

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras Hurricane Katrina Photographs

PI/2005.0024

http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/katrina

On August 29, 2005, Katrina made landfall on the Mississippi-Louisiana state line as a strong category 3 hurricane with sustained winds of 125mph and minimum central pressure the third lowest on record (920mb). Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, and Long Beach, Mississippi bore the brunt of Katrina's force, though central Gulf Coast cities such as Gulfport, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana, received significant damage. It had diminished to a category 1 hurricane (wind speeds of 75mph or greater) when it reached central Mississippi later that day. The collection consists of 103 color photographs taken by MDAH Graphic Records Curator Jeff Rogers that document Hurricane Katrina's destructive path through the Mississippi Gulf Coast and central Mississippi. Photographs show damage to civic, commercial, religious, and residential structures between August 29 and September 27, 2005.

Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:

The science of natural disasters, local history, cultural preservation, the emotional, economic (local and national), and cultural impact of natural disasters, and recovery efforts.

Suggested Classroom Activities:

Search for images from your area and discuss as a class the changes from before and after the hurricane. For students who remember Hurricane Katrina, allow time for them to share their own memories of the event.

For more lessons and activities based on the Digital Archives and other collections visit the Classroom Materials page on our website at

<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>

Teacher Discussion Guide on Reverse

Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “Hurricane Katrina Photographs” (found at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/katrina) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

1. In the “search for keyword” box search for the following images: 36, 42, 54, 80, 93, and 101. Then use Google Maps to compare the locations in the post-Katrina photos to how they appear today. What changes have occurred? Have the locations been rebuilt? Why or why not?
2. In the “search for keyword” box search for the following images: 18, 19, 65, and 66. Hurricane Katrina struck on August 29, 2005. Many of these pictures were taken very shortly after the disaster by employees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. What is the importance of recording these images? In addition to documenting the destruction, taking these photographs early also allows for the preservation of the recovery efforts and the people involved in the recovery. The photographs not only serve as a historical record but they can also help obtain insurance money for rebuilding and serve as training materials for people who work in disaster relief.
3. If you had been a historian/archivist at the time of the hurricane, which landmarks, locations, etc. would you have prioritized documenting? Explain why.
4. In the “search for keyword” box search for the following terms: “library” and museum.” What challenges come with the destruction of libraries and museums? Damage to books, texts, and documents can occur as well as to three-dimensional objects and artifacts. Many items stored in museums and libraries (such as county records, birth, marriage, and death certificates, and land records) are one-of-a-kind artifacts; when lost they cannot be replaced and when damaged their age and the materials they are made of can make it difficult (if not impossible) to restore them to their original state. Water damage can cause staining, breakage, and mold. Damage to library and museum buildings can also lead to challenges. Collapsed buildings, holes in roofs and broken windows can let the elements in which can cause further damage to artifacts but it also means that the damaged artifacts cannot be properly cared for. For example, security systems fail (leaving artifacts vulnerable to theft) and electricity goes out (meaning that storage areas are no longer climate controlled). Artifact recovery is another issue, as items that have been swept away by water or wind need to be located. When human lives are at stake, cultural artifacts may be lower on the list of things to rescue, allowing them to become further damaged. It can also be difficult to get trained library or museum personnel into the disaster zone in order to salvage cultural artifacts.
5. In the “search for keyword” box search for the following image: 37. In light of events such as natural disasters, what is the importance of community projects such as time capsules? Time capsules capture specific moments in the life of a community that can be preserved for future generations. Especially when a community goes through a drastic change, such as a natural disaster, cultural preservation becomes of increased importance as people come together to rebuild their lives and community.
6. In the “search for keyword” box search for the following image: 26. Using this photograph and Google Maps, compare and contrast the bridge over Biloxi Bay that was destroyed by Katrina and the one that has been reconstructed. Do you think the new bridge will be better able to stand a similar natural disaster? Why or why not?