

Bradford Washburn Mountain Photography

Antony Decaneas, editor, compiler
 Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 2000
 US \$29.95, 144 pages, softcover

The old adage of not judging a book by its cover clearly does not apply to *Bradford Washburn Mountain Photography*. The back cover quotes Ansel Adams' description of Washburn as a "roving genius of mind and mountains," which further intrigues one to open the spectacular cover.

Inside, one finds a fascinating introduction by the curator of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Bradford Washburn is a renowned mountaineer, scientist, and cartographer who used aerial photography in his scientific studies. He was also a pilot, as well as a pioneer in the fields of aerial photography, wireless communication, cold-weather search-and-rescue, and cold-weather survival. He produced award-winning maps, including those of Mount Everest, Mount McKinley, and the Grand Canyon.

The editor and compiler, Antony Decaneas, provides us with insightful interviews from conversations with Bradford Washburn conducted over a 4-year period. This enhances our appreciation of the 100 large-format photographs that follow. Amazingly, Bradford Washburn has numerically filed and catalogued more than 15 000 large-format negatives, as well as collecting countless color slides.

The selected collection of black-and-white photographs is an indescribable sensory treat. Washburn captures the near mystical interplay of clouds and mountains again and again. He also exposes the abstract art expressions of glaciers and moraines. Light and shadow are delicately used to dramatically highlight the magnificent beauty found in and around the special world of mountains. He is obviously an artist as well as a scientist. The book concludes with an 11-page illustrated chronology of his legendary career.

All those who love mountains or art will enjoy this book. From this reviewer's perspective, the only thing lacking is more extensive biographical information about this unique photographer. Alas, my curiosity about the historical significance and scientific implications portrayed by the photographs was not sated. An expanded or supplemented edition would be an additional treat that could only enhance one's appreciation of both Bradford Washburn and his photographic material.

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High Achiever: The Life and Climbs of Chris Bonington

Jim Curran
 Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers, 1999
 US \$26.95, 256 pages, hardcover

As mountaineering writer Mike Thompson quipped about Chris Bonington's first book, *I Chose to Climb*, it should have perhaps been more aptly titled *He Chose Not to Sell Margarine*. Jim Curran's account of the life of legendary British mountaineer Sir Christian Bonington (more commonly known as "Chris") is a fascinating story of an amazing man who is still hard at it today.

Chris Bonington grew up during the Second World War in Britain and fancied a career as an Army officer, to the point of going to the well-respected officer training school at Sandhurst. After several years in a tank division and training soldiers in the British Army's equivalent of Outward Bound, Bonington realized that the military wasn't quite for him. He then took a job with a multinational margarine corporation as a management trainee, but was dissatisfied. As a passionate climber and mountaineer, Bonington then set out to be one of Britain's first professional mountaineers, making a living solely through his mountaineering prowess. Rather than take the more commonly traveled path of professional guiding and instruction, Chris Bonington trained himself to be a mountaineering journalist, photographer, and professional adventurer. He has canvassed and pleaded for sponsorship, written for magazines and journals, sold photographs, and lectured. He has written numerous books on his expeditions, both successes and failures. What seems to many of us to be an exciting and romantic life is actually a tough way to make a living and support a family, but amazingly and admirably, he has succeeded. This book tells his inspiring tale.

This is not to downplay Bonington's considerable achievements, including the first British ascent of the North Face of the Eiger, first ascent of the Central Tower of Paine, leader of the successful Annapurna South Face Expedition, leader of the first successful Southwest Face of Everest Expedition, first ascent of The Ogre, first ascent of Kongur, his own successful ascent of Mount Everest, and the first British ascent of Mount Vinson. These are only a scant few of his accomplishments and to detail all of the first ascents, ascents, and climbs of Bonington's life until now surely takes an entire volume, if not several. Many of his expeditions have been failures. He has been turned back by weather and dangerous conditions. He has suffered the death of many friends and yet still climbs to an impressively high standard, carrying