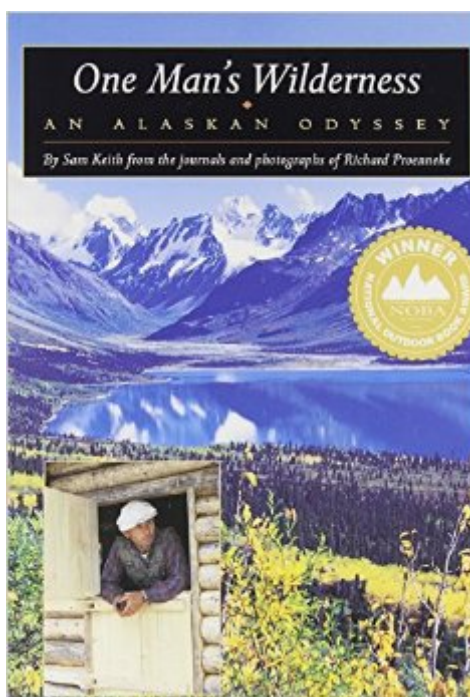


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One Man's Wilderness: An Alaskan Odyssey



Synopsis

This best-selling memoir from Richard Proenneke's journals and with firsthand knowledge of his subject and the setting, Sam Keith has woven a tribute to a man who carved his masterpiece out of the beyond. To live in a pristine land unchanged by man . . . to roam a wilderness through which few other humans has passed . . . to choose an idyllic site, cut trees by hand, and build a log cabin. . . to be self-sufficient craftsman, making what is needed from materials available...to be not at odds with the world, but content with one's own thoughts, dreams and company. Thousands have had such dreams, but Richard Proenneke lived them. This book is a moving account of the day-to-day explorations and activities Dick carried out alone....alone in the wilderness...and the constant chain of nature's events that kept him company.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars See all reviews (487 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I can understand some people giving this book or the related video only three or four stars; this is one of those stories that depend heavily on the outlook you bring to them. Some might find Proenneke's feat mildly interesting but wonder why he did it. I found it enthralling. You have to be fascinated by a man who seemed capable of creating almost anything he needed from raw materials using only hand tools. He carves out wooden spoons; builds his log home; turns gas cans into buckets, pots, and in-ground coolers; builds a cache on stilts; works up sturdy door hinges from stumps; and on and on. In our age of repetitive assembly of the same part or being a small cog in a service industry machine, in an age of such specialization even American farmers whose granaries

overflow run to the supermarket for bread and then complain about the price, in an age of abundance that comes at the price of over-dependence on others, Richard Proenneke reached a satisfying level of self-reliance now nearly extinct. I'm reminded of the "Little House on the Prairies" book series in which father Ingalls briefly laments having moved to South Dakota where he was dependent on the railroad trains to bring in food and fuel, compared to the days of self-sufficiency in the woods of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Proenneke's dream isn't for everyone. Imagine trying to do what he did if your skills are incomplete or you have a family to bring up. Living in the middle of wild Alaska would be more suffering than fulfillment. But what a dream to have, in which you turn your back on the rat race and build what you need to live from start to finish, or as Proenneke says "to do a thing to completion." His accomplishments give me daydream release from the tedious grind of bills and mindless work.

I was at Port Alsworth, Alaska, on Lake Clark this July 1999, and bought this book at the Lake Clark Visitor Center. The beauty of this country is awesome and spectacular. The book tells the adventure of a man called back in time. Dick chose to travel into bush country building a comfortable cabin with his two hands at the cost of \$40 dollars. Surviving the severe weather with wisdom and common sense. Enjoying and making friends with the wild animals. He had great respect for God's country and the animals. Friendship with Babe Alsworth, a true christian native and bush pilot. I met Babe's son, Glen and his wonderful family, at Port Alsworth. The book is vivid in describing Dick's many months of survival and adventure in the Alaska bush. The book is very well written and it makes you feel like you are living the adventure with Dick. Pictures of the Alaska country and cabin help to visualize your thoughts. In the busy world of today, it was refreshing to read this book and reflect on how in ages past people lived day by day. I enjoyed reading the book very much.

This is a powerful book and has quite a following. I was given the book by one of my best friends, which I consider a wonderful gift. This book has it all, beautiful photos, Richard's journal notes are amazing in their insight to his thinking and how this adventure unfolded. It is a simply wonderful book, and has people traveling to Alaska just to see the setting for such a balanced book. This book lays claim to new territory, and the claim is valid. No wonder it sells well, it is captivating reading and makes you look hard and close at your own life.

This has to be one of my very favorite books. I have read it front to back at least 7 times! It is written with the true adventurer in mind. Every detail of his experience makes the reader wish it were

he/she that was there with him. If you have ever wished you could just go off into the woods, build a cabin and be self-sufficient, This is the book for you.

I bought this book after watching the PBS documentary of Richard Proenneke's year alone in the Alaskan wilderness. Where the documentary gives a brief synopsis of Dick's time in the wilderness, the book gives a more complete account of the trials and tribulations of survival alone in the middle of nowhere. His planning and ingenuity of what he would need to survive the harsh Alaskan winter (from building his own log cabin from the ground up to stocking up on food for the long winter) are truly inspiring. Equally inspiring are the words Dick uses to describe his love of the land and of the joy he finds communing with nature and surviving in such a remote environment. If you've ever felt a bond with Jack London's "Call of the Wild" and "White Fang" you will love this true life adventure of Dick's year alone in Alaska's wilderness. I hope you enjoy this book as much as I did!

It could be argued that not a whole lot happens in this book - basically a guy builds a cabin by a lake and takes some hikes and paddles in the surrounding area. Even so, I couldn't put this book down. Richard Proenneke's journals come to life in the pages. He describes things like constructing a hinge for a door or making a sod roof in riveting detail. His trips into the backcountry are described equally as vivid. It is absolutely amazing to me what he accomplished with little more than his own bare hands and some rudimentary tools. His heart, spirit and philosophy are truly admirable.

The DVD and this companion book clearly illustrate one of the eternal conflicts: Man vs Nature. But in this case, they demonstrate how both can survive in harmony. Simply wonderful! PS You can go to [...] to get the Alone in the Wilderness DVD and the companion DVD Alaska Silence and Solitude. Each DVD costs \$21.95 plus s&h. I have no affiliation with Bob Swerer productions and am just trying to help the previous member. Best of luck!

I just want to say "ditto" to the above review. If you've ever fantasized about spending a good chunk of time living off the land in the rugged back-country, surviving by using your own wits and muscle, then this one's for you. Well written with wonderfully telling photos. Two thumbs way up!

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