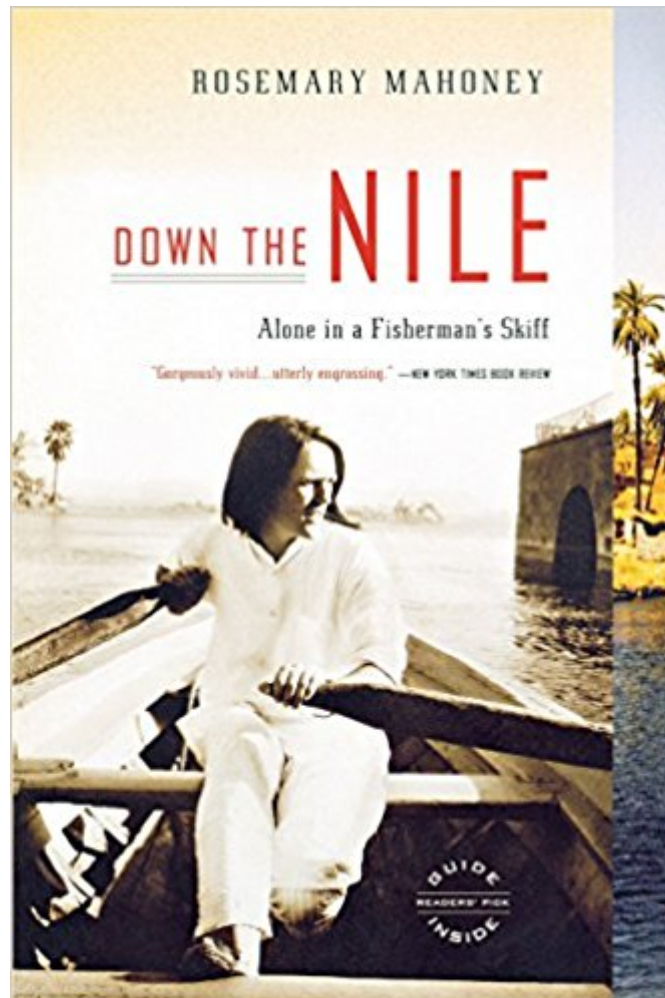




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# Down The Nile: Alone In A Fisherman's Skiff



## Synopsis

When Rosemary Mahoney, in 1998, took a solo trip down the Nile in a seven-foot rowboat, she discovered modern Egypt for herself. As a rower, she faced crocodiles and testy river currents; as a female, she confronted deeply-held beliefs about foreign women while cautiously remaining open to genuine friendship; and, as a traveler, she experienced events that ranged from the humorous to the hair-raising--including an encounter that began as one of the most frightening of her life and ended as an edifying and chastening lesson in human nature and cultural misunderstanding. Whether she's meeting Nubians and Egyptians, or finding connections to Westerners who traveled up the Nile in earlier times--Florence Nightingale and Gustave Flaubert among them--Mahoney's informed curiosity about the world never ceases to captivate the reader. "A pilgrimage about pilgrims and holy places that is not only enlightening but also very funny." -Paul Theroux (on *The Singular Pilgrim*) "Mahoney is a wonderfully effective catalytic agent: she goes to Ireland and just makes the country happen around her." -Jonathan Raban (on *Whoredom in Kimmage*) "Mahoney, who has been rowing for 10 year, brilliantly juxtaposes an account of her own palm-blistering hours on the Nile....with the diary entries of two Victorian travelers-Gustave Flaubert and Florence Nightingale." --Lisa Fugard, *New York Times Book Review*

## Book Information

Paperback: 273 pages

Publisher: Back Bay Books; 1 Reprint edition (September 15, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316019011

ISBN-13: 978-0316019019

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 71 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #112,671 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in *Books > Travel > Africa > Egypt > General* #49 in *Books > Travel > Middle East* #248 in *Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Travel*

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. This is travel writing at its most enjoyable: the reader is taken on a great trip with an erudite travel companion soaking up scads of history, culture and literary knowledge, along with the scenery. The genesis for the trip is simple: the author's love of rowing. Her plan, "to buy a small

