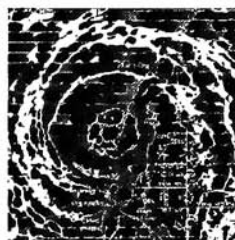


1

Hurricane Andrew and South Florida: The Beginning



Historically, Florida has suffered the impact of hurricanes more than any other part of the country. Of the 151 major hurricanes that made landfall in the United States between 1900 and 1989, fifty-four struck Florida; Texas and Louisiana ranked second and third with thirty-six and twenty-four storms each. Four of the five most powerful storms of the century—including Andrew—hit somewhere along the Florida Coast.¹

South Florida is the most hurricane prone region of the United States. On a scale of one to five, it ranks number one in the likelihood of suffering the impact of future storms. Despite this fact, most Floridians were unprepared for Hurricane Andrew. A major hurricane had not hit South Florida since Donna (a Category 4 storm) in 1960. In fact, the great majority of South Floridians had never experienced a hurricane.

Andrew was a Category 4 hurricane.² The only storm to hit Florida with stronger winds was the Category 5 hurricane that struck the Florida Keys in 1935.³ The 1935 storm, although responsible for the death of 400 people, was less serious in that it struck a relatively unpopulated area. In the case of Hurricane Andrew, no previous storm of this size and magnitude had directly struck a major urban center, such as Dade County.

Before Hurricane Andrew, the worst storm to hit Dade County was the Category 4 hurricane that struck Miami Beach and Miami on September 18, 1926. Although both Andrew and the 1926 storm were Category 4 hurricanes, the 1926 hurricane was very different from Andrew, cutting a path of destruction from Homestead to Moore Haven on Lake Okeechobee. While the hurricane in 1926 was “huge, slow and sloppy,” Andrew has been described as being “like a killer pit bull—small, strong, quick and incredibly mean.”⁴ Although Andrew is widely

recognized in financial terms as being the worst natural disaster in modern American history, it is frightening to imagine what its impact would have been if it had hit even ten or fifteen miles further north, cutting a swath across Key Biscayne, Miami Beach, and downtown Miami. Many more people would have died. Estimated financial losses could have been as high as \$50 or \$60 billion.

The eye of the storm came ashore in the southern half of the county. Its major impact was on suburban and rural areas away from the county's primary business and population centers. Miami Beach and downtown Miami, with their condominiums and high rise office structures, were spared the worst impact of the storm. Damage to the west coast of Florida was also minimized because the storm spent much of its fury over the southernmost area of the Everglades before reaching the west coast where it picked up strength again as it went out over the Gulf of Mexico and north towards Louisiana. (see figure 1.1)

Hurricane Andrew's eye measured between eight and ten miles across. (see figure 1.2) Maximum winds recorded from the storm were 169 miles per hour. Sustained winds over water were 150 miles per hour but were reduced to 140 miles per hour when striking land. The maximum storm surge recorded for Andrew was 16.9 feet.⁵ Immediately following the storm, 1.4 million homes were left without electricity. In terms of lives lost, it was the twenty-third most deadly storm in United States history.⁶

BEFORE THE STORM

As a lazy tropical depression located to the southeast of Florida, Hurricane Andrew did not gain much attention until Saturday morning August 21, 1992. At that time, the storm was 800 miles east of Miami with winds a little over seventy-five miles per hour. By Saturday evening people were being advised to evacuate the Florida Keys. The authors were attending a faculty back-to-school picnic to welcome their new dean to the University of Miami. The picnic was being held on Key Largo in the upper Florida Keys. Just a few minutes after the dean had been given a "Hurricane" T-shirt, coffee mug, and cap to welcome him to the University of Miami (the home of the "Canes," national football champions), the Florida Highway Patrol came through the neighborhood telling residents that a hurricane was coming and that

the Keys would have to be evacuated. This was at about 5:00 P.M. The dean—a transplant from Wisconsin and not used to tropical storms—wondered out loud if the situation was really serious as people grabbed their picnic gear, loaded their cars, and headed north as quickly as possible.

