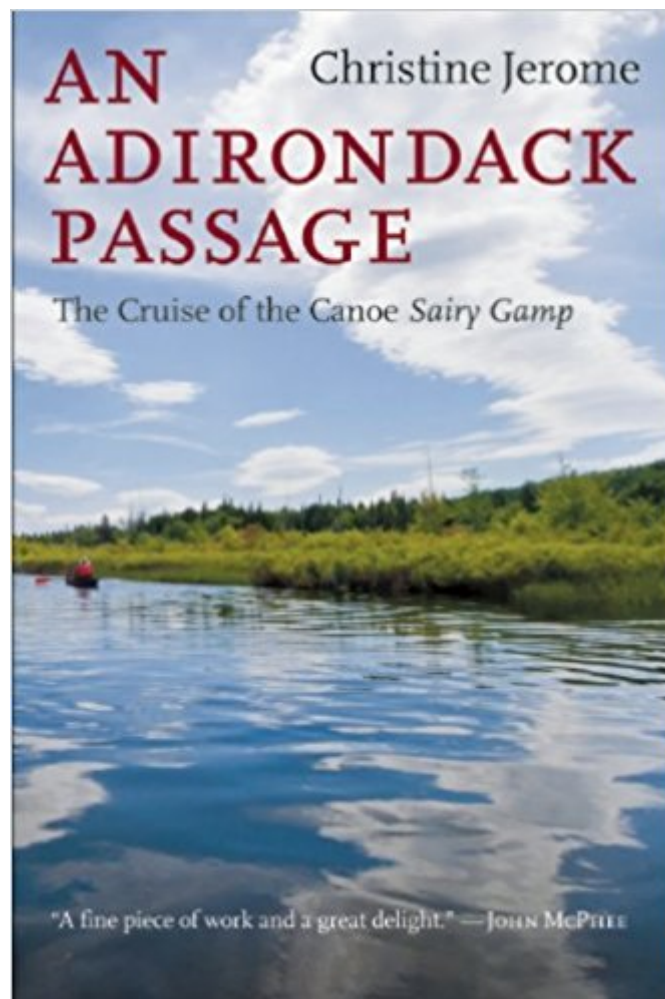




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An Adirondack Passage: The Cruise Of The Canoe Sairy Gamp



Synopsis

"A fine piece of work and a great delight."—John McPhee
Christine Jerome decides to repeat the 266-mile Adirondack canoe journey of George Washington Sears (pen name "Nessmuk"), a famous adventure and nature writer for the popular magazine *Forest and Stream* in the late nineteenth century. Part of what made his 1883 journey remarkable was the length of his canoe—a mere nine feet. The "Sairy Gamp" was the lightest of cockleshells, but could navigate rough lakes and stony rapids. Sears could heave it over his head and portage it between lakes for miles. So Jerome has a similar canoe built for herself, and sets off to see what has changed and what has remained on the water trail through the mountains. The result is a classic of canoe literature: a beautiful paean to journeying silently in light craft. Her nature writing and knowledge of local history lends a depth and substance to every mile. She conjures up Teddy Roosevelt, the Whitneys and Vanderbilts, as well as old hermits and eccentrics. She tells of legendary crimes committed along the lakeshores, while keeping her expert ear tuned for birdsong in the trees. An unforgettable account of traveling by canoe, and traveling back in time.

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Customer Reviews

George Washington Sears was an outdoorsman, a contributor to *Forest and Stream* under the pen name Nessmuk. In July 1883, he launched the Sairy Gamp, a nine-foot, 1012-pound canoe for a trip through the Adirondacks, from Old Forge to Upper St. Regis Lake. In our own day, in late summer of 1990, Jerome, former managing editor of *New England Monthly*, and her husband John set out to retrace Sears's journey, she in a duplicate nine-foot Kevlar canoe, he in a slightly larger

