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Calvin Rutstrum, His Published Works

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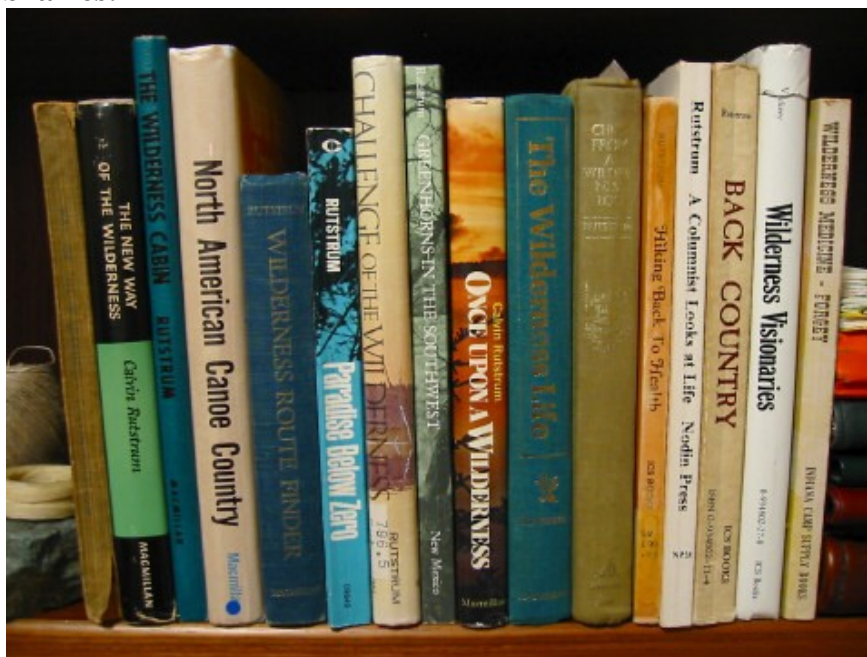
Description :

This review is an outline of Calvin Rutstrum's 15+ books in chronological order along with selected quotes, my opinions and observations of the work, as well as, a bit of availability information.

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Calvin Rutstrum, the outdoorsman and author is probably familiar to many. He published 15 books, by his count, over the course of this varied life including several how-to manuals, an autobiography (or 2), and some reflective wilderness essay collections. Many of his later books are difficult to find, but many of his early ones are generally still available in bookstores and libraries.



Rutstrum Bookshelf

An excellent synopsis of his life can be found in Jim Dale Vickery's *Wilderness Visionaries* 1986. I have gleaned some of this introduction from Vickery and some from Rutstrum's autobiography.

Calvin Rutstrum was born in 1895 and died in 1982. His wilderness experiences begin just before WWI and span the modern era including the environmental movement of the late 60's and 70's. He published his books starting in 1946 and continued to publish right up to near his death in 1982. His father died when he was three and he dropped out of school in the 7th grade and soon after began his working and adventuring life. Throughout his life he lived many experiences and held several jobs, his writing skills were primarily self-taught from reading. Some of these jobs and adventures included; riding fence on a Montana cattle ranch, serving in WWI as a Navy medical corpsman, buying and selling land, working as a bank criminal detective, and serving as a Camp instructor and guide. Many of these jobs he held just long enough to set himself up for some time in the wilderness. Many of his wilderness years were spent wandering the Canadian Shield or the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota on long canoe, walking, or sledding trips. Over the course of his life he also maintained or built several residences-Canadian and Minnesota cabins, a Marine-on-St. Croix home and a New Mexico ranch home.

Each of his books reveals a bit of Calvin, his experiences, and his philosophy. His writing style is very interesting to read with a bit of old style complex and sometimes convoluted sentence structure; this probably was the result of his vast reading and self-taught writing skills, but it tends to make the books all the more interesting. I have great respect for Rutstrum from reading his life work. He lived the life many of us only dream.

This review is an outline of his books in chronological order along with some selected quotes. I have also included my opinions and observations of the work, as well as, a bit of available information. I have tried to quote passages that are illustrative of the whole books tone or intent.

While each of his works is defiantly worth reading, some I have appreciated more than others. These books are the sort one takes on a trip or has on the bedside table for a bit of reflective reading and dreaming.



Rutstrum's How-To Books

Way of the Wilderness, A Complete Camping Manual, A how to Do It Camping Guide, 1946

For 10 years, Calvin was the Director of *The Lake Hubert Minnesota Camps*. He wrote and used this manual as a teaching tool at the Camp. It is essentially a straight-forward how-to manual for the camps curriculum. Topics include, canoeing, pack animals, dog teams and hand toboggans, afoot with a pack (backpacking), route finding, camp cooking and procedures, personal equipment. He made several item-by-item lists of equipment and his recommendations. He also has a certification of skills section which consisted of 8 tests. Here the camper was required to demonstrate certain skills and then the Director (Calvin) would sign off on these. These included: Compass and Routes, Expert Canoeist, Animal Packing, Dog Team and Hand Toboggan, Afoot with a Pack, Wilderness Equipment and Procedure, Go-Light Equipment and Day Hikes, and Wilderness Foods. In subsequent publications Calvin expanded on many of these topics.

Here are a few selected quotes from this volume:

On the Basics: *While many persons are concerned with the tasks of a wilderness journey, there are those who assume the attitude that living and traveling in the wilderness is a simple process requiring no study. Such persons should be avoided with all dispatch. I have encountered my share in a lifetime of wilderness travel. You fall in with them through the trick they have of claiming experience.....Any experienced woodsman catches them at their sham within a short while on the trail.*

On Wilderness Procedure: *Groups from organized camps, as a rule, are likewise caught unprepared on overnight trips or even on a day's outing, returning dripping and disappointed if it rains. Several major wilderness journeys of record, running into unseasonable weather, ended with heroic praise for the party, largely because bad weather was fought with inadequate equipment. It makes good reading, but basically it is poor camping.*

On Firearms: *Gun lovers have their own guns and it is not well to argue with them. For many years I carried*

restocked Springfields, Mausers and others. Now I carry a 30-30 Winchester carbine with sling. The much improved cartridge in this weapon will stop a moose or a bear without trouble. The gun is small, light, has good balance for carrying, and is convenient. For safety the sling is looped around a thwart in a canoe and around a cross bar or a lash rope on a dog sled.

For small game a single-shot 22-caliber pistol with a 6 or 8 inch barrel will work out. But a better gun all around, if it can be carried, is the over-and-under type with a top barrel shooting a 22-caliber cartridge, the bottom a 4-10, 3 inch shot shell. In some parts of the North, ducks are very plentiful, and the 4-10 shot shell is this gauge is not too heavy to carry. The pattern, however, is somewhat small but it is a worthwhile compromise in weight of shells

On Knives: The Expert pattern made by the Marbles Arms Company, Gladstone Michigan, is one of the best knives I have found for a belt knife. It is of exceptionally high quality, is thin enough and strong enough for all work in camp, and has a blade of 5 inches. The thick chisel-edged knives, generally sold, are of little value in the wilderness program. Rather get it too thin than too thick

This manual was published by the Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis MN and illustrated by Don Cederberg. It is a 192 page linen soft cover, and was originally supplied in a canvas bag. This text is fairly difficult to find. The Minneapolis Public Library has this in its archives (available after 2006) and the Minnesota Historical Society Library also has a copy. This has appeared on eBay for sale irregularly, with selling prices of \$75-\$100+. Bookfinder has listed this manual for \$12 to \$245. Best bet is to cruise your local bookstore and look for those bargains. Sadly many libraries in the Great Lakes region have discarded this old volume as it is greatly out-of-date when evaluated from the casual campers view.

This was published primarily for the campers at the Lake Hubert Camps but seems to have been available for general sales (See *Memoranda for Canoe Country* below, for more details). Many of these were signed by Calvin, inscribed to the camper.