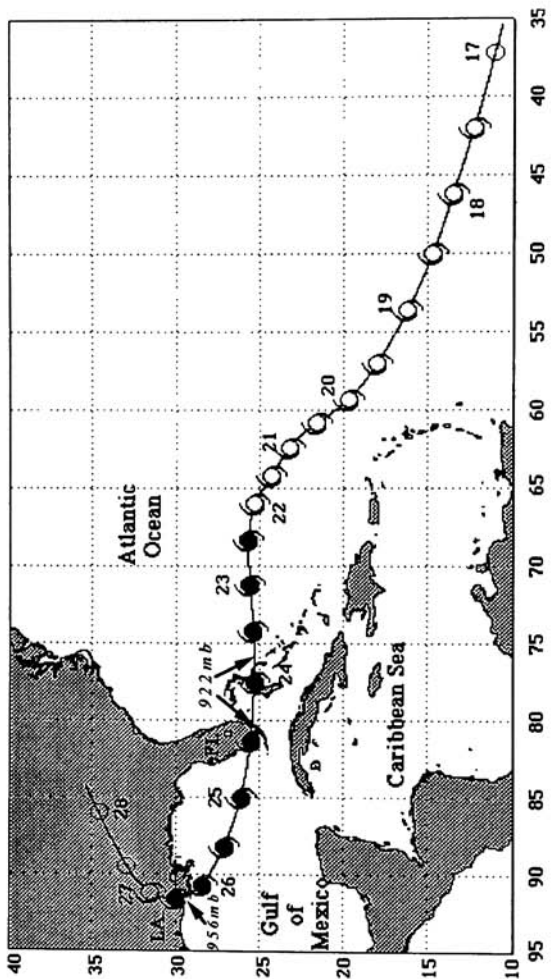
A secretary in the School of Education of the University of Miami, Suzanne Schorle, who was attending the picnic, mentioned to one of the authors that her children were scheduled to return the following Monday from Pennsylvania where they were visiting their grandparents. Monday, of course, was the day that the hurricane struck. The children never returned to South Florida. Their home was demolished, and Schorle and her husband were permanently displaced by the storm. The husband's job, which involved a small computer related business, was destroyed because of the hurricane, and he moved back to Pennsylvania to join his children. Schorle stayed on until early November to settle insurance matters and sell the family's house, and then she, too, moved to Pennsylvania.

Schorle's experience was similar to that of thousands of others throughout the county. By the beginning of November 1992, it was estimated that approximately 90,000 people would move as a result of the storm—over half of them permanently out of Dade and Broward counties.⁷

Other than the initial evacuation from the Keys and trips out for basic supplies, not much was accomplished by most people as Saturday evening passed. Most people were still unsure what to do or to expect as they watched the weather reports on their television sets and wondered whether or not this was really going to be "the Big One" that had been predicted for years. South Florida was being warned that all preparations had to be made by nightfall on Sunday.

By Sunday morning it was clear that the storm was on a direct collision course with South Florida. People battened down their houses and made runs for whatever supplies they could find in crowded supermarkets and hardware stores. By the afternoon most hardware stores and lumber yards were empty of any useful items. A sense of panic grew as grocery stores were emptied of all bottled water, canned goods, and paper products. Well into Sunday evening many people continued to prepare for the storm. One of the authors, Gene Provenzo, was still bolting storm shutters onto the windows of his house at 10:00 P.M., as the storm rapidly approached on a direct collision course with South Florida.

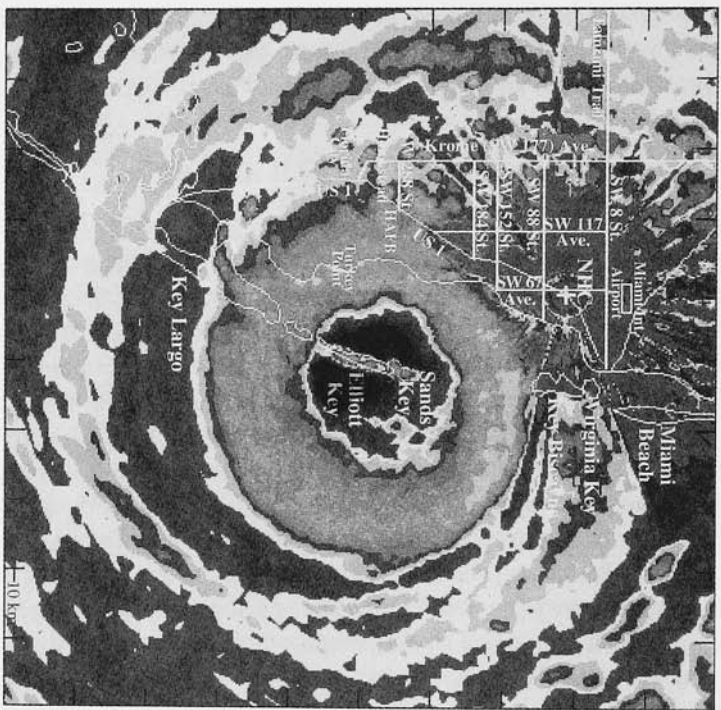
FIGURE 1.1. The Track of Hurricane Andrew August 16-28, 1993



