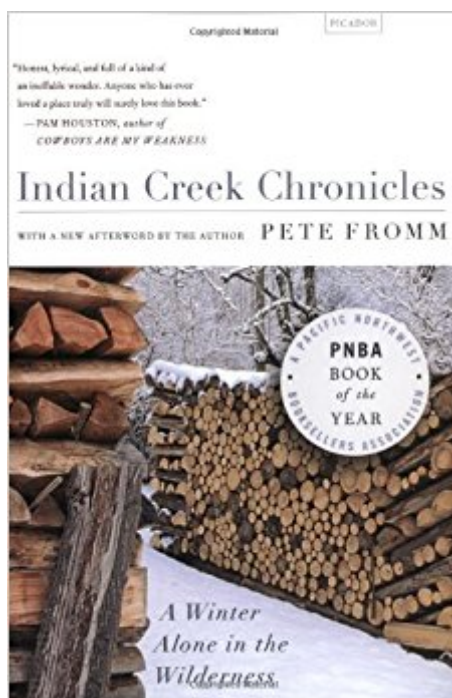


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# Indian Creek Chronicles: A Winter Alone In The Wilderness



## 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

It was an act of bravado that prompted 19-year-old Fromm to leave college and accept a winter job with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1990. His assignment was to check daily on two million salmon eggs planted in a channel between the Selway River and Indian Creek. The nearest road was 40 miles from camp; by mid-November the only access was by snowmobile. Fromm had dreamed of being a "mountain man"--a la Jim Bridger or Jedidiah Smith--but he was a tenderfoot, hardly prepared to spend seven months alone with his dog Boone in the wilderness. Fromm gives an engaging account of that winter; his job took about 15 minutes a day, so he had to combat loneliness and fill the hours. He learned to hunt, to tan leather, to preserve meat. There were occasional parties with hunting groups, brief visits by the game wardens, a few narrow escapes. A fine tale of adventure and self-sufficiency. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

YA-An absorbing personal account. Disenchanted with college, 20-year-old Fromm accepted a job

with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and set off to spend the winter in the middle of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. For 15 minutes a day, 7 days a week, he checked salmon eggs planted in the channel between the Selway River and Indian Creek, and made sure ice was cleared from the end of it. The closest plowed road was 40 miles away and the closest person 60 miles. The fruit of his labors was about 20 fish returning to Indian Creek out of the 2 1/2 million he watched over. Entertaining nonfiction. Pamela B. Rearden, Centreville Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a book review, not a summary, so I'm not going to outline the entire novel here. What can I say; I love this book! This novel, along with Edward Abbey's 'Desert Solitaire,' motivated me to switch from slactivist to activist. I was in my early 20s, living in Idaho, when I first read this book so the story felt very real to me. Peter Fromm's first person account of how he stumbled into spending a winter in the mountains, with no real backcountry or outdoor experience whatsoever, was extremely engaging. Normally I like a lot of dialogue in a novel but this one didn't have much since the majority of time it was just Fromm, alone. However, Fromm's internal dialogue was fantastic; the way he discovered himself by being completely isolated was inspiring and very well written. Lots of adventure and humor, with a little bit of misery thrown in for balance. Whenever people ask me to recommend a book, this one is always in my Top 5 (the others being Shantaram, by Gregory David Roberts; Desert Solitaire, by Edward Abbey; The Stand, by Stephen King; and The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, by Haruki Murakami).

A very engaging read that takes you from home to the snowy Montana. You live Pete's adventure with him and see his transformation from a young student to an (almost ;- ) rugged mountaineer. I particularly appreciated the way Pete explained its relation to the wilderness. At the end of the book, I was outraged with him at the way 'outsiders' behaved with it's beloved environment.

One reason I enjoyed this so much is that the young Pete Fromm (at his age in the book) reminded me so much of myself as a college student: adventurous, dreamy, loving the outdoors, reading all the "mountain man" books I could find, yet naive and self-sensitive about what others thought about me. That last trait is very un-mountian man-like, and therein lies the enigma that is so fun for a reader to explore in his author. His was not quite the "wilderness" you might expect in places like Alaska, and he certainly was not "alone" as the subtitle suggests; hunters and government men

came and went all too often. Yet he comes to oneness with his Nature and discovers a self-purpose he never envisioned. The two most compelling scenes: the bobcat's death and the eclipse. I devoured the book.

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. He had planned to trap animals, but after seeing the suffering of one raccoon he caught, he put his traps away. He saw a mountain lion around the time the mountain lion hunters were around, but didn't tell them he had seen one. And when the bear hunters arrived he claimed not to have seen any bears. Pete was a very curious young man who did accept the offer to go along on a lion hunt and watched in awe as a lion was skinned. I didn't get the feeling that he enjoyed the hunt which to me seemed barbaric. However, I had to admire Pete's curiosity about everything. Throughout the book I wondered if Pete's competitive swimming background had anything to do with his being able to handle the long periods of being alone. Swimming is usually a lonely sport. Hours are spent swimming laps back and forth, back and forth. Swimmers swim on teams, but for the most part are cocooned by water. I don't know, but I do know there are people who can handle being alone for long periods and there are people who cannot handle it. This is a wonderful book and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was hoping

Pete had further adventures that he wrote about. I guess not, but he has written several novels that I hope to read. He is in his later 50's now so I doubt he will have any more adventures like this long ago one, but that's probably a good thing.

Having spent time in this part of Idaho I love this book, but the book does a great job of conveying place without having been there. Well written. I give copies of this book to friends who appreciate the wildness of Idaho. A great read for anyone who has run the Selway River, as you pass Indian Creek on the way to the put-in. I think I have bought seven copies over the years. One of my favorites.

I'm not even sure how I stumbled upon this gem but I'm glad I did. I wanted to read about someone's experience living in the great outdoors and this fit the bill nicely. What I didn't expect was the humor near the beginning which I enjoyed very much; "What's a cord" - Made me laugh given the context. There's something enticing about living in a remote area for an extended length of time, and I think Pete captures this well. The only reason I didn't give it five stars is because I wanted more of the internal stuff: struggles, worries, etc that the author was going through at the time. Sure, there was definitely some of that stuff but I got the feeling that some of it was perhaps not fleshed out as much as it could have been? Those were the parts I was quite interested in. At any rate, his writing style is solid and the book flowed very well. He is definitely a talented author in that respect. All in all a pleasure to read! Trying to get some of his other stuff but its tough to find.

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