Overall, this is a fine example of Calvin's wilderness procedures and practices of the post war era. This book I highly recommend. If spotted for any price less than \$50, I would recommend buying it and if you do not like it, list it on eBay or better yet offer it to a forum member.

Way of the Wilderness, A Complete Camping Manual, A how to Do It Camping Guide, 1952

This is a revised edition of the above. Having just recently found this one, I think it stands as a separate edition due to the unique rewrite that Calvin did to both correct errors and omissions in the 1946 edition and to add or expand upon techniques that had changed in the 6 years since the original *Way* was published. In my earlier version of this review I thought that since this edition was only different by one page (according to the Minneapolis Public Library catalog) that it was unlikely to be an extensive rewrite. This is mostly true, but Calvin went to great effort to revise and edit many of the pages **without** extensively changing the page or illustration layouts. This may have something to do with the original typeset or some other publisher need, but Calvin was able to squeeze in or modify paragraphs or lines without radically changing the layout for the majority of this version. This edition evolved closer to *The New Way of the Wilderness*. All the camp manual specific test pages have been removed and the two final chapters found in *New Way* are added in their place, "Fishing for Food" and "Hunting for Food".

I did a page-by -page, paragraph-by-paragraph comparison of these two editions and was frankly amazed by the nice job of editing that Calvin had done and I was truly impressed by his ability to maintain the apparent pagination constraints. This text includes an author photograph, a brief portion of a letter from Col Townsend Whelen and an additional post script to the original introduction, which I think is appropriate to quote completely.

Calvin Rutstrum, His Published Works

A vast amount of water has roared through the cataracts of the North since this book was first presented in 1946. There have been changes both in the country and the people of the silent places. We sometimes hate to contemplate these changes, and we have even more reluctance to consider the changes within ourselves. I have no illusions, however, about this change in the author of this book. Additional years on the trail have tempered various ideas which were present in the first edition. The publisher's permission to grant my request for a revision has come through the kindness of many readers in their purchase of this volume.

Here, then, is the new edition. You will find a little more meat has been added, and the removal of a few bugs which inadvertently found their way into the stew.

Many persons have inquired about hunting and fishing as a part of the wilderness craft. Perhaps they will suffer some disappointment in finding the two new chapters on these subjects do not take the popular viewpoint in the capture of fish and the shooting of game. I hope, however, that they will find no deviation from the original theme in this book indicated by the title, WAY OF THE WILDERNESS, and gain information that is parallel to their request.

That this volume has found its way into many corners of the world, is heartening to say the least. Its arrival in places where the only service is a steamer once a year, has stirred my imagination and brought more than gratitude. And the leading men and women in the outdoor field who have sent on their good wishes and approval have my deepest, humble thanks. All these good people and places were in my mind as I prepared this new edition for approval. My greetings to all and a special greeting to those in the silent wilderness places of the world.

Many changes were added to the book but I think that the canoeing sections may have benefited the most from Calvin's rework. Among many other minor changes, he now voices very strong support for the recently developed aluminum canoes. Here is a portion of the new text supporting these views.

After several years of testing out canoes, I am won over not just to the blushing point, but complete marriage to the aluminum alloy canoe. I have battered them against rocks of rapid both by accident and with laboratory resignation of purpose, and must admit they put all other materials to shame. Persons who have been fighting against the aluminum alloy canoes, eventually come humbly to the alter too. Tinny? Yes. Noisy? Yes. But 60 pounds in an 18 foot aluminum canoe compared to 90 or more pounds in a canvas model, spells the difference between expedient travel and a sluggish, grueling journey.

Both significant edits like the one above and minor word changes or line additions are present throughout the text. Nearly no portion of the book is without at least some minor changes. All illustrations are the same except for the drawing of the A-tent. The original illustration has been replaced by a simple one showing the traditional understanding of the Rutstrum Wedge or Convertible A-design. The chapter ending, "Put out your Fire" illustrations, in many places have been omitted and the free space used by new text. Calvin seems to have used these redundant illustration spaces to keep the updates and additions "in-bounds". Calvin added many items in the equipment checklists that were in most cases omissions in the original text, not new items.

Overall, this is an excellent revision that seems to clearly illustrate Calvin's desire for both a correct and clear manual. This definitely is the launch point for *The New Way* which followed in 6 years.

This edition was also published by Burgess in the same format as the 1946 edition. It was also issued in a canvas pouch. I have seen it offered on eBay in the same price ranges as above. My edition is a 1953 second printing found at an independent bookseller (via bookfinder) at nearly \$50, but in excellent shape with the canvas pouch. Both the back of the book and the canvas pouch are stamped *Bill Rom's Canoe Country Outfitters*, Ely, Minnesota, just like the *Memoranda from Canoe Country* I received from the Minnesota Historical Society Library (see below).

This was definitely a book for sale to the general public. The editor in the Foreword mentions a 700 word book review in *The Beaver* and quotes Whelen as having recommended it to his readers. The Minneapolis Public Library also has this in its archives (available after 2006) and the Minnesota Historical Society Library also has a copy.

***Memoranda for Canoe Country*, 1953**

This is an uncommon 38 page stapled pamphlet published by Burgess in a pocket sized format. I have received a photocopy of this pamphlet courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society Library.

Rutstrum seems to have produced a small format "quick tips" guide based upon his *Way of the Wilderness* camp manual. On the copy I have, the back cover is stamped *Bill Rom's Canoe Country Outfitters, "Complete outfitting for Quetico-Superior canoe trips", Ely, Minnesota*. This back cover and the contents seem to indicate that this pamphlet was written for and distributed by canoe outfitters for their clients. Interestingly the last page is a plug by Calvin for *Way of the Wilderness*, so apparently *Way* was for sale, at least by 1953. Here is part of his plug:

The book "Way of the Wilderness" is recommended by such leading outdoor men of the world as Colonel Townsend Whelen, and highly praised in the Hudson's Bay Magazine, "The Beaver", and the press.....

It covers all the subjects in this pamphlet more completely, and many others pertaining to travel and life in the wilderness.....

See your book dealer or write to the publisher. This volume comes in a canvas pocket for carrying in the pack...

(more about these book reviews below)

Rutstrum covers in a paragraph or two what he covers in several pages in *Way*. The first 9 pages are spent on praise for aluminum canoes, recovering from upset, repairing, canoe nomenclature, efficient paddling (but not stroke techniques), landing, running rapids, poling, portaging canoe and packs, and running with the wind. Here is his summary paragraph for these canoe tips:

These are a few points in canoeing. You will find a great many as you progress in the art of canoeing. This is a craft calling for great skill, if you will watch an expert at work. A few of the strokes are: quarter sweep, skulling draw, diagonal draw, full sweep, underwater (this is a hunting stroke), bow rudder, cross bow, back stroke and J stroke; but you won't need all of these strokes in you first venture on a canoe journey. As you progress, you will come to include all of them.

The remainder of this pamphlet covers guides, ax handling, bugs, food, fishing, sleeping, rain, navigation, firewood and fires, cooking and camping. All of these topics have good basic sound advice in an abridged format. Certainly nothing is covered in depth, but enough of the basics are touched to assist new canoeists on their first guided or unguided trips. Here are a couple of excerpts:

Cooking utensils should be of the type that nest, and you can do your baking in a frying pan by reflection if you do not have a reflector oven. But no trip can have quite the luxury that a reflector oven contributes. Baked biscuits, fish, meat pies, shortcake, fruit pie, cake and cookies-all and more are possible with the reflector oven, as previously indicated.

Travel leisurely. Don't make the rat race out of your journey. You will miss the profound pleasures and see little if you do. Paddle close to shore when you can. You will then be more likely to see wildlife in the forest. Even by poking along at a lazyman's pace, you will be from fifty to a hundred miles or better from your point of departure in a week. Take a long time for getting good pictures. The trip will last for a short while, the pictures a lifetime.