Best track positions for Hurricane Andrew (August 16-28, 1992). Positions at 00 and 12 UTC are shown. Dates are at the 00 UTC locations. Tropical depression, tropical storm and hurricane strengths are represented by open circles and open and filled hurricane symbols, respectively. Locations of lowest minimum central pressure are shown. Data for this and other black and white figures are from National Hurricane Center's preliminary report.

Source: National Hurricane Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

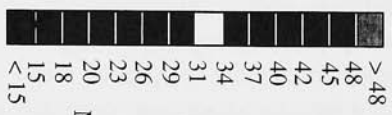
FIGURE 1.2. Hurricane Andrew Over South Florida



HURRICANE ANDREW

NWS MIAMI RADAR
August 24, 1992
08:35 UTC 04:35 EDT

DBZ



Hurricane
Research
Division



NOAA/AOML
Miami, FL

Domain: 100 x 100 km

Source: National Hurricane Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Prior to the storm, the school system played an important leadership role in preparing the community for the storm and in promoting individual household preparations. The majority of the county's Red Cross shelters were located in schools. The school system provided information on the availability of the shelters and offered suggestions on the types of supplies that people needed to take with them to the shelters. In addition, the school district broadcast information about the storm and how to prepare for it in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, the three major languages of the Greater Miami Area. The Dade County Public School System owns both its own radio station, WLRN, and television station, WLRN, channel 17. According to Maria Santamaria, Community Relations Specialist for Spanish Language Information, Dade County Public Schools, the school system also provided other radio and television stations with storm information in multiple languages through its community public relations office. These same services were used after the storm to tell people where to go for assistance, to inform them of the opening of stores and emergency aid facilities, and to promote the initial steps in the rebuilding process. For newly arrived immigrants, unfamiliar with the language and culture of the community, public information in their own language was an important component of the disaster preparedness and recovery process.⁸

Throughout most of Sunday morning and afternoon, traffic was jammed on all of the major arteries leading north of Miami for 120 miles. Sandra Fradd found herself caught in one of the largest traffic jams in history as many people fled South Florida for safer regions to the north. It took her three and one-half hours to make what would normally have been a forty-five minute trip to Boca Raton.

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

As the storm approached, most people tracked its progress on the local television stations. Bryan Norcross, a meteorologist with Channel 4, became an immediate celebrity as he described the approaching storm and advised people how to prepare for and survive it.⁹

On Sunday morning before the storm, pleas were made by county officials for all available medical personnel to volunteer their services at the local evacuation centers. All women in their final term of pregnancy were requested to go to Jackson Memorial Hospital where a spe-

cial medical support team had been assembled. By 10:00 P.M. Sunday evening the halls of Jackson Memorial Hospital were lined with more than 400 pregnant women.

By Sunday evening 180,000 people had been evacuated to emergency shelters out of low-lying flood zones. Most of these shelters were schools. At almost the last moment possible, emergency management officials realized that many homeless people, living in cardboard shelters under the freeway in downtown Miami, had not been evacuated. Four buses were sent out to take them to local shelters. By 10:00 P.M. bus service was terminated and by 10:30 P.M. police were telling everyone to get off the streets.

