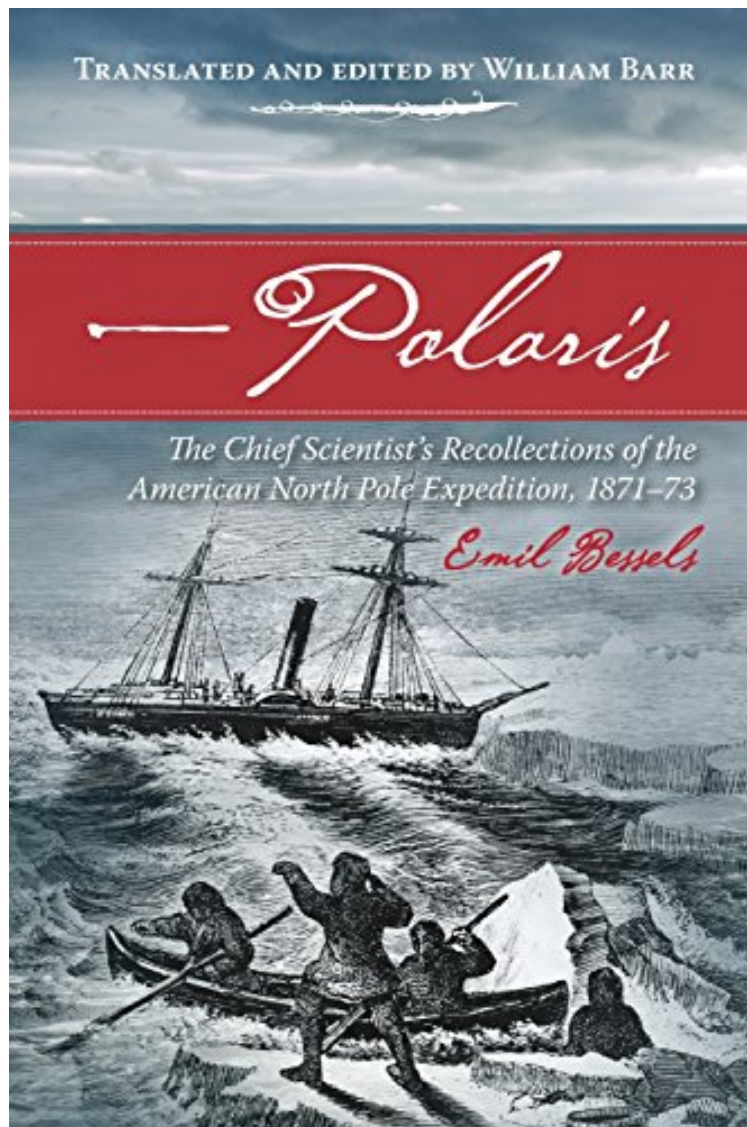


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Polaris: The Chief Scientist's Recollections of the American North Pole Expedition, 1871-73 (Northern Lights)

Emil Bessels

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Emil Bessels : Polaris: The Chief Scientist's Recollections of the American North Pole Expedition, 1871-73 (Northern Lights) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Polaris: The Chief Scientist's Recollections of the American North Pole Expedition, 1871-73 (Northern Lights):

Emil Bessels was chief scientist and medical officer on George Francis Halls ill-fated American North Pole Expedition of 1871-73 on board the ship *Polaris*. Bessels book, translated from the German in its entirety for the first time, is one of only two first-hand accounts of the voyage, and it is the only first-hand account of the experiences of the group which stayed with the ship after it ran afoul of arctic ice, leaving some of its crew stranded on an ice floe. Bessels and the others spent a second winter on shore in Northwest Greenland, where the drifting, disabled ship ran aground. Hall died suspiciously during the first winter, and Bessels is widely suspected of having poisoned him. Bill Barr has uncovered new evidence of a possible motive. *Polaris* includes considerable detail which does not appear elsewhere. It is the only account of the expedition which includes rich scientific information about anthropology, geology, flora and fauna. It provides much more information than other accounts on the Greenland settlements *Polaris* visited on her way north. Bessels is the only published first-hand account of the second wintering of part of the ships complement on shore at *Polaris* House, near Littleton Island, and of that partys attempt at travelling south by boat until picked up by the Scottish whaler *Ravenscraig*. The same applies to the cruise aboard the whaler, *Arctic*, after Bessels and his companions transferred to that ship. Essential reading for researchers and students of arctic exploration history, this book is also a compelling read for the interested general reader.

About the Author William Barr is a research fellow at the Arctic Institute of North America. A glacial geomorphologist by training, his major research focus is the history of exploration in the Arctic. He is a recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Historical Association for his contributions to the historiography of the Canadian North.