

The information is based on material from Rick Schwartz book,
Hurricanes and the Middle Atlantic States.

<http://www.midatlantichurricanes.com/>

Facts about the Great Labor Day Hurricane of 1935:

The Great Labor Day Hurricane struck the upper Florida Keys on September 2 as a Category 5 storm, one of only three Category 5 hurricanes to make landfall in the continental United States during the past 100 years. About 400 people died from winds of nearly 200 mph and a huge storm surge, topped by an immense storm wave.

After devastating a narrow section of the Keys, it weakened to a Category 2 before making landfall in the Florida Panhandle on September 3.

The storm affected the Mid-Atlantic region from September 4-6, with the peak on the 6th. It is one of the few tropical cyclones to intensify while the circulation center was over land. The Great Labor Day Hurricane strengthened from tropical depression to tropical storm while near the lower Chesapeake Bay and became a hurricane again within hours of re-entering the Atlantic and racing out to sea.

The James River crested at 25.5 feet above the 9 foot flood stage at Richmond, VA. The Weather Bureau estimated the total rainfall of September 5-6 at an average of 6.50 inches for the entire James River Basin. The rain however was considerably heavier east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the river at Lynchburg did not even reach flood stage. The Richmond rainfall was 7.41 inches as a storm total and 4.91 inches fell on September 5, 1935 alone.

The storm spawned a tornado outbreak in Virginia and Maryland, including a long-lived twister just east of Washington, DC. The most notable feature, however, was an epic deluge that pelted the Northern Neck of Virginia, Southern Maryland, and the central Delmarva Peninsula.

The storm ranks among the Maryland Eastern Shore's most destructive natural disasters. In Federalsburg, about 1,000 of the town's 2,000 residents were flooded out of their homes. Marshyhope Creek, which flows by the town, crested at 17.4 feet—still the record by more than five feet.

Elsewhere, a rainfall-related train wreck near Felton, Delaware, killed three crewmen. In Virginia, the James River crested at 25.5 feet, above a 9-foot flood stage. A powerful tornado killed three people near Farmville. Another tornado swirled through the Norfolk area. Gales lashed the lower two-thirds of the Chesapeake Bay and the Delmarva coast.

Rainfall Statistics (Sept. 4-6 –52 hours): Maryland: Easton—16 inches, Ridgely—12.51 inches, Salisbury—12.10 inches, Solomons—11.39 inches. Virginia: Tappahannock—12.24 inches, Dahlgren—11.85 inches, Richmond—7.41 inches. Washington, DC—6.70 inches.