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U.S. Weather Bureau.

Preliminary report on Hurricane "Diane",
August 11-20, 1955.

Preliminary Report on Hurricane "DIANE"
August 11-20, 1955



(This report is preliminary in nature and will be superseded by the official report in the August 1955 issue of Climatological Data, National Summary)

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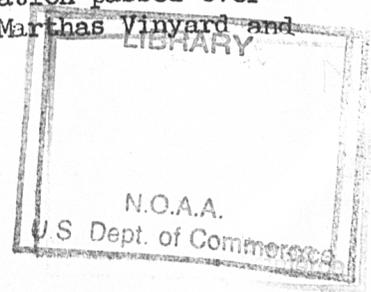
Hurricane DIANE was first detected over the Atlantic Ocean on August 11, 1955, about 400 miles northeast of San Juan, Puerto Rico. With winds of 50 to 60 mph over a small area near the center, DIANE moved in a northwesterly to northerly direction for about 24 hours. On August 12th, DIANE drifted slowly toward the north and northeast and increased in intensity to a full hurricane, with winds of 115 mph near the center. She altered course again and on the 13th was headed west-northwest at a speed of about 12 mph. This course continued until on the 16th, DIANE was poised off the Carolina coast and swinging toward a more northwesterly course. The hurricane entered the North Carolina coast on the morning of August 17th near Wilmington, North Carolina. After passing Wilmington, DIANE moved north-northwestward across the eastern part of North Carolina, passing directly over Durham in mid afternoon, and proceeded on into Virginia.

The hurricane caused showery weather over eastern South Carolina on August 16th and 17th. No hurricane winds were reported in South Carolina, though tides were 1 to 2 feet above normal in Charleston, and higher further northward along the coast. At Wilmington, North Carolina the peak wind gust was 74 mph from the northeast, but occurred well in advance of the storm center.

Damage in South Carolina has been estimated at about \$77,000, and in North Carolina at about 5 million dollars, which is considerably less than that from CONNIE. Agricultural losses are not included in these figures, and for the two storms probably exceeded 25 million dollars.

DIANE continued on a north-northwesterly path through Virginia with diminishing winds, but continuing rains. The center passed about 75 miles west of Richmond, and wind damage was negligible. Floods occurred in most of the rivers of central and eastern Virginia, as a result of the rainfall from DIANE superimposed on the saturated soils and full rivers left by CONNIE.

By the morning of August 18th, DIANE had diminished to the point that she was no longer called a tropical storm. Indeed no hurricane winds had been associated with her passage over North Carolina and Virginia. At 11 a.m. on the 18th, the decreased storm circulation was centered about 60 miles west of Washington, D. C. and moving northward. It turned toward a more northeasterly path during the afternoon, to pass just south of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and cross New Jersey headed east during the night of the 18th. On the morning of August 19th, the center of the circulation passed over eastern Long Island and by evening was located between Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, moving toward the east-northeast.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Bureau Hurricane Series

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During the 18th and 19th the winds were an unimportant feature of the storm, particularly when considered in relation to the rains. CONNIE had deposited from 6 to 12 inches of water over much of Northern Virginia, Maryland, eastern Pennsylvania, and New York, northern New Jersey and southern New England. The stage was set for floods if more rain fell. DIANE brought rainfall amounts from 6 to 16 inches to this area, and devastating floods resulted.

Many of the flooded rivers rose rapidly, as the rains fell, and the flood waters quickly overwhelmed the river valleys. Near Stroudsburg, Pa., an estimated 75 people were killed when the Brodhead Creek swept away a summer camp.

The Delaware River crested at record stages between Port Jervis, New York and Trenton, New Jersey, with the waters 5 to 18 feet above flood stage. The Delaware River reached an estimated height of 40 feet at Easton, Pa., on the 19th, four feet above the record flood of 1903. The Lehigh river crested at Allentown, Pa., at stages exceeding the record floods of 1902 and 1942, while at Scranton the city was isolated by the flood waters of the Lackawanna River. It is estimated that more than 90 lives were lost in eastern Pennsylvania as a direct result of the floods.

