

= 1926 Louisiana hurricane =

The 1926 Louisiana hurricane caused widespread devastation to the United States Gulf Coast , particularly in Louisiana . The third tropical cyclone and hurricane of the 1926 Atlantic hurricane season , it formed from a broad area of low pressure in the central Caribbean Sea on August 20 . Moving to the northwest , the storm slowly intensified , reaching tropical storm strength on August 21 and subsequently attaining hurricane strength after passing through the Yucatán Channel . The hurricane steadily intensified as it recurved northwards in the Gulf of Mexico , before reaching peak intensity just prior to landfall near Houma , Louisiana on August 25 with winds of 115 mph ( 185 km / h ) . After moving inland , the tropical cyclone moved to the west and quickly weakened , before dissipating on August 27 .

The hurricane 's strong storm surge at landfall caused extensive damage to coastal regions , especially lighthouses . Strong winds caused severe infrastructural and crop damage , destroying homes and disrupting communications . Heavy rainfall , peaking at 14 @. @ 5 in ( 370 mm ) in Donaldsonville , Louisiana , also helped to damage crops . Widespread power outages also occurred in areas along the Gulf Coast . 25 deaths were reported as a result of the hurricane , with damages estimates totaling \$ 6 million .

= = Meteorological history = =

A tropical depression first formed on August 20 in the central Caribbean Sea from a broad area of low pressure , based on weather reports from weather stations and ships in the vicinity . Moving steadily to the west @- @ northwest towards the western Caribbean , the disturbance slowly intensified , attaining tropical storm strength by 1200 UTC the next day . Prior to the Atlantic hurricane reanalysis project , however , the system was analyzed to be an open trough up until August 22 . The tropical storm began to move more towards the west in the Gulf of Mexico after clipping the Guanahacabibes Peninsula ? the westernmost region of Cuba ? late on August 22 .

Once in the Gulf of Mexico on August 22 , the tropical storm continued to intensify , reaching hurricane strength early the next day north of the Yucatán Peninsula . A ship in the hurricane 's vicinity reported a barometric pressure of 994 mbar ( hPa ; 29 @. @ 36 inHg ) , and other ships also reported similarly low pressures . Beginning on August 24 , the system began to curve northwards towards the Louisiana coast in response to a nearby cold front . The hurricane continued to intensify as it moved northwards , reaching Category 2 hurricane intensity the same day and subsequently the equivalent of a Category 3 hurricane on August 25 . A ship reported an eye associated with the system , observing 100 mph ( 160 km / h ) winds with a pressure of 959 mbar ( hPa ; 28 @. @ 32 inHg ) at 2100 UTC that day .

The major hurricane intensified up until making landfall near Houma , Louisiana at 2300 UTC late on August 25 , with winds estimated at 115 mph ( 185 km / h ) and an estimated minimum barometric pressure of 955 mbar ( hPa ; 28 @. @ 20 inHg ) , based on a pressure report of 959 mbar ( hPa ; 28 @. @ 32 inHg ) in Houma . Maximum sustained winds extended 23 mi ( 37 km ) from the hurricane 's center . Once over land , however , the hurricane rapidly weakened . By 1200 UTC on August 26 , the system had already degenerated to a tropical storm , while still located over Louisiana near Baton Rouge . The next day , the storm weakened further to tropical depression strength as it moved towards the west , before degenerating into an open trough of low pressure near Hillsboro , Texas by 1800 UTC on August 27 .

