

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 27, 1930.

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SAXBY'S GALE

On October 4, 1869, the coasts of New Brunswick and the adjacent parts of Maine and Nova Scotia were visited by a violent storm, accompanied by a tide of extraordinary height. About 120 vessels were beached and there was some loss of life at sea, while much damage was done by the winds on land. This storm, which apparently came up from the West Indies and had caused heavy rains in the United States, with floods in New England and at Washington, D.C., before reaching Canada, was called "Saxby's Gale," because a Lieutenant S.M. Saxby, of the British Navy, had announced about a year previously that a great storm and high tides would occur on October 5.

Saxby's prediction, based on supposed influences of the moon, was entirely indefinite as to the part of the world in which the storm would prevail so that its verification somewhere on the globe within a day of the announced date was not at all surprising. Doubtless the storm was still in existence somewhere in the western Atlantic on the date predicted for it, though it is not known to have done any damage on that date and it was too far from the coast to produce any perceptible tidal effects. Warnings of the event had been published in Newfoundland, where they caused much alarm, but no traces of the storm were felt there.

Saxby's notions concerning the relations of the moon to the weather are set forth in a book entitled "Saxby's Weather System," two editions of which were published in London a few years before the time of the gale that bears his name.

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