Record rains in the Catskills caused severe flooding of streams in southeastern New York, but the heaviest rains fell over southern New England on the 18th and 19th, with amounts ranging up to 16 inches. The Naugatuck, Housatonic, Connecticut and upper Thames River valleys in Connecticut, the Woonsocket area of Rhode Island, and the Connecticut River Valley and Worcester County areas of Massachusetts were hardest hit. The death toll has not been accurately counted as yet, but exceeds 85 in these areas.

A separate "Preliminary Report of Hurricane Diane and Floods in Northeast-August 1955" has been issued by the River Services Section of the U. S. Weather Bureau, reference O-6.41, dated August 25, 1955.

The Table on page 3 includes selected climatological data for stations affected by DIANE, and the track of the center of the storm is shown on the Chart in Figure I.

SELECTED CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA FOR STATIONS AFFECTED BY HURRICANE "DIANE" ARE CONTAINED IN THE TABLE BELOW, AND THE TRACK OF THE STORM IS SHOWN IN FIGURE 1.

| Station | Date | Wind | | | | Lowest Pressure in. | Time | Total Rainfall in. | Tide Above Normal ft. |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|--------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Fastest Mile mph. | Time | Peak Gust mph | Time | | | | |
| Charleston, S.C. | Aug. 16 | 24NW | | 32 | | 29.53 | | .09 | 1 1/2-2 |
| Columbia, S.C. | Aug. 16 | 28NE | | 40 | | 29.63(17th) | | 1.00 | |
| Myrtle Beach, N.C. | Aug. 17 | 20NNW | | 45E | | 29.27 | | | |
| Wilmington, N.C. | Aug. 17 | | | 74NE | 2:49a | 29.13 | 10:30a | 2.79 | 5.7 |
| Raleigh, N.C. | Aug. 17 | 28ENE | 8:03a | 46 | | 29.22 | 3:45p | | |
| Hatteras, N.C. | Aug. 17 | 50E | 7:57a | 60E | 8:20a | 29.64 | | | |
| Elizabeth City, N.C. | Aug. 17 | | | 69 | 12:30p | | | | |
| Cape Henry, Va. | Aug. 17 | 43SE | 12:50p | 49SE | 12:50p | 29.69 | 5:30p | | |
| Norfolk, Va. | Aug. 17 | 42E | 2:49p | 53ESE | 12:25p | 29.68 | 5:30p | .47 | 1.5 |
| Roanoke, Va. | Aug. 17 | | | 62NNE | 3:54p | 29.56 | 11:28p | 2.04 | |
| Richmond, Va. | Aug. 17 | 34NE | 1:09p | 40SSE | 6:04a(18th) | 29.64 | 6:30p | 4.26 | |
| Lynchburg, Va. | Aug. 17 | 36N | 2:13p | 56N | 2:15p | 29.53 | 12:45a(18th) | 2.68 | |
| Washington, D.C. | Aug. 18 | 33SE | 6:47a | 40E | 6:32a | 29.60 | 4:26p | 1.48 | |
| Baltimore, Md. | Aug. 18 | 36SE | 9:14a | 40SSE | 8:42a | 29.66 | 7:25p | 2.67 | 5.1 |
| Atlantic City, N.J. | Aug. 18 | 49SW | 4:07p | | | 29.61 | 3:00a(19th) | .26 | |
| Trenton, N.J. | Aug. 19 | 29NW | 5:21a | | | | | | |
| New York, N.Y. | Aug. 19 | 59NW | 10:09a | 64 | 10:13a | | | | |

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Clinton, N.J. | 6.30 |
| Branchville, N.J. | 8.34 |
| Stroudsburg, Pa. | 6.01 |
| Blakeslee Corners, Pa. | 8.67 |
| Liberty, N.Y. | 7.48 |
| Poughkeepsie, N.Y. | 7.66 |
| Windsor Locks, Conn. | 13.97 |
| Holyoke, Mass. | 15.00 |
| Boston, Mass. | 11.94 |

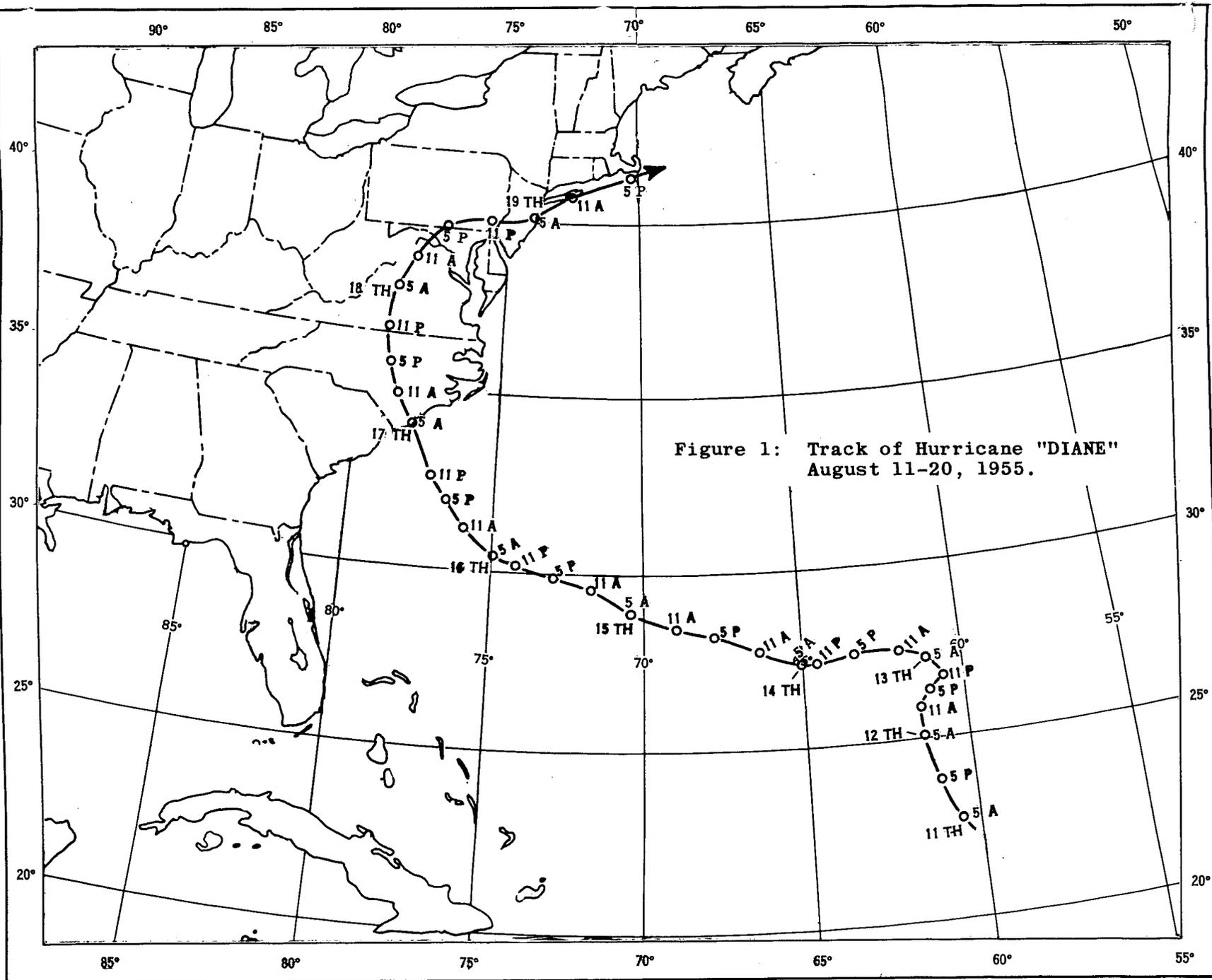


Figure 1: Track of Hurricane "DIANE"
August 11-20, 1955.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WEATHER BUREAU
Washington 25, D. C.

MEMORANDUM

September 8, 1955

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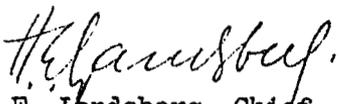
(To: All First Order Stations in South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, Regional Offices Regions 1 and 2, and Central Office Divisions)

Subject: Preliminary Report on Hurricane "DIANE", August 11-20, 1955.

Reference: Circular Letter No. 35-55 dated July 19, 1955.

Copies of a preliminary report on Hurricane "DIANE" are enclosed for your use.

This preliminary report will be cancelled upon issuance of the official report in the August issue of Climatological Data, National Summary.


H. E. Landsberg, Chief
Climatological Services Division

Attachments

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MEMO (Preliminary Report on Hurricane "DIANE", August 11-20, 1955)

Washington, D. C.
9-8-55

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