At 11:00 P.M. heavy winds and rains were being reported from Fort Lauderdale to southern Dade County. By midnight, the television reporter, Bryan Norcross, described the storm as "beginning to rock-and-roll." At this time, the National Hurricane Center said that the thrust of the hurricane would be felt for the next twelve to sixteen hours. At midnight Sunday Norcross brought the immediacy of the storm home to South Floridians by simply telling them that "absolutely, there is no doubt about it, it is going to happen tonight."

Brilliant bursts of blue-green tinged lightning lit the sky as the winds began to increase to over one-hundred miles per hour. By 2:00 A.M., trees were overturning and blocking roads all over the county. People throughout the county began to lose power at about this time. The eyewall of the storm entered Biscayne Bay at 4:28 A.M., Monday, August 24, 1992. At that time all police and fire personnel were ordered off the streets. A few minutes later in Coral Gables, the storm blew the National Hurricane Center's radar system off the roof. At 5:20 A.M. the wind gauge at the Hurricane Center recorded a speed of 164 miles per hour and then broke.¹⁰

People were advised by television and radio announcers to get away from any exterior walls or windows, to get to a central room—even a closet—and to have mattresses available to put over them. As windows shattered and roofs were torn off, people began to wonder when the storm would finally end. Karen Baldwin, an elementary school teacher living in the area just north of the eye of the hurricane, described how at the height of the storm, she, her husband Scott, and their teenage son Doug barricaded themselves in a closet in a protected bedroom. Her description of what then happened was similar to that of many individuals who were in the main path of the storm:

The wind was so loud that you could not talk or hear without shouting. . . . The noise level got to be eerie. To me, it was absolutely the most horrible noise that you could imagine. Everybody says it sounds like a freight train. It was much worse than a freight train, between the howling and the whistling of the wind. It was an incredible, indescribable noise. . . . I grabbed Doug's Walkman, put the headphones on and turned the volume up full blast, which in effect did drown out a good portion of the noise. It didn't drown it all out, but it made it that much more bearable because I was listening to a very calm voice on the radio talking people through the storm—the voice of Bryan Norcross.

We could hear the screen patio tearing away from the back of the house. We could actually hear the metal bending and ripping. . . . Attempting to open or closing any interior door after 4:00 o'clock in the morning was incredibly difficult to do. . . . Probably the height of the storm hit us at five o'clock. I was scared. I've never been so scared in my life. I realized I was sitting in the room shaking. At least I thought I was shaking. And then I kind of took a deep breath and realized that it wasn't me shaking, it was the wall behind me that was literally moving back and forth, almost vibrating. At that point, someone on the radio said if you don't feel secure where you are, you might want to seek an interior hallway in the house with no windows. So, I announced this to Doug and Scott. . . . We no sooner got the door open, and the wind literally threw Scott across the room. As we went out, the living room door blew, at which point all three of the French doors in the back of the house broke. We literally crawled back to the bedroom, got the door closed again pushed the dresser back up to door and were frantically trying to close the outside French doors into the bedroom. They had blown out and we were holding onto the doors trying to hold them closed. It was impossible. Between the three of us we could not get them closed. The storm continued. . . . I opened the bedroom door to check on the front doors. This was probably the height of stupidity for the evening. The whole force of the storm was coming through our front doors. I decided I had to close the front doors. So I went over to the doors and I tried to get the one door closed and I got it two thirds closed. And I had to reach over to get the other door. So I am standing kind of almost spread eagle in the doorway. And, of course, all this wind and rain and everything else was coming through the doors. It was as if I was flying between the wind and the water. . . . The wind just took me and literally pushed me backwards toward the wall in the dining room. It probably just pushed me about ten feet. . . . It was very surreal, the whole thing was surreal. I could see the doors, the wind and the water coming in. And there I was just slowly moving backwards with the force of the wind and the water.¹¹

Retreating back to the bedroom and an interior closet with her husband and son, Karen rode out the rest of the storm and waited to see just how bad the damage was to their home. A home that had been a haven, a safe place of retreat from the worries and cares of an outside life was no longer secure, breached by the extraordinary violence of the hurricane. (Baldwin Interview)

Faye McCloud, a counselor at Bowman Foster Ashe Elementary School, recalled her experience with the hurricane as being “horrendous.” As she explained:

