

= Hurricane Baker (1950) =

Hurricane Baker was a major hurricane that affected the Leeward Islands , Greater Antilles , and the Gulf Coast of the United States . The tropical cyclone was the second intense hurricane , second hurricane , and second tropical storm of the 1950 Atlantic hurricane season . Hurricane Baker attained peak winds of 120 mph (195 km / h) near the Leeward Islands , traversed Antigua , and weakened to a tropical depression southwest of Puerto Rico . It re-intensified south of Cuba , strengthened to a strong Category 2 hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico , and hit the United States near Gulf Shores , Alabama , with winds of 85 mph (140 km / h) . Hurricane Baker produced extensive damage in the Lesser Antilles and Cuba , but impacts were minimal in the United States .

= = Meteorological history = =

On the morning of August 20 , a strong tropical storm developed about 446 miles (718 km) east of Basse Terre , Guadeloupe . The tropical storm deepened to hurricane intensity . On August 21 , it rapidly attained maximum sustained winds of 120 mph (195 km / h) , equivalent to a Category 3 hurricane . The hurricane passed over Antigua during the evening , while still producing winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) . On August 22 , it lost intensity and weakened to a tropical storm . On August 23 , Baker made landfall near the Puerto Rican town of Guánica as a minimal tropical storm . The highest winds on the island of Puerto Rico were 35 ? 40 mph (55 ? 65 km / h) . The storm then degenerated into an easterly tropical wave , and moved west-northwestward over northeastern Hispaniola . On August 24 , it re-entered the Atlantic Ocean , and Tropical Depression Baker crossed the coast of eastern Cuba early on the next day .

On August 25 , Baker redeveloped a center over the Caribbean Sea off southern Cuba , and re-intensified to tropical storm status . On August 27 , Baker affected the Pinar del Río Province with 60 mph (75 km / h) winds , and then turned northward over the southern Gulf of Mexico . On August 28 , Baker re-intensified to hurricane intensity ; reconnaissance and ship reports suggest the hurricane attained a second peak intensity of 110 mph (175 km / h) on August 30 . The minimum central pressure was 979 mbar (28 . 92 inHg) on this date . The cyclone diminished in intensity prior to landfall . On August 31 , the hurricane struck Gulf Shores , Alabama as a Category 1 hurricane with sustained winds estimated near 85 mph (140 km / h) . The estimated central pressure at landfall was 980 mbar (28 . 95 inHg) . Baker moved inland over Alabama and dissipated over southeastern Missouri on September 1 .

= = Impact = =

On Antigua , the Pan American Airways station 's power failed when winds reached 85 mph (140 km / h) around midnight on August 22 . Unofficial estimates placed winds between 95 ? 120 mph (150 ? 195 km / h) at the location , although damages and casualties were unknown . Subsequent reports indicated light damage occurred on the island ; later , information from the island indicated extensive damage . More than 100 homes were destroyed or damaged in the Willkie and Piggott areas , and large homes were destroyed in Prestown . Additionally , a manse was also demolished in Prestown . Electronic communications were dismantled , and thousands of homeless people sheltered in churches and schools . No deaths occurred on the island , but damages were expected to reach several thousand dollars . In Cuba , 37 people died , and the property losses reached several million dollars .

In the United States , the greatest property and crop damage occurred from Mobile , Alabama to Saint Marks , Florida , where losses approached \$ 2 @, @ 550 @, @ 000 (1950 USD) ; high tides and winds inflicted minimal damage in both cities . Panama City , Florida incurred heavy damage to homes and businesses from high tides and rainfall , which peaked at 14 @. @ 96 inches (380 mm) . The highest rainfall total was 15 @. @ 49 inches (393 mm) at Caryville , Florida . Peak gusts exceeded 100 mph (155 km / h) on Santa Rosa Island , Florida . 200 to 300 cottages received damage in Panama City , and homes were flooded near the bay . Losses reached \$ 200 @, @ 000 (

1950 USD) in Gulf Shores , Alabama . Hurricane Baker spawned two tornadoes . On August 30 , a F1 tornado touched down in Apalachicola , Florida , destroying four dwellings and a store building and damaging another eleven buildings . On August 31 , a F0 tornado demolished one building near Marianna , Florida , in Jackson County . Inland , Birmingham International Airport recorded 50 mph (85 km / h) wind gusts ; higher gusts were estimated near 75 mph (120 km / h) in elevated , mountainous locations . Hundreds of trees were prostrated as far north as the Birmingham , Alabama area , and one person was killed and two more injured by live wires falling from utility poles .