

= 1850 Atlantic hurricane season =

The 1850 Atlantic hurricane season was the most recent season excluded from the scope of the official Atlantic hurricane database . Although meteorological records are sparse and generally incomplete , they indicate that three significant tropical cyclones affected land , each causing some degree of damage . The first system struck North Carolina on July 18 , causing significant damage before battering the Mid @-@ Atlantic states with high tides , strong winds , and heavy rainfall . Torrential rainfall caused river flooding from Baltimore to Philadelphia , particularly along the Schuylkill River , which took the lives of 20 people in various incidents . Strong winds damaged property and public facilities in and around New York City , and damaging floods extended into central and northern New England . Crops and railroad infrastructure suffered throughout the entire region .

On August 22 , a strong hurricane impacted Havana , Cuba , destroying fruit trees and disrupting shipping , before making landfall on the Florida Panhandle with an enormous storm surge . Coastal flooding was severe around Apalachicola , and as the storm moved inland , it generated destructive winds across the southeastern United States . Abundant precipitation fell from Georgia through Virginia , causing extensive flooding ; one river swelled over 20 feet ( 6 m ) above its normal height . The storm blew down crops and trees along its course , and toppled a large railroad bridge near Halifax , North Carolina . Offshore , a pilot boat collided with a larger ship in the rough seas and sank . Considered the worst storm in nearly 30 years in the tidewater region of Virginia , the cyclone briefly reentered the Atlantic off New Jersey before making landfall over New England . Strong winds and moderate to heavy rains plagued much of New England on August 24 and 25 .

On September 7 and 8 , a hurricane brushed the coastline from New York to Cape Cod with gusty winds and appreciable rainfall , and left many ships in distress . The system later struck Atlantic Canada , likely causing " great loss of property and lives " , though damage reports were limited . Fragmented records exist of other hurricanes , including two which remained over open seas in early September and the middle of October .

= = Season summary = =

Attempts to catalog Atlantic hurricanes in the first half of the 19th century began as early as 1855 , when Andrés Poey compiled information on just over 400 tropical cyclones from 1493 to 1855 . However , Poey listed only three of the five or more hurricanes that developed in 1850 . In his 1963 book , *Early American Hurricanes , 1492 ? 1870* , weather researcher David M. Ludlum discusses , in greater detail , three significant tropical cyclones that impacted the United States in 1850 . Unusually , all three heavily impacted the northeastern states ; Ludlum compares the season to 1954 , in which three major tropical systems impacted the Eastern Seaboard . More traditional hurricane targets , such as Florida , were spared the brunt of seasonal tropical cyclone activity in 1850 , while the atmosphere farther north was abnormally tropical . Newark , New Jersey , had its warmest ? and one of its rainiest ? summers on record at the time , owing to frequent nearby hurricanes and the influx of tropical air . Meteorological reports pertinent to the season were largely lost in a Smithsonian Institution fire in 1856 , limiting what is known about hurricane activity in 1850 . As the season falls outside the scope of the Atlantic hurricane database ( 1851 onward ) and its associated reanalysis project , records are regarded as incomplete . Extant accounts of the storms in 1850 are chiefly based on private weather records and press reports , and only approximate storm tracks are known .

= = Storms = =

= = = Mid @-@ July = = =

The first documented hurricane in 1850 originated in the Caribbean Sea , where it wrecked dozens

of ships along the Windward Islands on July 11 and 12 . On July 18 , the storm struck North Carolina from the south as a hurricane of at least Category 1 intensity ( on the modern Saffir - Simpson hurricane wind scale ) and proceeded northward . Although the exact point of landfall is unknown , the system is believed to have moved ashore south of Cape Hatteras . Ships just off the state 's coast battled three days of hurricane conditions from July 15 to July 18 . Onshore , " great damage " occurred from Wilmington to Elizabeth City .

Intense wave action churned the Chesapeake Bay , while storm - heightened tides up to 6 ft ( 1 @ . @ 8 m ) above normal flooded wharves and coastal communities . The Baltimore area endured persistent gale - force winds accompanied by torrential rainfall . As streams and rivers swelled above their banks , cellars and streets became inundated by floodwaters . Many trees were blown down and numerous poorly built or unfinished buildings were destroyed . The storm cut telegraph communications between Baltimore and surrounding areas . In the countryside , low - lying hay fields were flooded and most of the corn crop was decimated . At Bladensburg , Maryland , a train station and locomotive were washed into an adjacent flooded waterway . Arrivals of ships into port were delayed by the storm , which one captain held to be the worst he had ever observed , and some vessels incurred extensive damage .

