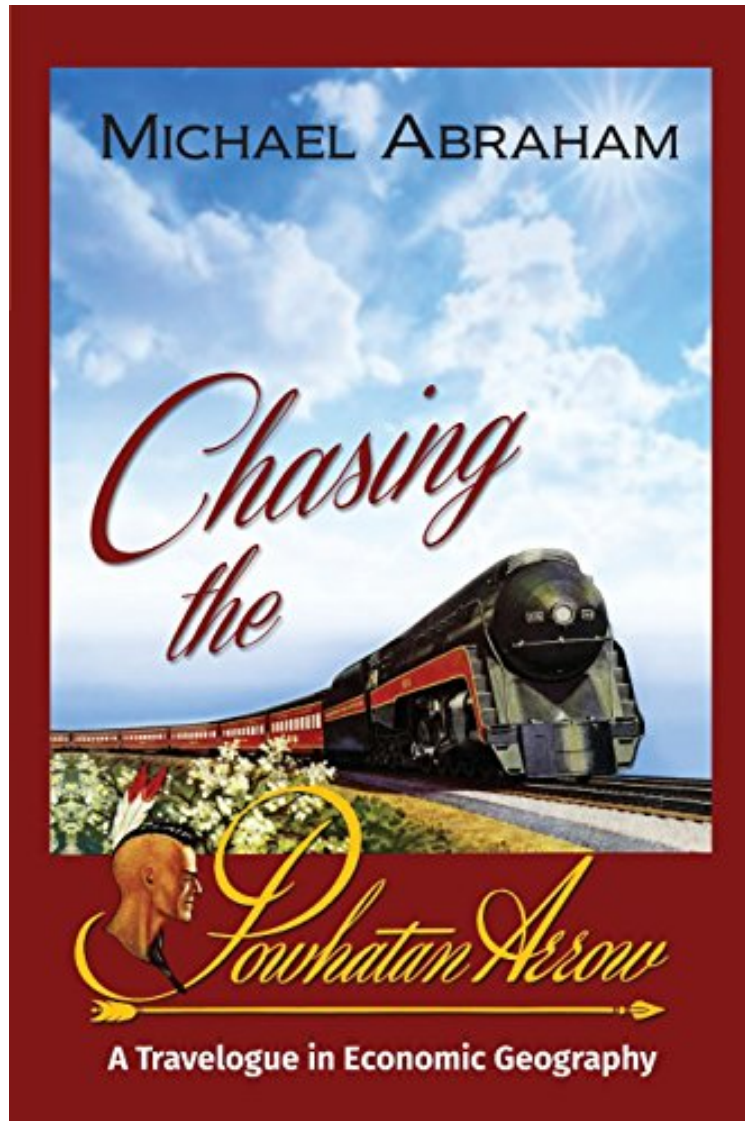


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Chasing the Powhatan Arrow: A Travelogue in Economic Geography

Michael Abraham

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Michael Abraham : Chasing the Powhatan Arrow: A Travelogue in Economic Geography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chasing the Powhatan Arrow: A Travelogue in Economic Geography:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. More than a train bookBy Leslie S. AllenAs a native of Southwest Virginia familiar with many of the areas discussed in this book, I enjoyed this unique travelogue that follows the route

of an elegant passenger train that operated mid-20th century. I enjoyed learning about the mechanics and engineering involved in not only building trains but in building tracks, maintenance and more. I thought the author handled difficult social and economic issues with compassion and honesty while pointing out that there are no easy answers to the complicated state of affairs in the poor communities of Appalachia. His conclusions about the future of transportation were interesting and I look forward to seeing if his predictions come true and how the world will be affected by them. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read for historians, rail fans, and human interest readers! By Rachel B Excellent story of a time when life was simpler. A story of people and their desire to produce the best results in their lives and their work was important. I grew up along the Route of the Powhatan Arrow. MY Grandfather retired as an engineer from the NW. This book accurately depicts life and the story of a people and their Railroad. Great read and I highly recommend it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended read! By Justin B. Davis Fantastic read, not only from the railroad history perspective, but from a people and regional perspective as well. I was lucky to meet the author in Roanoke a few weeks ago. Super nice gentleman.

