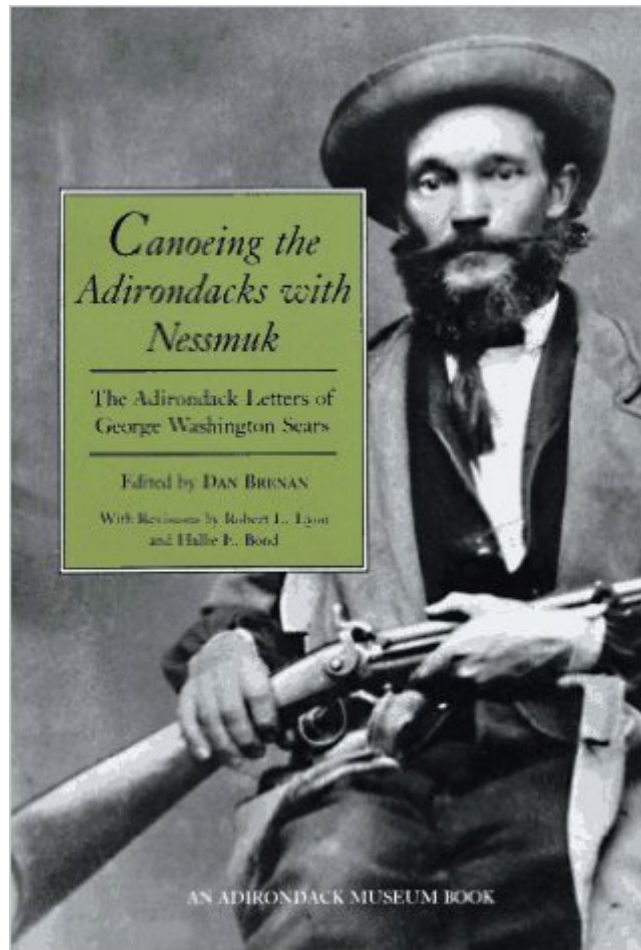


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Canoeing The Adirondacks With Nessmuk: The Adirondack Letters Of George Washington Sears



Synopsis

"She's all my fancy painted her, she's lovely, she is light. She waltzes on the waves by day and rests with me at night. But I had nothing to do with her painting. The man who built her did that. And I commence with the canoe because that is about the first thing you need on entering the Northern Wilderness." Thus opened Nessmuk's first commissioned "letter" for Forest and Stream in 1880. For years thereafter, George Washington Sears, under the penname Nessmuk, contributed a glorious series of pieces on canoeing the Adirondacks, exploring rivers and streams, climbing the many mountains and peaks, and chronicling his long relationship with one of the greatest canoe builders, J. Henry Rushton.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This slim collection of letters originally published in Field and Stream magazine is a record of canoe trips taken over several years by the plucky old woodsman George Washington Sears. Each year he used a different feather-light canoe made of thin strips of wood, mostly cedar, which were believed by their maker, J. Henry Rushton, to be so insubstantial as to afford little or no room for mishap on Sear's long journeys. Sears himself, despite his obvious pride in the delicate crafts, and despite his great pleasure in showing them off to anyone and everyone who was interested, never the less referred to them quite often as 'egg shells'. The journey's consisted of paddling and portaging hundreds of miles, mostly by himself, from lake to lake in the Adirondack wilderness, an area that is now a state park but that at the time was a booming recreation destination for hunters,

fishermen, and sufferers of consumption. The letters range from a very entertaining description of a "typical" guided tour of the lakes, to straight forward descriptions of the landscape, to complaints about the hardships of wilderness travel, and to Sear's own feelings on land management. After 120 years the letters still read remarkably well. The simple prose reveals a voice old in experience and timeless in convivial honesty. It is not difficult to imagine yourself paddling alongside the slight, almost fragile, elder as he idles away his time fishing and exploring lake after lake. Some things are lacking in his reports, noticeable details omitted because of his own personal assumptions about what his readers should already know, and there is a lack of some of the conventions we now take for granted in travelogues.

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