**Battle of Ink and Ice** is one of the latest books to explore the connections between newspapers and Arctic explorers, with a focus on the controversy between Frederick Cook and Robert Peary over their claims of reaching the North Pole in 1908 and 1909, respectively. Darrell Hartman credits Beau Riffenburgh’s 1993 book, *The Myth of the Explorer*, for cultivating his interest in both Arctic expeditions and the ways in which the press framed them, and cites his awareness of existent documentation between Peary and various parties as a reason for writing *Battle of Ink and Ice*. The prologue outlines one of the primary contentions of the book: the critical role newspapers played in exploration as they were a source of money for these explorers and disseminated information about their exploits, which could elevate the status of an explorer. This was a mutually beneficial relationship since these newspapers could reap huge profits and improve their status by covering these expeditions. Hartman examines the competitive nature of the newspaper industry in New York City and provides readers a glimpse into the lives of some of these newspaper barons, who “pulled heavy strings and lived in royal splendor” (p. 4) as exemplified by James Gordon Bennett Jr. *Battle of Ink and Ice* is not simply an analysis of American newspapers’ engagement with Arctic expeditions and how these have been framed, as it opens a window into the lives of figures such as Bennett, Adolph Ochs, Joseph Pulitzer, and William Randolph Hearst. Furthermore, it is a story over how newspapers competed with one another, innovated, and evolved. The examination of these newspapers provides Hartman with an opportunity to compare the nature of coverage between them, and to chart the shifts in the content of individual newspapers from the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.
Outside of the prologue and epilogue, *Battle of Ink and Ice* has fifty-two chapters broken into five parts. The first part, “Adventures in Journalism,” outlines the strategies Bennett used to turn the *New York Herald* into a successful paper, including expanding its capabilities to report on the news, securing scoops, and his effective use of the latest technologies. Hartman establishes Bennett's role in seeking out “the scoop of the century” by sending Henry Morton Stanley to find David Livingstone (p. 24). This discussion of the relationship between Stanley and Bennett allows Hartman the opportunity to outline the “unprecedented” nature of this scoop (p. 24), with Stanley finding Livingstone in 1871, and the profitability of such an expedition through newspaper sales the following year, and identifies a pattern of “mistrust and pettiness” that manifested itself in Bennett's relationships with his employees (p. 29). This part also describes the reception Cook received from the public, reporters, and academics upon his arrival in Denmark, although Hartman notes that Philip Gibbs was skeptical of Cook's claim of having reached the North Pole. The fact that this part discusses Cook and his claims demonstrates that the book does not strictly follow chronological order, but this does not adversely impact its readability.

The second part of the book, “Bones in the White North,” focuses on the role Americans played in Arctic expeditions during the second half of the nineteenth century and the ways newspapers covered these expeditions. The *Herald* was one paper that jumped into the field of Arctic reporting by covering the search for Charles Francis Hall's expedition in 1873. Furthermore, Bennett provided funding for Allen Young's Arctic expedition (1875) and the catastrophic one led by George Washington De Long to seek out the North Pole (1879-81), the latter of which Hartman notes was characterized as “one of the greatest disappointments of Bennett's life” (p. 84). This part also charts the attitudes of the *New York Times* toward Arctic exploration, as Hartman notes this “smaller-circulation” newspaper “considered government-funded Arctic adventuring a waste of taxpayer money” (p. 53), but was willing to engage with Arctic content by pursuing rumors of cannibalism during the Greely expedition (1881-84), and paying Frederick Schwatka to write Arctic content and funding his Alaskan expedition in 1886. Newspapers were becoming an increasingly important source of funding for Arctic exploration after the disastrous outcome of the Greely expedition closed the door to direct government-funded Arctic exploration, since they could potentially profit off covering successful, tragic, or controversial expeditions. Despite engaging in such coverage, Hartman notes it was clear “the pragmatic *Times* still considered the North Pole a waste of time” (p. 97).

The third part, “Fit to Print,” examines the effect the Spanish-American War (1898) had on newspaper sales and budgets, and on creating the dynamics that “invited a perfect storm of fake news” (p. 145). Despite that the proliferation of this “fake news” made it difficult to discern fact from fiction, Hartman notes the *Times* adopted the position that its readership highly valued accuracy in its news coverage. This is a theme carried throughout the book as Hartman notes the dedication of the *Times* to “impartially presented facts,” and believes it worked to achieve this to a greater degree under Ochs than its competitors (p. 183). This part also looks at Ochs's decision to lower the price of the newspaper, which Hartman claims was “one of the most important business decisions in the history of the *Times*” (p. 150) since it boosted sales to help make the *Times* profitable. There is also a discussion of the breakdown in the relationship between William C. Reick and Bennett and how Reick's move to the *Times* benefited the paper. Hartman charts the shifts in the topics of interest covered by the *Times* by recognizing its increasing “enthusiasm for technological and scientific news, and its willingness to invest in exclusive stories about these subjects” at the time Peary approached it to financially support his polar expedition (p. 213).
the trajectory of the *Times* makes it understandable why it was willing to front Peary $4,000 to secure the rights for his account to the Pole. Hartman characterizes this as a “low-risk loan” since the *Times* would recover this money from sales and, if it did not, then Peary would reimburse the remaining balance (p. 216). Hartman notes Peary’s relationship with the *Times* was “far more important” than simply for funding, which is clearly elucidated in the fourth part of the book (p. 216).