= = Preparations = =

In preparation for the oncoming hurricane , the weather forecast office in New Orleans began to issue tropical cyclone warnings and watches and advisories for the storm on August 23 . The first storm warnings were issued for areas of the United States Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Matagorda , Texas at 10 : 30 p.m CDT ( 0430 UTC ) that day , indicating an approaching system with considerable intensity . As the hurricane unexpectedly recurved to the north the next day , the

previously issued storm warning was shifted eastward to include areas from Morgan City , Louisiana to Galveston , Texas , while a hurricane warning was issued by the weather forecast office for areas between Morgan City and Mobile , Alabama at 10 : 00 p.m. CDT ( 0400 UTC ) . A storm warning was also placed for areas east of Mobile to Apalachicola , Florida . After the hurricane rapidly weakened over land , warnings and advisories from the New Orleans weather office related to the storm were discontinued by 9 : 00 p.m. ( 0500 UTC ) on August 25 . The warnings were communicated to potentially affected areas via mail , telegraph , and other forms of communication . During the time that the hurricane was approaching the coast , the United States Weather Bureau also began experimentally transmitting surface weather analysis maps to ships by radio . Small craft offshore of Mobile were recalled to the Port of Mobile , while floating dock property was removed in New Orleans . Due to the potential affects of the hurricane on the cotton industry , cotton stock markets reported gains of eight to fifteen points from the first trades , with stock prices closing with a net gain as high as 24 points .

= = Impact = =

A storm surge of 15 ft ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) was reported in Terrebonne Parish , Louisiana . At Timbalier Bay , tides were 10 ft ( 3 m ) above average . The New Canal Light was damaged by the strong wind and waves . Previously damaged by the 1915 New Orleans hurricane , the new damage instigated a project to raise the lighthouse by 3 ft ( 0 @. @ 9 m ) . The third Timbalier Bay lighthouse was also damaged by the hurricane . Several small fishing schooners were lost during the storm after failing to evacuate to ports prior to the storm . Upstream of the Mississippi River near Donaldsonville , Louisiana , a boat sank .

Strong hurricane force winds were reported along the Louisiana coast at landfall . Grand Isle reported sustained winds of 100 mph ( 160 km / h ) , while gusts in Thibodaux and Napoleonville were estimated at 120 mph ( 195 km / h ) . Three churches , a warehouse , and ten stores were destroyed in Thibodaux . A weather station in New Orleans observed a peak wind gust of 52 mph ( 84 km / h ) . Severe damage was reported between New Orleans and Baton Rouge , which included uprooted trees and displaced barns . Roads were also blocked by debris . Window damage caused by strong winds was reported in New Orleans . Baton Rouge was affected by a power outage , resulting in \$ 20 @, @ 000 in losses to the local electric company . Communication wires were downed in Morgan City , preventing communication with other cities . Houses were also unroofed in the city by strong winds . A ferry was also wrecked by the hurricane offshore of Morgan Point . In Houma , an estimated 90 % of sugar cane was lost due to the hurricane . The city 's sugarhouse was also destroyed , along with an Episcopal church . Three passenger trains along the Southern Pacific Railroad were detained in Avondale , Louisiana after winds were determined to be too unsafe for rail operations . The strong winds and rain also caused a mail plane to crash . In Tulane University , a chemistry building was destroyed by a fire during the hurricane . Several other fires were reported in various areas of New Orleans .

The hurricane also dropped heavy rains along the coast , which were increased by atmospheric instability in the region just prior to the storm 's landfall . Rainfall peaked in Donaldsonville , Louisiana , where 14 @. @ 5 in ( 370 mm ) of rain was reported in a 24 ? hour period from August 25 to the 26th . 24 ? hour rainfall records were set in 11 locations , including Donaldsonville . The rains destroyed a pecan orchard in Schriever , Louisiana , and damaged crops in Crowley , Louisiana . Other rainfall amounts of at least 3 in ( 76 mm ) were widespread across the coast . Outside of Louisiana , rainfall peaked at 10 in ( 250 mm ) in the Florida Panhandle , with localized rainfall measurements of at least 5 in ( 130 mm ) . The hurricane caused 25 deaths and an estimated \$ 6 million in damages , of which \$ 4 million were attributed to infrastructural damage . After the storm , the American Red Cross sent relief to Houma , Louisiana and other affected regions to assist in rehabilitation work .