

= 1909 Greater Antilles hurricane =

The 1909 Greater Antilles hurricane was a rare , late @-@ season tropical cyclone that caused extensive damage and loss of life in Jamaica and Haiti . Forming out of a large disturbance in early November , the hurricane began as a minimal tropical storm over the southwestern Caribbean Sea on November 8 . Slowly tracking northwestward , the system gradually intensified . Late on November 11 , the storm brushed the eastern tip of Jamaica before attaining hurricane status . The following afternoon , the storm made landfall in northwest Haiti with winds of 85 mph ( 140 km / h ) . After moving over the Atlantic Ocean , the hurricane further intensified and attained its peak winds of 105 mph ( 165 km / h ) on November 13 . The system rapidly transitioned into an extratropical cyclone the following day before being absorbed by a frontal system northeast of the Lesser Antilles .

Including rainfall from the precursor to the hurricane , rainfall in Jamaica peaked at 114 @.@ 50 in ( 2 @.@ 908 mm ) Silver Hill Plantation . These extreme rains led to widespread flooding that killed 30 people and left \$ 7 million in damage throughout the country . The worst damage in Haiti was caused rains exceeding 24 in ( 610 mm ) that led to catastrophic flooding . At least 166 people are known to have been killed in the country ; however , reports indicate that hundreds likely died during the storm .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of the 1909 Greater Antilles hurricane are unclear , but are believed to have begun with a large , slow @-@ moving storm system near Jamaica in early November . By November 8 , it was classified as a tropical storm and was situated over the southwestern Caribbean Sea , north of Panama . A ship in the vicinity of the system recorded an atmospheric pressure of 1004 mbar ( hPa ; 29 @.@ 68 inHg ) . Slowly moving northeastward , an unusual direction for a Caribbean cyclone , the storm gradually intensified . The forward motion of the system steadily increased on November 10 as it headed towards Jamaica . Late on November 11 , the system brushed the eastern tip of Jamaica as a strong tropical storm , with maximum winds estimated at 70 mph ( 120 km / h ) . Several hours later , the storm intensified into what would now be classified a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir ? Simpson Hurricane Scale . During the afternoon of November 12 , the hurricane made landfall in northern Haiti , in the Nord @-@ Ouest Department , with winds of 85 mph ( 140 km / h ) . After briefly moving over land , the storm entered the Atlantic Ocean and turned east @-@ northeast and further accelerated .

Early on November 13 , the hurricane further intensified to the equivalent of a Category 2 system and attained peak winds of 105 mph ( 165 km / h ) . No barometric pressure was recorded at the time of peak intensity since it occurred over water and away from any ships . In an initial analysis of the storm made by meteorologist José Fernández Partagás in 1999 , he wrote that at the storm 's peak , it was a strong tropical storm , not a hurricane . In a report , it was stated that " It was a difficult case for the author [ Partagás ] to decide whether or not to upgrade to a hurricane " . It was not until the Atlantic hurricane database re @-@ analysis reached 1909 in February 2004 that the storm was designated as a hurricane . By November 14 , the storm began to weaken as it turned nearly due east . Later that day , it quickly transitioned into an extratropical cyclone before being absorbed by a frontal system northeast of the Lesser Antilles .

= = Impact = =

Prior to becoming a tropical storm , the precursor low had been producing heavy rainfall across Jamaica since November 5 . Further rains fell as the system intensified and neared the country . Between November 5 and 11 , the system produced 30 @.@ 45 in ( 773 mm ) of rain in Kingston . More extreme rains fell upon the Silver Hill Plantation , where 114 @.@ 50 inches ( 2 @.@ 908 mm ) of rain accumulated in the five @-@ day period of November 5 ? 9 , with eight @-@ day totals from November 4 ? 11 reaching 135 @.@ 00 inches ( 3 @.@ 429 mm ) . This rainfall triggered

severe flooding . Roughly 500 @, @ 000 banana plants were lost as a result of the floods , about 20 % of the entire country 's yield . Around Kingston , the waterworks was destroyed and several tunnels and railways were blocked by landslides . Many bridges and roads were also damaged or destroyed . This led to many towns being isolated and hampered rescue efforts . Flood waters in the town of Annot Bay reached 3 ft ( 0 @. @ 91 m ) . Throughout Jamaica , the flooding killed 30 people and damage was estimated at \$ 7 million ( 1909 USD ) . Following the severe flooding , the Jamaican government allocated about \$ 150 @, @ 000 in funds for damage repair .

In nearby Haiti , the damage from the hurricane was catastrophic as torrential rains , reported to have exceeded 24 in ( 610 mm ) , triggered widespread flooding and landslides throughout the country . Initial reports from Haiti were slow to reach the news media as most roads were flooded or destroyed . Several days after the hurricane 's passage , reports began to indicate that immense damage had taken place due to the storm . The city of Gonaïves was completely flooded after a nearby river overflowed its banks . Residents sought safety from the flood waters in the upper floors and roofs of their homes . Sixteen people were killed in the city after a bridge was destroyed by the swollen river . The Tonazeau River near Port @- @ au @- @ Prince also topped its banks , inundating nearby areas .

Along the Yaqui River , unprecedented flooding led to the creation of a large lake , estimated to be 30 mi ( 48 km ) long and up to 80 ft ( 24 m ) deep . Many villages were destroyed by the floods , with hundreds of fatalities expected to result from the storm . Monetary losses for Haiti following the disaster are scarce , with the only known damage estimate being \$ 3 million . However , the true damage cost from the hurricane is likely much higher . At least 166 fatalities are known as a result of the storm in Haiti ; however , many reports state that several hundred people likely perished during the storm . Most of the fatalities took place in the Nord @- @ Ouest Department where 150 victims were identified .