I had never been in a hurricane. . . . I was very ill-prepared for the hurricane—for what happened. I have two children, a three year old and a five year old. At the time of the hurricane, they were two and four. It has just been horrendous. I’m still consumed by the effects of the storm. It’s just not ending.¹²

McCloud and her family lived a mile east of Metrozoo on 157th Street. The storm totally destroyed their house. Initially, like many other Miamians, she underestimated the potential destructiveness of the storm:

I had popped pop corn. We had candles. I thought that we were going to be in the house and be cozy. Twenty minutes into the main part of the hurricane, the window in my daughter’s room blew. I had just taken the kids from their room and put them in our room. That was about 4:45 A.M. (McCloud Interview)

In retrospect, there is an almost mundane and seemingly casual quality to McCloud’s approach to the storm. As she explained:

I had woken up about 1:30 A.M. and cleaned up and vacuumed. We had a new aqua carpet and I wanted to be prepared in case the electricity went off. About 4:30 my husband told me to look out of the window. I looked out and I was very frightened. I had never seen trees bend over like I saw them doing. I remember I told him that I was nervous. The sky had such an odd color and there was such tension around us, as if we knew that something was about to happen. We lit the candles. My husband was attempting to put something over the windows when they blew. I grabbed the kids and ran to the garage that was attached to the house and put the kids in the car. My husband said: “Faye, I have to go back in and blow out the candles.” I said: “No, you can’t go back in there. The hurricane is in the house.” He said: “I need to go in and get the keys so we can move the car closer to the wall so the kitchen door won’t bang open.” I begged him not to go. Then he said: “I need to check on our neighbor who is by herself. “I told him:

“You cannot go! You cannot go! You just have to stay here!!” Then we got in the second car that didn’t have as much glass as the first. (McCloud Interview)

Like many people describing the hurricane at its worst, McCloud recalled:

the horrible sound overhead—like a train. But as much as I was afraid, I didn’t want to display that to the children. So we sang songs and named all of the people that we could think of that we know and said: “They’re thinking of us.” . . . we were so hot. . . . We just stayed there hearing all of the horrible sounds of things hitting the garage, not knowing what it was. We were terrified. We were afraid that the garage door would break open. (McCloud Interview)

Once the storm was over, McCloud’s husband went inside their house:

When he came back, he was crying. He said: “Faye, I just can’t believe it. Our house is gone.” I could not even believe what he was telling me. I couldn’t comprehend what he was saying. So I went inside and he stayed in the car with the kids. I could not believe it. It was just beyond anything that you might see in a theater—in a good movie where you feel that you are there. Except, I was really there. I was so stunned, and so shocked, and so hurt. (McCloud Interview)

AFTER THE STORM

After the storm people across the county emerged from their houses to face massive devastation and destruction. Where he lives in Coral Gable, Gene Provenzo found virtually all of the huge ficus trees in his neighborhood uprooted and laying across lawns, streets, and even houses. In describing the scene to family and friends up north, it was impossible to communicate how the tropical ficus trees, with their extraordinarily dense vegetation and thick and twining root systems and branches, blocked, not just the roadways, but even the light and the breeze. No one could walk more than a couple of hundred feet beyond their houses without being blocked by mounds of what would be, in a couple of days, rotting vegetation. Cars could not pass through the neighborhood for several days and even then had to be driven across previously carefully manicured lawns. Driving became even more of a challenge at major traffic intersections where missing stoplights would not be

replaced for weeks to come. In most cases, drivers were careful and tried to avoid creating problems by yielding the right-of-way and giving signals to each other as they proceeded through intersections and traffic areas.

A surreal quality was evident everywhere following the hurricane. There were no leaves on the trees. It was as though a winter frost had appeared and killed everything in sight. At the same time, houses were covered with a green haze of plant vegetation. For several days, the air was extraordinarily clear. There was no dust. It had literally been blown away by the storm. Without the shade from the trees, without the diffusion of the sun's heat by dust in the air, sunny South Florida became hot and harsh. People accustomed to air-conditioning suffered. Coral Gables was a community considered to have come through the hurricane relatively well. The really major destruction began three to five miles further south where people emerging from their houses were apt to describe what they saw as "looking like a bomb had dropped," "like Hiroshima," or like a "war zone."

