

Staff Picks



Avalanches, Hurricanes and Blizzards

Over the past few years unusual meteorological events have shown us the impact that weather can have on the world around us. "Hundred-year storms" cause floods too often and send waves crashing through our cities. Snow and ice immobilize some places while destructive winds tear apart buildings. This list highlights storms that have changed history while sending us scurrying for shelter.

Compiled by: Keith C.



Blame It on the Rain: How the Weather has Changed History

Laura Lee 551.609 Le

Lee argues that adapting, or rather not adapting, to the weather has changed the outcome of war from ancient times to present day. Short essays are gathered in this easy-to-read book that sets out to prove that we have less control over events than we'd like to think.



Floods, Famines, and Emperors: El Nino and the Fate of Civilizations

Brian M. Fagan 551.6 Fa

Before 1997 only meteorologists, fishermen and weather buffs knew about the force of an El Niño. Tiny temperature fluctuations in the Pacific, however, can create weather systems powerful enough to wreck havoc in everyday lives. In 1997 the most powerful El Niño caused freezes in Europe, blizzards and floods in North America and deadly droughts in the South Pacific. Think a weather system doesn't change history? Think again.



Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time and the Deadliest Hurricane in History

Erik Larson 976.413 La

Weather forecasting and its implications on global relations change forever after the 1900 hurricane that levels the town and kills 6,000 in Galveston.



Storm Warning: The Story of a Killer Tornado

Nancy Mathis 551.553 Mat

In May of 1999 a series of 71 tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma and included a mile-wide F5 tornado complete with the fastest wind speeds ever recorded on the surface of the earth. Mathis, a native Sooner, provides an insiders guide into tornadoes and their impact both regionally and widespread.



The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast

Douglas Brinkley 976.335 Br

Brinkley, a Tulane professor, recounts the circumstances surrounding both the ill planning and botched rescue efforts of Hurricane Katrina. Disaster is tempered with stories of personal heroism and survival.



The Johnstown Flood

David G. McCullough 974.877 Mcc

Heavy rainfall and the collapse of a dam ravaged Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1889. Master

historian McCullough adeptly combines the stories of the town, the wealthy men who owned the dam, and the forces of nature into a seamless whole. The rescue effort was handled for the first time by the Red Cross, led by Clara Barton.



The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea

Sebastian Junger 974.45 Jun

A hurricane off Bermuda, a cold front coming down from the Canadian Shield, and a storm brewing over the Great Lakes proves too much for the fishing boat, Andrea Gale, and her crew in the fall of 1991.



The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American

Dust Bowl

Timothy Egan 978.032 Ega

On April 14, 1935, the biggest dust storm on record descended over five states, from the Dakotas to Amarillo, Texas. While magnified by meteorological impacts, these "black blizzards" were man-made.
