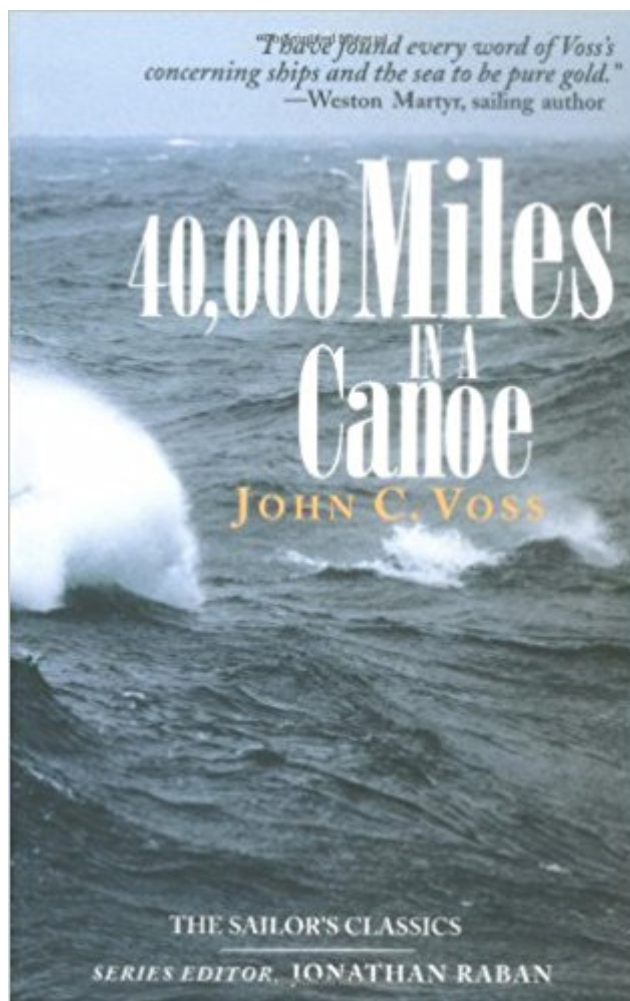




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# 40,000 Miles In A Canoe



## Synopsis

The Sailor's Classics library introduces a new generation of readers to the best books ever written about small boats under sail. The incredible story of Captain John C. Voss, who, in 1904, completed a three-year journey across three oceans in a Native American dugout canoe converted to sail.

## Book Information

Series: Sailor's Classics

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## Customer Reviews

What Are 'The Sailor's Classics'? No one meets the ocean on quite such intimate terms as the sailor in a small boat. No one experiences a solitude more absolute than that encountered by long-distance single-handed sailors like Joshua Slocum or Bernard Moitessier. Since the early nineteenth century, when Byron and Shelley put to sea in their own boats in order to set themselves adrift in nature at its most turbulent and unruly, writing and sailing have gone hand in hand. There have been writers who sailed; Wilkie Collins, Joseph Conrad, Robert Louis Stevenson, Hilaire Belloc, Jack London, E.B. White, William Golding, John Barth, Thomas McGuane, Geoffrey Wolff; along with a multitude of sailors who wrote, from Slocum and John Voss to Tristan Jones and the father-son team of Daniel and David Hays. After nearly two hundred years, the literature of small-boat voyaging under sail is enormous, and every publishing season sees more additions to the list. It is the function of The Sailor's Classics to recognize and celebrate the relatively small number of truly important books in this library. Some have been chosen because the voyages they describe are themselves of unignorable merit; some because the

