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Book Review: Camille, 1969: Histories of a Hurricane

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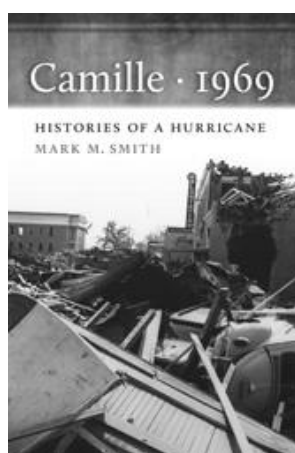
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Charleston rebuilt, while at the same time keeping an eye on the future. This meant trying to change some deeply-held beliefs on race and equal justice for non-whites. Some of these ideas eventually worked against Dawson as he slowly lost his influence once the rebuilding effort became a thing of the past. His tenure as editor of the *News & Courier* also coincided with the rise of Ben Tillman, the populist farmer advocate for South Carolina's upcountry, who started using class warfare to advance his own political agenda.

The book concludes with the murder of Dawson and the trial of his accused killer. Dawson would always be seen as a hero in many circles due to his captaincy for the Confederate cause, but many others saw him as a problem, especially when he used his position as a newspaper editor to blatantly control the parameters of discussion in post-earthquake Charleston. Dawson had picked up a few enemies as he worked his way up the ladder of Charleston's aristocracy, and it ultimately came back to haunt him. As the news of his murder started circulating, the case and subsequent trial captured the attention of the entire city. The tragic and surprising end to Dawson's murder trial illustrates the array of challenges that would plague Charleston and the South as it inched closer to implementing the policies of Jim Crow. *Upheaval in Charleston* is well-researched, and illustrates the complexities of many issues in a very transitional phase not only for the state of South Carolina, but for the South.

Recommended for academic libraries that offer materials in U.S. history, black history & Southern studies as well as Communications and Media Studies.

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Smith, Mark M. *Camille, 1969: Histories of a Hurricane*. University of Georgia Press, 2011. 71 p. ISBN 978-08203-37227. \$24.95 hardcover

Long before Hurricane Katrina became the standard upon which all natural disasters (or government relief failures) are measured, Hurricane Camille was the disaster that people remembered as the one that affected the coast of Mississippi and Louisiana. *Camille, 1969* is an analysis of this destructive hurricane, but it dives into new territory as it looks at the documentation of sensory history and the inevitable politics of recovery and rebuilding.

Smith, professor of History at the University of South Carolina, presents three different perspectives associated with the recovery and the rebuilding. Building off of a presentation that was created for Mercer University's Lamar Memorial Lecture series, Smith focuses not on what happened but what happened after the storm had flattened everything in its path. The first perspective covers the "sensory history" of the storm's aftermath. Specifically, did the residents affected by the storm smell and hear things differently once the recovery started? How did the intense darkness of the clouds affect the residents during the storm or what were their interpretation of images once they came out of the storm and had to live for weeks (or even months) without power? How did this change their habits once they were able to put their lives back in place? Smith discusses these experiences as a way to interpret the storm.

Smith's second perspective covers the obvious issue of race and inequality in the context of hurricane recovery. Integration was still something that had not been properly implemented; technically it was the law of the land, but the southern states had found creative ways to drag their feet on integrating their public school systems. Now with disaster relief funding as a bargaining chip, there were deals to be made and policies to discuss. The ability to move society forward, however, had mixed results, and Smith does a nice job of framing the issue as it was in 1969.

The aftermath of Camille was the blueprint for disaster recovery up until Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and this kind of "political economy" is the topic of Smith's third perspective. Coordinating services for relief and recovery is difficult in any circumstance, but the magnitude of Camille only made it that much harder. Also at play, however, was President Nixon's southern strategy, and he had to compromise in order to have political capital from Southern Democrats for use at a later time. Some businesses were able to get up and running rather quickly, others had problems getting started. Smith illustrates how this particular topic cuts across lines of class, as well as race, and how this all makes any recovery involving public funds quite difficult.

Recommended for academic libraries that offer materials in Southern studies, Political Science and Public Policy.

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