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Lowcountry Hurricanes: Three Centuries of Storms at Sea and Ashore (Wormsloe Foundation Publication) (A Wormsloe Foundation Publication) (Wormsloe Foundation Publication Ser.)

Walter Fraser Jr.

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At once sobering and thrilling, this illustrated history recounts how, for the past three hundred years, hurricanes have altered lives and landscapes along the Georgia-South Carolina seaboard. A prime target for the fierce storms that develop in the Atlantic, the region is especially vulnerable because of its shallow, gradually sloping sea floor and low-lying coastline.

With an eye on both natural and built environments, Fraser's narrative ranges from the first documented storm in 1686 to recent times in describing how the lowcountry has endured some of the severest effects of wind and water. This chronology of the most notable lowcountry storms is also a useful primer on the basics of hurricane dynamics.

Fraser tells how the 800-ton Rising Sun foundered in open water near Charles Town during the hurricane of 1700. About one hundred persons were aboard. All perished. Drawing on eyewitness accounts, he describes the storm surge of an 1804 hurricane that submerged most of Tybee Island and swept over the fort on nearby Cockspur Island, drowning soldiers and civilians. Readers may have their own memories of Hurricanes Andrew, Opal, and Hugo. Although hurricanes frequently lead to significant loss of life, Fraser recounts numerous gripping instances of survival and rescue at sea and ashore.

The author smoothly weaves the lowcountry's long social, political, and economic history with firsthand reports and data accumulated by the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Generously illustrated with contemporary and historical photographs, this is a readable and informative resource on one of nature's most awesome forces.

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