

= Hurricane Connie =

Hurricane Connie in August 1955 contributed to significant flooding across the eastern United States, just days before Hurricane Diane affected the same general area. Connie formed on August 3 from a tropical wave in the eastern Atlantic Ocean. It moved quickly west @-@ northwestward, strengthening into a well @-@ developed hurricane by August 5. Initially, it posed a threat to the Lesser Antilles, although it passed about 50 mi (80 km) north of the region. The outer rainbands produced hurricane @-@ force wind gusts and intense precipitation, reaching 8 @. @ 65 in (220 mm) in Puerto Rico. In the United States Virgin Islands, three people died due to the hurricane, and a few homes were destroyed. In Puerto Rico, Connie destroyed 60 homes and caused crop damage. After affecting Puerto Rico, Connie turned to the northwest, reaching peak winds of 140 mph (220 km / h). The hurricane weakened while slowing and turning to the north, and struck North Carolina on August 12 at Category 2 intensity, the first of three damaging tropical cyclones in the 1955 Atlantic hurricane season to hit the state.

Ahead of the storm, the United States Weather Bureau issued widespread hurricane warnings, resulting in 14 @, @ 000 people evacuating southeastern North Carolina. Connie produced strong winds, high tides, and heavy rainfall as it moved ashore, causing heavy crop damage and 27 deaths in the state. Connie tracked roughly along the eastern coast of Virginia before turning northwest, and it progressed inland until dissipating on August 15 near Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Four people were killed in Washington, D.C. due to a traffic accident. In Chesapeake Bay, Connie capsized a boat, killing 14 people and prompting a change in Coast Guard regulation. There were six deaths each in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and eleven deaths in New York, where record rainfall flooded homes and subways. At least 225 @, @ 000 people lost power during the storm. Damage in the United States totaled around \$ 86 million, although the rains from Connie contributed to flooding from Hurricane Diane that caused \$ 700 million in damage. The remnants of Connie destroyed a few houses and boats in Ontario and killed three people in Ontario.

= = Meteorological history = =

A tropical wave developed into a tropical cyclone on August 3 to the west of the Cape Verde islands, based on reports from two ships. It moved rapidly to the west @-@ northwest, quickly intensifying into Tropical Storm Connie. A Hurricane Hunters flight on August 4 reported a developing eye feature, and the next day Connie rapidly strengthened into a 125 mph (201 km / h) major hurricane. On August 6, it passed about 60 mi (97 km) north of the Lesser Antilles and Puerto Rico. By that time, Connie had attained peak winds of 140 mph (230 km / h), making it a Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir ? Simpson scale.

For four days, Connie maintained its peak intensity as its track shifted from the west @-@ northwest toward the northwest, passing to the northeast of the Bahamas as it rounded a large ridge. On August 7, its eye had decreased to a diameter of 7 mi (11 km). By August 10, the eye had lost its definition as Connie slowed its northwest track. It began a west @-@ northwest drift due to slight Fujiwhara interaction with developing Hurricane Diane to its southeast, as well as a building ridge to its northeast. The hurricane turned to the north on August 11 and was steadily weakening, due to the combination of upwelling and entrainment of cool air. Connie turned toward the north @-@ northeast on August 12, by which time it had weakened to a minimal hurricane.

Late on August 12, Hurricane Connie made landfall near Fort Macon State Park in North Carolina. According to the Atlantic hurricane database, Connie moved ashore as a Category 2 hurricane with winds of 100 mph (160 km / h), although the Hurricane Research Division initially suggested that the hurricane hit North Carolina with winds of at least 115 mph (185 km / h) but those reports were found to be too high in reanalysis. Connie briefly moved offshore before striking land again near Cape Charles along the Eastern Shore of Virginia. It progressed inland, weakening to a tropical storm over Virginia and moving northward through the Chesapeake Bay. Connie turned to the northwest, passing through much of Pennsylvania before weakening to a tropical depression near the Pennsylvania / New York border. After crossing Lake Ontario and southwestern Ontario, the

system moved through Lake Huron , dissipating on August 15 near Sault Ste . Marie , Michigan .

= = Preparations = =

On August 5 , Hurricane Connie began to become an apparent threat to the northeastern Caribbean Islands , with maximum winds in the storm reaching 125 mph (205 km / h) . The National Weather Bureau issued hurricane warnings for Barbuda , Saba and Antigua . The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico were placed on hurricane alert as warnings were possible later that day . After Connie affected Puerto Rico , a storm warning was issued for the northern coast of the Dominican Republic , and a hurricane warning was issued for the eastern Bahamas .

