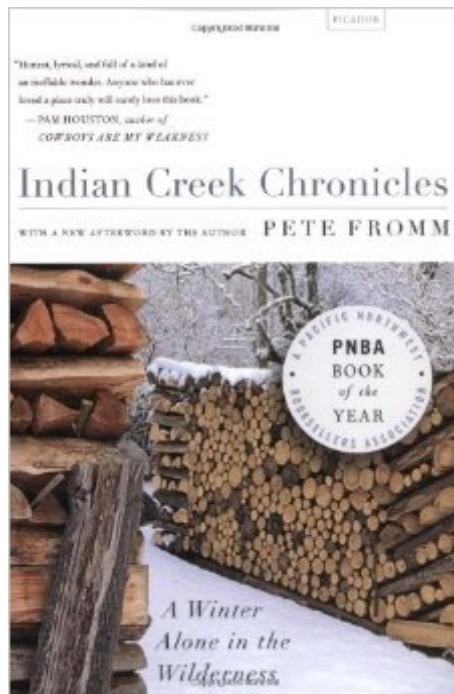


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Indian Creek Chronicles: A Winter Alone In The Wilderness



Synopsis

Winner of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Book Award, Indian Creek Chronicles is Pete Fromm's account of seven winter months spent alone in a tent in Idaho guarding salmon eggs and coming face to face with the blunt realities of life as a contemporary mountain man. A gripping story of adventure and a modern-day Walden, this contemporary classic established Fromm as one of the West's premier voices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I truly loved this book on many levels, from the hunting and fishing experiences the author shared to his personal reflections on several moral issues, which I felt were very poignant and truthful. The majority of this book covers the author's seven-month stay in a canvas tent, deep in the Idaho wilderness during the months of October through May. His job was to watch over and protect millions of salmon eggs that had been cached in the gravel of a nearby river. His love of mountain man books and the thrill of experiencing nature in all of its variety are ideals that initially lead him to volunteer for the long winter assignment. Later, his enthusiasm changes to loneliness and regret as he faces his separation from his friends and family. On the surface, his tale recounts his meetings with hunters, guides, outfitters, forest rangers, wardens, and outdoors enthusiasts as they pass by his lonely tent in his remote meadow. He speaks of the extreme winter weather he faced, the wildlife he encountered, and the steps he took to survive in an isolated and severe environment. The real beauty of this book, however, comes when the author shares how painful moments of loneliness affected him and ultimately how these experiences changed him into a person who became very

secure with his own creative abilities and very comfortable with his own company. He records some very personal reflections regarding what it meant to him to shoot various animals for meat during his long winter stay. As he accompanies various guides and hunters on their hunting trips, he recounts how he felt when others did not view their kills as the resources he believed they were.

A chance conversation with a college friend sends the author venturing into the Bitterroot Wilderness along the Montana-Idaho border, where he spends a winter tending to salmon eggs for the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game. This responsibility takes only minutes out of each day; the rest of the time is his own, and what this gregarious, impulsive, party-loving 20-year-old does with seven months of isolation in the wilderness is the central theme of this book. Fromm makes clear from the outset that he's almost utterly unprepared for this experience, with little guiding him but a fascination for the rugged, self-sufficient mountain men whose adventures he has read about. Packing a couple books on outdoor survival, he plans to figure it out as he goes, and given a need to keep himself busy and his mind off the isolation, he acquires a range of on-the-job skills, from operating a chain saw, to camp cooking, skinning animals, and curing meat. He also hunts for game, subsisting on grouse and squirrel until he amazingly (and illegally) bags a moose with a muzzle-loader. In fact, Fromm is not entirely alone -- he has a dog as a constant companion -- and there is a trickle of visitors throughout the winter. Besides the occasional visit by the wardens, who bring mail and packages, there are hunters and their guides who trek in on snowmobiles (snowmachines, as he learns to call them). Welcoming the company -- and curious -- he goes along on hunts, witnessing the shooting of a mountain lion. There are some disappointments. His father and brother travel from Milwaukee and attempt to ski in but are turned back by cold and bad trail conditions. A planned "vacation" with friends in Missoula has to be cancelled when snowslides make access difficult.

I can't help but admire the young Pete Fromm. A brilliant yet foolish 19-20 year old with not even summer mountain man wilderness experience accepts an experimental baby salmon minding position in the heart of the Idaho area of the Bitter Root for seven months over winter. Pete Fromm had endless intellectual curiosity and thank goodness, a true survivor's portion of common sense that saved him several times. Pete's adventure took place in the later 1970's when he was 19 or 20. Not around 1990 as written in the Publishers blurb above. This book wasn't published until 1993. After a very brief orientation Pete was left with his winter home-- a canvas tent fixed to a platform. There was an inadequate wood stove. He was given an old truck that would get him to the nearest phone ten miles away until the snow was too deep. He was told he needed about seven

cords of wood to make it through the winter and he better get it together soon because it would be close to impossible when the snow arrived. For awhile the nearby hunting camps were still working and Pete had occasional visits with people in those camps. After the camps closed he was alone except for his puppy who also grew up over the next six+ months. He did have a few short less than monthly visits from wardens with his mail and packages, but that was it for months. There are some really cranky reviews here about the killing of animals. It was clear to me that Pete did not kill for fun. He killed the bobcat because it had been critically injured in a fall with a deer. He killed grouse and a moose because he needed meat. I don't know if he had a bird license, but I know he didn't have a license for moose. I think that under the circumstances he can be forgiven.

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