This is an excellent example of Calvin distilled to the basics. Most of the unique writing style and flavor of Calvin is missing from this pamphlet, but the straightforward how-to predominates. This, I think, represents a good example of his teaching style and thought processes.

While I do not count this as a book, it has appeared on eBay (once) and sold for \$79! (not to me). This pamphlet is very difficult to find outside of the Minnesota Historical Society Library, but fortunately available to all with interlibrary loan capabilities and a few dollars for copy fees.

***The New Way of the Wilderness*, 1958**

This was Calvin's first general market publication. According to Vickery, this was a requested rewrite of the above camp manuals for general market sales. Burgess released the copy write to MacMillan for this book. In many places it contains verbatim passages from the 1946 issue of *Way of the Wilderness*. Most of the chapters from *Way* are included with some expansion, clarification, and fine-tuning on several procedures or pieces of equipment. Rutstrum added chapters on Fishing, Hunting, and Survival, and dropped the curriculum certification test pages. Overall this is an expanded (nearly 100 pages) and polished version of the camp manual; with both a greater number of illustrations and much better quality of illustrations. Illustrations here are also much more pertinent to the discussion topic and clearly illustrative of the procedure than those he used in *Way of the Wilderness*. For instance, *Way* has an ax handling drawing where the camper has amputated both legs and an arm....humorous but not really the skill Calvin was teaching. *Way* also has a drawing of a wooden stopper being driven into a bleeding skull. I am sure that in his one-on-one teaching with the campers these were used for comic relief but certainly not good in a general market how-to publication where the large publishing house lawyers had a chance to review.

This is an excellent text that compliments, expands, or updates authors such as Nessmuk and Kephart. A very popular contemporary author, Col. Townsend Whelen, wrote a generous introduction for this book. Many of the post WWII improvements in technology are incorporated along with some old style wilderness operations. For instance, down and air mattresses instead of blankets and boughs, aluminum advantages over wood and canvas canoes, but still open fires, reflector ovens, wool and fur clothing, and traditional trail foods of bannock and portage.

The basics of wilderness operations are covered in *The New Way* but as we will see this book serves as a springboard for 3 books that follow. Expansions on more specialized procedures were covered by Rutstrum in these later books, including wilderness route finding, wilderness canoeing, and cold weather operations.

Most of the passages quoted above in *Way* are retained with some minor changes (i.e. no mention of a Marble's knife specifically, but the drawing is still a Marble's). Here is an expanded firearms discussion that seems to combine both savvy information and a sense of wilderness mystic that is much more apparent in his writing in this updated version of the camp manual.

On Hunting for Food: Guns and ballistics have fascinated me since boyhood, and I hope this elemental pleasure will endure, for it has offered me a great deal of pleasure as well as kinship with others that only ballistics and a cozy campfire could possibly create. Such cartridges as the .270 Winchester, .300 H&H magnum, .30/06, and even some for the big-bore British favorites are as interesting to me as though magic were contained in these combinations of figures....

What has been the result? I have reached up to the gun rack and taken down the .30/30 carbine by some process of natural selection, not condoned perhaps by many experts by easily explained by those who spend long periods in the wilderness areas. The .30/30 Winchester carbine is light, short, easily worked through dense forest areas and, when carried over arduous trails, lends itself well to canoe, pack-horse, and dog-team travel. Also it is vested with the crowning glory-the open hammer and the lever action, which symbolize the outdoors as do the pattern of a snowshoe or a canoe.

If you own only one Rutstrum, this one would be my recommendation. It combines tidbits of his early wilderness philosophy with solid operations. Even today, in the era of modern fabrics, GPS, super-light canoes, snow mobiles, freeze-dried foods, amazingly accurate maps, there is a place for understanding long term wilderness operations and skills. I believe this text stands the test of time.

This 276 page book was published by MacMillan (New York), and superbly illustrated by Les Kouba as noted above. This book was reprinted many times in both hard cover and soft covers. It is widely available in bookstores, Bookfinder, eBay for very reasonable prices. I have seen good first edition hardbacks for \$5 or less, and reprinted soft backs for as low as \$2. It has recently been reprinted by the University of Minnesota Press, but the 1958 or 1960 printings are very easily found and usually less expensive than the soft back reprint.

***The Wilderness Cabin*, 1961**

Calvin built several wilderness cabins in his lifetime. These included one season trapper's cabins and more deluxe multi-year living cabins. When his edge of the wilderness cabin was encroached upon by the burgeoning population he moved to a slightly more remote place and built a new cabin. This text is a how-to of cabin design, construction techniques, tools, and even tips on living in a cabin.

On Some Points on Living in a Cabin: A common and well founded sentiment prevails that for solid comfort a wilderness cabin should be heated by an open wood fire. The fragrance, warmth, and cheerful glow of a wood fire impart an atmosphere to a room which can never be replaced. But what generally is overlooked is that in subzero temperatures wintering in a cabin heated entirely by wood is a major undertaking, involving a tremendous amount of hard physical labor.

This 169 page book was originally published by MacMillan and illustrated by Les Kouba. This book was also reprinted many times in different formats. It is also widely available for very reasonable prices (\$4+) on eBay and Bookfinder. This book is a good one, and while not one of my top favorites, given its availability and low price I would recommend buying it.

***North American Canoe Country*, 1964**

Here is Calvin's book length expansion of canoe operations and canoe trip stories and tips. Here Calvin expands and updates the chapters from *Way* and *New Way* on canoe techniques. Selecting a canoe, canoe techniques and route finding open the book, but in a significant departure from a strictly how-to book, this one has canoe voyage stories in the middle followed by gear selection and lists. This is a great book that combines how-to with good reading experiences.

From Recollections: When I look back over almost a half century of canoe travel, trails seem numerous, intricate, long, and-often enough-rugged. Yet, as I observe the topography of North America, I realize that one lifetime can cover but a limited part of the great network of existing waterways. We are apt to become a bit vainglorious in our boast of long travel by canoe until we recognize the insignificant scope of travel a single individual can accomplish

even in a half-century of consistent effort. But, fortunately, this always leaves untraveled trails for the future.

Also from Recollections: No cup of coffee rivals that which you drink on the rockbound shore of a wilderness lake, before a wood fire that is competing with the first rays of dawn.

From Canoe Equipment: The human being is the only creature who fares badly in the wilderness without tools. Yet, if he overburdens himself with equipment, he impedes his freedom of travel.

Against these two opposing premises, the canoe voyager must consider what he needs to sustain himself. The difficulty will be to arrive at a point of compromise between too much equipment and too little. Generally, he hauls along too many-gadgets intended to make life easy, but which turn out to be a nuisance around camp, a handicap and burden over every portage trail.

This 215 page book was published by MacMillan and illustrated by Les Kouba and has been reprinted many times in different formats including a recent reprint from the University of Minnesota Press. It is also widely available for reasonable prices. This book is a good one, and one of my favorites. If you are interested in canoeing or canoe trip experiences I would recommend buying it.

***Wilderness Route Finder*, 1967**

Along with *The New Way of the Wilderness*, this volume is likely to be encountered in most public libraries or used bookstores. This is a full expansion of his wilderness navigation procedures originally outlined in *Way*. This was an era before high quality maps were available for all wilderness areas. He covers map and compass, sextant, stars, and radio direction finding. He fully expands on man's lack of innate abilities to route find, and covers wilderness observation and basic knowledge of route finding.

Many of the wilderness navigation practices he discusses are no longer used due to excellent maps, baseplate compasses, GPS etc but this is a comprehensive text from a highly skilled wilderness traveler. This book is well worth owning, primarily to appreciate wilderness operations in true wilderness areas, but as this quote shows, he had a clear understanding of how and why people get lost, which is just as true today as it was then.

