Great Storms of the Great Lakes

A look at some of the infamous “Gales of November”, and the punishing toll they can exact on the freighters that ply the waters of the Great Lakes.

National Weather Service Gaylord MI
Winter Talk Series 2010
Great Storms of the Great Lakes

Outline:
The Great Lakes Hurricane: 7-10 November 1913

Armistice Day Storm: 11 November 1940

Sinking of the Carl D. Bradley: 18 November 1958

Loss of the Daniel J. Morrell: 29 November 1966

Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald: 10 November 1975

French trading vessel Le Griffon-- one of the first shipwrecks on the Great Lakes.
The Great Lakes Hurricane: 7-10 November 1913

-- At least 258 lives lost on the Great Lakes.
-- Twelve ships sank, 30 other vessels crippled.
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: Great Lakes Hurricane of 1913

Daily Weather Maps:

7am -- 8 November 1913
Storm #1

7am -- 9 November 1913
Developing Storm #2
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: Great Lakes Hurricane of 1913

Daily Weather Maps:

7am -- 10 November 1913

Storm #2 Track
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: Great Lakes Hurricane of 1913: 7-10 November 1913

The Charles S. