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**Published on** H-Environment (December, 2022)

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Jay Barnes’s *Fifteen Hurricanes That Changed the Carolinas: Powerful Storms, Climate Change, and What We Do Next* describes fifteen hurricanes that swept through North and South Carolina from the eighteenth century through the twenty-first. Barnes chose these fifteen storms because they were “epic encounters for their time. They are among the deadliest, most severe, and most memorable hurricane disasters Carolinians have faced” (p. 3). To depict these storms, Barnes relies on the work of other historians; newspapers, magazines, and television reports; and publications from the National Weather Service, the National Hurricane Center, the United States Weather Bureau, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Barnes has successfully crafted a narrative history of hurricanes in the Carolinas. Similar in format to Walter S. Grigg Jr.’s *Historic Disasters of Richmond* (2016), each chapter is devoted to describing a specific storm. The earliest storm depicted is the Great Carolina Hurricane of 1752 and the most recent is Hurricane Florence in 2018. The majority of the storms described occurred after 1950. For each hurricane, Barnes details the formation of the storm within the Atlantic Ocean, the preparations Carolinians made in the days and hours before the storm, and the experiences of those who chose to remain in place (many did not survive). He briefly describes the recovery and relief efforts in the aftermath as well as the economic and environmental consequences of the storms. Barnes concludes every chapter with succinct “takeaways” for each hurricane, which is where much of the analysis of these events and their effects takes place. Many chapters include arresting photographs depicting the gravity of the devastation of the storms. Barnes relays specific details of each hurricane, such as the windspeed, the dollar amount of damages, and the extent of storm surges, in a compelling and highly readable way.

One of the strengths of the monograph is Barnes’s description of how technology has changed the ways Carolinians prepare for and respond to hur-
hricanes and, in some cases, how those changes only benefit the privileged few. For example, prior to the Great Sea Island Storm of 1893, underwater cables had been placed in the Bahamas and parts of the Caribbean, which enabled forecasters to provide more reliable weather reports. That technology provided some Sea Islanders with ample forewarning of the approaching hurricane; however, thousands of poor and isolated residents of the Sea Islands never received the forecasters’ warnings of the approaching storm and suffered unduly as a result. Barnes effectively recounts the birth of the field of emergency management following Hurricane Hugo in 1989, warns of the perils of inland flooding during and after hurricanes and describes how those dangers have increased since the late twentieth century, and traces the role of first responders and members of the military in rescue efforts.

Barnes’s work on these fifteen hurricanes opens further lines of inquiry and could provide a starting point for disaster studies scholars or historians to examine specific aspects of these calamities. For example, because “lowcountry plantations were death traps for countless African slaves,” a great number of enslaved people died following the Great Antigua-Charleston Hurricane in 1804 (p. 39). As a result, rice fields lay fallow for years, and ultimately landowners were forced to sell large tracts of land at a loss. The risks enslaved people faced in the wake of such storms and the ways enslavers dealt with the loss of their human labor force in their aftermath are topics that warrant further attention.

Barnes’s book could be a useful addition to high school history or science curricula and will likely be attractive to local historians. Readers of Fifteen Hurricanes That Changed the Carolinas would benefit from perusing Ted Steinberg’s Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America (2006) to further understand how disasters have historically served to reinforce the injustices of race and class in America. Additionally, Matthew Mulcahy’s Hurricanes and Society in the Greater British Caribbean, 1624-1783 (2008) and Caroline Grego’s Hurricane Jim Crow: How the Great Sea Island Storm of 1893 Shaped the Lowcountry South (2022) provide a comprehensive analysis of how Carolinians have dealt with these storms and how these storms affected the political, economic, social, and racial dynamics of these two states. Comparing Barnes’s work to Andy Horowitz’s Katrina: A History, 1915-2015 (2020) offers insight into how southerners have dealt with deadly hurricanes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Ultimately, Barnes demonstrates how Carolinians have adapted—or attempted to adapt—to hurricanes that have become more commonplace and more intense, thus resulting in greater economic and environmental damages. However, it is worth questioning whether detailing the events of the hurricanes without also contextualizing the political, social, and racial circumstances in which they occurred and the ways those circumstances changed—or remained the same—in the aftermath of hurricanes such as the ones recounted in Fifteen Hurricanes That Changed the Carolinas is useful.
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