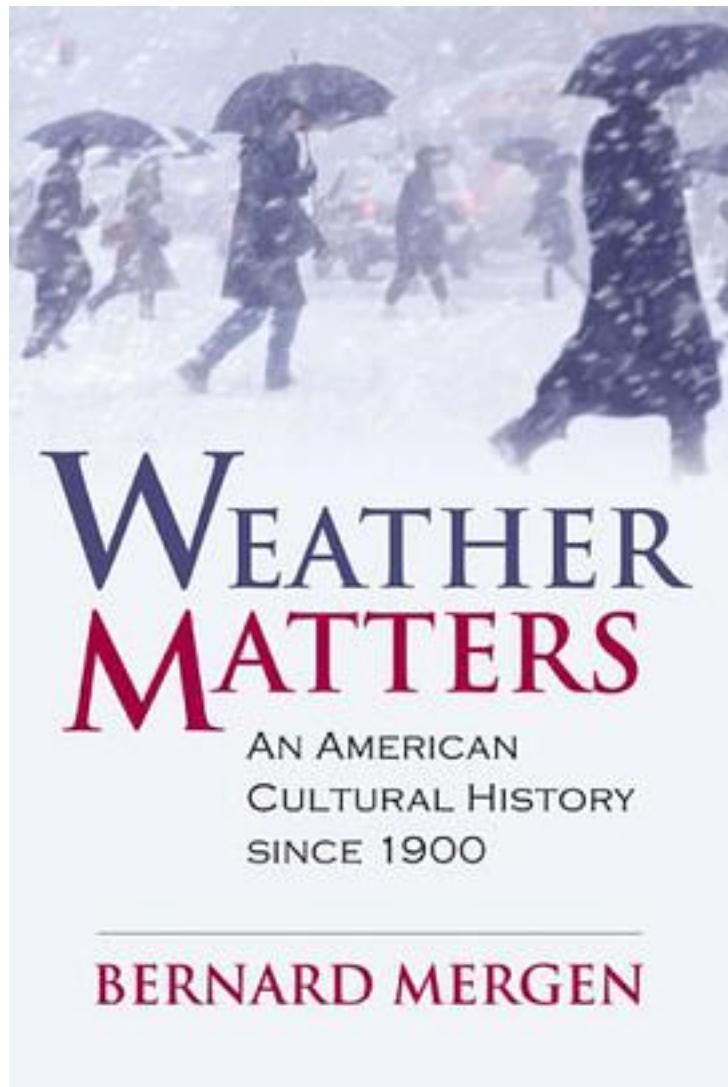


# Weather Matters



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Everybody talks about it--and why not? From tornadoes in the Heartland to hurricanes in the Gulf, blizzards in the Midwest to droughts across the South, weather matters to Americans and makes a difference in their daily lives. Bernard Mergen's captivating and kaleidoscopic new book illuminates our inevitable obsession with weather--as both physical reality and evocative metaphor--in all of its myriad forms, focusing on the ways in which it is perceived, feared, embraced, managed, and even marketed. From the roaring winds atop Mount Washington to the reflective calm of the poet's lair, he takes a long-overdue look at public response to weather in art, literature, and the media. In the process, he reveals the cross-pollination of ideas and perceptions about weather across many fields, including science, government, education, and consumer culture. Rich in detail and anecdote, *Weather Matters* is filled with eccentric characters, quirky facts, and vividly drawn events. Mergen elaborates on the curious question of the "butterfly effect," tracing the notion to a 1918 suggestion that a grasshopper in Idaho could cause a devastating storm in New York City. He chronicles the history of the U.S. Weather Bureau and the American Meteorological Society and their struggles for credibility, as well as the rise of private meteorology and weather modification--including the military's flirtation with manipulating weather as a weapon. And he recounts an eight-day trip with storm chasers, a gripping tale of weather at its fiercest that shows scientists putting their lives at stake in the pursuit of data. Ultimately, Mergen contends that the popularity of weather as a topic of conversation can be found in its quasi-religious power: the way it illuminates the paradoxes of order and disorder in daily life--a way of understanding the roles of chance, scientific law, and free will that makes our experience of weather uniquely American. Brimming with new insights into familiar experiences, *Weather Matters* makes phenomena like Hurricane Katrina and global warming at once more understandable and more troubling--examples of our inability to really control the environment--as it gives us a new way of looking at our everyday world.

作者介绍:

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