One of the authors, Sandra Fradd, who was staying with her mother in Boca Raton, watched with millions of others as the first images of the destruction were telecast from South Florida. Initially, the news shots of the downtown Miami area made it appear that the storm was nothing more than a nuisance. However, as the news reporters went up in their helicopters and began to fly south, it became clear that the damage was extraordinary and widespread. What struck her most was the dazed looks and disorientation that so profoundly marked the faces of the people whose images were captured on the television that Monday morning. The level of destruction in whole neighborhoods where she had recently traveled and worked was hard to comprehend. It soon became evident that much of South Florida was totally cut off from the rest of the world.

For the survivors of the storm in the southern part of the county, the news helicopters could transmit the images of what had happened but were unable to meet any of the needs of the survivors who had lost so much. The television images of the destruction were immediately sent out worldwide. Everywhere people were moved by the sight of the massive destruction and suffering. Homestead Air Force base was literally flattened. Reporters on local television stations commented over and over again that they had no idea while the storm was going on that it could have caused the sort of destruction that had taken place. A reporter flying in an open helicopter described how he saw "numerous homes

down to the ground. I did not see any homes—not one home south of Kendall Drive without damage—extensive damage. . . . I've never seen a nuclear attack before but that's what I would envision happening."¹³

People remarked that for once the images and the messages conveyed by television could not accurately portray the severity of the disaster. Howard Kleinberg, in his account of the first days of the hurricane, noted the differences between the impact of the storm portrayed by the media and the harshness of the reality of the disaster:

When phone lines finally opened and friends and relatives from around the country called to see how we were, my wife Natalie told them that whatever they saw on television was mild compared to how it actually was. After many years of people claiming television hyped and exaggerated events, Miamians were now saying that nothing seen on the tube adequately could portray what occurred on the morning of August 24, 1992.¹⁴

Weeks would pass before anything even beginning to approach normalcy returned.

People coming out of the storm expressed a sense of shock and disbelief. Many wondered if others were as badly "hit" as they were. Some people in the areas of greatest destruction in South County initially thought that the reason they had received no help or assistance was that the more northern and central parts of Dade County must have been damaged even more severely than they were. They imagined that they were among the few survivors in the area, that it must have been even worse elsewhere. This was the only possible explanation they could come up with to explain the lack of assistance.

Cut off as they were from all aspects of life as they had known it just twelve hours earlier, these disoriented and storm struck people began to devise their own ways of surviving. For many, cars and trucks, as well as their homes, had been totally destroyed. Roads were impassable, even when a vehicle still functioned.

With only a few of their possessions intact, survivors in the most severely struck areas banded together to share their meager resources. They were faced with a reality most of them had never thought possible. For the majority, their homes no longer had roofs, their possessions had been scattered by the wind and soaked by the rain, and they were totally cut off from communication with the outside world.

As personal reports began to come out of the south end of the county, people told reporters and others about terrifying hours spent

with three and four people huddled in a small closet or bathroom. Stories of people surviving in bathtubs with mattresses drawn over the top of their heads as the roof peeled off above them became commonplace. A new way of greeting people pervaded the community and continued for several months after the storm. How did you do? and Where were you during the storm? became the first questions people asked each other when they met.

Six hundred thousand people, or seventy-two percent of Dade County, were left without power immediately after the storm. The area south of Kendall Avenue was declared a restricted zone, and no one was allowed in unless they lived in the area or had a special reason for being there. Roofs were caved in everywhere south of Kendall. Buses were blown over on their sides. Large boats were stranded in backyards hundreds of feet from the water. Medical services were stretched to the maximum. In the emergency rooms of hospitals across the county people arrived with severe cuts and wounds.

Tragedies and extraordinary stories of survival emerged in the days and weeks following the storm. There were tales of people being decapitated in front of loved ones by flying glass and beams. There were accounts of pets being swept away in the wind. Stories of people moving out of rooms just before roofs were blown away or walls collapsed were told again and again. Children described "camping in the closet" and seeing their houses "break."

