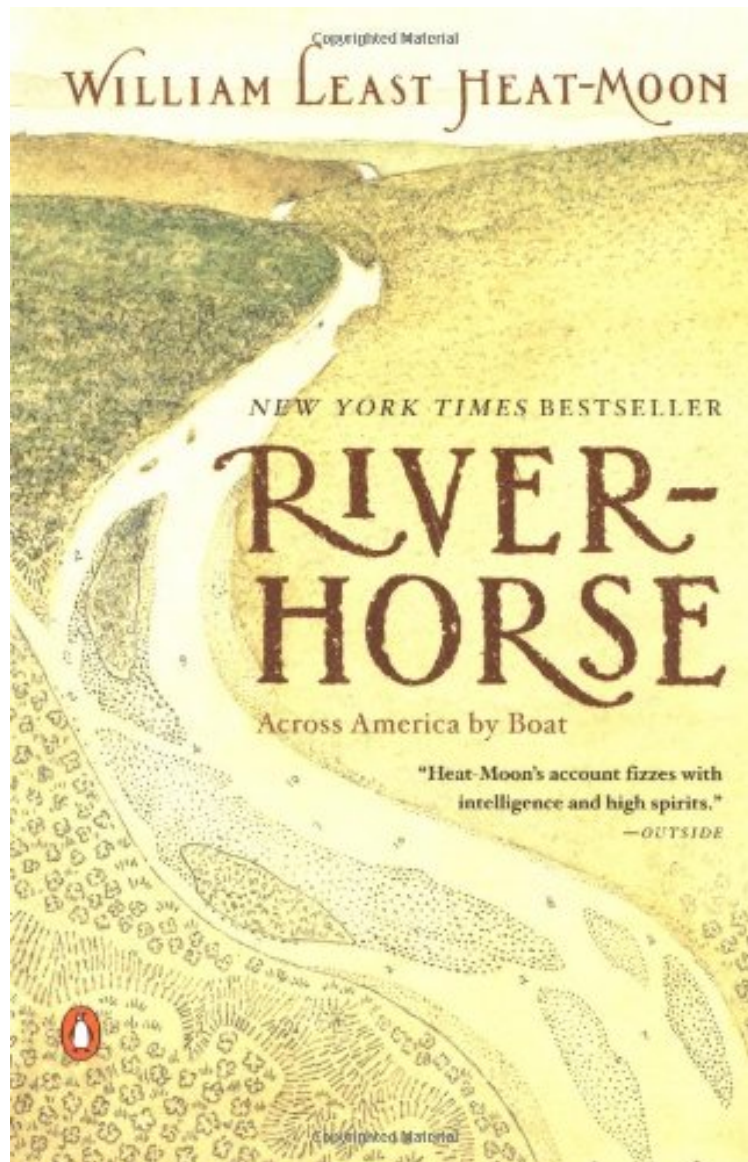


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River-Horse: The Logbook of a Boat Across America

William Least Heat-Moon

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William Least Heat-Moon : River-Horse: The Logbook of a Boat Across America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised River-Horse: The Logbook of a Boat Across America:

43 of 46 people found the following review helpful. The real Blue Highways of America come to life By D. McDiffett As a Kansan, rivers have played relatively little role in my life, although I have enjoyed the occasional canoe

trip down the Cottonwood and the K-State/KU canoe race on the Kaw. However, William Least Heat-Moon's earlier books fascinated me with their combination of travelogue, social history and natural history, and I expected the same from "River Horse." I wasn't disappointed. In fact, I enjoyed this book much more than "PrairyErth" even though I grew up only a few miles north of Chase County, KS, the subject of the earlier book. Although he is constantly impelled to move onward and westward for fear (unfounded mostly) of having too little water in the West, Heat-Moon still takes plenty of time to learn and relate the histories of many of the small river towns he finds along the way. This is the sort of personal, anecdotal history at which he excels and which I enjoy. Unlike "Blue Highways," this book did not necessarily make me want to attempt the trip myself--my lack of familiarity with boats and rivers would be a major hurdle! However, it did send me looking for more information on many of the sites and I have my own list of places I now hope to visit as a result of reading this book. In a way, I feel some of the same need for hurry as Heat-Moon did, though, thanks to the insane amount of control large farming and corporate America have over what are supposed to be public lands and waterways. Who knows but that by the time I can visit some of these areas, they may be flooded by a new dam or eroded to nothingness by thousands of cattle hooves? Some may not appreciate the political bent of this book, but I find it understandable that if a person loves an area enough to row, push and carry a canoe through it, then he should speak up for it in every way possible. Get in touch with the America too few of us appreciate by reading "River Horse"!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very Interesting WriterBy Ralph LawrenceI am enjoying the book, but have only read a few chapters so far. Heat-Moon is a very interesting writer.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a trip!By maeljeI, like the author, am obsessed with rivers; I've been an avid canoeist and kayaker for many years. This book's premise -- travel across America inland but on water, with a minimum of portages -- fascinated me. And the author did not disappoint; there's some very good descriptive writing here. Essentially, this is a travelogue, and the point of a travelogue, in my opinion, is to put you in the scene. Heat-Moon does that very well; I've been to a number of places along the Missouri, specifically, that he describes, and he absolutely nails it. Pretensions: Some have complained about the author combining his seven companions along the journey into one figure called Pilotis. I would argue this wasn't pretentious but rather a NECESSARY narrative choice. The whole point of the book is the watery trek, not the individual personalities of the first mate. Doing it the way the author did -- and also not naming minor real-life characters such as the Reporter and the Photographer -- keeps the story moving, and this book is all about movement. I will, though, agree with those who say that a bit of self-righteousness had crept into the author's writing by the time this book was composed, which is why I give it four stars instead of five. Still, it's an incredible read for anyone with a sense of adventure.

