

fort myers hurricane history

fort myers hurricane history reveals a complex narrative of natural challenges and community resilience along Florida's southwestern coast. Located in Lee County, Fort Myers has experienced a variety of tropical storms and hurricanes that have shaped its development and preparedness strategies. This article explores the significant hurricanes that have impacted Fort Myers over the decades, examining their effects on infrastructure, population, and local economy. Understanding the historical patterns of hurricanes in this region is essential for improving future responses and mitigating damages. The fort myers hurricane history also provides insight into how climate trends and storm intensities may influence the area's vulnerability moving forward. Comprehensive coverage of major events, recovery efforts, and hurricane preparedness initiatives will be detailed. The article concludes by highlighting lessons learned and ongoing strategies to enhance community resilience.

- Historical Overview of Hurricanes in Fort Myers
- Major Hurricanes Impacting Fort Myers
- Effects of Hurricanes on Fort Myers
- Hurricane Preparedness and Response in Fort Myers
- Future Outlook and Climate Considerations

Historical Overview of Hurricanes in Fort Myers

The fort myers hurricane history dates back to the early 20th century, when record-keeping and meteorological tracking began improving in the United States. Fort Myers, situated on the Gulf Coast, is vulnerable to hurricanes forming in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Historically, the area has faced storms ranging from tropical depressions to Category 4 hurricanes, each leaving varied levels of impact. The frequency and intensity of hurricanes affecting Fort Myers have fluctuated over time, influenced by broader climatic phenomena such as El Niño and La Niña cycles.

Early Recorded Storms

In the early 1900s, Fort Myers experienced several notable hurricanes that caused significant damage to property and infrastructure. The lack of advanced warning systems at the time meant residents often faced storms with little preparation. These early hurricanes helped establish the need for improved weather forecasting and emergency management in the region. Historical records indicate that some of these storms brought heavy rainfall, flooding, and wind damage that shaped local building codes and disaster response protocols.

Mid-20th Century Developments

By the mid-1900s, advancements in meteorology and communication enhanced Fort Myers' capacity to prepare for hurricanes. The fort myers hurricane history during this period includes several powerful storms that tested the city's resilience. Emergency response systems were gradually institutionalized, and public awareness campaigns began to educate residents about hurricane risks. This era also saw the reconstruction and strengthening of critical infrastructure to better withstand future storms.

Major Hurricanes Impacting Fort Myers

Fort Myers has endured several major hurricanes throughout its history, each contributing to the area's hurricane legacy. These significant storms are well-documented for their destructive power and lasting effects on the community. Understanding these hurricanes provides valuable insights into regional vulnerabilities and the evolution of disaster preparedness.

Hurricane Donna (1960)

Hurricane Donna was one of the most powerful and destructive storms to hit Fort Myers. As a Category 4 hurricane, Donna caused widespread wind damage, flooding, and power outages. The storm's slow movement exacerbated the impact, leading to extensive property damage and economic disruption. Donna's passage prompted improvements in emergency planning and infrastructure reinforcement in Fort Myers.

Hurricane Charley (2004)

Hurricane Charley made landfall near Fort Myers as a Category 4 hurricane, bringing devastating winds and storm surge. This hurricane is often cited as a pivotal event in fort myers hurricane history due to the scale of destruction it caused. Thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, and the local economy suffered significant setbacks. The aftermath highlighted the importance of timely evacuations and robust building standards.

Hurricane Irma (2017)

Hurricane Irma, a Category 3 storm at landfall, severely affected Fort Myers with heavy rains, flooding, and strong winds. The storm tested the city's improved emergency preparedness systems and infrastructure resilience. Irma's impact underscored ongoing challenges in managing hurricane risks amidst increasing urban development and population growth in the area.

Effects of Hurricanes on Fort Myers

The fort myers hurricane history demonstrates that hurricanes have multifaceted effects on the city, influencing social, economic, and environmental aspects. Each major storm has contributed to shaping local policies and community awareness about disaster risks and mitigation measures.

Infrastructure and Property Damage

Hurricanes have repeatedly damaged Fort Myers' buildings, roads, utilities, and public facilities. Wind damage often results in roof loss, broken windows, and structural failures, while flooding affects foundations and transportation networks. The fort myers hurricane history includes numerous instances where rebuilding efforts required substantial investment and innovation to enhance future resilience.