The storm 's effects quickly spread northward . Winds at Philadelphia began to increase in the morning on July 18 , becoming severe by the evening hours . Air pressure fell to 993 millibars ( 29 @ . @ 3 inHg ) early on July 19 as the hurricane 's center passed to the west , and the city received more than 4 inches ( 100 mm ) of rainfall . The storm wrought significant damage throughout the city , including to trees , signs , and structures . A number of houses were demolished , and many more - including a large brick building near Rittenhouse Square - suffered damage . Major freshwater flooding was observed in the area , especially along the Schuylkill River , which rapidly rose to its highest level since 1838 . A large quantity of lumber was swept away , and several docks were submerged . Their " worst apprehensions realized " , hundreds of residents worked hurriedly to mitigate damage from the flooding . Bridges over the river at Phoenixville were washed away , resulting in the deaths of four individuals . A lock of a dam upstream of Phoenixville gave way , destroying a boat and killing its occupants . Four men and a child reportedly drowned on the river 's banks near Conshohocken . Railways were covered with up to 3 feet of water in low - lying spots . Numerous small craft capsized on the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers . Overall , 20 people died in various storm - related tragedies along the Schuylkill .

The hurricane took a heavy toll on agriculture in the Mid - Atlantic states . Rampant flooding outside Philadelphia destroyed fruit orchards , and in nearby Burlington , New Jersey , strong winds and heavy rainfall inflicted significant damage to crops on the night of July 18 , leaving entire fields of corn blown down . The Delaware River burst its banks at Burlington , inundating nearby lowlands . Notable flooding also took place along the Lehigh River . Telegraph lines north of Philadelphia were crippled , limiting communications in the storm 's aftermath . Throughout the region , downed trees blocked railways .

Hurricane - force gusts buffeted Newark , New Jersey , and rainfall exceeded a weather observer 's rain gauge capacity of 4 @ . @ 75 in ( 121 mm ) . Strong winds imperiled New York City late on July 18 into the next morning ; there was widespread tree damage , with branches and leaves littering the ground , and many specimens uprooted or snapped . The storm ruined awnings and tore metal roofs off several buildings . Some ships in New York Harbor were ripped from their anchors and blown aground ; further east , multiple coaster vessels were wrecked along the coast of Long Island . The winds and storm tides destroyed bath houses and other facilities at Coney Island .

As the storm tracked northward through central New York State , it produced high southeasterly winds and heavy rainfall across most of New England . At Fort Trumbull along the coast of Connecticut , heavy rainfall starting early on July 19 accumulated to 3 @ . @ 24 in ( 82 mm ) . At Hartford , flooding caused about \$ 100 @ , @ 000 ( 1850 USD ) in losses . Southeasterly winds peaked at tropical storm - force . Damage to property and crops was confined to western New England , leaving areas such as eastern Massachusetts unscathed . Less substantial rain was reported at Providence , amounting to 1 in ( 25 mm ) . The rain shield extended into far @ - @

northern New England , producing 5 in ( 130 mm ) of precipitation at Montpelier , Vermont , and 3 @. @ 23 in ( 82 mm ) at Burlington . The resultant flooding was in some cases the greatest in recent memory .

= = = Late August = = =

A tropical system first observed near Barbados on August 16 proceeded to affect the Windward Islands before yielding hurricane conditions at Ponce , Puerto Rico , on August 20 . Two days later , the hurricane tracked over western Cuba , causing severe weather conditions around Havana . The storm destroyed large swaths of banana and plantain trees , and all vessels in Havana Harbor dragged anchors at the height of the hurricane .

The storm moved north over the eastern Gulf of Mexico , striking the Florida Panhandle between Pensacola and Panama City on August 23 . Extremely high tides bombarded the Apalachicola area , resulting in extensive coastal flooding . The hurricane destroyed wharves and left many ships damaged or foundered . Sea water intrusion inundated warehouses and streets in Apalachicola , and one street was made impassable by strewn debris and fallen trees . Farther east , a bridge over the Wakulla River was washed away by raging floodwaters . A long period of high winds was reported at the state 's capital city of Tallahassee . The storm produced some strong winds in interior Georgia on its way to the Carolinas . The destruction of homes , crops , and trees was reported from Griffin through Augusta . Adverse conditions extended westward to Montgomery , Alabama , where the night of August 23 was marked by high winds and heavy rainfall .

