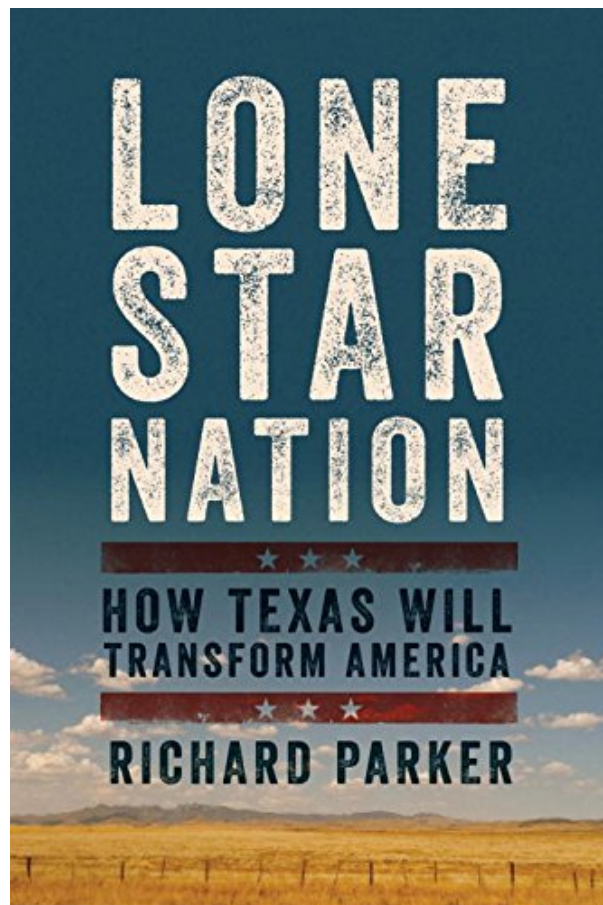
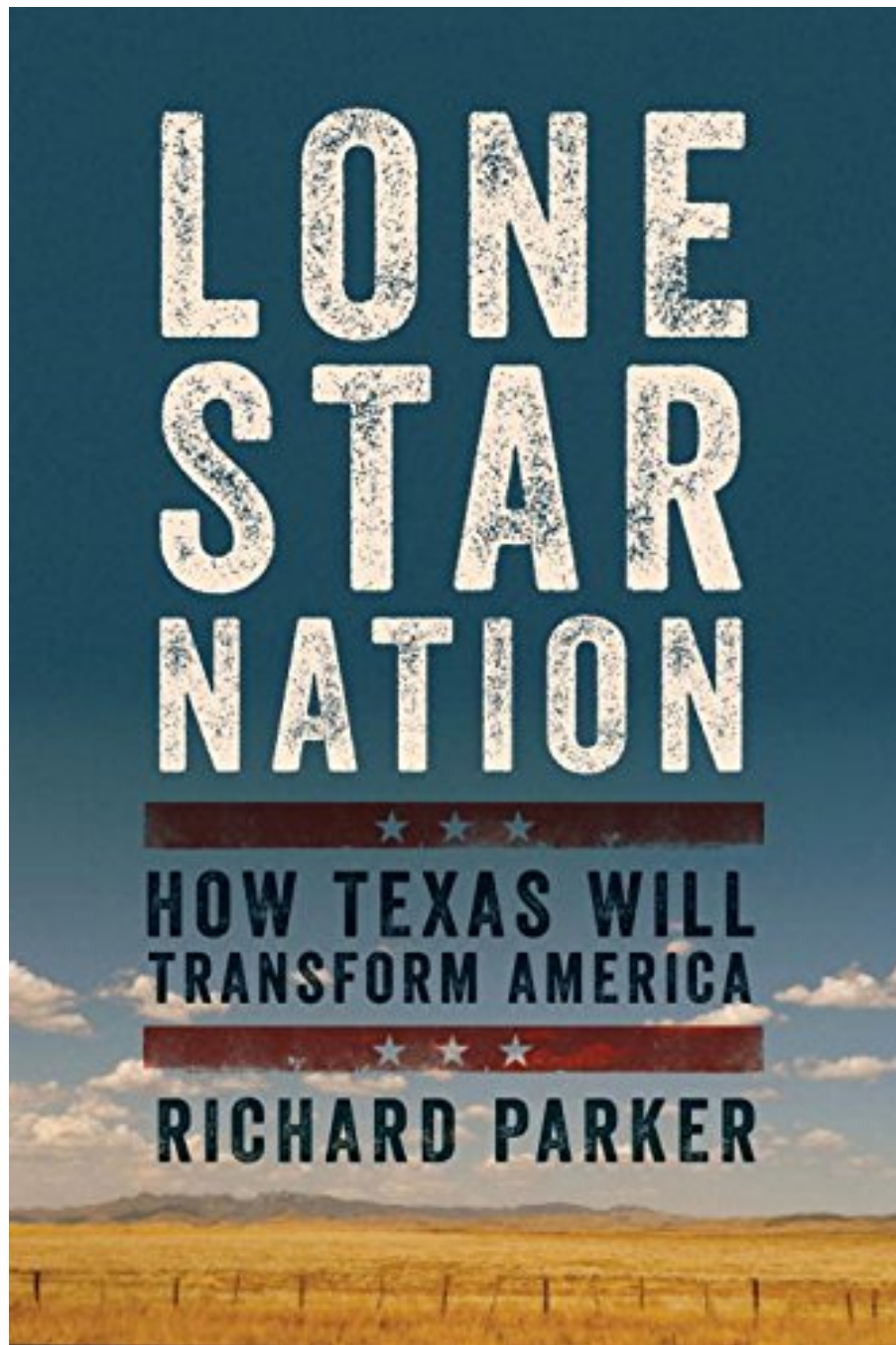


LONE STAR NATION: HOW TEXAS WILL TRANSFORM AMERICA BY RICHARD PARKER



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Review

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A provocative and eye-opening look at the most explosive and controversial state in America, where everything is bigger, bolder—and shaping our nation's future in surprising ways

To most Americans, Texas has been that love-it-or-hate-it slice of the country that has sparked controversy, bred presidents, and fomented turmoil from the American Civil War to George W. Bush. But that Texas is changing—and it will change America itself.

