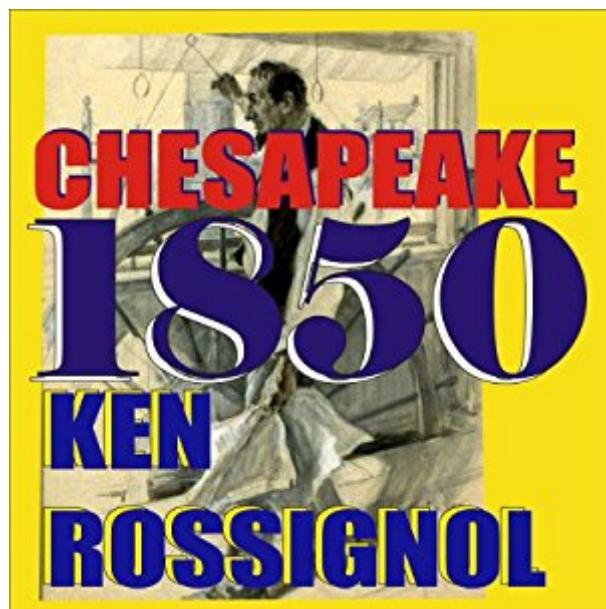


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# Chesapeake 1850: Steamboats & Oyster Wars: The News Reader



## **Synopsis**

The life of Ethan Aaron Douglas is chronicled as the ten-year-old joins his grandfather for a life on the Chesapeake Bay. With his grandfather as captain of a steamboat traveling between Norfolk, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, the boy learns quickly about life on the water. From hurricanes to blue crabs, life on the Bay changes quickly. Learning Shakespeare and witnessing a hanging are just part of the life along the river. Ethan Douglas' life brushes past major events in the United States from slavery to the underground railroad and the days leading up to the civil war. How did those who lived along the Potomac deal with active warfare during the War Between the States? Life was always a war on the water with pirates shooting at each other as well as Maryland and Virginia oyster police. Ethan's younger brothers and sisters soon join him as they grow older and become entrepreneurs - and as the nation's capital city grows and changes. From buyboats to newspapers, the lives of the Douglas family become part of the history of the young nation. Oysters were the 'white gold' of the east while railroads and shipping competed for freight. This book is the first in the series that will tell the story of life in tidewater Chesapeake Bay region from 1850 to 1950.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Ken Rossignol's new series is off to a great start with Chesapeake 1850, the tale of Ethan Douglas from his days as a 10 year old cabin boy on his grandfather's Chesapeake Bay steamship before the Civil War, through his rise to become a wealthy ship owner in his own right. The young boy witnesses everything from a hanging to hurricanes, to the bloody Oyster Wars as he matures, and

meets the love of his life and later marries her. The author does an excellent job of bringing history to life in an entertaining and captivating way that keeps you reading from start to finish. Good work, Mr. Rossignol!

July 22, 2013 A review by Anthony T. Riggio of Ken Rossignol's "Chesapeake 1850" (Steamboats & Oyster Wars: The News Reader) I purchased this book on Kindle and having been somewhat familiar with the Chesapeake Bay and being a charter member of the Chesapeake Bay, Bluefish and Beverage Society, circa 1981 thru 1995, a group of supervisors from FBIHQ who would fish two or three time a year from Maryland on a Charter boat and spend the day fishing and "beering". In any event, the title caught my attention and I thought it would be interesting to read about some of the history of the Chesapeake Bay. As I began to read the book, I was pleasantly surprised to see it dealt with issues on the Bay involving the Civil War, as this is one of my favorite parts of American History. The story involves a young boy named Ethan Douglas who effectively grows up on a steamboat operated by his grandpa. It deals with the history and issues involving maritime commerce and passenger transportation during the time before and after the Civil War. The story revolves around the adventures of the ten year old Ethan Douglas as he grows into a very a successful seafarer on the Chesapeake. He falls in love with the daughter of President Zachery Taylor. Being unfamiliar with the life of Taylor I had to search out the daughter of Taylor and who she actually married. I could not verify this point as an historical fact but this does not affect the overall historical accuracy's of the story. I totally loved the fact that Ethan was a newspaper reader for the passengers on board the steamboat. The times before and subsequent to the Civil War, newspaper articles are both entertaining and informative. This is an excellent book for anyone interested in these times and especially recommended for the young reader. It is a remarkable fun book to read and sets out a sort of story of growing success and successes of Ethan Douglas' siblings. I learned some things about the history of the Bay, namely the wars between Oystermen and how incredibly lawless they were. I gave this book a rating of five stars because it is both a fast and very informative historical read and the story of successes of a family.

After reading another stellar book by this author, Leopold and Loeb, I decided to jump into this one due to its intriguing plot with historical soundness swathed in an entertaining story. The language presented in the time setting was spot on and the descriptions were as if this was a memoir instead of novel. The protagonist's coming of age story on the river as he experienced everything from hurricanes to hangings was a joy to read because it was presented in manner that made it

palpable and real. The times during the civil war were again vividly displayed and suspension of disbelief occurred easily as I was transported to where Ethan was and saw the world around him. Another aspect of the book was the old world illustrations and photographs peppered throughout. These brought the novel to life even further, adding to the realness of the story and making it seem even more-so an historical account of an actual figure. By the time the end arrived and the Captain Douglas was not far from its first voyage, I was thoroughly satisfied yet again; another outstanding work by an exceptionally talented author.

Based on true events, as a young boy of 10 years old went to work with his grandfather on the 'Savannah' a steamship. Ethan learned from his experiences on the steamer, he was a deck helper loading and unloading cargo which included produce, animals, passengers and anything that needed to be imported or exported in the Chesapeake Bay area. He helped in the kitchen, became a news paper reader, reading the news paper aloud to the passengers which increased his reading and learning of current events, saw President Millard Fillmore sworn into office, went through hurricanes, learned of the underground railroads and slavery and learned about the Civil War. Ethan taught his two brothers about the duties of the steamer. Ethan's grandfather taught him about saving his money in the banking business, later he started his own companies and became a very wealthy man. This is a wonderful book full of history and great adventure, well written I enjoyed it. This is a book that a young boy would enjoy and learn from also.

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