



# 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1921 Hurricane



**...IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN. ARE YOU PREPARED?...**

On October 25, 1921 Tampa Bay suffered the most destructive hurricane to hit the area since 1848. A storm surge estimated at 11 feet destroyed substantial portions of the sea wall along coastal locations. The storm surge inundated areas in Bayshore and Tarpon Springs. Many vessels, like the steamer "Favorite", and the Thomas B. Garland were smashed against the docks by the waves.



*Destruction at the Southern Steamship Co. and Gulf Terminals, Tampa.\**

Powerful winds brought heavy damage to structures along the bay area, especially on Edgewater Park, the Hendry Knight Channel, and Palmetto Beach where many structures were reduced to rubble. Waves from the bay were almost breaking in the streets of Ybor City.

**Date : Oct 25, 1921**  
**Name: not named**  
**Intensity : Estimated at Cat 3 (100+mph)**  
**Landfall : Tarpon Springs**  
**Fatalities : 8 confirmed**  
**Est. Cost : 5 million (not adjusted)**

The Citrus industry was hard hit by the cyclone which destroyed entire crop fields. There were eight confirmed fatalities, most of them by drowning as the storm surge inundated near shore locations.



*Thomas B. Garland stranded on the ruins of the Hendry & Knight Channel.\**

Without the support of modern tools such as satellites, radars, computer graphics, and mathematical models, the forecast for such an event was extremely difficult as it was completely dependent on sparse marine and land observations. Most of the hurricane forecasts in those days were based on climatological data from previous hurricanes, which suggested that in general cyclones moving over the Gulf of Mexico had a tendency of passing well north of Tampa.

*\*Pictures courtesy of the Tampa Hillsborough County Library System*

In 2004 and 2005 the vulnerability of Florida's west coast to hurricanes was again exposed as Charley (category 4) and Wilma (category 3) wrecked southwest Florida. Their tracks over the eastern Gulf resembled the 1921 hurricane. Undoubtedly, another big hurricane will hit the Tampa Bay area in the near future.

In the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this memorable storm, we strongly encourage every citizen to develop an effective emergency plan for each household in the Tampa Bay area. More than ever, proper planning is essential in order to effectively respond before, during, and after the storm. Let us not forget that hurricane season ends in November 30.

**We must, and will be prepared.**



*The storm surge brought extensive urban flooding as shown here at the intersection of Parker and Eagle streets, Tampa.\**



*Destruction at Palmetto Beach.\**



*Hyde Park, South Delaware Avenue \**