Looting began almost immediately after the storm in many neighborhoods. Preventing looting became a matter of personal survival and a constant source of tension and fear. Although the police and the National Guard were present throughout the county, they were at first too few in number to provide necessary protection. Many neighborhoods set up local patrols who checked on anyone who was not familiar. Fear permeated the neighborhoods—fear not only of being robbed or attacked by looters but also of being mistaken for a looter as one searched for friends and loved ones.

Traffic jams caused by people trying to return to their homes from shelters made getting around almost impossible for several days. On Thursday August 25, 1992, three days after the storm, one of the authors made his way from his own neighborhood to some of the worst hit areas in the county. He was able to do so as part of the relief effort, driven by his new next-door neighbor, Deborah Stone, who had moved into her in-laws' home with her husband and two children after the hurricane had

destroyed her family's house and possessions in the Mediterranean I complex, just north of Perrine.

Mediterranean I is in the neighborhood of Country Walk—one of the worst hit housing developments in the hurricane's path. Roads were barely passible. American flags flew from the top of what remained of roofs or were draped over the front of battered houses and on crudely constructed flag poles. Signs asking for help from insurance companies such as Prudential, Allstate and State Farm were spray painted on walls identifying families and insurance policy numbers. Defiance and survival were reflected in the messages that accompanied the requests for assistance. "Andrew Sucks," "Life begins at 165 mph!" "Andy's Come But We are Not," "In a Few Months He'll be Forgotten," "Screw You, Andrew!", and "Wipe Your Feet," demonstrated that people still had a sense of humor while "Looters will be shot Dead," "Looters will be shot—no questions asked," and "Never alone—you loot—we shoot," reflected the very real threat of robbery and violence that people were beginning to experience in the devastated neighborhoods.

Survivors in the Mediterranean I development described how they spent the night guarding their homes and chasing off looters who were driving through their neighborhood with the lights on their cars turned off looking for houses that were unprotected and open. Driving around a corner to leave a note on a friend's house, Gene Provenzo and Deborah Stone were confronted by a middle-aged man with a hunting knife strapped to his leg and a pistol in a holster at his side. He wanted to know what they were doing in the neighborhood and communicated very clearly that they were not welcome.

Many people lost everything that they owned. Among colleagues in our department at the university, approximately half sustained damage so severe that they had to move out of their homes or, at the very least, had to undergo major reconstruction involving new roofs and complete interior renovations. Hurricane Andrew was an event that would be relived in casual conversations, in bad dreams, and in stray memories for a long time to come.

THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO THE STORM

Little or no coordination of relief efforts took place during the first seventy-two hours following the storm. Many problems stemmed from the

magnitude of the catastrophe, but others were clearly a result of a lack of communication within the local government and the failure of the federal government to efficiently send military resources into the area. Both government officials and residents alike had failed to anticipate and prepare for the possible damage of a hurricane like Andrew. As a result, the first attempts to provide aid to citizens who clearly needed help were feeble, inept, and, in many of the hardest hit areas, virtually nonexistent. Near the Country Walk housing development, the sign on a house with an American flag flying from its roof echoed many survivors' frustration: "Andrew's Dead—We're Alive—Forget the FEDS and RED X WE WILL SURVIVE."

CONCLUSION

Hurricane Andrew was a transforming experience for many of the people in the South Florida community—something that would redefine their lives forever. It was also an experience which would redefine the social and cultural institutions of the area as well. In order to understand how the transformation occurred, it is important to understand the forces that were at work. One of the most profound effects of the storm for many people was the loss of personal control and an increased sense of vulnerability. A second effect was the lack of connectedness and isolation that many people felt in the first few days after the storm. Finally, many people who were normally independent and autonomous in their day-to-day lives found themselves dependent on others for aid and assistance in ways that they had never experienced before.

Compared to those of the 1926 hurricane, the experiences people went through as part of Andrew had some clear similarities and differences. According to the account of the 1926 hurricane by L. F. Reardon, as was the case with Hurricane Andrew, people banded together after the storm to help each other out and to share whatever meager resources they had. Patriotism and love of country also emerged as themes after both hurricanes as people flew flags as a symbol of unity and their having survived. This was particularly the case after Andrew, where house after house in the storm struck neighborhoods displayed American flags amidst the devastation and destruction.

