

Richard Parry

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#13674193 in Books 2001-08 Format: Large Print Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x 5.75 x 1.251,
#File Name: 0786234504607 pages | File size: 72.Mb

Richard Parry : Trial by Ice: The True Story of Murder and Survival on the 1871 Polaris Expedition before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Trial by Ice: The True Story of Murder and Survival on the 1871 Polaris Expedition:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Captivating story, boatloads of typosBy EarthlightJust before reading this book I had read Shackleton's Endurance. While Shackleton's text was often written in a matter-of-fact style, the first chapter of this book was so (over) dramatic that I had to lay my Kindle down and try and digest all the adjectives and overboiling drama. After the initial shock, the rest of the book was well written and captivating.However, the Kindle edition I received suffers from infuriating amounts of typo s, we:rd

An extraordinary real-life adventure of men battling the elements and themselves, told with ice-cold precision. starred, Kirkus Reviews In 1871, the Polaris sailed with great fanfare from New York harbor and began a historic journey to one of the earths final frontiers. Seven months later, a handful of half-starved survivors returned with a story that shocked the entire nation. . . . In this powerful true story of death and survival, courage and intrigue aboard a doomed ship, Richard Parry chronicles one of the most astonishing, little-known tragedies at sea in American history.

From Publishers WeeklyDuring the first U.S. attempt to reach the North Pole, the doomed 1871 Polaris expedition's

team leader, Charles Francis Hall, mysteriously died. In this book, Parry, a novelist (*That Fateful Lightning*, etc.), provides a vivid but uneven account of the captain's death, which may have been brought on by a muddled command structure that encouraged insubordination, even mutiny, among the crew. Suspense builds as Parry describes the events leading up to Hall's "murder," then climaxes in horrifying detail. Once Hall is gone, however, the plot's momentum disappears, with half the book to go. The fragmented crew's attempt to survive the Arctic until they are rescued and brought back to civilization is evoked only by clichés. Readers holding out through the pedestrian middle section will be rewarded with an enticing account of the government's coverup and an absorbing chapter about the autopsy performed on Hall's body 100 years after it was buried. Author tour. (Jan. 30) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Although Denmark, England, France, and Norway had already tried and failed, in 1871 the United States decided to finance an expedition to find the North Pole and the Northwest Passage. Charles Francis Hall of Ohio, who was neither a seafarer nor an explorer, convinced President Grant and Congress to send out a vessel and was given a ship, the *Polaris*, and a crew of 25. The ship was not suitable for ice navigation, and the crew, a mixture of Germans and Americans, was selected by politicians and did not include the men Hall wanted. The expedition was doomed from the start. Beset by jealousies, intrigues, and weak leadership, the crew suffered from exposure, hunger, and the bleak Arctic. Captain Hall was poisoned (it was probably murder), and the ship was lost. The crew split into two parties, one surviving nine months on an ice floe until it was finally rescued by a whaler. Despite an exhaustive inquiry by the U.S. Navy and Congress, no conclusion was reached. Parry (*That Fateful Lightning: A Novel of Ulysses S. Grant*) has brought the story to light again with this riveting account. For all public and academic libraries. D Stanley L. Itkin, Hillside P.L., New Hyde Park, NY Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* In the mid-1800s, a number of countries raced to be the first to reach the North Pole. This incredible but true story relates the ill-fated 1871 *Polaris* expedition led by Charles Hall, an experienced Arctic explorer who persuaded President Grant and Congress to fund the endeavor. In a classic case of too many cooks spoiling the broth, the expedition was in trouble before it set sail. Hall, the Navy, and the Smithsonian Institute squabbled to appoint members to the expedition according to their own distinct and incongruent priorities, resulting in a group that suffered from disunity and mistrust. Personal enmity and unrelenting egos started undermining the captain's leadership before long. After the captain's suspicious death, the expedition deteriorated further under poor leadership that fostered a dangerous lack of discipline among the men. Parry uses the journals and testimony of the men to relate their conversations and interactions, portraying a vivid picture of the loyalties and personal differences among the members. His extensive research and excellent storytelling skills make this a fascinating and enjoyable read. Gavin Quinn Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved