

## **Chris Foster**

# **"Storm Of The Century"**

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The Storm of the Century  
(the 1935 Labor Day hurricane song)  
Words and music by Chris Foster Â© January 9th 2003.

The keys are the islands along Florida Bay  
There a paradise found for most all.  
The locals all live the fine life everyday  
Only few still alive may recall.  
About the sea and its fury when it was torn by the gales  
And how nothing could stand in its way  
Saltwater canyons made of 30 feet swales  
That came ashore one labor day

The pressure was falling the tides on the move.  
It was nothing liked weÂ'd ever seen  
Winds from the north waves from the south  
And a small piece of land in between.

We boarded up windows, pulled in our boats  
Made our havens as safe as could be  
We couldnÂ't imagine what was to be  
Everything would end up in the sea.

II. The storm started coming the pressure was dropping  
Large waves started hitting the beach  
Lighting was flashing, timbers were flying  
And safety was clear out of reach.  
The railroad was sent from south of Miami  
To rescue us but to no avail  
A wave washed the train cars right off of the track  
And it ate 30 miles of the rail

The wind knock me over I grabbed my sister  
And she clang to me for her young life  
She couldnÂ't hang on despite fear in her eyes  
And her fingernails digging like knives

I whispered I love you as she drifted away  
Then some sand blasted me in the eye  
I found refuge on the top of a tree  
placed there by the 20 foot tide.

III awoke the next morning after being unconscious  
The storm of the century had past  
The slow falling rain mixed with tears in my eyes  
As I wondered who all didn't last  
No blade of grass no tree left standing  
Every building was washed out to sea  
Dazed and confused I stood comprehending  
What my eyes told me to see.

Where is my family, where is my home  
They were nowhere in sight, someone said  
I sat by the water with my head in my hands  
Wondering if I was better off dead?

I had to go on, they needed my help  
As we mournfully stacked all the dead  
We all said a prayer then we lit them on fire  
Its an image that won't leave my head

IV. Great walls of water swallowed some whole  
In a battle between God and Man  
Four hundred twenty three lives were the toll  
And I will never quite understand  
An 18-foot monument stands off US 1  
With remains of so many who died.  
Words of remembrance with the date etched in bronze  
September 2nd 1935

I am so lucky that I'm here to retell  
God gave me a final reprieve  
Nothing short of a miracle surviving the gales  
As I desperately held to a tree

Now I share the memory with family and friends  
Sleepless nights sure have riddled my life  
Remembering all of the lives lost that day  
Is a memory that cuts like a knife.

Artist notes: This song was crafted from 2 accounts of  
the storm.

J.E. Duane who worked for the weather bureau and was  
stationed  
in the keys and from Bernard Russell who is a life long  
resident  
of the keys. After many weeks of trying to capture the  
power of  
the storm in words, I thought the human element of  
telling the  
story from the perspective of a survivor would yield the  
most  
vivid images of imagination. Only about 10 people still

alive could  
ever relate to the true horror of this event. In the writing  
of the song,  
it picked up momentum once I read Mr. Duane's log  
notes.  
The details of events. It seemed to give the song the  
backbone  
it needed. The personal side of the song is all Bernard.

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