

The Saxby Gale

THE SAXBY GALE was a tropical cyclone which struck eastern Canada's Bay of Fundy region on the night of October 4 - 5, 1869. The storm was named for Lieutenant Stephen Martin Saxby, a naval instructor who, based on his astronomical studies, had predicted extremely high tides in the North Atlantic Ocean on October 1, 1869, which would produce storm surges in the event of a storm. - *Wikipedia*. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ranks the Saxby Gale #10 on its list of Canada's worst storms. One casualty not mentioned in the local report was the destruction of the old quarantine hospital buildings on Little Hardwood or Hospital Island, erected during the Irish famine years of 1846 and later. ~

Standard

Oct. 6, 1869

Great Storm and Destruction of Property

Almost 6 o'clock on Monday evening last, rain commenced falling, quickly followed by a strong southeasterly gale which increased in volume until 7 o'clock, when it became a hurricane, ripping shingles from the roofs of the houses and bricks from the chimneys, leveling fences, etc. The night was unusually dark, and the howling of the storm with occasional crashes of falling buildings made it appalling. The spray from the harbor was carried as far up as the barracks hill, and the fruit on the trees had a salt taste on the outside. The tide rose higher than was ever before known, and such a storm was never witnessed here by our oldest inhabitants, one of whom, now upwards of 90 years old, recollects distinctly as far back at 75 years, and can read without the use of spectacles. We must hasten however to give a brief summary of the results of the storm.

Marine Disasters

Considerable damage was done to the vessels in the harbor; we endeavored to obtain a correct list of the disasters, which we give. Schooner *Julia Clinch*, H. Maloney, for Philadelphia with a cargo of iron, broke from the steamboat wharf, was dismasted and otherwise damaged.

Utica, A. Maloney, from New York for St. John, cargo of flour, ran in here for a harbor, ashore, will be discharged.

Calvie Clark from Saint John for Philadelphia, put in here for shelter, was driven ashore. Cargo will be discharged.

Eliza Frances, Hunt, for Portland, cargo of sleepers, drove ashore, will be discharged.

Legonia, Grierson, from St. George for Boston, put in here, considerably damaged.

Mary Budd, Johnston, received slight damage.

Elizabeth Bowlby, Gatcomb, driven ashore, little injured.

Matilda Stinson, was driven up on wharf and much damaged.

Athlete, Jackson, rode out the gale. The Captain was the only person on board his vessel.

Mary Ellen, J. Bratt, loaded for New York, rode out the gale.

Franklin, Coats, loaded, bow stove in.

A small vessel loaded with fish from Latete was much damaged, cargo discharged.

A Jonesport, Maine, schooner, spile laden, drifted into the inner Bay from outside, bottom up.

Between Robbinston and Eastport ten vessels are ashore, seven at Eastport, and twenty-three at West Quoddy.

Several boats were broken up, and all the wharves with stores on them, from the upper end of the town to Mr. Whitlock's wharf, are carried away, and the beach is covered with logs, boards and scantling.

Loss of the Bark *Genii* with all the Crew

Letters received this morning confirm the melancholy tidings that the new barque *Genii*, Capt. Bailey, launched here only last month, loading at New River, was driven on the reefs and went to pieces, and we are sorry to learn all the crew met a watery grave. The bodies of the master Mr. John Stratton, a native of Fredericton, two McVicars, from Mascareen, and two others were picked up. James McGill, a native of this place, was also on board; he leaves a young wife to mourn her loss.

Damage in town and country

The injury to property in the town and country was extensive; houses and barns are blown down, cattle killed, several large shade trees torn up from the roots and lying across the streets, and almost every fence prostrated.

Beginning at the head of the town - Mr. Edw. Stinson's house was blown over, the family having barely escaped, furniture destroyed. Thomas Bailey's barn down and horse killed. Mrs. Kearney's and Mr. Whitlock's barns at Chapel, down. J. W. Street's barn unroofed. Joseph Alexander's house unroofed. Leonard Chase's barn down, and a cow killed. G. D. Street's considerably damaged. A small shed attached to Crozjet house knocked down by the bricks from a large chimney. Jas. H. Whitlock's chimney down, barn unroofed. J. S. Magee's shop windows smashed, and others on Water Street; the old steam mill, part of the roof blown off. Miss Swift's barn roof off. Mr. Greathead's barn and greenhouse injured. Mrs. McStay's new barn down. E. Stentiford's blacksmith shop and shed blown down.

At the railway station, the freight house, car shops, and wood shed were levelled to the ground, part of the roof of the locomotive house was blown off, and the chimney of the Machine shop carried away. The Manager's residence was slightly damaged, one of the chimneys blown down. Two cars loaded with bark lying on the track were driven up the extension, ran off and received some damage.

H. O'Neill's and E. DeWolfe's barns were blown down. Mr. Stevenson's barn at his residence a short distance from town, with five tons of hay and five of grain, was lifted bodily a distance of ten feet without injury. George Stewart who lives about half a mile from the town, had his barn blown down, killing three horses and a cow. From the country districts we learn many barns were blown down, cattle killed, and other destruction of property. Part of the bridge across the Waweig River is gone, carrying away a horse and wagon, which was by the bridge at the time. The horse was found drowned next morning. It is impossible at present to estimate the amount damage done, which must be very large. We notice by St. John papers that the storm was severe in that vicinity, but it does not appear to have done the amount of damage that it did in this vicinity.