On Getting Lost: The failure properly to relate ourselves to some know factor-natural or otherwise-as a directional guide and most often the lack of systematic travel forward or return to a predetermined base line (such as a road, railroad, river, or lakeshore) rather than a specific point (such as Hudson Bay post, cabin or car) are the most common reasons why we get lost, or fail to move freely and successfully over wilderness land or water.

This 214 page book was originally published by MacMillan and illustrated by Les Kouba and distributed in a coat pocket sized format. It has been widely reprinted over the years in Collier paperback and soft back formats. It has also recently been reprinted by The University of Minnesota Press. It is widely available in the soft formats for good prices and hardback editions are also rather common.

***Paradise Below Zero*, 1968**

This again represents an expanded volume with its origins in *Way*. Cold weather gear and equipment and techniques are well covered. Semi-modern equipment, dog sleds, furs, wool and camp techniques are well covered in the text. It is an excellent how-to for its era. Even though many modern materials have replaced his clothing selections, the basics of cold weather operation are timeless. Calvin included a few illustrative stories much like he

did in *North American Canoe Country*. This is a classic and well worth owning.

On Wintering: *Not many people, comparatively speaking, have had the priceless experience of long wilderness solitude. Quite often the question is posed, "What on earth do you do up there all winter?" There is no wholly satisfactory answer for those who need to ask. A wide estrangement must inevitably exist between people who find lone hours hanging heavy on their hands and those who fully enjoy the benefits of seclusion and extended leisure. If one must ask what to do with life's most priceless possession-time-perhaps the best answer would be, "If not aware of its inestimable values, sell it to the highest bidder for cash, and always be cheated." As Thoreau said, "No one but a fool ever sold more of his time than he had to."*

This is a relatively common and inexpensive volume in its recent reprinted versions (University of Minnesota Press) and older soft backs and paperbacks (Collier Books) It is harder to find in its original hardcover release (MacMillan) and somewhat expensive. My Collier 244 page softback was illustrated by Les Kouba with photographs by the author and various vendors. Bookfinder generally lists several recent reprints, and older hardbacks have appeared on eBay and sold for fairly high prices (>\$25).



Rutstrum's Wilderness Series

***Challenge of the Wilderness*, 1970**

This is Calvin's autobiography. This is a very good book outlining in a generally non-specific way Calvin's life. He covers his early childhood work which prevented him from attending public school. His time on a Montana ranch as a fence rider is a very compelling story and shows him as a young man learning about the pleasures of being alone in the environment. His war years are briefly covered. Much more detail and time is spent on his earliest edge-of-the-wilderness living experiences and trips with the Canadian First Peoples and prospectors etc. He works just enough to support his wilderness living needs and this is covered in detail. Much of his real life story is not covered in this volume. Much more detail can be found in Jim Dale Vickery's *Wilderness Visionaries* where some of Calvin's other jobs and life styles are more fully discussed. Calvin outlines his approach to living on the edge of the wilderness by buying and then selling the land near him. Later as these plots are developed and a road is put in, he decides that this is too crowded for him and moves. At no time does he actually discuss that his land sales may have contributed to the population increase and maybe even the road. This inconsistency of his life is one of those paradoxes we all probably have in our own lives.

This book, more than any of his others, outlines his uncommon and probably unpopular views on work and leisure time. The last quote below is my favorite of the book. In view of our increasing worker productivity (mostly due to

longer hours at the expense of leisure time) this quote really hits home.

Here are a few selected quotes:

On Trial Flights from Urbanity: That I was compelled to be a school dropout at the age of thirteen to earn a living, did not appear socially disgraceful to me, or to anyone else, it seemed, at the time. Most of us now would regard this as society's failure to perform its responsibility. Today we face the problem of compulsory education and at the same time we are at a loss as to how we can give the lesson of self-reliance to youth early enough.... There is a kind of independent prodigiousness inherent in youth, which should be allowed to develop-commonly destroyed by parental regimentation, and largely neglected in academic education.

On Work: Through the winter into the spring breakup time, I worked at whatever employment paid the highest wages, giving my best effort with only tended to get me involved, because my employer did not always see fit to have me leave. Generally, I was offered a liberal bonus, the promise of quick promotion-all ensnaring attributes that the conventional world has set up to control life from womb to tomb.

But the challenge of the wild was too strong.

Reaction to my leaving employment periodically for wilderness travel and leisure was destined at times to become a serious difficulty. But I must not overlook the magnanimously spirited owners of industry who patted me on the back and with a bon voyage said, "When you come back from your trip, drop in, and we'll try to find something for you to do." I might sensibly forget those who lectured me severely. One such employer told me that I was "hitting below the belt" in leaving at a busy season. "Only a worthless bum would work just long enough to get a grubstake," he said. As a parting shot I quoted Thoreau, that only a fool devoted more time to industry than was necessary. He found no ready answer for Thoreau.

The worst was from an employer who rose from his swivel chair, leaned angrily over his desk, and gave me departing words as I was about to pass from his office. Shaking his fist, he said, "I'll blackball you so that you won't get a job in this city as long as you live!"

I turned in the doorway and answered, "You mean you will do this and expect to stay alive?" He froze, paused for a moment and threatened to call the police. I suggested he call the press too, for a good story on executive ability.

On Life, Work and Retirement: To suggest that one should reduce employment to such nominal hours as to allow leisure early in life, is, I realize, to confront adversely the whole business and conventional establishment. Yet, this is the choice one must rebelliously make in order to escape the business and industrial year-round penal servitude that is quite certain to completely destroy our mental and physical capability for enjoying leisure by the time we do retire.

This 196 page book was published by TS Denison, Minneapolis and again illustrated by Les Kouba with several photographs by the author. This is a difficult and expensive book to buy. *Challenge of the Wilderness* is infrequently listed on eBay, and Bookfinder generally has a few copies selling in the \$60-\$150 range. Fortunately my library system has this one.

He reissued this as *A Wilderness Autobiography* in 1979, Nodin Press, Minneapolis, MN (see comments below).

***Greenhorns in the SouthWest*, 1972**

Of all of Calvin's books this one stands out as probably the strangest. This one covers his finding, fixing and living in an adobe ranch house in New Mexico along the Pecos River. He was in a strange environment and his writing here shows that. Calvin and his wife maintained this residence as a winter home for several years, and while I think he did come to like the region, you can easily see a degree of discomfort expressed in his writing. The high desert region living is a huge contrast to the living environments of his other works. This one is actually hard to classify in context with the other works. This is not really a how-to book nor is it a reflective book; it is more a South West autobiography. According to Vickery, this one sold poorly. I do not find this book as appealing or as readable as most of his other works, but I will qualify this statement as this may, in part, be due to my lack of understanding or experience with the desert SW.

This, like most of his works, takes time to hammer home his favorite theme of minimizing work time and maximizing free time.

From *Natural Approach*: *One tends to become aware of country life's intrinsic values when not permanently tied to the country scene by occupation. There is, of course, no happy balance of this kind in the life of an individual who is confined fifty weeks to industry and allowed only two weeks of pleasurable rehabilitation in a natural environment. It figuratively suggests too much "fifty-fifty stew, one cow and one rabbit."*

Whenever I am caught up in the grandeur of sunrise over the desert, of the spectacle of desert bloom after spring rains, I become aware of individual man's greatest poverty-time. If this time factory could be pointed out with certitude (but, of course, it can't) perhaps there would be less passion for greed, less self-imposed servitude in industry, less friction between man and man, less racism, more leisure to enjoy the precious moments of life that are rapidly ticking away.

This book was originally published by TS Denison and later (1979) as the 176 page soft back by the University of New Mexico Press with photographs by the author. Denison editions are difficult to find and expensive >\$20, UNM copies are more affordable and common.