craft of 1012 feet. Jerome gives a captivating account of their journey interspersed with a biography of Sears, regional history and excerpts from Sears's story of his own trip. She takes us into a world of hermits and millionaires, of wild streams and glorious mountain scenery. These wilderness adventures, more than a century apart, will appeal strongly to canoeists and to readers familiar with the Adirondacks. Illustrated. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After visiting the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, New York, the author became intrigued with George Washington Sears (pen name Nessmuk), a late 19th-century outdoors writer who at age 61 made a 180-mile canoe trip in the Adirondacks. His canoe, the Sairy Gamp, was just nine feet long, weighed only 10.5 pounds, and was the object of attention along his route. Jerome decided to duplicate the canoe (hers became the Sairy Damp) and with her husband retrace Sears's 1883 voyage. This book is the delightful tale of their month-long journey in 1990. Jerome blends information from Sears's diary entries and other writings with the history (cultural and natural) of specific lakes or lodges and accounts of people (often famous), creating a fascinating portrait of what has happened since Sears passed by. The result is an informative, readable adventure whose history and environmental lessons are taught well. Essential for regional collections and highly recommended for all other collections.- Nancy Moeckel, Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OhioCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Like many another paddler and camper, Christine Jerome was inspired by the writings and example of "Nessmuk," George Washington Sears, who lived, adventured, and wrote in the mid to late 19th century. This book is the story of how she and her husband paddled in the wake of the diminutive, asthma and consumption-ridden Sears, who spent every minute he could spare and afford camping and living off the land in the northeastern United States. Jerome and her husband also decided to travel in super lightweight tiny canoes using double-bladed paddles, as had Sears. These are particularly suitable craft for these relatively protected inland waterways, and I have included a photo of a member of a group my wife and I accompanied to the same region in 2013 as an illustration. It is no longer possible to live mainly off the land, as did Sears, and the network of camps and hotels he used for R&R or re-supply has gone, so the pair substituted car -spotting and relatively frequent stops at markets for supplies, as the tiny canoes do not have room for a lot of gear. Jerome stirs history, personal experience, natural history, and meditations in a rich mixture that

will please any lover of the Adirondacks in particular and woods travel in general.

I enjoyed this book very much. It was a lot about canoeing. A lot about their trip, camping and personal level. A lot about geography and history of the place. It was everything I was looking for in a book about canoe adventure,

The author did considerable research for this journey which made it an interesting read. Since I spent many days canoeing and rowing the same waters especially Racquet and Saranac and Long lakes areas it was hitting my senses and bringing back my younger years. I understand the hairy feeling you get on a big lake in a storm. Windy conditions can change a casual day into a monster event. The author conveys these passages very well. Her research into the past residents of lakeside cabins and settlers of the area provides an interesting journey. JB Zito author

My wife and I have traveled to and through the Adirondack's for decades. "An Adirondack Passage" brings back pleasant memories, a never ending history lesson, and a peek at places not yet seen. I read the passage during the last months (not for the first time), and I'm pleased to say we have plans for another relaxing visit this coming summer. We can smell the balsam already!

An Adirondack Passage is a sweet, gentle introspective account of the author's recreation of the voyage of the Sairy Gamp, a boat and journey well known to Adirondack canoeists. Jerome has no bones to pick and her simple yet perceptive descriptions of the people and landscapes she encounters are a fair reflection of the Adirondacks as they really are. Possibly she makes a little too much of the challenge of this route - after all these waters are traversed by hundreds if not thousands every season - but then again, Jerome is admittedly an inexperienced paddler. I've covered these routes multiple times both alone and with my father. An Adirondack Passage transported me back effortlessly to those happy days.

I had a copy of this book, which I read over and over, then lent to someone.....gone. I recently kayaked in the Raquette Lake area, and had to read Christine Jerome's descriptions along with her stories of Nesmuck as I paddled through this fabulous area. Jerome has an amazing way of interweaving her experience on these waterways with the history, geography and culture of George Washington Sears' time. This is a 'must read' for anyone wanting to add depth to a paddling experience in the Adirondacks.

I came to know the work of Christine Jerome as a gift from her late husband John. For years John Jerome has been one of my favorite authors. While not, unfortunately, widely read; he remained true to his own voice. In many of his books he mentions his wife Chris, and with John gone I felt compelled to get to know Chris better, through her work. I am so glad I did. This is a fine, wonderful book. I hope to see more from Christine Jerome. Perhaps a biography of John.

I could not put this book down. The mix of past and present was very intriguing. I wish the book had not ended.

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