

= 1910 Cuba hurricane =

The 1910 Cuba hurricane , popularly known as the Cyclone of the Five Days , was an unusual and destructive tropical cyclone that struck Cuba and the United States in October 1910 . It formed in the southern Caribbean on October 9 and strengthened as it moved northwestward , becoming a hurricane on October 12 . After crossing the western tip of Cuba , it peaked in intensity on October 16 , corresponding to Category 4 on the Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale . That same day , the hurricane moved in a counterclockwise loop and hit Cuba again . It then tracked toward Florida , landing near Cape Romano . After moving through the state , it hugged the coast of the Southeastern United States on its way out to sea .

Due to its unusual loop , initial reports suggested it was two separate storms that developed and hit land in rapid succession . Its track was subject to much debate at the time ; eventually , it was identified as a single storm . Analysis of the event gave a greater understanding of weather systems that took similar paths .

The hurricane is considered one of the worst natural disasters in Cuban history . Damage was extensive , and thousands were left homeless . It also had a widespread impact in Florida , including the destruction of houses and flooding . Although total monetary damage from the storm is unknown , estimates of losses in Havana , Cuba exceed \$ 1 million and in the Florida Keys , \$ 250 @,@ 000 . At least 100 deaths occurred in Cuba alone .

= = Meteorological history = =

On October 9 , the fifth tropical depression of the 1910 season formed from a tropical disturbance in the extreme southern Caribbean , to the north of Panama . It tracked steadily northwestward , and attained tropical storm intensity on October 11 . It continued to strengthen , and became a hurricane the next day . On October 13 , the storm was observed to the southwest of Cuba . Early on October 14 , the hurricane briefly reached an intensity corresponding to Category 3 status on the modern @-@ day Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale before tracking ashore along the western tip of Cuba . However , it weakened somewhat after crossing the island . Upon emerging into the Gulf of Mexico , the hurricane slowed considerably .

Steered by currents from an area of high pressure to the north , the storm began to drift northwestward and rapidly deepen over warm waters of the Gulf . It executed a tight counterclockwise loop , and continued to mature ; on October 16 it reached peaked winds of 150 mph ( 240 km / h ) with a minimum barometric pressure of 924 mbar ( hPa ; 27 @.@ 29 inHg ) . The hurricane turned northeastward , again approaching western Cuba , and began to accelerate towards the Florida Peninsula on October 17 . Its center passed west of Key West and made landfall near Cape Romano . The storm moved due north for a time as it moved inland , and deteriorated into a tropical storm . From northeastern Florida , the cyclone curved northeastward and hugged the coast of the Southeast United States before heading out to sea . The storm is estimated to have dissipated on October 23 .

The storm is unusual in that due to its loop near Cuba , initial reports suggested that it was actually two separate cyclones . The Monthly Weather Review describes the event as multiple disturbances and reports that the first hurricane dissipated in the central Gulf of Mexico after crossing Cuba , while the second formed subsequently and hit Florida . At the time , the storm 's track was subject to much debate . It was later identified as a single storm , although observations on the hurricane led to advances in the understanding of tropical cyclones with similar paths . On October 19 , The Washington Post wrote , " Whether two storms have been raging in Cuban waters within the past week , or whether the same storm has revisited Cuba , traversing southern Florida in its backwards course , remains to be determined . If the later supposition be correct , the recurve of the storm , after its entrance into the Gulf of Mexico , must have been unusually sudden and sharp . "

= = Impact = =

On October 15 , all vessels within a 500 mi ( 800 km ) radius of Key West were warned of the approaching storm , and many ships anchored in harbors . Throughout the region , storm warnings and advisories were issued .

= = = Cuba = = =

The storm wrought severe destruction in Cuba , considered to be among the worst effects from a tropical cyclone on record . High winds and torrential rainfall flooded streets , destroyed crops , and damaged plantations . In particular , the storm caused substantial damage to the tobacco in the region of Vuelta Abajo . Many towns were severely damaged or destroyed . The city of Casilda was devastated , while the town of Batabanó was inundated by flood waters . The hurricane cut off communications to inland areas . The majority of the fatalities and property damages were suspected to be in the Pinar del Río province .

The New York Times wrote that Cuba had " probably suffered the greatest material disaster in all its history " . It was reported that thousands of peasants were left homeless due to the cyclone . Losses in Havana were also extensive ; along the shore , scores of ships carrying valuable cargo had sunk . The storm also seriously damaged goods stored on local wharves and barges . " Tremendous " waves crashed ashore , flooding coastal areas . Numerous ships and small watercraft were wrecked by the cyclone . The raging seas submerged about 1 sq mi ( 2 @. @ 6 km<sup>2</sup> ) of Havana 's oceanfront land . The Malecón sea wall breached , allowing flood waters to engulf the roadway there and residences in the area .

It is estimated that at least 100 people lost their lives , mostly due to mudslides , including five persons in Havana . However , reports range as high as 700 . Initial estimates of the financial damage caused by the storm were in the millions of dollars , including losses of \$ 1 million in Havana , largely from the destruction of Customs House sheds there , which were filled with many valuable goods . Some of these buildings were swept 0 @. @ 5 mi ( 0 @. @ 80 km ) away , and the winds tore the roof off the main warehouse . In the aftermath ? while the hurricane was still widely considered to be two separate storms ? rumors arose " of the approach of a third storm " , although in actuality no additional storms were known to have occurred in the 1910 season .