sheer brilliance of their writing demands their inclusion. Most combine in equal parts serious nautical interest with literary excellence. As general editor of the series, I am always trying to keep in mind the bookshelves on my own 35-foot ketch. A proper ship's library isn't restricted to books with boats in them, of course; I wouldn't happily set sail for more than a day or two without novels by Dickens, Trollope, Evelyn Waugh, and Saul Bellow, and poetry by Pope, Keats, Tennyson, Hardy, Philip Larkin, and Robert Lowell. The big question is which small-boat voyages can stand up in such exalted literary company? Not very many is the honest answer, and half the function of an editor is to know what he must reject. The books that won't figure in the series are as important as those that will. We won't be publishing quaint curiosities. Period charm does not make a classic, and though I have a soft spot for, say, Nathaniel Bishop's *Four Months in a Sneak Box* (1879), and an even softer one for Maurice Griffiths's *The Magic of the Swathways* (1932), they won't be found in *The Sailor's Classics*. Nor will the many salty 'yarns' full of the faded yo-ho-ho of generations past. Whimsical accounts of family vacations afloat (the obligatory adventure with the dog and the dinghy...) will be left to gather dust in peace. So will all those melancholy solo voyages in which the writers go to sea in order to discover themselves. There remain the books whose vigor has not dimmed with the passage of time, whose voice is as alive and meaningful now as it was on their first publication; the books that should be essential reading for every literate sailor. No. 2 in the series is Richard Maury's *The Saga of Cimba*, first published in 1939; No. 4 is *The Strange Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* by Nicholas Tomalin and Ron Hall, first published in 1971. They are perfect examples of what I mean: one a loving close-up portrait of the sea in all its moods, written by a master mariner with an astonishing literary gift; the other a study, by two journalists, of a man who lost touch with reality during the course of the first singlehanded round-the-world yacht race. Each, in its very different way, is an indispensable book. Each contributes an important thread to the larger pattern in the carpet, which is the great, various, and intricate design of the literature of small-boat sailing. *The Sailor's Classics* will surprise our readers with its richness and complexity. Since Homer's *Odyssey*, the voyage has supplied one of the classic forms in literature; both as a grand metaphor for life itself in the long passage from birth to death, and as a sequence of tests and adventures. Equally, the boat (and especially the small boat) has long stood as a symbol of selfhood; a fragile ark bearing the journeying soul to its destination. Hilaire Belloc put the matter beautifully in *The Cruise of the Nona*: The cruising of a boat here and there is very much what happens to the soul of a man in a larger way... We are granted great visions, we suffer intolerable tediums, we come to no end of the business, we are lonely out of sight of England, we

make astonishing landfalls and the whole rigmarole leads us along no whither, and yet is alive with discovery, emotion, adventure, peril and repose. Those five nouns should be emblazoned above The Sailor's Classics: it is from the interweaving of discovery, emotion, adventure, peril, and repose that the pattern of sailing literature is made, and we shall do our best to honor each and every one in our selection of the best books ever written about life aboard small boats at sea. Jonathan Raban Series Editor March 2001 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"I have found every word of Voss's concerning ships and the sea to be pure gold."--Weston Martyr, sailing author On May 27, 1901, Captain John C. Voss, accompanied by journalist Norman Luxton, put to sea in the Tilikum, a 38-foot dugout canoe. Joshua Slocum's best-sell, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, had been published the year before, and Voss and Luxton's goal was to make a name for themselves by circling the globe in a vessel smaller than Slocum's *Spray*. Tilikum was just 5 feet wide and drew a mere 24 inches fully loaded. Outfitted by Voss with a deck, a small keel, three stubby masts, a cockpit for the helmsman, and a tiny cabin, Voss's canoe was one of the oddest craft ever to attempt a deep-sea voyage. Her crew, too, was mismatched. Voss was a professional sailor who had been pushed ashore by the decline of commercial sail. Luxton, a nautical innocent, was along to record the voyage for posterity. More than three years later, Tilikum arrived in England after a voyage of 40,000 miles--a journey fraught with perilous and exotic adventures on both land and sea. Luxton abandoned the boat in the South Seas, and his replacement was lost overboard in a storm. But Voss carried on, and in 1912 - 13 he wrote *The Venturesome Voyages of Captain Voss*, the book that established him alongside Slocum as one of the greatest small-boat navigators of all time. This volume in *The Sailor's Classics* restores in its entirety Captain Voss's account of his adventure in the Tilikum, together with the more noteworthy of the two remaining narratives in Voss's original book, a voyage through a typhoon in the 19-foot yawl *Sea Queen*. In the words of Jonathan Raban, "to possess this book is to have at your elbow your own compact fount of growling sea-wisdom, the classic primer on small-boat handling under all imaginable conditions." For sailors and armchair adventurers alike, *40,000 Miles in a Canoe* is an unforgettable read. "It is the voice of Captain Voss that stops you in your tracks, like Coleridge's wedding guest detained by the Ancient Mariner; a gruff, bewhiskered, seadog's voice, rich in experience and personality. There's liquor on his breath, and a singular glitter in his eye."--from the introduction by Jonathan Raban Captain John C. Voss is, without a doubt, one of the most colorful and controversial figures in 20th-century nautical history. During his lifetime, and for many years thereafter, he was labeled an adventurer,

