



Category 5: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane (Florida Quincentennial Books)

By Thomas Neil Knowles

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A frightening account of the first Category 5 storm to strike the U.S.

“A gripping account. . . . Winds were so strong that they tore babies from the arms of their parents. Over four hundred people lost their lives, including over two hundred veterans of World War I. It was a tragedy that did not have to happen.”--John Wallace Viele, author of *The Florida Keys: A History of the Pioneers*

“Makes for fascinating reading about a period of time when science, politics, and nature converged, resulting in disaster.”--Rodney E. Dillon Jr., Vice President, Past Perfect Florida History, Inc.

In the midst of the Great Depression, a furious storm struck the Florida Keys with devastating force. With winds estimated at over 225 miles per hour, it was the first recorded Category 5 hurricane to make landfall in the United States.

Striking at a time before storms were named, the catastrophic tropical cyclone became known as the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane, and its aftermath was felt all the way to Washington, D.C.

In the hardest hit area of the Florida Keys, three out of every five residents were killed, while hundreds of World War I veterans sent there by the federal government perished.

By sifting through overlooked official records and interviewing survivors and the relatives of victims, Thomas Knowles pieces together this dramatic story, moment by horrifying moment. He explains what daily life was like on the Keys, why the veteran work force was there (and relatively unprotected), the state of weather forecasting at the time, the activities of the media covering the disaster, and the actions of government agencies in the face of severe criticism over their response to the disaster.

The Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 remains one of the most intense to strike America's shores. *Category 5* is a sobering reminder that even with modern meteorological tools and emergency management systems, a similar storm could cause even more death and destruction today.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Compelling . . . demands to be read in one sitting. . . . [A] sobering yet gripping account of the storm’s ferocity, and at the same time personalizes its consequences by making us care about the people it affected. If you are a fan of the Keys, the author’s descriptions of life there in the mid-1930s will add to your understanding of why it is such a unique place to so many people.”—*Miami Herald*

“[T]old in vivid detail. . . . The book is the result of a 12-year labor of love for Knowles, who combed through hundreds of pages of testimony from a 1936 congressional hearing on the hurricane before interviewing the only seven survivors he was able to track down.”—*Tallahassee Democrat*

“Knowles tells the story in all of its pulse-quickenning detail.”—*Creative Loafing*

“Dramatic anecdotes about those affected by the hurricane play out within the context of U.S. weather service history, the on-again, off-again development of the Florida Keys, and Great Depression public works programs utilizing unemployed veterans.”—*Journal of Southern History*

“Provides a unique perspective on an important episode in the state’s history that had not just local but national consequences. While [Knowles’s] research provides the reader with considerable insight into life and culture in the Florida Keys during the 1930s, it also speaks significantly to how storms such as the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 or, more recently, Hurricane Katrina have the potential to become national issues.”—*Tampa Bay History*

About the Author

Thomas Neil Knowles is the author of *Long Key: Flagler’s Island Getaway for the Rich and Famous*. Born and raised in Key West, he is a fourth generation Conch whose ancestors moved from the Bahamas to the island in the mid-1800s. He now lives in Tallahassee.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Elaine Kistler:

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you

want send more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining including comic or novel. Typically the Category 5: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane (Florida Quincentennial Books) is kind of book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Jonathan Garcia:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Category 5: The 1935 Labor Day Hurricane (Florida Quincentennial Books), you could enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't obtain it, oh come on its called reading friends.

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