= = = Holliswood = = =

A four @-@ masted schooner , the Holliswood , became trapped in the storm in the Gulf of Mexico . The vessel departed from New Orleans on October 1 , carrying cypress wood . The crew fought the storm for days and eventually the masts were cut to avoid capsizing . Waterlogged , the ship was blown miles off course . As described by the owner of the schooner , Paul Mangold :

On Wednesday , the 12th , we began to get the first of the hurricane . We were running under very little canvas . Early Saturday morning we got the full force of the storm . We managed to get the sails fast and ran with the hurricane under bare poles . The wind circled about us sometimes at a hundred @-@ mile rate . The seas came from all directions , though it was from the starboard that the real trouble seemed to come .

The steamboat Harold spotted the ship and rescued all of its crew except Captain E. E. Walls , who opted to stay behind with the order " Report me to my owners " . At the time , the Holliswood was badly damaged , with her house destroyed and her rudder torn away . The crew apparently advised the captain that the ship would not stay afloat for another five hours , although he dismissed their concerns . After the crew was rescued , Captain Walls struggled against the storm for days without food or fresh water . On October 20 , the Parkwood rescued Walls unconscious , but initially feared to be dead . Once aboard , he regained consciousness and , reportedly amidst an episode of delirium , asked to be returned to the Holliswood . Ultimately , the captain of the Parkwood agreed to tow the battered ship to shore .

= = = Southern Florida = = =

At Key West , pressures began to fall at midnight on October 12 as the storm approached from the southwest . By late on October 13 , heavy rain had begun to fall , and winds began to increase , reaching 50 mph ( 80 km / h ) on October 14 . Gusts reached 110 mph ( 180 km / h ) and storm tide ran 15 ft ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) ; swells in the area attained " unusually high " levels . Many docks were destroyed , and on October 17 , the basement of the Weather Bureau office was submerged by rising waters . Before the rain gauge was washed out to sea , 3 @. @ 89 in ( 99 mm ) of precipitation was recorded . Damage throughout the Florida Keys was moderate , estimated at worth around \$ 250 @, @ 000 ( 1910 USD ) . Property damage was generally limited to structures along the shore .

As the storm progressed westward , Tampa and nearby locations started to experience its effects . Strong winds from the northeast blew water out of the Tampa Bay to the lowest level ever recorded . The barometer fell to 961 mbar ( hPa ; 28 @. @ 4 inHg ) , and extremely high waves battered the shore from Flamingo to Cape Romano . The surf continued well inland , forcing survivors to cling atop trees . North of Tampa , the hurricane 's effects were moderate or light , while in the southwestern part of the state , damage increased in severity . A portion of the local citrus crop was destroyed . Property damage was widespread from Tampa to Jacksonville and points south . High winds tore the roofs off homes and shook some structures off their foundations .

Seven men lost their lives in the wreckage of several Cuban schooners at Punta Gorda . Nearby , one man and a baby drowned as a result of the storm surge , and another died while attempting to cross a flooded river . A French steamship , the *Louisiane* , went ashore with 600 passengers ; all people aboard the vessel were rescued by the *Forward* , a Revenue cutter .

= = = Northeastern Florida and southern United States = = =

Damage on the Atlantic coast was less severe , although at Jupiter , the Weather Bureau office reported : " the rainfall at this point did more damage than the wind . It had rained every day from the 3rd to the 13th , with a total fall of 5 @. @ 96 inches ( 151 mm ) , and the creeks and flat woods were full of water when the first storm began . From the 14th to the 18th , inclusive , 14 @. @ 27 inches ( 362 mm ) more fell . The inlet being closed the rivers rose 8 feet ( 2 @. @ 4 m ) above normal high water , which in a flat country like this , puts practically all land under water from 1 foot ( 0 @. @ 30 m ) to 8 feet ( 2 @. @ 4 m ) . Fortunately the sea remained low and comparatively smooth so that it was possible to open the inlet and let the water out . "

A large number of pine trees were blown down near the city of Jupiter . One man near Lemon City was killed by falling timber . Small watercraft , docks and boathouses sustained damage , but otherwise the storm 's effects on the east coast were more moderate compared to other areas . Portions of the Florida East Coast Railroad bed were washed out , and repairs were anticipated to be costly . An American schooner blew ashore at Boca Raton , killing three and leaving the rest of the crew stranded for 12 hours until help arrived . Estimates of the cyclone 's impact on citrus crops in the region vary widely .

On its way to sea , the storm passed just west of Jacksonville . Although very little damage occurred in and around the city , persistent northeasterly winds caused flooding in low @-@ lying coastal areas . Minor flooding extended northward into Georgia and South Carolina ; initially , interruptions of communication between cities led to exaggerated reports of damage in those states . Early on October 18 , light precipitation began to fall in Savannah as the winds picked up . By October 19 , winds had reached 70 mph ( 110 km / h ) . However , it was said that the city 's worst damage came as a result of the high tides rather than the intense winds . Certain rivers exceeded their banks , submerging surrounding farmland . Minor damage occurred in Charleston , South Carolina .