***Once Upon a Wilderness*, 1973**

This book marks a clear departure from the wilderness how-to of Rutstrum's earlier works. In this volume he embarks on story telling, good operations in the wilderness essays and discussion of what wilderness means. Calvin is 78 years old at the publication of this book and he has seen many changes in the way wilderness was utilized. Chapters include comparison to old and new ways, Women in the wilderness, Wilderness as a sanctuary and Solitude in the Wilderness. Overall this is a fine example of reflection and hope for the future combined with stories that are just good reading.

On *Wilderness*: *As I type these pages, a Franklin fireplace stove, burning jackpine and birch, warms my back enough to allow a wide-open door at a temperature well under sixty degrees. A moderately heavy sea pounds the shore-the clearing process following a three-day rain, though billowing rain-cloud masses still continue to roll up from the northwest that seem to threaten a shower. They are, I find, merely the tailings of yesterday's downpour and speedily disappear on a scudding, dry run over the southeast forest. Through window and door I see island beyond island, mile upon mile of unpeopled, coniferous-timbered shore.*

From *Wilderness Happy*: *Obviously, a rather wide latitude of difference exist between the noise-seeking, urban-prone, utilitarian citizen's attitude as against that of the artist, the writer, and the humanistic mind seeking an atmosphere of seclusion where ideas can more readily form. To quote Clifton Fadiman, so that I can blame his ego rather than my own for saying it, "Writers, artists, thinkers and heroes are simply more interesting than bankers and*

railroad presidents. They have more of the leaping stuff of life in them."

From *Hands and Feet*: *The argument is often entered as to what qualities are possessed by the most competent woodsman. One might, of course, as here: "What is meant by a competent woodsman?" A prosaic definition of a woodsman could merely be the man who is most capable of carrying on successfully and fruitfully the necessary utilitarian functions of wilderness life. Whatever attributes and accomplishments of manual sense and theoretical knowledge are to be considered, the greater handicap exists where one is obliged to maintain wilderness life on a minimal manual sense and a maximal theoretical knowledge, rather than the reverse of these.*

From *Burning Bridges*: *Material want looms most important in the first half of adult life. It does not diminish rapidly in the second half, but it surely tapers off. There comes a time when neither the storage nor utility of many material things is compatible with well-being. Empty space on a shelf, literally and figuratively, late in life has a greater attraction than saturated storage capacity-one starts giving away and enjoying the luxury of riddance.*

This 181 page book was published by MacMillan with photographs by the author. This is fairly commonly found on Bookfinder at fairly reasonable prices. It has also been reissued by the University of Minnesota recently. This is definitely worth owning.

***The Wilderness Life*, 1975**

This is another wonderful collection of essays and stories containing more wilderness philosophy than wilderness how-to. This, like *Once Upon a Wilderness*, is just a joy to read.

From the Introduction: *A vast wilderness sweeps off to the north from my cabin door, across thousands of rockbound wilderness lakes, rivers and forests, with little interruption for a thousand miles or more. I ask myself, "Is this not too alluring a prospect for activity to be preempted by the writing of these lines?" Had the weather provided a different turn of events this morning, I might have proceeded with this writing another day. Waves on the lake are pounding the nearby shores, hurtling whitewater into the air like inverted cataracts. Rain mixed with hail is pelleted against my window until I wonder why the double thickness glass does not break. The buffeting wind and thrashing waves impart a basso hissing and booming. Trees sway; some, falling victim to the wind, lose their rooted bond with the earth and strike the ground with what seems crashing despair.*

Days such as this are obviously fashioned for contemplation. Yet, earlier in the day, when the elements were reaching their most intense bluster, I was leaving the tiny trading post a few miles away with a waterproofed pack of provisions in a canoe, to ride out the heavy sea as one would ride a half-broken bronco. I suppose that leaving the tempestuous lake for the comfort of a cabin was the diversion I needed to get on with this writing. But too long at sedentary work leads one to crave grappling again with the waves, or otherwise flexing one's muscles."

On *Wilderness Destiny*: *Having enjoyed more than a half century of living a large part of the year in the wilderness, and by virtue of it having lived close to manual processes, I am inclined to regard many of the mechanized devices of modern life as not so tragically dispensable should they suddenly become unavailable or greatly reduced in number through energy shortage or some other unforeseen condition. Much of the seeming indispensability of the goods of modern living is mere illusion gained from nefarious advertising, or from consumers succumbing to convenience gadgets that permit a physically phlegmatic life. We could become a stronger people by having less. We could become nobler by improving our sense of personal and national economy, avoiding all kinds of needless waste of resources.*

On *Wilderness Guile*: *It is strange that an intelligent man is willing to admit his inexperience in nearly all things except*

the very few which concern virility. It is therefore rare on this basis that any man admits a lack of campcraft knowledge and skill. The male camper who takes a short vacation once each year frequently finds it incredible that he should be asked what his competence in camping is. The female camper, to whom virility is not a problem, is far more likely to seek advice.

Wilderness orientation is not only a matter of acquiring a knowledge of campcraft, but also one of knowing how to cope with the wide range of elements as well.

This 241 page book was published by MacMillan and illustrated by the Les Kouba. This is fairly commonly found on Bookfinder at moderate prices. It has also been recently reissued by the University of Minnesota. This is a must have.

***Chips from a Wilderness Log*, 1978**

This is a good collection of small tips, stories, ideas that Calvin had collected over the years that would be used for more complete books. Several of these had been seen in some form in other of his books, but this collection is well worth reading. Some of the essays are humorous, some make you smile at the ideas of this fellow, some are strong opinions and some are just good reads. Not nearly as good a read for wilderness operations or mood as some of the above, but the short snippets of what Calvin was thinking about are a window into his life that is not available in most of his other works. Similar to the essays in *A Columnist Looks at Life* discussed below, but these vary in length from a few lines to several pages.

Probably the best way to describe this volume is in Rutstrum's own introduction: *Long accumulated in a wooded soapbox stored in the cache cabin were scribbings, notebooks, clippings, and other miscellany collected over a half century. I hoped this material would help me recall much of a varied wilderness life as I recorded it at the time. During the culling and sorting I tried to determine what would be most pertinent to those who truly love the wilderness and to those whose inclination may lead them in that direction....*

As I pored over the contents of the soapbox and glanced through the door at the untamed scene, I realized that there could be no significant chronology in depicting the wilderness as I had seen it. Yesterday was today and, we hope tomorrow. Nature has a cycle but no time clock.....

In our restless world, it seems that the wilderness has to be experienced only transiently by most people, seldom leisurely. On that premise, the format of this book should synchronize well with that hurried demanding life, for one can pick a "chip" at the beginning, middle, or end with little lost effect, and no worry of broken continuity. You may browse at will.

And just a bit of a chip: On Campcraft, (and also expressed by Kephart in *Camping and Woodcraft*): *The vehemence with which many novice campers hold to their own untried methods over empirically proven ones is amazing. You may get away with criticizing a person's religion, his politics, even his choice of mate; but question his camping ability and you have violent discord. One might condone the tenderfoot's enthusiasm in one sense, since almost any innovation should be given consideration. But what generally occurs is that novelty prevails over tested methods only because it is new, resulting sometimes in tragedy.*

This 244 page book was published by Stein and Day, New York and was illustrated by Gary Jones with photographs by Rutstrum. This book also marks a permanent departure from MacMillan as publisher. Later in *Columnist* Calvin comments on the lack of face-face communication with his New York publishers. All books after this one will be published with smaller Minnesota or Indiana publishers. *Chips* is sometimes difficult to find and can be expensive.

Bookfinder generally will list several copies at prices in the \$8 to \$60 range, and I have rarely seen it on eBay. I am glad to own this one, and it absolutely makes my must have list.