Southeasterly gales had a large impact on shipping interests off North Carolina . Several vessels were imperiled ; in one case a pilot boat capsized after colliding with another ship . In light of this incident , the hurricane is listed in the National Hurricane Center 's contemporary compilation of tropical cyclones that " may have " caused at least 25 fatalities . The storm grounded the schooner H. Wescott near Cape Fear .

Gales were reported from Savannah , Georgia , to Wilmington , North Carolina . Near Halifax , North Carolina , the winds toppled a railroad bridge about 450 ft ( 140 m ) long and 60 ft ( 20 m ) high . The storm also ravaged farmland in the area , destroying crops , fences , trees , and structures , and injuring several people . Much damage was reported in the Raleigh area , and many trees in New Bern suffered at least some limb breakage ; several large trees were fully uprooted . The local corn crop ? already diminished from the July hurricane ? was judged completely lost , though property damage was negligible . Offshore winds from the storm created a negative storm surge on the Neuse River , leaving docks dry for a time . Torrential rains over a large area from Georgia to Virginia triggered severe river flooding . The Dan River , which flows through North Carolina and Virginia , swelled 20 ft ( 6 m ) , amplified to 40 ft ( 12 m ) above normal in narrow channels . In the Carolinas , mills , dams , and roads were washed out , and losses in central North Carolina alone totaled an estimated \$ 7 million .

Gale @-@ force winds lashed the tidewater region of Virginia in what was considered the worst storm on the lower Chesapeake Bay since the 1821 Norfolk and Long Island hurricane . A ship called the Osceola lost its wheelhouse to the winds , while onshore , the storm razed crops and a few small structures such as barns and outhouses . Affecting many of the same areas as the July hurricane , the cyclone downed trees in and around Baltimore and caused street flooding in Washington , D.C. , where a railroad bridge was swept away . The storm began to influence the weather at Philadelphia on the night of August 24 . Strong winds out of the north and northeast at Philadelphia and Newark , New Jersey , suggest the center moved off the New Jersey coast and reemerged into the Atlantic . In addition to the gales , more than 3 in ( 75 mm ) of rain fell on Newark on August 25 .

Winds at New London , Connecticut , and Providence , Rhode Island , veered from southeast to south , then west , so the storm center likely tracked somewhere over Connecticut . The storm adversely affected shipping on the Long Island Sound , and heavy rain fell across much of New England . Fort Trumbull recorded 4 @. @ 43 in ( 113 mm ) of rain , while 2 @. @ 5 in ( 64 mm ) fell at Providence ; the deluge triggered flash flooding , though few details are known about the extent of

the damage .

== Early September ==

The third and final widely documented hurricane to affect the U.S. East Coast in 1850 remained predominately offshore , but still impacted ships and coastal cities on September 7 and 8 . A vessel about 140 mi ( 230 km ) east of Atlantic City , New Jersey , intercepted the hurricane 's center and recorded a pressure of 988 mbar ( 29 @. @ 18 inHg ) on the night of September 7 . Numerous ships near the Delaware coast were stricken . Gusty winds snapped tree branches in New York City , while Newark received 2 @. @ 6 in ( 66 mm ) of rain as the hurricane brushed the region . The system probably continued toward the northeast , passing south of Nantucket , Massachusetts . There , gale @-@ force winds initially blew out of the southeast before shifting to north midday on September 8 . Similarly , Cape Cod experienced blustery conditions accompanied by heavy rainfall , though damage in eastern New England was generally inconsequential . Providence , Rhode Island , received 2 in ( 51 mm ) of rain .

The storm later affected the Canadian Maritimes , causing heavy disruption in Nova Scotia . Downed telegraph wires in the region delayed damage reports until repairs were completed . The cyclone " undoubtedly caused great loss of property and lives along the coast " , according to a report from the telegraph office at Halifax .

== Other storms ==

A strong squall swept across Matagorda Bay in southeastern Texas on June 27 . High winds ripped a ship from its anchor and drove it aground , and at least one other vessel suffered structural damage . Although it is included in the Weather Prediction Center 's publication , Texas Hurricane History , little is known about the nature of the storm .

Shipping data indicates a hurricane formed near Cape Verde on September 2 and tracked northward into the northeastern Atlantic over the next week . Andrés Poey listed this system as two distinct cyclones , later confirmed by Chenoweth ( 2006 ) to be a single storm .

A final hurricane is believed to have existed over the central Atlantic in mid @-@ October , moving from near 24 @. @ 5 ° N , 47 ° W to 25 @. @ 5 ° N , 41 ° W over the course of four days .

== Specific ==

== General ==

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