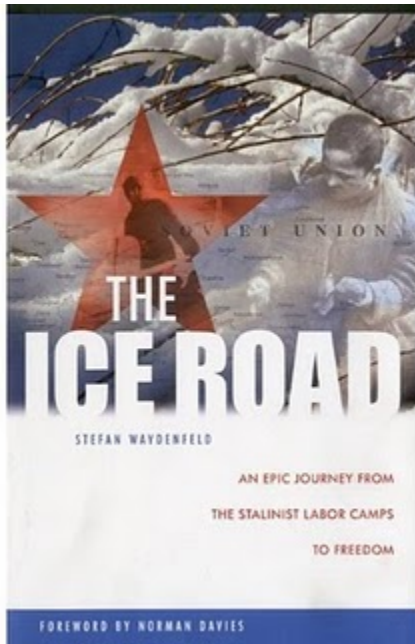


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Never complain about the cold again after this!



While browsing the stacks of new nonfiction at Euclid Library last week, I happened upon "Ice Road" by Stefan Waydenfeld.

Subtitled "An epic journey from the Stalinist labor camps to freedom," it fit right into my desire to expand my knowledge of past conflicts. Plus, the title is a grabber, isn't it?

Waydenfeld's account of his Polish family's nomadic years during World War II is a real eye-opener.

I cannot imagine packing everything I own into suitcases at gunpoint, forced to leave my home, sent off to an unknown future. And the Waydenfelds did it more than once!

Waydenfeld doesn't mince words and his book is surprisingly unsentimental. There

is no woe-is-me - and he sure had reason! - at all.

His family went from middle class existence (his father was a doctor; his mother a bacteriologist) to working the most brutal of jobs in the most brutal of conditions in a Siberian labor camp.

Reading his account of logging in Siberia and in particular of the night work on the ice road, I vow to never complain about the cold again.

In such circumstances, it'd be easy to lose hope. Yet he keeps focused on the future and a return to his education.

Among the items Waydenfeld lugged from place to place were school books. How many of us can say we would have done the same?

I'm not sure I would have had the fortitude to endure half of what he did, let alone with so little complaint and hatred for those who essentially robbed him of so much.

Read more about his journey at <http://www.polandww2.com/ice-road/the-ice-road> .

- Tricia Ambrose

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