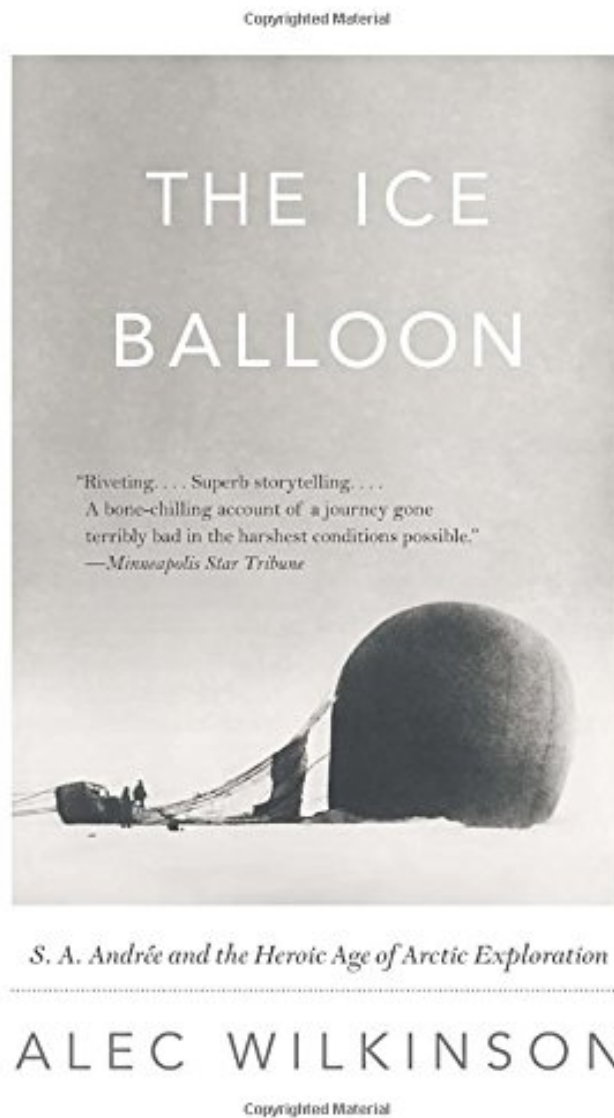


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The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andree and the Heroic Age of Arctic Exploration

Alec Wilkinson

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Alec Wilkinson : The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andree and the Heroic Age of Arctic Exploration before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andree and the Heroic Age of Arctic Exploration:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Ice balloon story fillerBy rclAs several others have noted, this book

does not spend much time (only 30% of the book) on the actual journey and activities of Andree and his crew after their launch. They don't get off the ice in their balloon until page 148, and are dead on page 221 (total pages in the book 239). Another major gripe is the total lack of a map that is readable and of any value. The few maps included are small, of a large scale, poorly reproduced, and totally useless. In the exploration books I read, I refer to the maps constantly, otherwise, why bother mentioning lots of specific geographic names and locations? I want to follow the expedition!! I had to refer to maps in other books to get a partial understanding of where things happened. The quality of the pictures included is also poor (and they are small). The author did short summaries of several other Arctic explorations and disasters, and you would be much better off spending your time reading the excellent *Ghosts of Cape Sabine* about the Greely Expedition, and *Icebound*, about De Long's attempt to reach the pole from the Bering Sea. Both of these are epic stories of survival and exploration with great maps. Another book that does an excellent job of summarizing expeditions to the Pole and search of the NW Passage is *The Arctic Grail* (670 pages!). Take my advice and buy these other books instead; you won't be disappointed. Wilkinson should have titled his book "Information about stuff that happened before Andree launched his balloon to the Pole".

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Pleasant read, but not entirely satisfying
 By D. Watson This is a perfectly fine book - well written and dealing with an interesting and unexpected aspect of polar exploration. If it is your first foray into the history of arctic exploration, you are likely to enjoy it more than someone who has already looked into the substantial literature that is already out there. Or if you are simply interested in all things arctic, you will likely find something to appreciate. Still, I would agree with some of the other reviewers that, in the end, you have a sense that the basic source material was insufficient to fill a book on the Andree expedition. There are substantial sections dealing with the Greely expedition and Nansen, neither of which have much of a direct relation to the Andree story. In the case of Greely, the link appears to be his public statement of skepticism about Andree's balloon idea. Not much else, but we still get a rather lengthy account of the well-known Greely story. I enjoyed the book and learned a few things about balloons and about the arctic, but I cannot praise it as highly as some others have done.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. My grandpas cousin was on the balloon
 By anders w] My grandpas cousin Nils Strindberg was on the balloon. I have also been a hot air balloon pilot for 20 years. That is the reason why I bought the book. I also have the original book from the expedition. And that book now has got a good company in the shelf. IMHO the book don't reveals any new information about that expedition. But it is fascinating to read the authors thoughts about it. Of course I was interested in Strindberg because it is family. My niece did a special paper in school about the life of Nils Stridberg before the expedition and how the family coped after his disappearance Nils father Oscar called Occa newer stop to mourn an wrote a poem to his lost son on his birthdays. The book is also a very good compilation of other expeditions to the arctic and the age of Arctic expeditions in the backlight of the Andre expedition. I recommend the book highly. anders wasen Strindberg's Star Letters from the Andree Party. The Balloon Expedition to the Pole - An Account of the Start by Andree's Fellow - Voyager Nils Strindberg - Letters Relating to the Expedition from Strindberg's Father. With the Eagle on the Pole : Andrees Polar Expedition in 1897 : The Complete Record of His 1897 Polar Balloon Flight (Med Ornen Mot Pole : Andrees Polarexpedition AR 1897) ** Swedish Edition ** With the Eagle on the Pole : Andrees Polar Expedition in 1897 : The Complete Record of His 1897 Polar Balloon Flight (Med Ornen Mot Pole : Andrees Polarexpedition AR 1897) ** Swedish Edition ** [[ASIN:0436505029 The Flight of the Eagle

