



Quicklet on Matthew Algeo's **Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure: The True Story of a Great American Road Trip**

Larry Holzwarth

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The former President of the United States, nattily dressed in suit and tie in defiance of the early summer Missouri heat, driving through towns whose telephone systems are connected through central switchboards, sheepishly obeying his wife's directive not to exceed fifty-five miles per hour and loving every minute of it, is what the reader finds in Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure. And that's just what's on the surface.

Also within its covers one will find a former President of the United States moving about at will, free from the wall of Secret Service protection separating him from his fellow citizens. They will discover a man beset by financial challenges, planning a badly needed vacation by poring over maps at his kitchen table, carefully setting up an itinerary. With Harry Truman at the wheel the reader drives across a midwest devoid of interstate highways, fast food restaurants, chain motels and often even speed limits.

Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure describes a vanished America that is still tantalizingly within reach for those of a certain age. It presents a not so far off time when a visit to a service station meant telling the attendant to "fill 'er up," and drinking a quick Coke (seven ounce returnable bottle) while your oil was checked and the windshield washed.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Larry Holzwarth is a freelance writer and submarine veteran. A former US Navy systems analyst, he has been a corporate writer on diverse subjects, a professional trainer, recruiter and lecturer. A lifelong student of history, he enjoys reading, camping, hiking and Reds baseball. After traveling extensively he returned to his native midwest where he resides near Cincinnati.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure is a tale of two trips, the first taken by the recently retired President of the United States and his wife, the second by the author, retracing and replicating the first to the extent that fifty-some years of progress allowed. Truman planned his trip with the somewhat wistful hope it would be accomplished in anonymity, naively believing the ex-president could remain incognito on America's highways. The author, who needed to introduce himself and his project at every stop, discovered an ex-president who was not only recognized, but celebrated wherever he stopped on his drive, the crowds and pressures applied by the press seem to have been more tiring than the drive itself.

Both Truman and Algeo explored other roads than those upon which they travelled on their respective adventures. The former president, who left office with what was then the lowest approval rating in history, found an adulation and respect for him that was unsuspected when he departed the White House a scant six months earlier. A gradual awakening to the idea that once a president left office he is no longer a Republican or a Democrat seeking office but a statesman belonging to the people helped him to shape his contributions

to the public welfare in his retirement. The author learned that this attitude applies to the ex-presidents since who, despite party affiliations, have found ways to come together and work for the public good, both domestically and abroad.

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