The fourth part, aptly titled “Antiheroes,” explores the reception that Cook received from the public, the blind acceptance of Cook’s claims from explorers, such as Roald Amundsen and Otto Sverdrup, and the ways Cook defended his claims of traveling to the North Pole. This part takes the reader through the steps taken to unravel Cook’s claims and the attacks from Peary, who “colluded” with the *Times* to discredit Cook (p. 299). Hartman notes Peary was also the target of criticism over his attacks on Cook and for his refusal to transport Cook’s possessions, including records, out of Greenland. Although there were criticisms over the dogged campaign launched by the *Times* to discredit Cook’s North Pole claim, the *Times* was validated in its skepticism of Cook, and Hartman believes this “controversy elevated the *Times* head and shoulders above its peers” (p. 304).

The fifth part, “Yearning to Believe,” examines the period following the polar controversy, attitudes toward Peary, and the scrutiny of his polar claim. Although Cook’s claim to have reached the Pole and his earlier one of having ascended Mount McKinley had been debunked, Peary’s claim of having reached the North Pole was challenged by Charles Henshaw Ward and Dennis Rawlins. The *Times* continued to be involved in Arctic expeditions as it secured exclusive coverage of Amundsen’s aerial expedition to the North Pole in 1926. This involvement aligns with the interest the newspaper had exhibited in Arctic expeditions and aviation that Hartman identifies in his book. Although the *Times* continued to defend Peary following the controversy, the newspaper acknowledged in 1988 that both it and the National Geographic Society “may have failed to scrutinize adequately what they yearned to believe” (p. 324).

The epilogue offers commentary on the legacies of Bennett and Ochs to the field of journalism, as Hartman notes the former had “bequeathed no journalism schools, scholarships, or prizes” (p. 325), while Ochs had “done more for the American press ... than he’d ever dreamed of” (p. 327). Hartman notes the praise the *Times* received for its coverage of World War I and its index, the latter of which allowed it to become known as the “newspaper of record.”

Hartman is not the first to examine the connections between the press and Arctic explorers as this was the focus of Riffenburgh’s *The Myth of the Explorer*. Riffenburgh argues that the polar controversy was not simply “a struggle” between Cook and Peary over their respective claims, but “equally a struggle between *The New York Herald* and *The New York Times*.”[1] Hartman’s conclusions that this controversy benefited the *Times* aligns with those reached by Riffenburgh. Hartman notes his use of Riffenburgh’s work for his analysis of Schwatka’s and Bennett’s expeditions. One of the differences between these two books is that Riffenburgh charts the ways in which British and American newspapers reported on the Arctic and Arctic explorers while Hartman directs his focus more to the New York press. That said, Hartman probes into the private lives of these newspaper barons to a greater extent than Riffenburgh. Although Riffenburgh focuses on the ways in which the *Times* covered the polar controversy, his discussion on Ochs is extremely limited compared to that found in Hartman, which is one of the strengths of *Battle of Ink and Ice*. Hartman relied on *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family behind “The New York Times”* by Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones, which is a source Riffenburgh did not have the benefit of given its publication in 1999. Furthermore, Hartman consulted the Adolph S. Ochs Papers housed in the New York Public Lib-
rary, which allowed him to further delve into the life of the owner of the *Times*. The Ochs Papers allowed Hartman to examine a range of topics from lowering the price of the *Times* newspaper to the criticism of the *Times* over its coverage of Cook, to a menu for a Peary Arctic Club event. Although both Riffenburgh and Hartman note Bennett's relocation to France, Hartman goes more into the scandalous details that surrounded Bennett prior to this move. The books written by Hartman and Riffenburgh can nicely complement one another, but there are points of disagreement. For example, Hartman notes that Peary's book and his ghostwritten series for *Hampton's Magazine* “flopped” (pp. 313-314), while Riffenburgh describes the book as “best-selling” and the *Hampton's Magazine* series as “successful.”[2]

*Battle of Ink and Ice* is written in an engaging way that will appeal with a popular readership, but academics may take issue with the fact that the book has no specific endnotes. That said, there is a discussion of sources used in the “A Note on Sources” section of the book that outlines Hartman's critique of some sources and his rationale for trusting some sources more than others, and describes how he used these sources. Hartman uses a number of newspaper articles and memoirs to good effect. For example, Hartman compares Gibbs's coverage of Cook in early September 1909 to the observations he recorded of the explorer in his memoirs. This comparison demonstrates an absence of “many alarming details” in his reporting (p. 220), which Hartman recognizes leads to questions of whether “Gibbs exaggerated some of Cook's behavior” in his memoirs (p. 337). In addition to the Ochs Papers, Hartman consulted the Archives of the Peary Arctic Club, the Frederick Albert Cook Papers, and the Peary Family Collection. One potential area for further elaboration is the role of science in Arctic expeditions, as some sources have analyzed the interconnections between science, funding, explorations, and the ways in which the Arctic has been framed. For example, Kelly Lankford probes into the ways Peary crafted networks with scientists and scientific institutions to secure much-needed funding for his expeditions in the late nineteenth century, although this diverted some of his attention from his polar ambitions.[3]

*Battle of Ink and Ice* weaves together a fascinating story of how American newspapers engaged with and reported on Arctic expeditions. It would be myopic to suggest that the book exclusively focuses on these expeditions, as Hartman does a masterful job detailing the lives of these newspaper proprietors, including some of the more personal details of Bennett’s life. The book also delves into the conflicts between these individuals, particularly Hearst and Bennett, the ways in which these news barons shaped their respective papers, and the strategies Ochs used to turn the *Times* into a successful paper. Hartman also does a commendable job outlining how the *Times* shifted from its dismissive position toward North Pole expeditions to one that supported Peary's polar expedition in ways beyond simply funding. As the title of the book suggests, Hartman delivers in crafting a sensational story that offers an engaging account of the personal lives of these news barons and their relationships with explorers.

Notes


[2]. Riffenburgh, 189.