Economic Impact

The economic consequences of hurricanes in Fort Myers include direct costs such as property repair and infrastructure replacement, as well as indirect effects like business interruptions and tourism decline. The local economy, heavily reliant on tourism and real estate, is particularly sensitive to storm disruptions. Recovery periods after major hurricanes often involve coordinated efforts between government agencies, insurers, and private sectors.

Environmental and Ecological Effects

Hurricanes have also affected the natural environment surrounding Fort Myers. Storm surges and heavy rains contribute to coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and damage to wetlands and marine habitats. These environmental changes can have long-term implications for biodiversity and ecosystem services important to the region's sustainability and quality of life.

Hurricane Preparedness and Response in Fort Myers

Over the years, Fort Myers has developed extensive preparedness and response strategies to mitigate the impacts of hurricanes. These efforts are informed by the fort myers hurricane history and ongoing risk assessments.

Emergency Management Systems

The city has established a comprehensive emergency management framework that includes early warning systems, evacuation plans, and coordination among local, state, and federal agencies. Public education campaigns emphasize the importance of hurricane readiness, including securing property, assembling emergency kits, and understanding evacuation routes.

Building Codes and Infrastructure Improvements

Fort Myers enforces stringent building codes designed to withstand hurricane-force winds and flooding. Infrastructure projects incorporate resilient design principles to reduce vulnerability to storm impacts. These measures reflect lessons learned from past hurricanes and aim to protect lives and property more effectively.

Community Engagement and Recovery Programs

Community involvement plays a critical role in hurricane preparedness and recovery. Fort Myers supports programs that empower residents to participate in disaster planning and volunteer efforts. Post-storm recovery initiatives focus on rapid restoration of essential services and support for affected populations.

Future Outlook and Climate Considerations

The fort myers hurricane history provides a foundation to anticipate future hurricane risks in the context of climate change. Rising sea levels and changing storm patterns may influence the frequency and severity of hurricanes impacting Fort Myers.

Projected Changes in Hurricane Activity

Scientific projections suggest that the intensity of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico region, including Fort Myers, could increase due to warmer ocean temperatures. This trend may result in more frequent Category 4 and 5 storms, posing heightened risks to the city's coastal infrastructure and population.

Adaptation and Resilience Strategies

In response to evolving climate conditions, Fort Myers is investing in adaptation initiatives such as enhanced flood control systems, natural habitat restoration, and updated building standards. These strategies aim to reduce vulnerability and promote long-term resilience against stronger hurricanes.

Importance of Continued Monitoring and Research

Ongoing research and monitoring of hurricane activity and climate variables are essential for informed decision-making. The fort myers hurricane history serves as a valuable data source for understanding trends and guiding policy development to safeguard the community in the years ahead.

- Fort Myers has a long history of hurricane impacts dating back to the early 20th century.
- Major hurricanes like Donna (1960), Charley (2004), and Irma (2017) caused significant damage.
- Storms have affected infrastructure, economy, and the natural environment in multiple ways.
- Preparedness efforts include emergency management, building codes, and community programs.
- Climate change introduces new challenges, necessitating adaptive and resilient strategies.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the most significant hurricane in Fort Myers' history?

The 1926 Miami hurricane is considered one of the most significant hurricanes impacting Fort Myers, causing widespread damage and marking a notable event in the city's hurricane history.

How often does Fort Myers experience hurricanes?

Fort Myers typically experiences a hurricane or tropical storm impact every few years during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30.

What was the impact of Hurricane Charley on Fort Myers?

Hurricane Charley, which struck in August 2004, caused severe damage in Fort Myers including destroyed homes, downed trees, and power outages, making it one of the most damaging storms in recent history for the area.

Have any Category 4 or 5 hurricanes made landfall near Fort Myers?

Yes, Hurricane Charley was a Category 4 hurricane when it made landfall near Fort Myers in 2004, bringing destructive winds and storm surge to the region.

What measures has Fort Myers taken to prepare for hurricanes?

Fort Myers has implemented building codes designed to withstand hurricanes, established evacuation routes, and maintains emergency response plans to prepare for and mitigate hurricane impacts.

How did Hurricane Irma affect Fort Myers?

Hurricane Irma in 2017 caused significant flooding, power outages, and some structural damage in Fort Myers, though it was less severe than Hurricane Charley.

What is the historical frequency of hurricanes impacting Fort Myers over the last century?

Over the last century, Fort Myers has been affected by several notable hurricanes roughly every decade, with some years experiencing multiple tropical storms or hurricanes.

Are hurricanes becoming more intense in Fort Myers due to climate change?

Studies suggest that hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico region, including those impacting Fort Myers, may be increasing in intensity due to warmer ocean temperatures linked to climate change.

Where can I find detailed records of Fort Myers' hurricane history?

Detailed records can be found through the National Hurricane Center archives, local government emergency management offices, and historical weather databases that track storm impacts in Fort Myers.

Additional Resources

1. *Storm Surge: The Untold Hurricane History of Fort Myers*

This book delves into the powerful hurricanes that have impacted Fort Myers, chronicling events from the early 20th century to recent storms. It combines historical records, personal accounts, and meteorological data to paint a vivid picture of the region's resilience. Readers gain insight into how the community has rebuilt and adapted over time.

2. *Eye of the Storm: Fort Myers and the Fury of Hurricanes*

Focusing on the most devastating hurricanes in Fort Myers' history, this book explores the human stories behind the headlines. It covers the economic, social, and environmental impacts of major storms, including detailed narratives from survivors. The book also discusses advances in forecasting and emergency preparedness.

3. *Hurricanes Over the Caloosahatchee: Fort Myers' Battle with Nature*

This book provides a comprehensive overview of hurricanes that have affected the Caloosahatchee River and surrounding areas of Fort Myers. It highlights the natural geography that influences storm patterns and flooding. Historical photographs and maps offer readers a visual understanding of the storm's effects.

4. *Fort Myers in the Eye: A Historical Account of Hurricanes and Recovery*

A historical analysis of Fort Myers during and after significant hurricanes, this book examines the city's responses to natural disasters. It includes stories of community efforts in rebuilding infrastructure and homes. The narrative emphasizes lessons learned and improvements in disaster management.

5. *Winds of Change: The Impact of Hurricanes on Fort Myers' Development*

This title explores how repeated hurricane strikes have shaped the urban and economic development of Fort Myers. It discusses changes in building codes, city planning, and population shifts driven by storm experiences. The book also looks at how hurricanes influenced tourism and local industry.

6. *After the Storm: Fort Myers' Path to Resilience and Renewal*

Focusing on recovery efforts post-hurricanes, this book highlights the resilience of the Fort Myers community. It covers government aid, volunteer initiatives, and innovative rebuilding strategies. The stories emphasize hope and strength in the face of natural calamities.

7. *The Great Hurricanes: Fort Myers' Most Memorable Storms*

This collection of essays recounts the most memorable hurricanes that have hit Fort Myers, featuring eyewitness testimonies and expert commentary. Each chapter focuses on a different storm, detailing its unique challenges and aftermath. The book serves as both a historical record and a tribute to the city's perseverance.

8. *Fort Myers Under Water: Flooding and Hurricanes Through the Decades*

Examining the flooding caused by hurricanes, this book addresses the ongoing challenges Fort Myers faces with stormwater management. It traces the evolution of flood control measures and their effectiveness. The text includes scientific explanations alongside human experiences.

9. *Surviving the Storm: Personal Stories from Fort Myers Hurricane Victims*

This poignant compilation presents firsthand accounts from residents who lived through Fort Myers hurricanes. These narratives reveal the emotional and physical toll of the storms, as well as the spirit of community solidarity. The book offers a deeply personal perspective on natural disasters.

