

The
ROCKBOUND COAST

Travels in Maine



CHRISTOPHER LITTLE

The
**ROCKBOUND
COAST**

Travels in Maine

BY

Christopher Little

W · W · NORTON & COMPANY

NEW YORK · LONDON

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F I R S T E D I T I O N

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Frederick Goodrich Crane
1923–1992

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I AM CHIEFLY INDEBTED TO Fred and Joyce Crane, the owners of the sloop *Consolation*, who loaned us their most prized possession and, along with her, their selfless and unflagging support for this project.

In Dicken Crane—my *Captain Courageous*—I could not have found a more enthusiastic or patient companion had I scoured the oceans of the world. Thanks, Dicken, for your indefatigable “Yo-ho-ho!” To my sometimes crewmates, Coe Kittredge, “Fitz” Fitzpatrick, Carrie Crane, and Chuck Chadwick, thank you for all your anchor-yanking and bonhomie.

My thanks also go to those whose individual generousities made this book a reality: Stuart and Anastazia Little; Philip Conkling of the Island Institute; Malory Mercaldi; Nellie Blagden; Walter Lord; M.C. Marden; Tom and Kate Chappell; Irving Slavid; Cricket Lyman; Jamie, Toshiko, and Tei Carpenter; Hannah Batchelder; Michael Mahan; Co Crocker; Charles Foote of Camden Marine; Angela Drexel; and Jay Espy of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Many thanks to the librarians of the Norfolk (Connecticut) Library, who collectively suffered aphasia whenever my research books came due, and especially to Jan and the late Hank Taft, coauthors of *A Cruising Guide to the Maine Coast*, whose knowledgeable pathfinding made more than one tricky harbor easier to enter.

Had it not been for William F. Buckley, Jr., and the great adventures portrayed in *Atlantic High*, *Racing Through Paradise*, and *WindFall*, the seed for this book might never have been sown. Characteristically, WFB, your enthusiasm was infectious.

To my agent, Angela Miller: thanks for getting me a date with James Mairs. To Jim Mairs, Senior Editor at W. W. Norton, I thank you for your astute counsel. And to Cecil Lyon, Jim Mairs’s astute *counselor*: would you mind if I put in an early nomination for your beatification?

All those mentioned above are in every sense coconspirators, but only up to the point of errors and omissions. For those inevitable faux pas, I alone am to blame.

I send special thanks to my permanent crewmates, Betsy and Eliza. Their enthusiasm during the trip made getting up before dawn a little easier; their patience during the grumpiest moments of my writing made my respect and love for them soar.

Consolation is a sailboat, whom you will get to know in the pages of this book. While it may seem strange, I think of her as every bit as much of a character as the people depicted herein. With that in mind, I say: *Consolation*, you took us everywhere we wanted to go safely, speedily, and, above all, stylishly. Thank you so very much. No, *Hoggie*, I haven't forgotten you. Thank you, too.

C.S.V.L.

Colebrook, Connecticut

On November 22, 1992, only a few weeks after Fred Crane read the manuscript for this book, he died from injuries sustained in a logging accident. If there was anything Fred loved as much as *Consolation* and the coast of Maine, it was working in the woods of his beloved Holiday Farm in Dalton, Massachusetts.

The funeral service was held on the day after Thanksgiving. His four children—Carrie, Timmy, Mary, and Dicken—and his daughter-in-law, Patty, all spoke powerfully of the vibrant, happy man we will so sorely miss. Each in his own way spoke of Fred as the consummate outdoorsman—sailor, skier, birder, woodsman.

After the brave eulogies and before the tearful singing of “The Navy Hymn” (“... Oh hear us when we cry to thee,/For those in peril on the sea.”), the minister read the poem “Sea-Fever.”

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied.
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flying spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

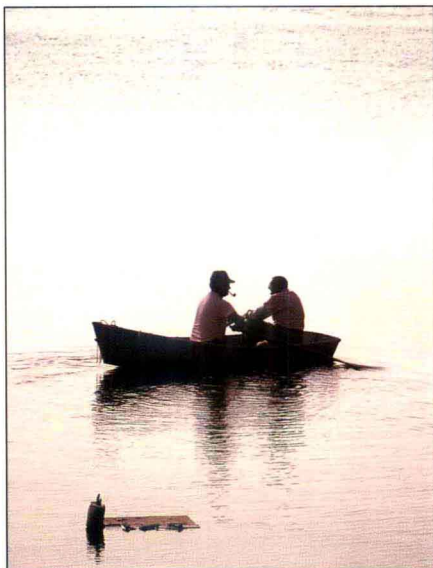
I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

Through my own tears, it struck me that Masfield's poem was so to the point—particularly that final stanza—that he might have written it especially for Fred... except for one thing: Fred's “trick” wasn't quite long enough.

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