While Connie was meandering in the western Atlantic Ocean , its potential track posed problems for forecasters . On August 7 , a hurricane warning was issued from North Carolina to Norfolk , Virginia , with a hurricane alert further north to New York City . The Weather Bureau later extended the hurricane warnings to Delaware Breakwater , with storm warnings further northeast to Provincetown , Massachusetts . The alert for North Carolina was up for about three days until Connie moved inland .

Ahead of the storm , the United States military flew planes away from the coast to safer shelters further inland . Two people were killed when they crashed the Navy plane they were evacuating . Naval ships rode out the storm at sea , while small boats were secured at port . The American Red Cross opened shelters and mobilized 41 officials with experience in hurricanes . The Coast Guard ordered four towns along beaches to evacuate , and overall about 14 @, @ 000 people evacuated the coastline , some to the 79 Red Cross shelters opened up . About 2 @, @ 000 people evacuated from flood @-@ prone areas in New Bern , North Carolina . In Philadelphia , the Boy Scouts evacuated 800 scouts from Camp Delmont due to the threat of the hurricane . The threat of Connie also canceled a flight by President Dwight Eisenhower from Gettysburg to Washington , D.C. , prompting him to travel instead by car . Residents were also evacuated in coastal portions of New Jersey .

= = Impact = =

= = = Caribbean = = =

As the hurricane passed about 50 mi (80 km) north of the Lesser Antilles , the outer rainbands of Connie produced wind gusts as high as 104 mph (166 km / h) on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands . Wind gusts reached 46 mph (74 km / h) in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands , although there were estimates of 80 mph (130 km / h) wind gusts on Saint Thomas . The outer rainbands of Connie also produced heavy rainfall in the northeastern Caribbean . The highest precipitation total in Puerto Rico was 8 @. @ 65 in (220 mm) along the lower Río Blanco , of which 7 @. @ 50 in (191 mm) fell in one day . Rainfall reached 7 @. @ 04 in (179 mm) in Charlotte Amalie on Saint Thomas . Two people drowned on the island , and one person was electrocuted due to Connie 's passage . The hurricane also destroyed a few shacks and boats on Saint Thomas . Along the northern coast of Puerto Rico , the threat of Connie forced 40 @, @ 000 people to evacuate their homes . High waves and other impact from the storm destroyed 60 poorly @-@ built houses . Connie also damaged crops and utilities in Puerto Rico .

= = = United States and Canada = = =

As Connie struck North Carolina , it produced sustained winds of 72 mph (116 km / h) in Morehead City , with gusts to 83 mph (134 km / h) . Wind gusts near where the hurricane moved ashore reached 100 mph (160 km / h) , although it was not confirmed whether the gust was estimated or measured . Frying Pan Shoals offshore the state reported a gust of 92 mph (148 km / h) . Along Connie 's western periphery , the rainbands spawned at least six tornadoes , of which

five in South Carolina and one in North Carolina . The hurricane produced tides that were up to 8 ft (2 @. @ 4 m) above normal while moving slowly ashore , which resulted in significant beach erosion . Tides were higher at Swansboro , North Carolina than during Hurricane Hazel the previous October , and many piers that were rebuilt after Hazel were damaged or destroyed by Connie . The storm surge flooded low @-@ lying portions of Wilmington and destroyed 40 buildings in Myrtle Beach , South Carolina . High waves in advance of the storm flooded coastal roads along the Outer Banks . Rainfall amounts of over 10 in (250 mm) in the area west of where Connie made landfall . Stream flooding occurred as far inland as Raleigh , but was most significant near the coast . Along the Pamlico River in Washington National Guardsmen were ordered to help about 1 @, @ 000 people evacuate during the storm . Outer rainbands knocked out power lines in coastal North Carolina , and flooding @-@ induced rainfall closed U.S. Route 17 near New Bern . Throughout North Carolina , the hurricane caused about \$ 40 million in damage , of which about 75 % was from crop damage . There were 27 deaths in the state related to Connie , including traffic deaths , drownings , people in damaged buildings , and electrocutions . Damage was minimal in Myrtle Beach , South Carolina .