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fort myers hurricane history: Historic Hurricanes of Fort Myers Thomas P. Hall, 2023-09-30
On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian struck Fort Myers, Florida, ravaging Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel, Captiva, Matlacha and Pine Islands. Ian was just the latest in a series of storms that have influenced how the region has developed since the mid-1800s. In fact, it was an 1841 hurricane that followed roughly the same track as Ian that caused the Army to move its central supply depot to Fort Myers' present-day location, a site presumably safe from impacts such as storm surge, hurricane force winds and inland flooding. That was not true then. It is not true now. Of all the towns and cities that dot the coast of the United States from the Rio Grande to Eastport, Maine, the City of Fort Myers has the sixth most homes and fourth most multi-family dwellings at risk for storm surge in the entire nation. With more than 400 miles of canals encompassing 520 square miles, neighboring Cape Coral is America's most vulnerable city when it comes to flooding produced by tropical systems. The severity of these impacts and the associated loss of life and property damage are expected to increase in the future due to sea level rise, climate change and ongoing development of single family, multi-family and commercial properties in the shallow flood plains that drain the Caloosahatchee River and its tributaries. With Historic Hurricanes of Fort Myers, local historian Tom Hall blends a meticulously researched analysis of where and why Fort Myers is uniquely subject to storm surge, wind damage and inland flooding with old-time stories of how the region's early pioneers weathered storms as they built a town and an economy based on cattle exports to Cuba. For the historian at heart, Historic Hurricanes of Fort Myers transports readers to a time when rugged, enterprising men and women assayed to build a town in the footprint of an old Seminole and Civil War fort on the southern bank of the Caloosahatchee River. It chronicles the role played by iconic cattlemen like Jake Summerlin and Capt. Francis Asbury Hendry and the singular importance of the cattle industry in decades following the end of the Civil War. For residents and property owners, this book provides a street-specific road map that delineates each neighborhood's risk for

mild to catastrophic damage from storm surge, hurricane force winds and freshwater flooding. It considers how these impacts are likely to worsen in a wetter, hotter climate. And with input from WINK TV Chief Meteorologist Matt Devitt, *Historic Hurricanes of Fort Myers* provides useful tips and concrete recommendations for how to survive a storm ... and when and why to evacuate in advance of one. Readers will glean a greater appreciation of the factors that led to the settlement of this part of Florida. But given the region's unique risk for storm impacts in a changing climate, *Historic Hurricanes of Fort Myers* serves as the quintessential tropical cyclone survival guide.

fort myers hurricane history: *Florida's Hurricane History* Jay Barnes, 2012-08-15 The Sunshine State has an exceptionally stormy past. Vulnerable to storms that arise in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico, Florida has been hit by far more hurricanes than any other state. In many ways, hurricanes have helped shape Florida's history. Early efforts by the French, Spanish, and English to claim the territory as their own were often thwarted by hurricanes. More recently, storms have affected such massive projects as Henry Flagler's Overseas Railroad and efforts to manage water in South Florida. In this book, Jay Barnes offers a fascinating and informative look at Florida's hurricane history. Drawing on meteorological research, news reports, first-person accounts, maps, and historical photographs, he traces all of the notable hurricanes that have affected the state over the last four-and-a-half centuries, from the great storms of the early colonial period to the devastating hurricanes of 2004 and 2005--Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, and Wilma. In addition to providing a comprehensive chronology of more than one hundred individual storms, *Florida's Hurricane History* includes information on the basics of hurricane dynamics, formation, naming, and forecasting. It explores the origins of the U.S. Weather Bureau and government efforts to study and track hurricanes in Florida, home of the National Hurricane Center. But the book does more than examine how hurricanes have shaped Florida's past; it also looks toward the future, discussing the serious threat that hurricanes continue to pose to both lives and property in the state. Filled with more than 200 photographs and maps, the book also features a foreword by Steve Lyons, tropical weather expert for the Weather Channel. It will serve as both an essential reference on hurricanes in Florida and a remarkable source of the stories--of tragedy and destruction, rescue and survival--that foster our fascination with these powerful storms.

