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Florida's Hurricane History by Jar Barnes

Eugene F. Provenzo Jr.
University of Miami

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Florida's Hurricane History. By Jay Barnes. 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. xi, 407 pp. Foreword by Steve Lyons, introduction, B&W photographs, maps, illustrations, appendix, acknowledgments, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper)

Nowhere in the United States has been more affected by hurricanes than Florida. They have been a constant in the state's history. During the early colonial period, for example, the question of whether or not France would take territorial control over Florida was decided by a hurricane. In 1565, Jean Ribault led a French armada from Fort Caroline, near modern-day Jacksonville, to drive the Spanish from St. Augustine. On September 22, a hurricane dismasted and wrecked Ribault's ships. The Spanish fleet survived. Defenseless, Fort Caroline was easily captured by the Spanish, and Ribault and his men were easily defeated. As a result, the French lost the opportunity to settle the southern Atlantic coast of North America. In October 1926, a hurricane hit South Florida, bringing an end to the area's speculative land boom and beginning the Great Depression in the "Sunshine" State.

Jay Barnes provides a comprehensive and useful history of hurricanes in Florida in *Florida's Hurricane History*. The second edition of this 1998 work includes updates on recent storms such as Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma. Including over two hundred photographs, the book provides an excellent introduction to hurricanes as meteorological phenomena, their importance in Florida's history, and even something of their cultural significance (the term "hurricane" derives from the name of an evil Mayan god, the University of Miami's sports teams are called the "Hurricanes," and so on.).

Following his introductory chapters, which deal with how hurricanes are formed; their impact in terms of winds, storm surge, and rainfall; and the tracking of storms, Barnes provides detailed chronological summaries of all of the recorded hurricanes in Florida's history. His summaries are engaging and make clear how hurricanes have been a constant meteorological, economic, and cultural force in Florida's history. Detailed maps show the path of each storm. An appendix includes tables of information on the twenty deadliest modern hurricanes to strike the United States, as well as the costliest in terms of destruction.

Barnes brings home to the reader just how massive and consuming Florida's hurricanes can be. Statistics, such as the death of approximately 2,500 people as a result of the breaking of the Lake Okeechobee levee in the 1928 hurricane, or the estimated \$41 billion expense of Hurricane Andrew, are important. As the southern Atlantic coast becomes more populated, the consequences of hurricanes become increasingly significant, and Barnes argues that it is inevitable that major storms on the level of Andrew and Katrina will continue to strike the state.

This reviewer has sat through a number of hurricanes, the worst being Andrew in 1992, when winds in my neighborhood reached at least 168 miles per hour. Unless one has lived through a storm of this type, it is hard to understand

just how powerful and terrifying a hurricane can be. Equally hard to understand is the challenge of recovering after a major storm. The T-shirt that became part of the mythology of Hurricane Andrew had emblazoned on it: "I survived Hurricane Andrew. It's the recovery that's killing me," and this best conveys how enormous and all-encompassing hurricanes can be. For those newcomers to Florida who have not experienced a hurricane, but will almost certainly eventually do so, few books are as useful as Barnes's history.

On a minor note, this reviewer would have liked to see a more careful inclusion of recently published works as part of this updated volume. In the case of Hurricane Andrew, for example, Eugene F. Provenzo Jr. and Asterie Baker Provenzo's *In the Eye of the Storm: An Oral History of Hurricane Andrew and the South Florida Community* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002) and Eugene F. Provenzo Jr. and Sandra H. Fradd's *Hurricane Andrew, the Public Schools and the Rebuilding of Community* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) provide detailed personal accounts of the social and cultural meaning of the storm, a perspective that would have made Barnes's excellent book even better. Likewise, recent accounts such as Christopher Cooper, Robert Block, and Robert Jeffrey Block's *Disaster: Hurricane Katrina and the Failure of Homeland Security* (New York: Times Books, 2005) and Douglas Brinkley's *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) would have contributed important information and insights.

In summary, Barnes's book is the best general history on hurricanes and their impact on the Sunshine State and should be of interest to Florida history enthusiasts and general readers.

EUGENE F. PROVENZO JR.
University of Miami

Pilgrim in the Land of Alligators: More Stories about Real Florida. By Jeff Klinkenberg. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. xiii, 238 pp. Series foreword by Gary Mormino and Raymond Arsenault, foreword by William McKeen, preface, acknowledgments, B&W photographs. \$24.95, cloth)

Nature poses serious threats in Jeff Klinkenberg's Florida. A bull shark can get close enough to the shore of the Panhandle to bite off the arm of a swimmer who is training for a triathlon, while another attack near Destin proves lethal for a teenaged girl. At the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens near Gainesville, a 12-foot-long alligator named Mojo tears the arm off an employee clearing algae from a pond. Greg (Spook) Whidden makes a living catching wild hogs by hand; the largest he captured weighed 416 pounds. A columnist for the *St. Petersburg Times*, Klinkenberg also