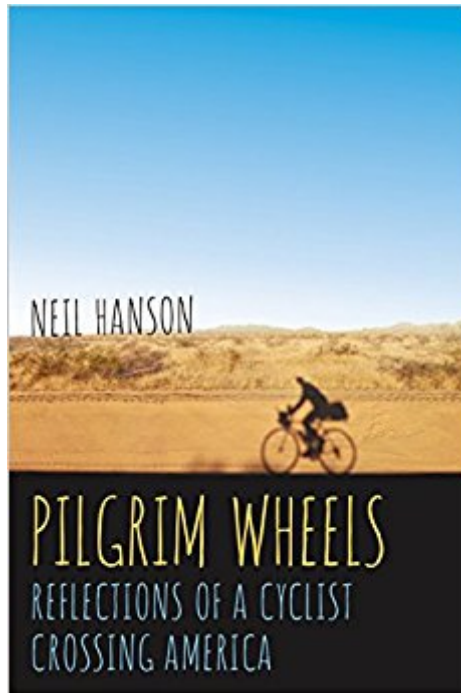




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Pilgrim Wheels: Reflections Of A Cyclist Crossing America



Synopsis

Award-winning and best-selling saga of an epic American journey. WINNER – National Indie Excellence Book Awards FIRST PLACE – Next Generation Indie Book Awards FIRST PLACE – Independent Publisher Living Now Book Awards SILVER – HONOREE – Benjamin Franklin Digital Award SECOND PLACE – Reader Views Reviewers Choice Award SECOND PLACE – Great Southwest Book Festival SECOND PLACE – CIPA EVVY Awards

Approaching 60 years old, Neil Hanson pedaled 3400-miles across the country, exploring an America that can only be discovered on winding backroads from the saddle of a bicycle. More than just a travelogue of a bike ride across the country, Hanson's delightful and beautifully written story takes the reader on a journey that is engaging and insightful, often hilarious, sometimes poignant, and always inspiring. It's a must-read adventure that will stir your soul. Pilgrim Wheels reveals an inspirational story of journey, discovery, and place, told from the saddle of a bicycle, rolling down the highways of America. Neil Hanson's bicycle ride becomes a canvas for his pilgrimage of wonder as he explores the people he meets along the path, the obstacles he faces, the pain he endures, and the boundless joy he achieves pedaling across America. Pilgrim Wheels takes the reader up to the humid farmland east of Medicine Lodge, Kansas, while the sequel to be released in May -- Pilgrim Spokes -- takes the reader from Medicine Lodge to Annapolis on the east coast.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A terrifically observed story of a bicycle journey. Neil Hanson captures perfectly what it's like to ride the open roads. The prose makes you feel brutal headwinds, unimaginable inclines, and the heat and dryness of the desert, where 'there's no instrument for the wind to play.' The small encounters, little epiphanies, kindnesses from strangers, and recollections make this story compelling and unique. This is On the Road meets Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. The writing is superb. Honestly, I couldn't put it down."~ George O'Hara, Author of The Thousand Hour Club

"Hanson takes the reader with him in a way few authors can. You feel the heat of "sledgehammer sun" in the Sonoran desert, the hot wind that blows him across the Mojave. You can feel the dogs nipping at his heels, the steep climbs."~ Louis Frouws, Author of A Cyclist's Mind Goes Everywhere

"More than the story of a bicycle ride across America, Hanson relates himself to the culture, history and scenery, which weave together to form the magical moments we all seek. I've found a kindred spirit--a cyclosopher."~ Scott Stoll, Author of Falling Uphill

A splendid story of journey, discovery, and Place
More than just a travelogue of a bike ride across the country, Hanson's de- lightful and beautifully written story takes the reader on a journey that is engaging and insightful, often hilarious, sometimes poignant, and always inspiring. It's a must-read adventure that will stir your soul."

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Neil Hanson is a lifelong cyclist. Originally from Kansas, he currently lives in Colorado. His eclectic career path has included jobs ranging from carpenter to high-level executive. His first book, Peace at the Edge of Uncertainty, was published in 2010.

