

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

By Laura Lee

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Blame It on the Rain: How the Weather Has Changed History By Laura Lee

An amazing, enlightening, and endlessly entertaining look at how weather has shaped our world.

Throughout history, great leaders have fallen, the outcomes of mighty battles have been determined, and the tides of earth-shattering events have been turned by a powerful, inscrutable force of nature: the weather. In *Blame It on the Rain*, author Laura Lee explores the amazing and sometimes bizarre ways in which weather has influenced our history and helped to bring about sweeping cultural change. She also delights us with a plethora of fascinating weather-related facts (Did you know that more Britons die of sunburn every year than Australians?), while offering readers a hilarious overview of humankind's many absurd attempts to control the elements.

- If a weather-produced blight hadn't severely damaged French vineyards, there might never have been a California wine industry. . . .
- What weather phenomenon was responsible for the sound of the Stradivarius?
- If there had been a late autumn in Russia, Hitler could have won World War II. . . .
- Did weather play a part in Truman's victory over Dewey?

Eye-opening, edifying, and totally unexpected, *Blame It on the Rain* is a fascinating appreciation of the destiny-altering vagaries of mother nature&#8212and it's even more fun than watching the Weather Channel!

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In this series of sprightly essays Lee presents an intriguing look at how atmospheric conditions have affected a range of historical events, while acknowledging that other factors were important as well. Lee (*100 Most Dangerous Things in Everyday Life*) argues that, because of the weather's impact, we have less control over events than we think. She theorizes that Greek culture survived a Persian attack in the 480 B.C. battle of Salamis because of naval commander Thermistocles' excellent knowledge of wind currents. In another chapter, Lee vividly describes the 1415 battle of Agincourt, where England's Henry V pitted his exhausted and badly outnumbered army against the French as relentless rain turned the war arena into a mud field. Henry dispatched his archers to force the opposition onto the deadly battleground, where horses and riders collapsed, giving the young king a decisive victory. Elsewhere Lee recounts how in 1800 a storm flooded bridges and roads, disrupting a potential slave uprising in Virginia, while another torrential rainstorm finally delivered water to Civil War prisoners dying of thirst at the notorious prison camp, near Andersonville, Ga. Lee presents intriguing browsing items for history buffs. *(Aug.)*
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From School Library Journal
Adult/High School–Much like the '80s breakup song with the same title, this book chronicles how bad weather has affected mankind, most notably in times of war. Starting with prehistoric man, each chapter chronicles a different event, from Noah's flood to missile launches during the Cold War, including the Wright brothers' first flight and the D-Day Invasion. Chapters may be read individually or collectively. Students will enjoy Lee's concise, conversational style and the quirky relationship she identifies between humans and the forces of nature.–*Brigeen Radoicich, Fresno County Office of Education, CA*
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From Booklist
Lee performs in infotainment mode in this survey of climatic influence on human history. Ever ready with the arch aside, her comedic tendencies are, however, kept in proportion and do not swamp the factual aspect of the historical episodes she relates. Allotting herself about five pages per subject, Lee summarizes from extant literature a goodly number of battles won, lost, or postponed because of weather. That this factor has so often been fatefully decisive might be the strange-but-true spark that will inspire Lee's audience to take an interest in military history or in several technological catastrophes she raises. Lee is not confined to warfare, however: on offer are the meteorological backstories to the Stradivarius violin, the hymn "Amazing Grace," the safety razor, and several political events, such as Harry Truman's presidential victory in 1948. With its varied content and populist flavor, Lee's historical jaunt has high browsing appeal. *Gilbert Taylor*
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Lawrence Scuderi:

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