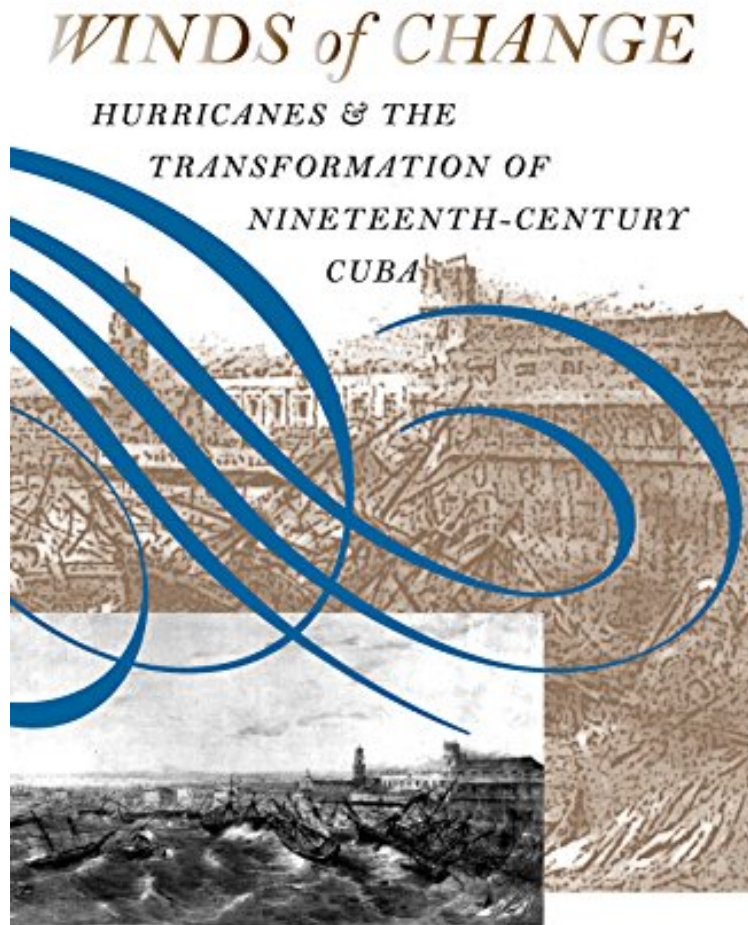



Winds of Change: Hurricanes and the Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Cuba


Louis A. Peacuterez Jr.

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The first book to establish hurricanes as a key factor in the development of modern Cuba, *Winds of Change* shows how these great storms played a decisive role in shaping the economy, the culture, and the nation during a critical century in the island's history. Always vulnerable to hurricanes, Cuba was ravaged in 1842, 1844, and 1846 by three catastrophic storms, with staggering losses of life and property. Louis Perez combines eyewitness and literary accounts with agricultural data and economic records to show how important facets of the colonial political economy--among them, land tenure forms, labor organization, and production systems--and many of the social relationships at the core of Cuban society were transformed as a result of these and lesser hurricanes. He also examines the impact of repeated natural disasters on the development of Cuban identity and community. Bound together in the face of forces beyond their control, Cubans forged bonds of unity in their ongoing efforts to persevere and recover in the aftermath of destruction.

A short but elegant discourse on the powerful role of hurricanes in Cuban history. (Los Angeles Times Book Review) Responding to hurricanes as a shared experience shaped how Cubans would 'negotiate adversity of all types.' (Chronicle of Higher Education) Hurricanes, as Louis Perez convincingly demonstrates, have played a major role throughout Cuba's history, shaping its economic, social, and political trajectory. This book provides a valuable key to the enigma of Cuba's nineteenth-century history. (Luis Martinez-Fernandez, Rutgers University) A masterful story of three hurricanes--in 1842, 1844, and 1846--and their impacts on the historical evolution of Cuba. . . . A reminder that disasters occur in socioeconomic and political contexts, not in vacuums, and it is a powerful antidote to ever again thinking of disasters as isolated events. . . . In this era of increasing attention to extreme events as turning points in national histories, this book needs to be read and reflected upon.--Cuban Studies Louis Perez Jr. leaves us in no doubt of the power of great hurricanes to change the course of the past in economic, political and social ways. . . . [An] elegant discourse on the powerful role of hurricanes in Cuban history.--Los Angeles Times A thorough history of the far-reaching impact of the United States on Cuban culture from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1959 revolution.--American Studies Contributes an unprecedented review of the impact on Cuban politics, society and culture of a rather frequent (but also frequently overlooked) natural feature of the island's history.--Environmental History An enthralling historiography of how powerlessness (peasants, slaves, common folks) and power (the Spanish colonial authorities) reached compromise in preparing for tropical storms, surviving them, and rebuilding in the wake of the storms. . . . Louis A Perez has provided us with a fascinating and highly readable account of this important geographic story.--Historical Geography [Perez] regales us with a study that inscribes itself in the growing body of revisionist Latin American and Caribbean historiography which . . . refocus[es] our approach to the region's past. . . . Perez deftly assembles both the extent of the devastation and responses to the disruption and disarray that, he argues, provide clues to the broader Cuban psyche in negotiating adversity.--Journal of Latin American Studies With his usual eye for detail and customary rigour, Perez paints a picture which certainly adds to our understanding of a critical set of socio-economic developments at a critical time in Cuba's history. . . . One always welcomes a new study by Perez, and this one does not disappoint.--European Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies The strength of Perez's analysis rests with his insightful examination of how hurricanes affected each sector of Cuban society in different ways. . . . He judiciously makes a strong and innovative case for how environmental history can provide new insights into well-covered topics in Cuban history.--Latin American Research In Perez's new book . . . the major hurricanes of the 1840s are historical actors. . . . Responding to hurricanes as a shared experience shaped how Cubans would 'negotiate adversity of all types.'--Chronicle of Higher Education An original, interesting, and engaging work that should be read by those dedicated to the study of Cuba and its people, as well as by anyone who is interested in understanding the deep bonds between human beings and nature.--Colonial Latin American Historical A short but elegant discourse on the powerful role of hurricanes in Cuban history.--Los Angeles Times Book Review Perez Jr. makes valuable contribution to the small but growing number of Latin American case studies in the field of environmental history.--Journal of American History [This] work is carefully constructed not to show the single causal force of hurricanes in 'the Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Cuba,' but rather, how environmental history can shed new historiographical light on well-covered topics such as agriculture, slavery, population growth, urbanism and colonialism.--Caribbean Studies Employing rich archival material from Cuba and Spain, travelers' accounts as well as popular literary forms, Perez successfully places this climatological phenomenon at the center of the island's history, culture, and its peoples' psychology. . . . Contributes to our understanding about Cuban concepts of gender, race, class, culture, identity, and ecology. . . . This book ought to be read in both undergraduate and graduate-level Latin American and Caribbean history and geography courses.--American Historical The Caribbean's sugar islands, of which Cuba is the undisputed queen, have historically teetered on the edge of disaster and economic ruin, vulnerable to the whims of nature and the shifting winds of international trade. Hurricanes, as Louis Perez convincingly demonstrates, have played a major role throughout Cuba's history, shaping its economic, social, and political trajectory. This book provides a valuable key to the enigma of Cuba's nineteenth-century history.--Luis Martinez-Fernandez, Rutgers University About the Author Louis A. Perez Jr. is J. Carlyle Sitterson Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His books include *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture*, winner of the 2000 Bolton-Johnson Prize, and *The*

War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography.