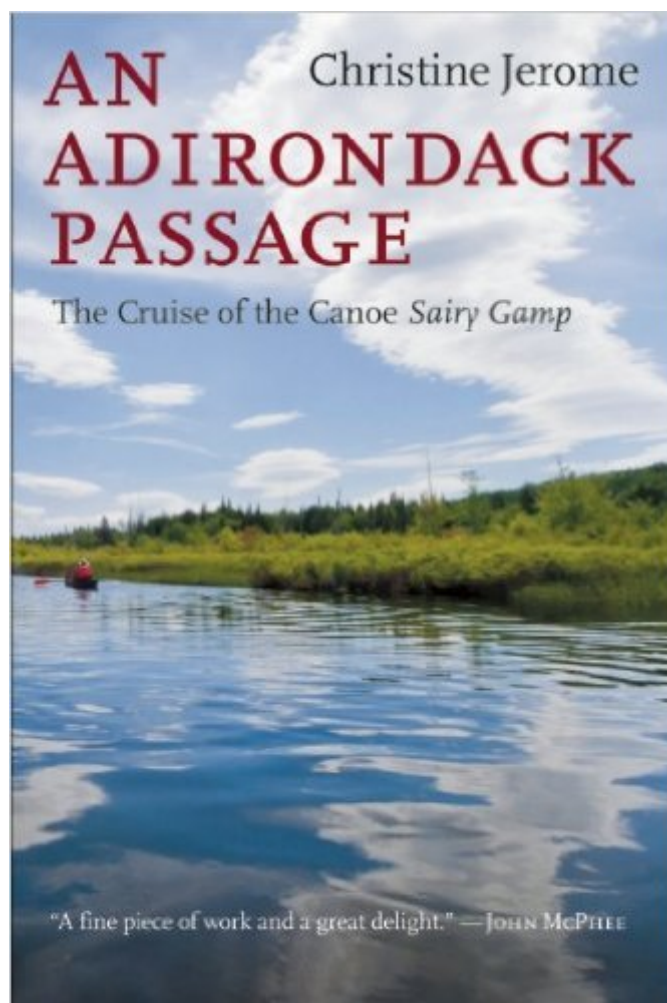


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An Adirondack Passage: The Cruise Of The Canoe Sairy Gamp



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

I loved this book on several levels. For one, it was short and simple and every word was right. For another, I have read many paddle trip narratives such as *Running the* by Joe Kane and *Water and Sky* by Alan Kesselheim. They also talk about the adventure and the surrounding history. But this is in a class by itself, a gentle canoe trip, if you will, taking on the amenities and lack of them in the nation's biggest park east of the Mississippi. I have only been to the Adirondacks a few times and

been impressed by their beauty. But when I go back, and I hope I do, I will know so much more.

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.

What a great book! We spent a week kayaking the Adirondacks and a wonderful day at the Adirondack Museum. In it was the tiny little boat the Sairy Gamp. It sparked my interest to learn of George W Sears travels. Reading Christine Jerome's version of his and her travels was a joy to read. If you love camping, paddling and history you will love how she intertwines modern water travel with the 1800's and G.W. Sears writings. cathy

Christine Jerome not only covers the trips of G. W. Sears through the Adirondack but she covers the rich history of the region in detail. An excellent book for more than the canoe enthusiast.

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.

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.

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