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"Mixed Methods, Dry Valleys, New Insights"

Chignell, Stephen

Chignell, Stephen. "Notes from the Icehouse: Mixed Methods, Dry Valleys, New Insights." *Global Environment*: *A Journal of Transdisciplinary History* 16, no. 1 (2023): 149–58.

The McMurdo Dry Valleys are a polar desert and the largest icefree region of Antarctica. They were discovered in 1903 on the first expedition of British explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott, who, seeing the bare rock and lack of plants, called the area 'a valley of the dead.' ... How might one write an environmental history of such a place, never permanently inhabited, only relatively recently brought within the compass of human knowledge, and widely regarded as devoid of history and culture? ... Recognising that scientists and support staff are the only people to spend significant time in the region, and that the history of science would therefore figure large, we took the approach offered by critical physical geography, a growing field which seeks to study material landscapes, social dynamics and knowledge politics together. By mixing methods and embracing iterative analysis, we have been able to adjust our goals, assumptions and methods as new lines of inquiry emerge. (From the article)

A collaboration between the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations and The White Horse Press, "Notes from the Icehouse" is a series of reflections published in each issue of *Global Environment: A Journal of Transdisciplinary History*.

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