Hurricane @-@ force winds extended into Virginia . In the state , severe river flooding was reported from the coast , inland to Richmond , which caused localized damage . Ten stations in the state , and sixteen in neighboring Maryland , reached the highest stage on record . As Connie progressed northward , it continued to drop significant amounts of precipitation . Totals of over 10 in (250 mm) were reported on both sides of the Chesapeake Bay , in Pennsylvania , and in southeastern New York . Rainfall in Richmond , Virginia totaled 8 @. @ 79 in (223 mm) on August 12 , breaking the day 's precipitation record . Record rainfall also occurred in Philadelphia and New York City . The highest precipitation related to Connie was 13 @. @ 24 in (336 mm) at Fort Schuyler in New York . Rainfall also extended as far west as Michigan and as far east as Maine . Across the northeastern United States , high rainfall from the hurricane resulted in disastrous flooding , along with Diane which moved ashore four days after Connie ; this was due to unusually moist air across the region , which resulted from above average water and air temperatures . Many areas were in drought conditions before the flooding . The combination of strong winds and high waves quickly wrecked a 125 ft (38 m) schooner in the Chesapeake Bay . Capsizing near Fairhaven , Maryland , the boat , named the Levin J. Marvel , was 64 years old , and was described as " unseaworthy " when it left from Annapolis , Maryland . Of the 23 passengers and four crew members , 14 people drowned , making it " one of the worst maritime calamities in the history of Tidewater Maryland " , as described by The Baltimore Sun . The other passengers were later rescued , some of whom after holding onto wreckage .

In Virginia , flooding washed out a portion of the Richmond , Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad near Lankford , and covered portions of U.S. 1 and U.S. 301 . The storm downed trees and caused scattered power outages for at least 5 @, @ 000 people in the state . In Washington D.C. , a car accident caused by slick roads resulted in the death of four people after a car was sideswiped and knocked into a swollen creek where the occupants drowned . In Delaware , the rains caused flooding that was described as " inconsequential " by the United States Geological Survey , due to preceding drought conditions . Rainfall reached 9 in (230 mm) in southeastern Pennsylvania , causing flooding that entered basements in low @-@ lying areas and covered roads . Two people drowned after floods swept away their cars . There were six deaths in the state , and also six deaths in neighboring New Jersey . Hurricane Connie brought the heaviest rain seen in New York in over 50 years during its passage , dropping 5 @. @ 32 in (135 mm) in New York City within a 20 @-@ hour span . Large areas of the city , including subways and thousands of houses , were flooded , and about 100 @, @ 000 people were left without power . Between New York and New Jersey , about 225 @, @ 000 people lost power . High winds and tides from the storm caused the cancellation of ferry service , and forced LaGuardia Airport to temporarily shut down after it was flooded 1 ft (0 @. @ 30 m) deep . The rains caused heavy damage across southeastern New York , and 11 people were killed across the state . In coastal Connecticut , the rainfall from Connie increased levels along streams , but there was little damage . Overall damage in the United States was estimated at about \$ 86 @, @ 065 @, @ 000 , mostly in North Carolina , Virginia , and Maryland

Further inland , gusts from Connie reached 65 mph (105 km / h) along Lake Huron in Michigan , which caused high waves that damaged or sank many small boats . Damage in the state was estimated at \$ 150 @, @ 000 . Before Connie affected Canada , residents in Humber valley prepared for potential evacuations , after Hurricane Hazel in the previous October produced deadly flooding . When the remnants of Connie entered Ontario as a tropical depression on August 23 , it continued to produce winds of up to 46 mph (75 km / h) , and the storm dropped 2 @. @ 56 in (65 mm) of rainfall near the Great Lakes . In Burlington , 27 boats were destroyed , and one person drowned in Lake Erie after his boat sank . Two other people drowned in the province . Connie destroyed six houses and damaged several others due to high waves . The storm also caused power outages and damage to the tobacco crop .

= = Aftermath = =

Flooding caused by Connie generally did not attract much media attention ; however , the floods were important in setting the conditions for later significant flooding across the northeastern United States . Just five days after Connie struck North Carolina , Hurricane Diane affected the same area , but instead of continuing to the northwest it turned to the northeast . Diane produced further rainfall in already wet areas from Connie . Damage from Diane totaled at least \$ 700 million , and six states were declared federal disaster areas from the combined hurricanes ' impact ; this allowed federal assistance for the affected areas .

The loss of the Levin J. Marvel during the hurricane prompted the United States Congress to pass a law in 1956 , which allowed the Coast Guard to inspect all vessels with more than six passengers ; the previous law only allowed inspections for boats of more than 700 tons , greatly higher than the 183 tons that the Marvel weighed . A federal courthouse charged the inexperienced captain with negligence , giving him a one @-@ year probation .

Due to its destructive impacts , the name Connie was retired , and will never again be used for an Atlantic hurricane .