fort myers hurricane history: 2004 Atlantic Hurricane Season ,

fort myers hurricane history: 1994 Atlantic Hurricane Season ,

fort myers hurricane history: *Florida Almanac, 2012* Bernie McGovern, 2012-04-23 An amazing atlas, directory, tourist guide, reference manual, and history book all in one—for natives, visitors, and new residents in the Sunshine State! From basic history and tourist information to obscure facts—such as the size of the largest squash grown—this book has it all. After reading the list of derivatives for the name of each Florida county, the Lake City Reporter called a previous edition of this book “indispensable” and described it as containing “just about everything you ever wanted to know about Florida—and a good deal of information you probably never really thought about.” In addition to listings of national memorials, monuments, and landmarks, this volume contains road maps of each county, charts of rivers and waterways, and facts about Florida's geography and climate. For those who are visiting the state, there are sections on major attractions, annual festivals, state parks, and lodging as well as regulations for boating, fishing, and hunting. The chapters on education, crime, residency, taxes, and utilities will be invaluable to people who are considering moving to Florida. Anyone interested in the history and settlement of the Sunshine State will appreciate the facts about Native American cultures and the chronology of major events in Florida's past. Also included are various statistics and a hurricane survival guide. Packed with information and including a detailed index, it's a useful, comprehensive reference—and a fascinating resource for geography lovers.

fort myers hurricane history: *Hurricanes* Pat J. Fitzpatrick, 2005-11-10 From killer storms to their implications for the insurance premiums of U.S. residents, this much-awaited update explores the ecological, social, and economic consequences of hurricanes and their effects on both coastal and inland areas. In September 1776 the so-called Hurricane of Independence hit Canada and the

northeastern United States, leading to 4,170 deaths. In 1900 around 8,000 perished in the Galveston Hurricane and the resulting tidal surge. Coastal defenses, early warning systems, and evacuation procedures have improved enormously. However, hurricanes still pose a potentially devastating threat to life and property, especially in coastal regions of the United States and the Caribbean. What causes these extreme storms? How can we best defend ourselves? *Hurricanes: A Reference Handbook* explores the historical, ecological, economic, and social dimensions of hurricanes in North America. Synthesizing literature from a wide range of authoritative sources, this book is an invaluable guide to hurricanes and their impact and is essential reading for students, scientists, mariners, and coastal residents alike.

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fort myers hurricane history: *Encyclopedia of Hurricanes, Typhoons, and Cyclones, Third Edition* David Longshore, 2020-06-01 Praise for the previous edition: ...a strong pick for any collection strong in weather science at the high school or college levels.—Midwest Book Review The entries in the encyclopedia make great reading...has considerable merit and most libraries will want to purchase the volume for their reference collections.—American Reference Books Annual ...comprehensive, highly readable...Recommended.—Choice ...a fact-filled work with articles that are informative and accessible to both student and lay reader...a reasonable and worthwhile investment for both academic and public libraries...larger libraries may want this title for their circulating collections as well.—Against the Grain Now in its third edition, this comprehensive encyclopedia covers all major aspects of tropical cyclone activity. Hundreds of extensively cross-referenced A-to-Z entries detail cyclonic storms in meteorology, history, and culture, along with accessible definitions of technical terms and engaging narratives that capture the dramatic intensity of tropical storms, hurricanes, typhoons, and cyclones and the devastation and loss that often resulted. Hurricanes Andrew, Dean, Felix, Gilbert, Wilma, Sandy, and Maria are covered in detail in this comprehensive reference, as well as the most destructive and deadly tropical cyclone witnessed in the United States in the last 50 years—Hurricane Katrina.

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fort myers hurricane history: *Hurricanes* Michael Woods, Mary B. Woods, 2007-01-01 Explains why hurricanes occur, how we prepare for them and also examines the history of some of the most famous.

fort myers hurricane history: Tales of Deadliest Hurricanes Muska Ayir, 101-01-01 *Tales of Deadliest Hurricanes* explores the raw power and profound impact of some of the most intense hurricanes in history. This book is a compelling mix of nature's fury and human resilience, charting storms from formation to aftermath and weaving in stories of survival, courage, and loss. Each chapter offers a deep dive into a specific hurricane, backed by historical records, scientific data, and personal accounts, revealing how these natural disasters have shaped lives, landscapes, and policies. More than just weather events, hurricanes are presented as pivotal moments in time—testing communities, transforming regions, and inspiring remarkable acts of bravery. With climate change intensifying such storms, the book serves not only as a chronicle of the past but also a call to understand and prepare for the future. Through vivid storytelling and thorough research, it honors the enduring spirit of those who endure and rebuild, capturing the human side of nature's fiercest trials.

