

The Man Who Walked Backward, Author Ben Montgomery
Friday October 26 @ 6pm
Orcas Island Library - Free

Ben Montgomery is author of the New York Times bestselling 'Grandma Gatewood's Walk,' winner of a 2014 Outdoor Book Award, 'The Leper Spy,' and 'The Man Who Walked Backward.' He spent most of his 20 year newspaper career as an enterprise reporter for the Tampa Bay Times. He founded the narrative journalism website Gangrey.com and helped launch the Auburn Chautauqua, a Southern writers collective. In 2010, he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in local reporting and won the Dart Award and Casey Medal for a series called "For Their Own Good," about abuse at Florida's oldest reform school.



Like most Americans at the time, Plennie Wingo was hit hard by the effects of the Great Depression. When the bank foreclosed on his small restaurant in Abilene, Texas, he found himself suddenly penniless with nowhere left to turn. After months of struggling to feed his family on pitiful wages he earned at a greasy spoon, Plennie decided it was time to do something extraordinary -- something to resurrect the spirit of adventure and optimism he felt he'd lost. He decided to walk around the world -- backwards.

In *The Man Who Walked Backward*, Pulitzer Prize finalist Ben Montgomery charts Plennie's backwards trek across the

America that gave rise to Woody Guthrie, John Steinbeck, and the New Deal. With the Dust Bowl and Great Depression as a backdrop, Montgomery follows Plennie across the Atlantic through Germany, Turkey, and beyond, and details the daring physical feats, grueling hardships, comical misadventures, and hostile foreign police he encountered along the way. A remarkable and quirky slice of Americana, *The Man Who Walked Backward* paints a rich and vibrant portrait of a jaw-dropping period of history.