***A Wilderness Autobiography*, 1979**

I obtained a copy of this book from my local library via interlibrary loan, from the Mesa Arizona Public Library. It is a slightly expanded version of *Challenge of the Wilderness*. Calvin added "A Foreword to My Inception" and "A Word in Retrospect". These additional 6 pages are the only differences. The body of the book is identical in all respects to *Challenge*. Page numbers, photographs, illustrations and text are unchanged, even the dust jacket front and rear page bios are nearly identical. One omission on the back dust jacket blurb that I find both interesting and slightly amusing is this: *Wilderness Autobiography omits* "The author is self-educated, as the text of the book will show." This was probably not meant to have a double meaning when published in 1970, and only the omission actually made me think that this factual statement could actually mean that Rustrum states he was self-educated in the text (which he of course, does), or it could mean that the writing style makes this apparent, which it also does.

When I originally published this article I ended this section with: "According to Vickery this is a reprint from his local publisher. Why it was re-released in this way is a mystery." After carefully reading the new pages I think I can glean a bit of why this book was republished. Calvin expanded upon his early life in the "Forward". Here he explains a bit more about his life before he begins his adventuring, his father dying from pneumonia which Calvin also had (age of 3), his living near the Mississippi in Minneapolis, and a bit about his immigrant parents and ancestors. He opens the new "Forward" with this:

The world started with a BIG BANG! At least, so we are told.

Then the forward more completely tells and reflects upon his early beginnings, similar to some of the information presented by Vickery. This passage gives some sense of his feelings about memories from his return to his boyhood home:

Twenty years later I visited the hillside in Midway in St. Paul. It was an ugly dump for steel scrap behind a metal industry. Our house had long ago been razed. Weeds and junk befowled the site where it had stood. One should never return to the nostalgic sites of youth. The magic of memory usually paints a better picture.

In the final chapter, "A Word in Retrospect", Calvin reflects upon his 83 years of quality life and where we are all going.

The fact is that I am completing this chapter for the publisher on a deadline, before my wife, age 74, and I set out on a three-month's sojourn into the wilds of Canada....

When I am in the wilds alone I find that I undergo a complex emotional change and outlook. Every move has to be my own responsibility, and no less, my own suffered consequence if I make an error. I have no one then to supply an alternative to my deficiencies. I can cry for help and not be heard. Even this occasional futility of feeling might have its benefits. As Nietzsche is essence pointed out: If I survive it I am made better as a result....

One might as, "What has all this to do with *A Wilderness Autobiography*?" Primarily, it is the fact that wilderness is no longer a separate entity as we had thoughtlessly believed so many years to our despair. Wilderness, city, countryside, ocean, lake, river, people, flora and fauna-are all bound up in one interrelated ecology, where, if wilderness is ravaged, the whole will suffer, city-life, no less than natural phenomena. "Wilderness is the

preservation of the world," said Thoreau, a concept gaining geometrically in force and sense.....

We need leisure time for personal development, for the most wholesome amenities around us, derived from nature, and from the very best that is in us. More than anything else, we need magnanimity rather than competitive greed, and no less-free exercise of the human animal, mentally and physically in its most viable environment.... As we depart life we need to recognize our biological position, that we depart as any other creature by all incontestable evidence in nature. Was it not a great privilege to have been personally included in the BIG BANG?

I think this may be the real reason that Calvin reissued his autobiography*we depart as any other creature.....was it not a great privilege to have been personally included in the BIG BANG?* Did Calvin reissue *Challenge* to reflect upon the major changes in wilderness and give thanks for his chance to enjoy it....yes I think so. *Challenge* and *Wilderness Autobiography* are really Calvin's manuals on how he was able to live the good life. Did Calvin reissue *Challenge* for other reasons....probably, but they remain a mystery to me still.

This is a reissued *Challenge of the Wilderness*, by Nodin Press, Minneapolis, MN. The copyright page notes: "Published as the title *Challenge of the Wilderness*, Assigned to Calvin Rutstrum and reprinted 1979 Calvin Rutstrum with additional chapters under the title *A Wilderness Autobiography*. Given the rarity of either of these volumes, it seems Calvin's hope in reissuing this edition was probably not realized. This is a fine book to read just for the additional 6 pages. Fortunately, interlibrary loan can provide this text to anyone. I have never seen this book offered for sale on Bookfinder or eBay.



Rutstrum's Last Books

***Hiking Back to Health*, 1980**

Calvin, in this very small volume, is praising hiking and the outdoor life as healthful lifestyle goals. He covers some of the revolutions in equipment available at that time, including the odd pieces of gear like the U-shaped aluminum fore and aft backpacking frame. This along with other invitations in backpacking gear is combined with fervor for getting out into the woods. This is a less appealing book than just about any of the others. It seems choppy and lacking a clear purpose. I almost get the feeling that Calvin was trying to bring his life experiences into the backpacking revolution, but his skills at this stage of his life, in my opinion, really were in stories not new technique and equipment. Overall this is a bit of a rough read with some evangelical aspects to motivate people into a healthier more active lifestyle. Chapter topics include hiking happiness, hiking away from addiction, extraordinary hikes, mini-hikes, cross-country hikes, physical and physiological aspects of hiking, along with hiking gear and food.

One thing worth noting is that Calvin again retells the story of Lillian Alling, the Russian immigrant to the US who walked back to Russia in 1927. He told this same story, more briefly, as opening chapters in *Way and New Way*. Here he expands on the story a bit, includes a photograph of her, and recounts his attempts to see what happened to her upon her return to Russia. He is comparing her pursuit of this goal to pleasure walkers. He is retelling this story to a new generation, but the telling purpose is still the same....to recognize her individualism and achievement and subtly state that one can accomplish such goals given determination and will.

From the Back Trail, the reasons for this book in Calvin's words: *The title of this book may seem to presume a clinical aspect, perhaps beyond the scope of one with no certificate in the basic sciences. But what I have written here as a layman has three supporting legs of an existential tripod: my 85 years of living and self-consideration; observation of the consequences of human, physical neglect generally; and the concurrence of medical men who tell me that if they could get people up off their developing broad beams to hike, much medication could remain on pharmaceutical shelves.*

This 112 page soft back was published by Indiana Camp Supply, Pittsboro IN, with photographs by Rutstrum and several vendors. This book is difficult to find and sells at widely different prices. I found mine on eBay for \$2, but have seen it briefly listed on Bookfinder for >\$25. It does not make my must have list, but does represent some of Rutstrum's last efforts as an author, and health advocate.

***A Columnist Looks at Life, Here's Cal Rutstrum*, 1981**

This book represents 46 newspaper essays that he wrote for the Osceola Sun (Wisconsin) newspaper. These represent some free swinging outdoor and social comments from the then 84 year old Rutstrum. These seem to all have been originally written in 1979.

This one like *Chips from a Wilderness Log* is much more revealing of Calvin's other life outside of wilderness instructor and wilderness essayist. Here we have some social and political comments, some of his thoughts on work and leisure and a bit deeper glance into his life.

Here are some snippets, again he is making his work/life balance arguments which we tend to ignore to our collective disadvantage:

On time: *I wish I could somehow slow the passage of time-hang onto its coat-tails as I believe Walt Whitman suggested. When selling hours for dollars the important thing in keeping from being cheated is to know when one reaches the point of diminishing returns. Few make this discovery soon enough and so barter away much of their lives, beyond needs.*

More on time, (reduction of work week from 6 days to 5): *They discovered in the shorter week the essential of sunshine, fresh air, and diversion in the outlying natural environment. It was, in a limited sense, a kind of recreational renaissance, which, if expanded now, could threaten to make industry and the rest of us more civilized. Selling five-sevenths of our daily lives each week for subsistence, borders on the ridiculous. If we made higher quality merchandise that lasted, we could pay the same wages and reap the same profit existing now for planned obsolescent trash, provide more leisure and better national health. When the Indian was asked why he worked only two days each week instead of five like the rest of us, he said. "I couldn't make it on one."*

On Libraries (a point I wholeheartedly support): *Those who write professionally must live eternally in humble gratitude for public libraries. What makes libraries invaluable is when they are highly functional. What makes them highly functional is not only the generous appropriations for the purchase of books, but a staff that is able to bring the*

overwhelming information a library contains to the reading public.