Egyptian rowboat and row myself along the 120-mile stretch of river between the cities of Aswan and Qena," is less so. Mahoney (*The Singular Pilgrim*; *Whoredom in Kimmage*) conveys readers along the longest river in the world, through narrative laced with insight, goodwill and sometimes sadness. Mahoney's writing style is conversational, her use of metaphor adept. She cleverly marshals the writings of numerous river travelers but focuses on "two troubled geniuses": Florence Nightingale and Gustave Flaubert. The device allows readers a backward glance at the Edwardian travel accoutrements of sumptuous riverside dinners, staggering supplies of alcohol and food, trunks of books and commodious accommodations. The physical environment is demanding. "When I removed my hat, the sun had made the top of my head sting... it was like having a freshly baked nail driven into one's skull." Yet her biggest obstacle isn't the climate but the slippery hurdles of culture and sex. Whether struggling to buy a boat, visiting historic Luxor or rowing, innocent encounters become sticky psychological and philosophical snares. Still, the ride is smooth, leaving the reader wishing for more nautical miles. (July 11) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Boston native and avid rower Rosemary Mahoney, once an assistant to playwright Lillian Hellman, has led a peripatetic life, and her writing reflects the breadth of her travels and the depth of her thinking on cultural matters. Previous efforts include *The Early Arrival of Dreams*, the author's experiences in China just before Tiananmen Square; *The Singular Pilgrim*, a spiritual travelogue; and *Whoredom in Kimmage*, a treatise on Irish gender roles. In *On the Nile*, the author writes beautifully of the connections between culture and history-though critics note how reluctantly she shares details of her own life outside her travels. Still, Mahoney's voice is direct and honest, her Nile as evocative as Paul Bowles's desert, her wit a counterbalance to the unease engendered by such a profound cultural divide. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is easily one of the best travel narratives I've ever read, in terms of both Rosemary Mahoney's experiences in Egypt and her enchanting style that draws the reader in. On her first trip to Egypt, in 1996, Mahoney, aboard a cruise ship out of Luxor, quickly became charmed and entranced as the Nile slipped by. Returning home, she became more or less obsessed with Egypt and the Nile until she returned two years later, determined, as she writes: "not just to see the Nile River but to sit in the middle of it in my own boat, alone." Mahoney draws from history, art, architecture, politics,

literature, other traveler's accounts, the people, the land, the food and every conceivable aspect of what makes travel beguiling. But it's her captivating style that will inspire me to read this memoir over and over again.

This book is a rather strange take on the usual "My Trip to Egypt" memoirs written by other intrepid adventurers to the area. Most of the book is spent with the author obsessively searching for a boat in which she can row herself down the Nile - alone. The quest to obtain such a boat brings her in contact with a bevy of wild and wonderful characters - none of them keen to see the author realize her ambition. I thoroughly enjoyed Mahoney's description of the Egyptian people - their confusion as to why on earth a woman alone would want to row down the Nile, and their often bumbling efforts to allow them to do the rowing for her. She brilliantly evokes the feeling of the Nile and the Egyptian land, so that you can almost feel the heat from the sand and hear the river in its relentless flow. I came to love the character Amr - a gentle Egyptian with a huge heart and even bigger spirit. Mahoney peppers her account with fascinating insights from luminaries such as Florence Nightingale and Gustave Flaubert, both of whom had travelled to Egypt in the previous century and had each written of their own experiences. And along with the historical points of interest, Mahoney unearths all sorts of weird and wonderful facts that won't fail to surprise and titillate the reader. But then we come to Madeleine Stein. Here is a woman who lives and works in Egypt, speaks fluent Arabic, is obviously somewhat of an adventurer, and she agrees to accompany the author down the Nile in order to satisfy the legal requirements of the inspectors. Indeed, the book is dedicated to her. A fascinating woman by anyone's account, but what does she look like? How old is she? Who does she live with? What does she think about things? Whereas Mahoney has intricately described every other character in the book, including herself from a self snapped photo, there is absolutely no quality information on Madeleine Stein other than the bare facts of her presence. This omission was almost irritating enough to deduct a star from my review. Other than this, an enjoyable read and highly recommended.

This is a cute little true adventure book about a lone American woman who is a rowing enthusiast, wants to row down the Nile River from its source to the mouth. She meets resistance everywhere she turns, so there are many good stories of how she is able to navigate, not only the river, but the roadblocks thrown up by officials, tribal ppl, sleazy men, and others, before she is able to embark on her solo trip. Quite interesting read! I was scared for her!

Details, history and cultural lessons about Egypt intertwined with the author's adventures up the Nile. I wanted the story to continue on past its abrupt ending.

You can't know what this book holds in store for you until you read it. A beautifully written first person account of a woman traveling alone on a brave and determined adventure in Egypt, including much history of the region as well as current interactions with the people and the landscape. But really it is the story of what it is like to be a woman, particularly an independent woman, traveling alone, and traveling specifically in Egypt. The whole book builds toward a riveting climax, and the journey is riveting as well. A brilliant piece of work, and thrilling to read.

This is a must read for anyone taking a vacation in Egypt. Ms. Mahoney's book gives insight into the customs, sights, and most importantly, the minds of Egyptians both male and female. The book is a fascinating narrative of the author's challenges of purchasing a row boat and rowing alone from Aswan to Quena. This was an extraordinary feat for a female in a male dominated land. The reader is given useful information about what clothing and manners are appropriate, in fact mandatory, in order to best explore and experience the fascination of Egypt.

Well written experience that often balanced adventure with an even mixture of fear. The amount of prejudice for an unknown culture is unfortunate, but redeemed later to some degree by her apparent understanding that not all things can be judged by surface assumptions. The book was entertaining as well as educational with respect to the Nile culture.

I really didn't want to give this book one star. I read just a little of the book and found it so boring I didn't attempt to finish it.

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