

= 1887 Halloween tropical storm =

The 1887 Halloween tropical storm was a late @-@ season tropical cyclone that caused significant damage along the East Coast of the United States during Halloween of 1887 . The sixteenth tropical storm of the annual hurricane season , it formed from an area of disturbed weather over the Gulf of Mexico on October 29 . The storm later came ashore along the west coast of Florida . After crossing the state , it produced severe thunderstorms along the North Carolina ? Virginia coastline before becoming extratropical on November 1 . The extratropical system intensified into the equivalent of a Category 1 hurricane on the modern @-@ day Saffir ? Simpson Hurricane Scale . It eventually dissipated on November 6 , shortly after hitting northwest France .

The storm affected the town of Norfolk , where it became the most damaging storm since 1879 . Despite the damage inland , the storm is best known for the unusually high amount of shipwrecks and maritime incidents it caused . One ship , a schooner called the Manantico , capsized , killing the captain and one of its crew members . Three other ships were driven ashore on Virginia beaches from Dam Rock to Cape Henry , and numerous others were put in danger .

= = Meteorological history = =

The storm originated from an area of disturbed weather that had persisted in the Gulf of Mexico during late October 1887 , outside the area of coastal stations . On October 29 , the disturbance completed tropical cyclogenesis and became the sixteenth tropical storm of the season . After forming , the storm was located 200 miles (320 km) northwest of Key West and began moving east @-@ northeastward , making landfall on the Florida Peninsula . It crossed land and emerged over water within the next eight hours while weakening . During its passage near Fort Meade , the storm had an estimated barometric pressure of 1 @, @ 007 millibars (29 @. @ 7 inHg) , supporting minimal tropical storm strength . Upon crossing the state , it paralleled the East Coast for two days while restrengthening . It passed closest to land near the North Carolina coastline on October 31 at its peak intensity , with sustained winds of 70 mph (110 km / h) and a pressure of 993 millibars (29 @. @ 3 inHg) . Shortly after moving away from land , it became extratropical .

The extratropical cyclone moved away from the coast and strengthened to the equivalent of a Category 1 hurricane on the modern @-@ day Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale on November 1 . It began a weakening trend on November 2 while taking a wavering path across the north Atlantic Ocean . On November 4 , the cyclone started a general east @-@ southeast motion , passing near the southwest coasts of Ireland and Great Britain . It made landfall on the Cotentin Peninsula of France on November 6 and dissipated , although one proposed track , which is a modified track that differs from the official record due to new evidence or theory , was given by Charles Mitchell that showed the cyclone executing a counter @-@ clockwise loop over northwest France until dissipating the storm on November 8 .

= = Impact = =

In its formative stages , the storm was responsible for causing rain from the Rio Grande Valley along the Gulf Coast to Florida . As the storm crossed Florida , Fort Meade recorded less than 1 in (2 @. @ 5 cm) of rainfall . As it strengthened off the East Coast , the storm caused damage in various towns . A maximum wind speed of 54 mph (87 km / h) was measured at Hatteras , North Carolina . In Kitty Hawk , impact from the storm was more intense , generating maximum winds of 60 mph (97 km / h) to as high as 70 mph (110 km / h) from late on October 30 to the following afternoon ; despite the intensity , only minor damage was reported . In Lenoir and Raleigh , heavy rain totals up to 4 @. @ 18 in (10 @. @ 6 cm) were reported . Unusually , reports of hail and snow were also received from these locations . Telegraph poles were snapped on Bodie Island and south of Little Kinnakeet , affecting communication . The worst land @-@ based impact from the storm was in Virginia . Cape Henry was hit with a combination of wind , rain , and blown sand on October 31 and communications between Cape Henry and Norfolk were lost . In Norfolk , the storm was the

longest @-@ lasting and most damaging since the Great Beaufort Hurricane of 1879 . The storm conditions made beaches in the area so hazardous that they were watched day and night . Effects from the storm reached as far north as Provincetown , Massachusetts , where winds of 60 mph (97 km / h) were recorded .

Despite causing damage along the East Coast , the storm is best known for causing a record number of maritime incidents . Numerous ships were caught in the storm from October 30 , when the steamship Claribel reported gale @-@ force winds , to November 6 , when another steamship , the Australia , reported stormy weather . One ship , the brig Osseo , was caught in the storm on November 1 and became flooded . Although the pumps were manned , the water level inside the ship soon reached 4 ft (1 @. @ 2 m) . After being carried away by a wave , the distressed ship was spotted by the Camalia , which rescued the crew and brought them to port . Another vessel , the Wyonoka , spotted a sunken schooner with its five crew grasping the mast and ropes : they were also rescued . In addition , four ships were deemed total losses after being beached in Virginia . The first was the Mary D. Cranmer , which was ripped from its cables and stranded near Cape Henry . Shortly after the rescue of the crew of the Cranmer another ship , the Carrie Holmes , was found beached . The ship had been driven so far up the beach that its crew were able to jump and wade to safety .

A third ship , the Manantico also crashed into shore due to a combination of the storm and human error in which the captain confused Cape Henry with Cape Charles after spotting another schooner . The Manantico was also where the two deaths associated with the storm occurred . The first was when a cook on the ship was crushed to death by the cargo of lumber being hauled by the ship . The ship was then pushed towards a sand bar . The captain , who had stayed high on the starboard side for safety , began climbing down to slip the ship cables , but the ship made a sudden stop . This flung the captain into the water , and he drowned . Both bodies were found after the storm and were very disfigured . The captain was sent to Middletown , Connecticut for interment while the body of the cook was buried on the beach . The final ship was the Harriet Thomas , which was the schooner spotted by the Manantico . After beaching , the crew managed to get a rope to shore where fishermen had tied the other end . The crew were able to climb ashore , although the captain had to be rescued via alternate means due to being too heavy for this method . The ship was written off as a \$ 7000 (1887 USD) loss . Although all four ships were beached , due to the loss of communications , only one wreck ? that of the Mary D. Cranmer ? was reported in the Norfolk Virginian newspaper . As a result , news of the two deaths from the Manantico were initially unreported .