



## W. HODDING CARTER

W. Hodding Carter, 35, may be better prepared than most to handle a journey of the magnitude of **Viking Voyage 1000**. An epicure of adventure, he has spent his life seeking new physical, mental, and spiritual challenges.

Born and bred in Greenville, Mississippi, Carter studied English literature at Kenyon College in Ohio and then headed to Kenya for two years as a Peace Corps volunteer. Back in the U.S., Carter launched his writing career at Esquire Magazine with articles on cooking and sports. From there, he moved to a staff writing job at M Magazine, penning a collection of memorable feature stories on subjects as far-ranging as sneaking into Burma to interview heroin dealers, placing second in the Louisiana Oyster Eating Contest, and getting lost in Wales with legendary travel writer Redmond O'Hanlon.

Carter's first book, *Westward Whoa*, chronicles his escapades while retracing the path of explorers Lewis and Clark who sought the Northwest Passage. Critically acclaimed, the book received as much praise for its probing examination of what civilization has done to the environment as for its witty, humorous prose, a hallmark of Carter's breezy, self-deprecating style. Baltimore Sun critic Howard Henry Chen wrote, "Carter's voice is so infectiously charming and the prose so affable, even the hardships sound fun... He tells [his] story with a comfortable rhythm, a little irreverence, a little angst."

Next, it was on to West Virginia, where Carter and his wife settled in the small mountain town of Thurmond. Located in the rugged, isolated New River Gorge area and populated by a mere two dozen people, Thurmond was as endlessly interesting to Carter as New York City. Here he guided white water rafting trips, wrote a science fiction novel, joined the city council, and served as the town's postmaster. With the arrival of twin baby daughters, Carter and his family relocated to the more metropolitan Beckley, West Virginia.

It was in Thurmond that Carter fleshed out his childhood dream to recreate Leif Eriksson's voyage to North America. Navigating by the sun and the stars, propelled forward by the wind and the currents, living in the elements on an open-deck Viking knarr, Carter and his crew will follow Eriksson's wake from Greenland to Newfoundland in the summer of 1998. He will write a book about his Viking adventures to be published in late 1999 by Ballantine.

"This is what I love to do: research a historical moment, retrace it and then write about my experiences. I think of myself as Everyman trying to do things that our history books say were only accomplished by heroes and saints,"

says Carter. "I want to capture this adventure, to show everyone what this journey a thousand years ago was really like for Leif Eriksson and his crew and just as importantly, what it's like today."

This will be Carter's second attempt at the project he calls **Viking Voyage 1000**. During the summer of 1997 a crew of 12, including Carter, strived to make the journey from Narsaq, Greenland to L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland but had to abruptly end their efforts after their rudder sustained serious damage in the waters between Greenland and Baffin Island. Despite difficulties arising from the beginning of the voyage, including delay in the delivery of the boat from Maine to Greenland and a crippling lack of wind, Carter believes the effort was nearly as successful as the completed voyage would have been.

"Challenge always lies in failing, and then fixing the problem and going on. Now we know that we can handle ourselves really well in an emergency and that we work well as a team," he explains. "And we also know that we simply need to give ourselves more time to make the journey itself. That's what we'll try to do this summer."

Carter is gratified to be working in continuing partnership with Lands' End, the sole sponsor of **Viking Voyage 1000**. "I believe that understanding history helps us to put our own lives in context. Without the support of Lands' End, we would be unable to illustrate the significance of such a remarkable human endeavor in this unique manner."

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