From its inception in the 1880s, The Norfolk Western Railway primarily carried freight but as a sideline, it always provided passenger service. A profitable, well-run company, NW only accepted the very best. As World War II ended, NW offered several named trains along its main line, including the Cavalier, the Pocahontas, and its daytime flagship the Powhatan Arrow. Pulled initially by the magnificent Class J steam locomotives that NW manufactured at its Roanoke Shops, the Powhatan Arrow provided fast, luxurious, and memorable service for three decades before passenger service was discontinued, giving way to automobile and airplane travel nationwide. The corridor traversed by the Powhatan Arrow is a wonderfully complex, geographically fascinating, socially diverse, and economically mixed path through Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. The vicissitudes of time have endowed the communities along the way with a broad spectrum of fortunes, branching from prosperity to failure. With railroads no longer carrying passengers, Michael Abraham duplicated the route as closely as possible by car, motorcycle, bicycle, and even canoe, gathering each area's history and culture and profiling entrepreneurs, historians, railfans, and everyday people in this enlightening, humorous look at a swath of America's past, present, and future.

From its inception in the 1880s, The Norfolk Western Railway primarily carried freight, principally conveying coal from the central Appalachian coal fields in Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky to the eastern seaboard port of Norfolk and to Cincinnati for transfer to the steel mills and power plants of the Great Lakes region. But as a sideline, it always provided passenger service. A profitable, well-run company, NW only accepted the very best. As World War II ended, NW offered several named trains along its main line, including the Cavalier, the Pocahontas, and its daytime flagship the Powhatan Arrow. Pulled initially by the magnificent Class J steam locomotives that NW manufactured at its Roanoke Shops, the Powhatan Arrow provided fast, luxurious, and memorable service for three decades before passenger service was discontinued, giving way to automobile and airplane travel nationwide. The corridor traversed by the Powhatan Arrow is a wonderfully complex, geographically fascinating, socially diverse, and economically mixed path through Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. The vicissitudes of time have endowed the communities along the way with a broad spectrum of fortunes, branching from prosperity to failure. With railroads no longer carrying passengers, Michael Abraham duplicated the route as closely as possible by car, motorcycle, bicycle, and even canoe, gathering each area's history and culture and profiling entrepreneurs, historians, railfans, and everyday people in this enlightening, humorous look at a swath of America's past, present, and future. * * * * * Books with names about famous trains are frequently written by historians and are filled with endless facts such as ridership figures, equipment types and service details. Michael Abraham's Chasing the Powhatan Arrow is not one of those books. Instead, Abraham takes a fresh look at the people, communities and issues affecting the population outside the train along its 676 mile route. This book presents a wide range of issues, from the history of tobacco, coal mining, and the Civil War to contemporary topics such as the coming ramifications of driverless cars. It is a testimonial to communities that have thrived since the heyday of passenger rail travel and those that have seen declining fortunes. Michael dives into the local fabric between Norfolk and Cincinnati with a unique and fresh sense of humor that is his signature writing style. At each stop along the route of the Powhatan Arrow we are treated to a new story. While some interviews may have been planned in advance, other stories and tidbits are totally impromptu as Michael's wit and charm draws the best out of his subjects and he in turn memorializes the history of the locals along the route for generations to come. If you have not been to places like Crewe, Virginia, Welch, West Virginia or Ironton, Ohio, then sit back and let Michael Abraham's Chasing the Powhatan Arrow take you there. You'll laugh, learn, and be entertained throughout. But by the time you reach the end, I can promise there will be a few of these out of the way towns that will be on your bucket list of places to visit. J. Preston Claytor About the Author Michael Abraham was born, raised, and educated in southwest Virginia. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He has one adult daughter and currently he lives in Blacksburg with his wife, two dogs and four motorcycles. He is the author of seven other books.