fort myers hurricane history: *In the I of the Hurricane* Rebecca A. Keen, 2024-07-18 After relocating to Florida, author Rebecca A. Keen lived in a condo on Charlotte Harbor in Punta Gorda, a small community north of Fort Myers. On September 28, 2022, as the eye of Hurricane Ian barreled toward the harbor, she waited in terror. Initially predicted to make landfall farther north, many had ignored the evacuation warnings, and all across southwest Florida, residents sheltered in place. Then, this unpredictable Category 5 hurricane unleashed a 500-year record storm surge, decimating entire towns. Nearly one year later, on August 26, 2023, Hurricane Idalia, a Category 4 storm, struck the Big Bend area of the state, causing chaos and destruction to its victims. In *The I of the Hurricane*, Keen visits the towns and beaches where each storm made landfall. Through weather

bulletins, text messages, and personal accounts, she shares meaningful insights and inspires hope in the face of the unimaginable. This narrative includes her personal, firsthand experience in the storms as well as stories from some of the survivors. She tells how families and entire communities united through the complete devastation of both Hurricane Ian and Idalia.

fort myers hurricane history: Hurricane Almanac Bryan Norcross, 2007-05-29 Essential Information from CBS News' Hurricane Analyst Bryan Norcross's pioneering and courageous TV coverage of Hurricane Andrew in 1992 helped millions of people in Florida cope with the killer storm. This revised and updated version of last year's popular almanac adds detailed stories of the powerful hurricanes of the past that would be catastrophes if they happened today and explores how explosive coastal development during a time of relatively few hurricanes has set the stage for mega-disasters. If hurricanes make landfall today at the rate they did in much of the twentieth century, how could we prevent the unimaginable destruction? A new section will also help you better understand hurricane advisories. Bryan Norcross's Hurricane Almanac is two books in one. The first half is hurricane science, history, and perspectives on how we, as a society, deal with hurricanes. The second half is a personal guide to Living Successfully in the Hurricane Zone. In addition to reviewing and explaining the relatively mild 2006 hurricane season, it looks forward to hurricane seasons to come, highlights the fascinating history of hurricanes interacting with civilization, and details our rapidly increasing ability---but still with limitations---to predict the severity and tracks of storms. With preparation checklists and shopping lists, an easy-to-understand guide to the technical information coming from the National Hurricane Center, and critical practical information, Hurricane Almanac is your essential guide to coping with Mother Nature's greatest storms. A provocative chapter entitled: How I'd Do It Better details Norcross's ideas for a better hurricane system. -Family Communications -Evacuation Decision-making -Staying in a House -Staying in an Apartment -Shutters -Hurricane-proof Windows -Backup Power -Generators -Computer Hurricane Plan -Post-storm Air-Conditioning -Candles -Pool Preparation -Pets, Boats, Cars, and Businesses -Insurance

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fort myers hurricane history: Southeastern Geographer David M. Cochran Jr., Carl A. Reese, 2014-12-19 Southeastern Geographer is published by UNC Press for the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (www.sedaag.org). The quarterly journal publishes the academic work of geographers and other social and physical scientists, and features peer-reviewed articles and essays that reflect sound scholarship and contain significant contributions to geographical understanding, with a special interest in work that focuses on the southeastern United States.

fort myers hurricane history: Explorer's Guide Sarasota, Sanibel Island & Naples: A Great Destination (Sixth Edition) Chelle Koster-Walton, 2013-06-03 Gain an insider's vantage point on this exceptional part of the Florida coast. Whether Charlotte Harbor's wild shorelines and preserved estuaries, or Sarasota's historic culture sweetened by sugar magnates, travelers have an in-depth look on the environment, history, and culture of this beautiful stretch of coastline. Now in its 6th fully updated edition, this guide gives visitors and locals access to the best of Florida's Gulf Coast. Do it all, from the fabled "Sanibel stoop" for collecting seashells to dining in the finest five-star bistros. The author's deep local knowledge again provides the most reliable info available to this paradise.

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Eminent historian Gary Mormino illuminates early twenty-first-century Florida and its connections to some of the most significant events in contemporary American history, taking stock of a tumultuous decade of change and explaining the state's social, cultural, and political intricacies--

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