In Reardon's account, while Marines from Key West and the National Guard patrolled in order to prevent looting, there was no major

theft nor significant violence involving one group of people against another. In 1926, the world and Miami was smaller and more unified while, ironically, less informed and interconnected. In 1926, there were no helicopters flying overhead and reporting the news to the outside world immediately after the storm—no reporters making broadcasts as to the level and types of destruction that had been experienced.¹⁵

In 1926, people were more isolated. There was no way, for example, for anyone to know the fate of Miami Beach after the storm since the causeway had been destroyed and boats could not make their way across the bay for several days.

In 1926, there were no convenience stores, air-conditioning was not yet in use, and there was no television or radio. The community was more isolated, yet more self-reliant. In 1992, the community was much larger, more connected through radio and television, and yet, therefore, even more isolated and troubled. After Hurricane Andrew, when the fences came down and the trees were uprooted, many people were faced with having to communicate on a personal level with neighbors they often barely knew and in ways that were new to them.

Many survivors of the hurricane of 1992 shared a natural feeling of euphoria. At the same time there was the challenge posed by having to rebuild and to deal with neighbors and colleagues in ways that were new and unique.

Many Miami suburbs, imbued with anonymity, were suddenly reduced to villages and local communities. Where prior to the hurricane people largely left their neighborhoods each day to go to work, lived in their isolated homes, and knew or cared little about their neighbors, after Hurricane Andrew they were inevitably drawn together. The comforts and security provided by electricity—air-conditioning, cable television, heat for cooking, and power to activate burglar alarms—was gone. People had no choice but to venture out and deal with their community in ways that they had never previously considered.

In the following pages, we look at the role of the schools in dealing with the transformation and change created by Hurricane Andrew. We examine the role that the schools played in reestablishing a sense of continuity in the South Florida community. We believe that with Hurricane Andrew, the role of the schools in recovering from the storm was somehow more important—somehow different—than sixty-six years earlier after the 1926 hurricane. *How* and *why* is ultimately the subject of this book.

NOTES

1. Curtis Morgan and Stephen K. Doig, "Could It Happen Again?" *Miami Herald*, September 5, 1992, p. 7E.
2. A Category 4 hurricane is one in which the barometric pressure is between 27.17 to 27.90 inches with winds of 131 to 155 miles per hour and a storm surge of thirteen to eighteen feet. Damage in this category of storm is "extreme" and typically includes the almost total destruction of doors and windows. See "Measuring a Hurricane's Strength," *Miami Herald*, August 28, 1992, p. 3E.
3. Hurricanes were not given names prior to 1950.
4. Arva Moore Parks, "Until Last Week, Storm of '26 Was *The Hurricane*," August 30, 1992, *The Miami Herald*, p. 1L.
5. *Sun-Sentinel, Andrew! Savagery From the Sea, August 24, 1992* (Orlando, Florida: Tribune Publishing, 1992), 15.
6. *Ibid*, p. 5.
7. David Satterfield, "Pulling Up Stakes: Thousands Planning to Relocate Because of Andrew," *Miami Herald*, November 10, 1992, pp. 1A.
8. Interview with Maria Santa Maria conducted by Sandra Fradd and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., February 8, 1993, Miami, Florida.
9. The following section is drawn in large part from the television documentary, "Hurricane Andrew: As it Happened," produced by WTVJ-Miami, Channel 4. This documentary was developed primarily from news reports made by Channel 4 before, during, and after the storm and was distributed through the community a few months after the storm.
10. John Dorschner, "The Hurricane That Changed Everything," *Miami Herald*, August 30, 1992, p. 30A.
11. Interview with Karen Baldwin conducted by Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., Miami, Florida, September 1, 1992. The quote that follows is from this interview and cited in the text.
12. Interview conducted by Sandra Fradd and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr. with Faye McCloud, February 26, 1993, Miami, Florida. The quotes that follow are from this interview and are cited.
13. *Hurricane Andrew*, WTVJ-4 documentary, from news reports broadcast August 24, 1992.

14. Howard Kleinberg, *The Florida Hurricane and Disaster, 1992* (Miami: Centennial Press, 1992), p. 2.

15. L. F. Reardon, *The Florida Hurricane and Disaster* (Miami: Centennial Press, 1992), p. 16.