thief, saint, charlatan, even murderer. But one thing that Voss's friends and detractors alike agreed upon without reservation was his genius for practical seamanship. This volume in The Sailor's Classics presents two epic, salt-encrusted sea tales from Voss's 1913 book, *The Venturesome Voyages of Captain Voss*. "40,000 Miles in a Canoe" is the unforgettable account of his three-year voyage across three oceans in a Native American dugout canoe modified for sail. In "Sea Queen," Voss and his crew survive a monstrous typhoon in a tiny 19-foot yawl. This book is not just great storytelling, it is also the classic primer on small-boat seamanship.

It is good, but not great. If you like sailing stories, it will be a nice addition to your collection. I would recommend *Kon Tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl, *Adrift* by Steven Callahan and *Tinkerbelle* by Robert Manry. *Tinkerbelle* is one of my favorites, if you can find a copy. *Dove* by Robin Graham is another sailing book that I would recommend. I enjoyed *40,000 Miles in a Canoe*, but I have read better sailing books.

I just finished reading this and I couldn't stop reading it. What began as a publicity stunt ended as a real adventure. Two things stand out. First Captain John Voss is very good at capturing his own emotions and those of his ever-changing First-Mate and he records both the good and the bad. Second his observations on small boat handling and his ingenious solutions to fix all manner of problems including the destruction of his boat in a shipyard are a good read. I got a lot more from this book than I expected.

Voss is more than just an expert sailor. He is cunning and has a genius for understanding the sea in all of its moods. The story is every bit as good as any other sea tale including Slocum's and Chichester's stories. Voss describes, in a matter of fact way, conditions that would frighten even the saltiest of sailors. To imagine being in those situations in a modified canoe is all the more incredible. Yet he survives and describes in great detail his recommendations for small boats in large breaking seas. And swears that a small boat can be comfortable in such conditions if handled properly and if the equipment is up to it. Although obviously dated in many respects his love of the sea and his understanding of how to survive the worst of it are timeless. I have read several of the great sea tales over the years; I don't know how I missed this one. It was a joy to read. He uses some very old nautical terms ("We made a board to shore." I think was one of his statements) but a good dictionary usually put me back on course.

I am not someone you would normally find reading a book on high sea adventure but for other reasons I purchased this book and I was hooked. It is a wonderful story full of humour, adventure and suspense. The characters become alive, particularly Captain John C. Voss and you feel you are making the journey with him. The story is compelling and the reader finds it difficult to put the book down. The book actually contains two stories but the one that captured my attention was the journey on the Tilikum with Norman Luxton. The story awoke an interest in me to the point where I continued to research the characters and the vessel and the story of what happened to the Tilikum after she reached Margate, England. The Tilikum just celebrated her 100th anniversary of her departure from Oak Bay (Victoria, B.C.) where they have erected a plaque. She has been fully restored complete with new rigging and is now on display at the Maritime Museum in Victoria. For a book to interest a reader to the point where she will track down the vessel in order to see her means you have a very powerful and well written story.

Nice and valuable. Super product, great handle. Ordering another! very good . my sister, great, very kind and the best seller. I got it in the mail and it came in a nice case which I enjoyed. I love the feel and how heavy it is. When I got it, I immediately washed it and tested it out and it cut through some peppers like butter. I really liked it. as a birthday gift to my husband as described . good.

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