The author of *Blue Highways* and *PrairyErth* "takes us on a lifetime voyage full of imagery, insight and appreciation." --Cleveland Plain Dealer In his most ambitious journey ever, William Least Heat-Moon sets off aboard a small boat named *Nikawa* ("river horse" in Osage) from the Atlantic at New York Harbor in hopes of entering the Pacific near Astoria, Oregon. He and his companion, *Pilotis*, struggle to cover some 5,000 watery miles, often following in the wakes of our most famous explorers, from Henry Hudson to Lewis and Clark. En route, the voyagers confront massive floods, dangerous weather, and their own doubts about whether they can complete the trip. But the hard days yield incomparable pleasures: generous strangers, landscapes untouched since Sacajawea saw them, riverscapes flowing with a lively past, and the growing belief that efforts to protect our lands and waters are beginning to pay off. Teeming with humanity, humor, and high adventure, *River-Horse* is an unsentimental and original arteriogram of our nation at the millennium.

.com Since hitting the American roads in *Blue Highways* nearly 20 years ago, William Least Heat-Moon has been following another calling--to traverse America by its rivers. "I wanted to see those secret parts hidden from road travelers," he writes. And from the waterways of his 5,000-mile voyage, Least Heat-Moon shares a sharp and stirring vision of America. Filling a small bottle with brine from the Atlantic Ocean, Least Heat-Moon and his wise companion, whom he calls "*Pilotis*," start up the Hudson River in a 22-foot C-Dory that Least Heat-Moon has named *Nikawa*--from the Osage words *ni* for river and *kawa* for horse. The voyage--from New York harbor to the Pacific Ocean--packs surprises, wisdom, regrets, mishaps, candor, and conversations that readers who savored *Blue Highways* and *PrairyErth* will delight in. The impetus for *River Horse* is one of intrigue--less urgent than the departure in *Blue Highways*--and the narrative possesses a captivating pull as it courses westward through the strongest currents and pauses in the back eddies of contemporary American life. Least Heat-Moon is in his element. Written in short thematic chapters, *River Horse* plies canals, greets the Missouri's many moods, and challenges chaotic waves. Indeed, the turbulent and placid waters of America flow throughout this well-told story. When *Nikawa* finally reaches the Pacific Ocean, Least Heat-Moon has discovered a new America in the country he knows so well. He ponders the command that rivers hold on him and celebrates the national treasures that they are. Exceeding 500 pages, *River Horse* may be a long journey, but when traveling by rivers, America is a larger country. A triumphant book all the way to the salty Pacific. --Byron Ricks From Publishers Weekly Writing under the name Heat-Moon (*Blue Highways*), William Trogdon once again sets out across America, this time propelled chiefly by a dual-outboard boat dubbed *Nikawa*,

"River Horse" in Osage. In this hardy craft, he and a small crew attempt to travel more than 5000 miles by inland waterways from the Atlantic to the Pacific in a single season. Citing 19th-century travelogues and dredging odd bits of the rivers' past, Heat-Moon conveys the significance of passing "beneath a bridge that has looked down on the stovepipe hat of Abraham Lincoln, the mustache of Mark Twain, the sooty funnels of a hundred thousand steamboats." Though at first he is struck by how river travel is "so primordial, so unchanged in its path," he later notes that the only thing Lewis and Clark would recognize on a dammed and severely altered stretch of the Missouri River is the bedeviling prairie wind. But what remains constant for him is "the greatest theme in our history: the journey." It is an American theme, though by "westering" and persistently believing that the voyage is destined to succeed, Heat-Moon seems to be on dangerous waters for someone who is part Native American. But his romantic attachment to the nature of exploration doesn't occlude his indictments of pollution, overzealous river management and aboriginal displacement. The book, though largely engaging, is not without its slow spots, which Heat-Moon avers are true to the trip's nature: "the river is no blue highway because the river removes reverie." Heat-Moon has written a rich chronicle of a massive and meaningful undertaking. Unlike Blue Highways, however, the focus is not so much on people and places as on the trials of a journey that bypasses them in favor of reaching its destination. Illus. 250,000 first printing; \$250,000 ad/promo; 13-city author tour. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In this, the third title in his trilogy (following Blue Highways and Prairieerth), Heat-Moon strikes out to discover America through her rivers. Feeling that he "could never really know America until I'd seen it from the bends and reaches of its flowing waters," he acquired a small boat, which he named Nikawa (which means river horse), a copilot (referred to as Pilotis), and a logbook and set out to journey from New York City to the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon. In spite of the many obstacles he encounters, he has much time for reflection Aoften bordering on superstition Aand observation. The result is less a view from the river, which is obscured by natural valleys, river banks, and the usual border of trees, than of the people he meets along the way. His descriptions of them (and his ear for a good line) enhance our understanding of the places he visits. Heat-Moon set out to "experience the empire, learn the science, and report it to those who might not ever make the journey," and he has succeeded nobly. This evocative and masterly narrative is a reminder of the beauty and grandeur of our country. -A Julia Stump, Voorheesville P.L., NY Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.