



# Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure: The True Story of a Great American Road Trip

By Matthew Algeo

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## Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure: The True Story of a Great American Road Trip By Matthew Algeo

One of the Best Books of 2009 -Washington Post "Utterly likable" -Christopher Buckley "[An] enchanting glimpse into a much simpler age" -Library Journal. On June 19, 1953, Harry Truman got up early, packed the trunk of his Chrysler New Yorker, and did something no other ex-president has done before or since: he hit the road. No Secret Service protection. No traveling press. Just Harry and his high school sweetheart Bess, off to visit old friends, take in a Broadway play, celebrate their wedding anniversary in the Big Apple, and blow a bit of the money he'd just received to write his memoirs. Hopefully incognito. In this lively history, author Matthew Algeo meticulously details how Truman's plan to blend in went wonderfully awry. Fellow diners, bellhops, cabbies, squealing teenagers at a Future Homemakers of America convention, and one very by-the-book Pennsylvania state trooper all unknowingly conspired to blow his cover. Algeo revisits the Trumans' route, staying at the same hotels and eating at the same diners, and takes readers on brief detours into topics such as the postwar American auto industry, McCarthyism, the nation's highway system, and the decline of Main Street America. By the end of the 2,500-mile journey, you will have a new and heartfelt appreciation for America's last citizen-president. Matthew Algeo is the author of *The President Is a Sick Man* and *Last Team Standing*. An award-winning journalist, Algeo has reported from three continents for public radio's *All Things Considered*, *Marketplace*, and *Morning Edition*.

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

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Public radio reporter Algeo (*Last Team Standing*) brings the 1950s into focus with a fascinating reconstruction of Harry and Bess Truman's postpresidential 2,500-mile road trip. I like to take trips—any kind of trip, Truman wrote. They are about the only recreation I have besides reading. Between 2006 and 2008, Algeo retraced their journey with stopovers at some of the same diners and hotels the couple visited. When Truman left the White House in 1953, he returned to Independence, Mo., rejecting lucrative offers he felt would commercialize the presidency. His only income was a small army pension. Acquiring a 1953 Chrysler, the Trumans set out with no fanfare and a curious notion of traveling incognito. However, reporters and newsreel cameras soon turned their vehicular vacation into an ongoing media event. The book benefits from extensive research through oral history interviews and papers at the Harry S. Truman Library, and Algeo's own interviews with eyewitnesses. With deliberate detours, this book is a portal into the past with layers of details providing unusual authenticity and a portrait of the president as an ordinary man. 20 b&w photos, 1 map. (May)

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### Review

"One of the Best Books of the Year." —*Washington Post*

"An engaging account . . . Well-researched." —*Wall Street Journal*

"Now, this is what's called a road trip." --*In Transit, New York Times* travel blog

"Matthew Algeo recalls [my grandparents'] memorable trip beautifully and with the sense of humor it deserves." —**Clifton Truman Daniel**, grandson of Harry S. Truman

"*Harry Truman's Excellent Adventure* resonates Aaron Copeland's 'Fanfare for the Common Man'—brassy, bright, energetic, brief and declaratively American." —*Washington Times*

"Enlivened by Algeo's endeavors to see the places where Truman stopped, this is an engaging historical sidebar." —*Booklist Online*

"Algeo chronicles this unlikely excursion in great and wonderful detail. . . . [An] enchanting glimpse into a much simpler age." --*Library Journal*

"An absolutely wonderful book." —*Virginian-Pilot*

## About the Author

**Matthew Algeo** is an award-winning journalist who has reported from three continents for public radio's *All Things Considered*, *Marketplace*, and *Morning Edition*. He is the author of *The President Is a Sick Man* and *Last Team Standing*.

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