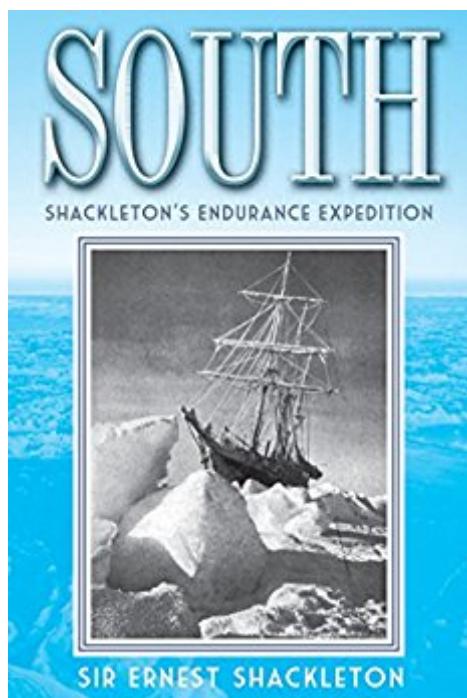


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South: Shackleton's Endurance Expedition



Synopsis

In 1914, as Europe braces for an unfathomably deadly war, explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton sets sail for Antarctica to do the impossible: traverse the continent. He has a ship (the aptly named *Endurance*), a head brimming with optimism, and 28 men willing to follow him on an expedition across some of the most treacherous terrain on the planet. But Shackleton's optimism doesn't last long. Despite his experience in the Antarctic, disaster strikes early on when the *Endurance* is trapped in packed ice and slowly crushed, forcing Shackleton and his men off the ship and stranding them in a sea of ice. *South* is the legendary story of Shackleton and his crew's struggle to survive the elements and return home alive. Written by Shackleton, *South* is a truly astonishing story of human fortitude. It is the story of a voyage that lasts nearly three years; a firsthand account of hurricane-force winds, subzero temperatures, glaciers, icebergs, freezing water, starvation, and lethal, terrifying storms. It is a tale unlike any to come before or since. Shackleton's record of his journey made him famous around the world and transformed him into a symbol of achievement and hope in an age of darkness and war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The story is interesting, but you have to get through the journal/log style of writing -- all the longitude, latitude, temperature readings and such. It's good to hear it in Shackleton's own words. What separates this book from the other well known book called "Endurance" is that Shackleton explains the fate of the Aurora which was the supply ship for the south pole. The Aurora went on assuming her duties not knowing the fate of Shackleton and his men. The Aurora also got caught in the ice, but was eventually freed and floundered until saved.

This is a wonderful account of the hardships endured during this endeavor. The writing is clear cut without elaboration or speculation. It is raw in its writing and the events that occurred. If you're interested in a story like White Fang, don't read this. If you're interested in the human spirit of adventure and what it takes mentally, physically, and emotionally to stay alive without any outside help or communication, then read this! Shackleton made decisions to keep people alive, and it wasn't a majority vote. The men knew and ultimately trusted his experience and judgement in spite of all the difficulties and isolation on ice flows. Can today's youth comprehend what it must have been like NOT to communicate beyond face to face for months? Also these men's loved ones had no idea whether they were alive or dead or where in the Antarctic they might be or if they made it that far.

Very detailed account of the men and crew. I did feel that it was written as a great adventure novel and not so much of a journal of tribulation and survival. There is very little mention of fear or desperation. And anytime a possible difficulty is encountered the author quickly moves on to better topics and what the men did next to receive the smallest joy and fulfillment.

Those familiar with Shackleton's story as well as that of the Ross Sea party on the other side of Antarctica won't find any new information here, but Shackleton writes well and his purpose is to provide a summary of the events and research on a weekly or daily basis rather than a dramatic telling of the stories. If anything, he underplays his own role in leading his men, particularly the overland crossing of South Georgia Island, but he arguably underplays his responsibility for the Ross Sea party, which suffered from scurvy and the deaths of three members when their ship broke its moorings, not to return for another 18 months, with over half the men and most of the supplies still on board. Without a doubt Shackleton was a tremendous leader but this expedition in particular was underfunded, either due to his lack of planning or lack of salesmanship in drumming up funds.

The book "The Lost Men" on the Ross Sea party implied that the ship the Aurora, which had been used by Douglas Mawson in 1911, was underpowered, and that Shackleton's written instructions to Capt. Mackintosh and Ernest Joyce were unclear as to who would be the expedition leader once they reached Antarctica. This had a substantial impact as Mackintosh rejected Joyce's plea to do most of the work with the dogs during the second season of laying depots, and the dogs prematurely became "played out" and were unavailable to bring the men back after the second season when some of them became sick with scurvy. Mackintosh and another member, both of whom had scurvy, tried in early spring to reach Cape Evans over soft sea ice against the advice of the other members of the party and were never heard from again, and the reason may have been the power struggle between Mackintosh and Joyce had made it impossible for them to continue living at much smaller Hut Point.

Thoroughly captivating! The violence comes from nature. Men struggle against horrendous odds to remain alive. I really haven't felt warm since reading this true life adventure. This is a story of real men who did anything to protect one another--amputating body parts, sharing scant food supplies and travelling enormous distances over ice-covered terrain and water, and in temperatures of 100 below zero F, to rescue their comrades who never gave up hope of being rescued. Travelling hundreds of miles was done on foot, by dog sled and in small cramped, open boats; done with few instruments and, in most situations, without radio contact with others. An amazing story of men driven to expand their scientific knowledge of Antarctica.

Very worth reading. For the armchair traveler who becomes fully immersed in their reading, this book will take you to the Antarctic to experience, in detail, the heartbreak, determination, hope, despair, and sheer determination of men who survived in and returned from a hopeless place - not because they didn't give up, but because they never all gave up at the same time, they had strong intelligent leaders, and they worked together even when they did not entirely agree with, or like each other. Full of interesting true details too of how an expedition was formed, and ships were procured, provisioned and staffed before we had such things as freeze-dried foods, refrigerators, steel, antibiotics, all the stuff that simply did not exist in the early 1900s. Anyone heading into desolate polar regions on a vacation excursion today owes it to themselves to read this fascinating book, before you go. You'll have a much better appreciation that you are going there with very high assurances of returning whole, healthy and on schedule, having seen (and endlessly photographed) some of the wonders of that savage world in the comfort of warm dry clothes, on well-planned

landings from a ship where you are well fed, and sleep warm & safe at night.

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