I always enjoy reading books from people my age that do some pretty amazing things, like riding a bike across country. Neil not only does a great job of being an inspiration, but each chapter goes far beyond the technical end of the story. He talks about people he meets (which is typical of this genre) but also goes much deeper into thoughts of his own. When you ride long distances, like Neil or myself, you spend a lot of hours lost in thought. Most people never record those thoughts to discuss with others; Neil puts it all out there for the reader to also think about. Most of these books I enjoy reading but that's it. However, I would love to sit down one day in one of the obscure places

that Neil talks about finding along the route to enjoy a cheeseburger and a few beers with him. Very good read!

Neil's book conveys the joys and travails of a self-propelled journey, which is so different--physically and mentally--from any other kind. I cringed when I read that his knee was bothering him, because it reminded me of the trek Neil and I shared on the Appalachian Trail in 1977. Neil's knee blew out on that trip, and despite three days of rest in a state park lean-to and a visit to a small-town doctor, there was no recourse but for him to get off the trail. Obviously, this time his knee recovered. What astounds me is that all these years later Neil is healthy and determined enough to accomplish a cross-county bike trip, which would stymie most people a third our age. The idea of it certainly stymied me when Neil called to ask if I wanted to join him for a stretch. My bad back can't handle it anymore, and I had to decline. This book reminded me of the flights of fancy one's mind takes to cope with long distances traveled on foot or bike. And it conjured up the ecstasy found in simple pleasures, like ice-cold water, a hot shower, and a sublime sunrise on the prairie. I wish I could've been there. This book was very tightly written and flows smoothly. I'm looking forward to another vicarious adventure when the book on the second half of Neil's journey comes out.

I had not heard of the title prior to reading so was a little skeptical. It was thoroughly enjoyable and will lead me to part II. The author mixes parable like ante dotes in with riding a bike thousands of miles and does it without a single tired cliché or phrase that might feel too thought out. Will recommend to my guy buddies and not necessarily just riders.

As a non-cyclist, this book gave some interesting insight and really, simply conveyed the emotions and thoughts over a long trip. It didn't get too hung up on the practical challenges (though I would have liked to hear more about that), but rather it was a well written story about experiences and thoughts. Some reviewers seem to think too much about Mr Hanson's views. I don't think that is important, whether you agree with him or not, what is nice is that he simply states the things he felt, what he enjoyed, what he thought about, and how his experience affected him. This is a story of simple reflection - it is not a deep work, just the thoughts of a man on his bike enjoying his surroundings and facing his own challenges in his own way. He keeps his narrative to the point and expresses his feelings in a direct way. It was a nice, easy read and one which allows for your own reflection on situations. Enjoyed it indeed.

Perhaps the greatest line in bicycling writing was penned by this author, describing the time crossing through the American southwest desert. For those of us that have "been there", Neil Hanson's writing evokes the imagination that transports us all with such clarity. You feel the moment, heatwaves that eliminate off roads on a summer day as you gaze into the distance or the solitude that one seeks in a world of constant "noise". I'm determined to meet this guy, shake his hand and say, "thanks for writing a damn good book!"

Neil Hanson captures the sense of place of the Southwest--open, arid, changeable. Each leg of his journey introduces colorful characters that have personalities that fit the landscape or perhaps for some fight the landscape. Certainly the book moves along at a good pace revealing the physical exertion and wanderings of mind an athlete experiences as he navigates the changes in road, slopes, weather, wind, traffic and traveling partner. A good read especially when you can share the visual experience mile by mile in Google Maps or Bing Maps along most of the route. A contemporary view of the long stretches of western byways in the spirit of George R. Stewart's perceptive experience of the west, the road and the towns of a previous generation of travel.

This book kept me reading. The descriptions were vivid -- of the land, the people and culture, and the riding itself. I "experienced" two things that I know virtually nothing about but find alluring -- the US west and biking the open road, And the peppering of the author's thoughts and memories, sparked by encounters along the journey, added an entertaining and sometimes emotional personal dimension. Half the country went by faster than I wanted it to.

This was a good book that deals with the meditations and thoughts of a man in his 50s who is making a journey across the US by bicycle. This man has recently lost his wife to cancer and is tired of running a restaurant. He feels it is time for him to do something different--something that will satisfy the longings deep within himself. And do the book deals with a man examining everything he believes in the hopes of finding a new meaning to his life.

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