Richard Parker takes the reader on a tour across today's booming Texas, an evolving landscape that is densely urban, overwhelmingly Hispanic, exceedingly powerful in the global economy, and increasingly liberal. This Texas will have to ensure upward mobility, reinvigorate democratic rights, and confront climate change—just to continue its historic economic boom. This is not the Texas of George W. Bush or Rick Perry.

Instead, this is a Texas that will remake the American experience in the twenty-first century—as California did in the twentieth—with surprising economic, political, and social consequences. Along the way, Parker analyzes the powerful, interviews the insightful, and tells the story of everyday people because, after all, one in ten Americans in this century will call Texas something else: Home.

16 pages of color illustrations

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Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

The Ideal Texas Primer

By Tracy S. Dahlby

For a relative newcomer-resident like me, this book is the ideal Texas primer. Parker is at once an elegant narrative writer and a probing analyst who uses affecting personal anecdote to rivet a strong sense of place even as he shrewdly slides into place the game pieces that will determine the future of America’s most storied state and one of its leading political and economic pivots. “The culture of Texas seems a hard thing to stamp out of existence, even as it changes,” Parker writes—and indeed it’s the author’s ability to limn that change that makes “Lone Star Nation” such a fascinating read.

7 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

It's not the old cow town anymore.

By B. Wolinsky

The author begins his story in the late 80’s; a college student with few job prospects in San Antonio, he drives east, then north. In 2000, he comes back, and it’s booming. Parker illustrates the story of Texas as having internal as well as out-of-state migrations, both in the 80’s, when he left, and present day, when people are moving in. Texas has always attracted migrants, for cattle, oil, and agriculture. Even by the 1970’s, Texas had great cities, like Dallas, which housed Fortune 500 companies. Yet even with the wealthy cities, the state’s record on education, crime, health, and race relations were lousy. He blames it in part on the migrations.

Parker writes that in the 1980’s, former rust belt residents came to Texas, and strengthened the GOP’s position. Fast forward to 2015 however, and the famous Republican hold on Texas is fading. The new Texans are young, better educated, entrepreneurial, and often non-white, and they’re less dependent on oil, cattle, and agriculture. There are fewer Fortune 500 jobs, but lots of little ones. Not surprising, given that CD stores have closed, Blockbuster is finished, Circuit City and Best Buy have downsized.

One change that the writer explores is how the state's attitude towards Gay Americans has changed. Houston, for instance, elected Annise Parker as its mayor, and I guarantee that 20 years ago this would not have happened. The first things she dealt with were typical city problems; clearing ditches, unblocking sewers, and though she can't take credit for the building boom, nobody want to do business in a city that's filthy. She even proposed a law banning discrimination against gays and lesbians in the workplace. Her following among women voters, gay voters, and minorities is powerful.

Texas has always had a dependence on large-scale business, like agriculture and oil, to sustain its economy. The problem was that these industries were somewhat anti-technology, and it's not surprising, given that solar and wind power would've cut into big oil's market. The 2013 drought hit the agricultural sector hard, and the farmers, certain that they were fool-proof, had no water-savvy irrigation technology that the Israelis use. Corn fields withered, cattle died, deer had to eat oleander leaves to survive and it killed them off, and coyotes were so desperate that they started killing and eating cats. Conservative Texans in the George Bush mold were not into technology and innovation, and they ended up losing.

Parker is not, however, without his criticism of the new Texas. In order not to raise taxes, Texas raised tuition rates for state and local colleges (up to \$50,000) which makes it harder for lower-income students, often minorities. There are ways to alleviate the problem, however; tuition can be lowered for majors that the state needs, like nursing, physical therapy, early child education, and criminal justice.

I always imagined Texas the way I saw it on Dallas; a state full of gruff, loud, conservative businessmen, dead set against any kind of change. The state's death row would be working overtime, executing multiple convicts daily, and the schools, when not paddling the kids, would be checking to make sure nobody was teaching evolution. The change, however, has arrived, not by force, but through the "old guard" dying out.

Call it "intelligent design," I suppose.

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting and Insightful

By Tony M.

A must read for students of Texas culture, politics, or history; or anyone interested in learning more about what America will become.

I'm a former resident of the Lone Star state, and frequent visitor who tries to keep up with its traditions and changes. Mr. Parker very much "gets it" when it comes to Texas. He has written a fascinating book that puts in crisp, and concise words the changes rapidly happening across Texas, and how they will in turn change America.

Having recently finished reading Fehrenbach's classic "Lone Star" about the history of the state, I find Parker's view of the "new Texas" to be as important as Fehrenbach's telling of its past. I don't know if this book will become a classic, but I'm confident that Parker is on the right track.

See all 27 customer reviews...

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