In 1897, at the height of the heroic age of Arctic exploration, the visionary Swedish explorer S. A. Andre made a revolutionary attempt to discover the North Pole by flying over it in a hydrogen balloon. Thirty-three years later, his expedition diaries and papers would be discovered on the ice. Alec Wilkinson uses the explorers papers and contemporary sources to tell the full story of this ambitious voyage, while also showing how the late 19th century's spirit of exploration and scientific discovery drove over 1,000 explorers to the unforgiving Arctic landscape. Suspenseful and haunting, Wilkinson captures Andres remarkable adventure and illuminates the detail, beauty, and devastating conditions of traveling and dwelling on the ice.

.com Best Books of the Month, January 2012: Before the twentieth century, more than a thousand people tried to reach the (north) pole, Alec Wilkinson writes in his entertaining new book. Most of those attempts were by ship, sled, and foot. The odds of reaching the pole alive were terrible. About three-fourths of those explorers died. But that one-in-four chance of success didnt deter Swedish explorer S.A. Andree, who in 1897 attempted the most unlikely means of reaching the North Pole: by hydrogen balloon. What makes this more than another adventure story is Wilkinsons exploration of mankind's compulsion to reach the extreme points of the Earth, despite all the absurd and obvious risks. --Neal Thompson From Booklist *Starred * A writer known for discerning portraiture (*The Happiest Man in the World*, 2007), Wilkinson here probes the personality of Swedish explorer Salomon Andre, who, along with two companions, disappeared in an 1897 attempt to discover the North Pole by balloon. Their remains were found three decades later on an island near Spitzbergen, and from their accompanying diaries, letters, and photographs, Wilkinson narrates their flight and ensuing retreat toward civilization. That story of intrepid struggle caps Wilkinsons main interest in placing Andre within the tradition of exploration of the Arctic and adventurers emotional responses to the

icescapes. Unlike his contemporary, Fridtjof Nansen, an expressive explorer who in his writings exulted in the sublime scenery, Andre, an engineer, was a reticent man of facts and figures, one who comes to life a little resentfully, as if interrupted. Contemplating Andre's possible motivations—desire for fame and scientific achievement, intention to prove the balloon was a practical aircraft—Wilkinson concludes that the cautious Andre became as zealous and wild-eyed as any fanatic who went off toward the unfound places. Wilkinson proves to be an evocative stylist and a solid historian in this fine addition to the annals of polar exploration. --Gilbert Taylor Riveting. . . . Superb storytelling. . . . A bone-chilling account of a journey gone terribly bad in the harshest conditions possible. The Minneapolis Star Tribune Gripping. . . . When you consider what these people went through, it is hard not to admire their resilience, optimism and determination, but also to question their sanity. That is what makes such stories as Andre's so compelling. The Seattle Times Wilkinson writes with insight and flair He understands that the value of polar stories . . . [lies] in our endless love of discovery and the drama of being human. The New York Times Book That rare work of nonfiction whose sublimely understated writing rivals the inherent drama of its subject matter. . . . [Wilkinson's] book couldn't be more riveting. The Toronto Star Fabulous. . . . One feels guilty having so much fun reading about such harrowing voyages. The Boston Globe Fast-moving and often heartbreaking. The Columbus Dispatch Wilkinson's writing is so flawless and engaging that I'd read him on a packed subway at rush hour. Sebastian Junger Alec Wilkinson is a spare, clear, and lucid writer who works in stylistic simplicity with material that is not simple at all. Peter Matthiessen The Ice Balloon captures a time and place unknown to us now and, in elegant, low-key prose, offers an inspiring narrative of exploration and the indomitable human spirit. Highbrow Magazine An eminently tellable story that is a perfect match for [Wilkinson's] spare and evocative style. . . . It's possible to forget that today's adventure tourists are following trails once traveled only by heroes, fools, and dreamers. Natural History Captivating. . . . A thrilling account of a remarkable man. Publishers Weekly A fine addition to the annals of polar exploration. Booklist (starred review) Entertaining and extremely well written, this captivating story about an obscure Arctic expedition is an essential purchase for all avid readers of exploration and polar literature. Library Journal (starred review)