

New & Noteworthy List for July 2017

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1. Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration--and How to Achieve Real Reform

By John F. Pfaff

Investigates the root causes of mass incarceration in the United States. Argues that the reigning consensus or the "Standard Story" for the surge in incarceration rates is misguided and has many shortcomings. Presents alternative factors for increased rates of imprisonment including: shifts in prosecutor behavior, public spending, public-sector union lobbying, and politicians with prisons in their districts. Provides concrete solutions for reforming the criminal justice system and reducing incarceration rates.

Basic Books, 2017. 311 pages.

365.973 P47L 2017

2. The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters

By Tom Nichols

Contends that American culture has moved toward embracing ignorance rather than expertise. Analyzes various factors contributing to this distrust of experts in historical and contemporary contexts. Explores how this viewpoint is detrimental to decision-making in political, health, and other spheres, providing examples ranging from vaccination to foreign aid spending. Suggests ways to balance thoughtful discourse with trust in vetted research.

Oxford University Press, 2017. 252 pages.
303.4833 N518D 2017

3. The Color Of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

By Richard Rothstein

Presents a case for how local, state, and federal government's laws and policies are the cause of American cities remaining primarily segregated to this day, rather than the commonly held belief that it was due to personal prejudices, income differences, or banks.

Examines the flawed urban planning of the 1950s along with the suburbanization of American life after WWII, that led to officially segregated public housing and the demolition of previously integrated neighborhoods. Argues that while the Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibited future discrimination, it did nothing to reverse the deeply embedded residential patterns in cities across the country.

Liveright Publishing, 2017. 345 pages.

305.800973 R746C 2017

4. Goodbye to a River: A Narrative

By John Graves

Narrates the author's contemplative canoe journey down the Brazos River in 1957, a trip inspired by a proposed series of flood-control dams that would have altered the river and the surrounding landscape.

Weaves his experience and observations on the trip with historical accounts of the Native Americans and pioneers who lived in the area around the river and in North Central Texas. Muses on the relationship between people, place, and nature.

Knopf, 1960. 306 pages.

917.641 G785G 1959

5. Lone Star Nation: The Epic Story of The Battle for Texas
Independence

By H.W. Brands

Explores the Texas journey from early colonization in the 1820s to statehood and beyond. Presents a chronological review of development and settlement, with the bulk of the book covering 1820 to 1836. Concludes by highlighting the period of 1836-1865, with a focus on Sam Houston's service in Congress and as the Governor who refused to follow his beloved state into secession from the union.

Anchor Books, 2005. 582 pages.

976.403 B734L 2004