This 133 page soft back was published by Nodin Press, Minneapolis, MN. This is also difficult to find and expensive when found. Bookfinder has listed it a few times in the >\$25 zone. This is a very interesting volume but probably would not make the must have list of any but the serious student of Rutstrum.

***BackCountry*, 1981**

This is the last book of Calvin's essays. Excellent stories, recollections and experiences are superbly presented in this book. Calvin returns to his best form with what I believe to be his last published book. These essays are excellent reads. They are pure poetry from a man who probably knew this was his last effort. While there is probably nothing really new in this volume there seems to be an intensifying of his ability to paint a mood and picture with his words. Both *Once Upon a Wilderness* and *A Wilderness Life* have this sort of imagery, so this was not a new found ability for Calvin, just a last wonderful effort. This one seems more intimate of his life and it includes several personal stories of his wilderness companions. More of the heart of Calvin is revealed in this collection than possibly any of his other books. We have stories of canoe partners he trained, children he assisted with medical care, a kid taken out of the city ghetto for wilderness trips, and some social commentary on population control. I think it is very unfortunate that this edition is so difficult to find. This is defiantly one of my favorites.

On the wilderness attitude (notice the nearly poetic cadence of this opening line): *While the populations of the work fume and fret, grub and sweat, caught by the addiction of supererogation (a lumbering word, but the only one I know that means doing more or earning more that is necessary to live viably) backcountry lies back there in all its glory for those who begin to see the lesser merit in the dither of a wholly urban mode of life.*

Now that I have described this book as poetry see what Calvin has to say about that: *It is understandable that we can become poetic when we describe a reaction to beautiful or spectacular natural phenomena, not because it reveals what prose does not, but because it allows us to float off into some ethereal realm of emotional gratification. Poetry has a way of circumventing fact. Poetry frequent perverts and handles illusion quite well. In short, it metaphorically often lies horribly.....*

Prose about Backcountry, as my reader complained, tends to get into the same blur when it floats off into the supernatural. It might better stick to poetry, for there, at least we have the song if not the fact.

Now I am not absolutely sure what Calvin is driving at, but in my view he has written poetry, factual poetry or embellished poetry, but either way it has "the song" based on fact. This one is worth seeking out, just for these chapters. The personal stories just add additional merit to this volume. I wonder if he did not take special effort with this book knowing it would be probably his last. Some of the personal stories show a side of Calvin that were never specifically revealed in any of his earlier works...an altruistic, generous, and hopeful side.

This 253 page book was published by Indiana Camp Supply, Pittsboro IN, in a very nice soft cover with excellent cream paper and illustrated once again by Les Kouba. This one is very difficult and expensive to find. I have only seen it listed on Bookfinder twice at >\$25.

Conclusions and Observations The fact that many of Calvin Rutstrum's books have recently been reprinted by the University of Minnesota Press is a testament to his place among the better outdoor authors of his time. The earlier works (from *New Way* on) are much more available (both as reprints and in their initial printings) than those published in his last few years of life. In the later years, he had smaller publishers and the outdoor book market was in a time of major change. The environmental movement of the 60's and 70's, the rapid changes in backpacking and

Calvin Rutstrum, His Published Works

wilderness experiences seems to have nearly eclipsed Calvin's style and techniques. Major publishers probably thought the times had passed Calvin by. These later works, though much more varied than his earlier works, are, in my opinion, some of his most interesting. *Backcountry* showcases his essays in their top form, equal to his reflective stories from the late 70's, but with nearly poetic beauty, clarity, and imagery.

In this review, I have attempted to quote fairly long passages to provide a better sense of the books tone and mood. I have also picked passages that illustrate Calvin's somewhat unique writing style and sentence structure. Complex sentences with less than clear meaning are pure Calvin. Sometimes I find I need to read a passage many times to clearly understand what he is writing but this makes it all the better.

I have also picked several quotes that illustrate Calvin's work/life balance ethic. Working as little as possible to comfortably live but leaving plenty of time to enjoy life is a theme in nearly every book. These quotes are very meaningful to me as my work/life balance vastly exceeds Calvin's recommendations.

Another point worth noting here is that there has been a small but significant return by a few to the simple tools and procedures outlined by Calvin as far back as 1946. Cold weather operations using human pulled sleds, woodstove heated canvas tents, wool, pile and fur clothing, simple trail foods, and a recognition of slow, comfortable operations have been expounded upon by Garrett and Alexandra Conover in a recent book, *The Winter Wilderness Companion* 1995, 2001. This text gives recognition to those early pioneers of cold weather operations including Rutstrum and is much like reading an updated *Paradise Below Zero* or chapters from *Way or New Way*.

Notations concerning the availability and general costs of these books represent personal experience from Fall 2003 to Spring 2004.

I recommend each and every one of his books, but must have include *New Way of the Wilderness* and at least one of *Once Upon a Wilderness*, *A Wilderness Life*, *Chips from a Wilderness Log*, or *Backcountry*. Many of Calvin's works are available in local libraries, and like Calvin says in *Columnist*, I too "live eternally in humble gratitude for public libraries". I highly recommend the reader utilize your local library and their interlibrary loan program to read all of these books. Owning many of these is a pleasure, but reading each of these is the gift that Rutstrum left for all of us.



Calvin Rutstrum From "Challenge of the Wilderness" 1970

PostScript, Calvin's work in *The Beaver* magazine

In both *Way of the Wilderness* 1953/53 and *Memoranda for Canoe Country* 1953, there were references to the book review(s) done in *The Beaver* magazine. *The book "Way of the Wilderness" is recommended by such leading outdoor men of the world as Colonel Townsend Whelen, and highly praised in the Hudson's Bay Magazine, "The Beaver", and the press.....* The first time I read this reference, I was intrigued and wondered what the review had to say about Calvin's book(s). Canada's History Society currently has a web site listing the contents of *The Beaver* from the mid 1950's forward. I contacted them asking about references to the book reviews and they were kind enough to supply a complete bibliography of both Calvin's publications and reviews of his work by others. I have listed the complete bibliography below. I requested a few of these articles through my local library interlibrary loan. There were two reviews of *Way*; one done by James Anderson on Calvin's 1946 edition; and one done by Clifford Wilson on the 1952 edited version. *New Way, Wilderness Cabin, and North American Canoe Country* were also reviewed.

From James Anderson's review of 1946 *Way*:

This is a most interesting and instructive booklet. For those who have traveled in the wild places, it will provide new tips and ideas, and for those who plan to travel it is an invaluable guide...

The most interesting and complete part of the guide book is that dealing with canoe travel, and it is here that the author is most at home...

It is interesting to note that the author still considers there is a place for the individual toboggan, particularly for overhauling the trap-line. He points out that a man can haul his own weight on his own toboggan and still make practical progress...This reviewer, however, cannot endorse the three-man toboggan combination---two hauling and one pushing---as recommended by the author. The breast-strap method of hauling, we believe, make the toboggan essentially a one-man vehicle, and we are convinced that three men, each with his own toboggan, will haul more than three men with one toboggan as described in the book.

