

= 1949 Texas hurricane =

The 1949 Texas hurricane was an intense tropical cyclone of the 1949 Atlantic hurricane season . Forming in the Pacific Ocean on September 27 , the storm crossed into the Gulf of Mexico ? one of only a handful of known storms to do so ? and began to intensify . It ultimately peaked with winds corresponding to high @-@ end Category 2 status on the modern @-@ day Saffir ? Simpson Hurricane Scale and made landfall near Freeport , Texas , on the morning of October 4 . It rapidly weakened after moving inland and dissipated several days later . Damage from the storm was moderate , although the hurricane temporarily cut off the city of Galveston from the mainland . Rice crops suffered extensive damage , with losses estimated at up to \$ 10 million (1949 USD , \$ 99 @.@ 5 million 2016 USD) . Two people died due to the hurricane .

= = Meteorological history = =

According to modern @-@ day analysis , a tropical depression developed in the Pacific Ocean , south of El Salvador , early on September 27 . It drifted northward across Central America and eastern Mexico before emerging into the Gulf of Mexico near Ciudad del Carmen on September 30 . Weather reports had indicated low air pressures over the area for several days . It is relatively rare for a tropical cyclone to cross from the Pacific into the Atlantic , or vice versa , and this storm is among less than a dozen known to have officially done so . Only three other tropical cyclones have crossed from the eastern Pacific into the Gulf of Mexico .

The cyclone intensified into a tropical storm on October 1 and sped up slightly as it curved northwestward . A day later it became a hurricane . Subsequently , a period of rapid intensification took place , and as the cyclone approached the Texas coast on October 3 , it attained peak winds of 110 miles per hour (177 km / h) , equivalent to upper @-@ end Category 2 ? almost Category 3 ? intensity . The storm moved ashore early the next day just east of Bay City with a barometric pressure estimated at 965 millibars (28 @.@ 50 inHg) . The storm is one of a relatively few October hurricanes to either impact or make landfall in Texas . After significantly weakening , it passed directly over Houston ; the next storm to do so would be Hurricane Alicia in 1983 .

Upon moving inland , the hurricane quickly degraded into a tropical storm within six hours of making landfall . It turned northeastward as it continued through the central United States , weakening to a tropical depression by October 5 . It became extratropical the next day , yet persisted until October 7 , when it is believed to have dissipated near Sheboygan , Wisconsin .

= = Preparations and impact = =

Throughout 10 cities in Texas , 50 @,@ 000 sought shelter in advance of the hurricane . An estimated 28 @,@ 000 residents fled to shelters ; around 5 @,@ 000 stayed in the Houston City Auditorium . Tropical cyclone watches and warnings were issued along coastal areas of Texas and Louisiana . Pioneer Airlines removed its aircraft from Houston , while small watercraft were kept safe in port . Schools in Corpus Christi closed by October 3 , as well as businesses in the threatened area .

The hurricane produced gusts of 135 mph (217 km / h) just west of Freeport , accompanied by an air pressure of 28 @.@ 88 inches of mercury (978 hPa) and tides of 11 @.@ 4 ft (3 @.@ 5 m) above normal . Precipitation from the storm was heavy , peaking at 14 @.@ 5 in (370 mm) at Goodrich . Rainfall extended eastward into Louisiana , amounting to 6 @.@ 81 in (173 mm) at Shreveport , Louisiana . Urban areas sustained generally light damage . In Houston , the winds shattered some store windows and distributed debris . Galveston was temporarily cut off from the mainland during the hurricane when water surpassed the city 's seawall . The hurricane spawned a minor tornado which struck the community of Riceville , injuring on two children . Freeport reportedly suffered the worst damage , costing approximately \$ 150 @,@ 000 .

A pier at Port Aransas was largely destroyed at a cost of \$ 10 @,@ 000 . The hurricane caused extensive damage to rice , cotton , and vegetable crops in the region . An estimate several days

after the storm placed the total quantity of rice damaged at 500 @, @ 000 bushels , totaling \$ 10 million in monetary losses . However , Zoch (1949) reported that total damage from the storm was \$ 6 @. @ 7 million . Following the storm , thousands of automobiles in six states were affected by widespread peeling and blistering paint . The blisters , usually concentrated on the hoods , fenders and tops of vehicles , contained a small amount of water , and peeling paint was also reported on one Shreveport home . Most of the cars damaged were parked outside , and sheltered automobiles were unaffected . Although total damage from the phenomenon may have reached thousands of dollars , experts were unable to identify its cause immediately following the storm . Two deaths were attributed to the storm : a resident of Port Neches who was electrocuted , and a young woman who drowned in Matagorda Bay .