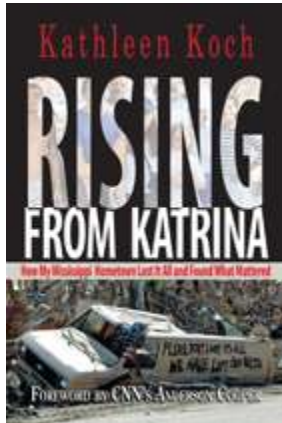


Tom Hall – Patron Review (OGPL)

Rising From Katrina: How My Mississippi Hometown Lost It All and Found What Mattered

Kathleen Koch

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Ask almost anyone about Hurricane Katrina and they will respond, "that's the storm that hit New Orleans." Well, to Kathleen Koch, and the people of Mississippi, that is the "wrong" image.

As a youngster growing up in Bay St. Louis, Kathleen could not in her wildest imagination considered what Katrina would do to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in August 2005. A quaint town of only a few thousand people, the lifestyle was laid back, lazy and Old South, but that would change. Kathleen had finished high school, gone to the University of Southern Mississippi, received a degree in journalism, and taken her first job at WLOX-TV in Biloxi, before going on to become a journalist with CNN. She was happy and successful.

In late August 2005, a hurricane of epic size (Cat 5) swept through the Mississippi Gulf Coast and produced damage that was unthinkable. The right front quadrant of Katrina, the most destructive part, came ashore and as they say, "the rest is history."

Kathleen was assigned to cover this area by CNN and what follows in the book is her insight into her hometown, the people, places, and events that changed the Mississippi Gulf Coast forever.

At first, it was the devastation and heartbreak of death, to cleaning up, then trying to rebuild not only homes, but lives as well.

This story pulls at one's heart as the author tries to cope with her own fears and depression, all the while trying to maintain her objectivity. One can sense the frustrations and disappointment in FEMA, the media, and all of the red tape.

As I read this book, I found myself unable to put it down. I too became overwhelmed with the same frustrations, especially since all the attention was focused on New Orleans, and not on Mississippi where Katrina actually hit.

If you love Mississippi, then this book is a “must” read. It will make you proud of Mississippi folks, their character and resilience. It will cause you to understand your fellow citizens and understand their concerns and feelings in facing the monumental task of starting over from nothing – no homes, cars, clothes, and most of all no pictures (those that contained all of their memories).

As you read this story, you will experience the wonder of the human spirit and the closeness that disaster can bring. What a journey!

Tom is a Friend of the Oak Grove Public Library.