*One place, however, where the author goes sadly astray, is in his discussion of the north magnetic pole. "In 1831," he says, it was "fixed on Boothia Peninsula in Northertn (sic) Canada, by John Ross, a British explorer. In May 1945 the American Wing Commander, D.C. McKinnley, corrected this error and fixed the Magnetic Pole on Prince of Wales Island, 300 miles north-northwest of the site fixed by Ross." Mr. Rutstrum is evidently unaware that the north magnetic pole keeps moving. James (not John) Ross was probably quite correct in fixing it where he did. Amundsen in 1904 fixed it about forty miles northeast of Ross's position. Now Dr. R.G. Madill, chief of the magnetic division at the Dominion observatory, calculates from the latest data that it is on Somerset Island at lat. 73 15' N. and long. 94 30" W.---about 200 miles north of Amudsen's fix. Incidentally, W/C McKinley was captain of the R.A.F. aircraft **Aries**.*

There is a useful section on wilderness camp equipment...In the section on wilderness foods, cooking, recipes and menus, the good old bannock is not overlooked, which is as it should be, for many a fur trader has traveled many a weary mile with little sustenance other than the humble bannock.

A useful volume indeed and provided with a comprehensive index. Perhaps too elaborate for the fur trade wilderness traveler of other days, but eminently suited to the present-day seeker of recreation in the quiet places of our great north country.

And similarly but shorter from Clifford Wilson's review of the 1952 edition of *Way*:

*This handbook for the wilderness traveler was first published in 1946, and reviewed in the **Beaver** for June 1947. The chief difference between the first and second editions is that two chapters have been added: "Fishing for Food" and "Hunting for Food".*

However, he has unfortunately not corrected the error in the paragraph on the Magnetic Pole to which attention was drawn in the previous **Beaver** review. It was James, not John Ross who fixed the position of the Magnetic Pole in 1831; and it was not "an American Wind Commander [there is no such thing] D.C. McKinley" who in 1945 fixed the location of the pole on Prince of Wales Island. A Canadian Wing Commander, K.C. Maclure, in the R.A.F. Lancaster aircraft, **Aries**, made observations in that year which indicated that the pole was south of Barrow Strait, but did not fix it on Prince of Wales Island (see the June 1949 **Beaver**. W/C McKinley of the R.A.F. commanded the **Aries**.

As with the first edition, the book has been provided with waterproof covers, and a canvas pocket to protect it from wilderness weather. If you're a wander in the wilds, you'll want it.

So my curiosity has been quelled. Other than the Magnetic Pole errors, which were very glaring and grating to the historical record of discovery, these two editions were well received. I think it is interesting that neither reviewer commented on the various skills tests that were part of the 1946 edition but removed from the 1952 edition.

I have requested and received several other reprints from the references below. They are all interesting pieces of Calvin's life. I recommend them should you encounter a library with *The Beaver* archives or via interlibrary loan.

Bibliography; Calvin Rutstrum, as author or subject in *The Beaver* magazine search courtesy of *Canada's History Society*.

S 1944 Cover, Canoe being loaded

S 1944 "Post-war promise [new products]" p 40-43

Je 1947 "Way of the Wilderness", book review by James Anderson, p 50

S 1952 "Pacific and Northwest Hunting" book review by Calvin Rutstrum, p50

S 1952 "Way of the Wilderness" book review by Clifford Wilson, p 49-50

S 1952 "On getting Lost" article by Calvin Rutstrum, p 28-31

Je 1953 "The book of Outdoor Lore" book review by Calvin Rutstrum, p 50

Spring 1958 "North American head hunting" book review by Calvin Rutstrum, p 58

Autumn 1958 "New Way of the Wilderness" book review by George Douglas, p 55-56

Winter 1960 "One man's pleasure" book review by Calvin Rutstrum, p57

Spring 1962 "Wilderness Cabin" book review by Malvina Bolus, p 57

Spring 1966 "North American Canoe Country" book review by NE Rodger, p57-58

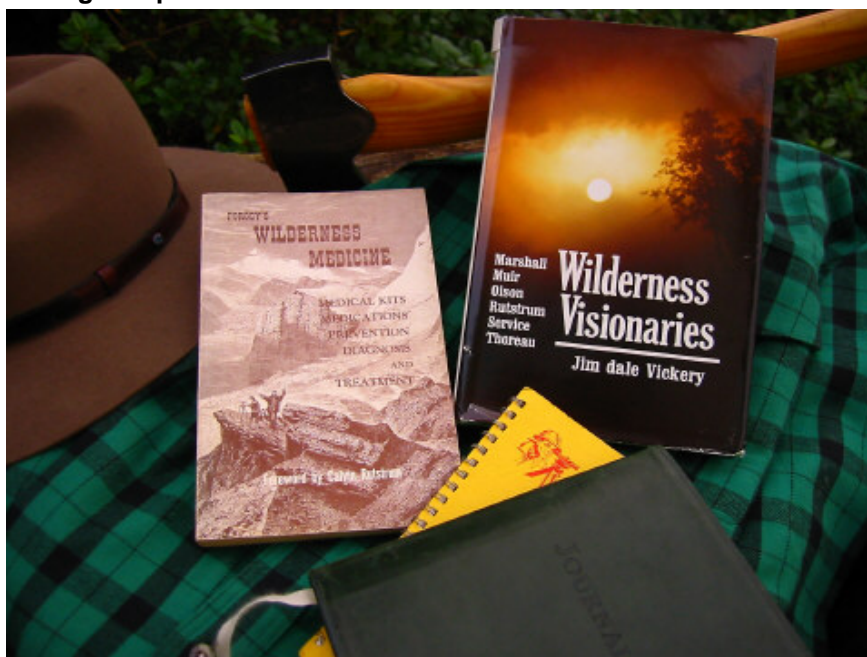
Summer 1966 "Wilderness Canoe Travel" article by Calvin Rutstrum, p44-48

Winter 1972 "Wilderness Artist" Calvin Rutstrum photo or review, P54-57

Autumn 1973 "Sourdough" article by Calvin Rutstrum, p40-43

[Canada's History Society](#), and *The Beaver* index of back issues

Other related or interesting companion volumes



Rutstrum Additional Reading

Wilderness Visionaries, Jim Dale Vickery, 1986

Vickery's 263 page book has a basic biography of many wilderness notables including Leopold, Thoreau, Muir, Olson, Murie, Service, Marshall, and Rutstrum. Rutstrum's life is discussed in Chapter 5. This Indiana Camp Supply, Pittsboro IN, volume is well worth owning for the general discussion of all of these men. It can be had easily in paper and commonly in hardback at reasonable prices in both the first printing and various reprints, and I definitely recommend it.

Wilderness Medicine, William Forgey, 1979

This 124 page Indiana Camp Supply, Pittsboro IN, first aid text has a 3 page introduction by Calvin Rutstrum. This is a dated but still useful medical text. ICS published a few of Calvin's last works and the introduction here is pure Calvin.

The Winter Wilderness Companion Garrett and Alexandra Conover, 1995, 2001

This 358 pocket sized paper back published by Ragged Mountain Press is clearly the "modern" equivalent to Rutstrum's *Paradise Below Zero*. Similar cold weather operations are covered with emphasis on human pulled toboggan sleds, snowshoes, and wood stove heated tents. If "old style" winter procedures are of interest this is the perfect companion text to Rutstrum's earlier works.

Resources

Book search engines:

My overall favorite is Bookfinder.com. <http://www.bookfinder.com>

Another equally good one is ABE. <http://www.abebooks.com>

Used Book Search, is a world wide collection of search engines. <http://www.usedbooksearch.co.uk/>

Minneapolis Public Library: [Rutstrum search](#)

Minnesota Historical Society Library: [Rutstrum search](#)

Post-scriptum :

Version 2.5 3/16/2004

Version 2.8 3/22/2004 A Wilderness Autobiography has been finished and an additional comments have been added to conclusions in support of our public library systems.

Version 3.0 3/29/2004 Memoranda for Canoe Country has been finished.

Version 3.5 5/3/2004 Way of the Wilderness, 1952 review added.

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Version 3.7 1/20/2005 Beaver magazine Reviews of Way of the Wilderness and Bibliography added

Version 3.71 3/31/2005 "Challenge of the Wilderness" image added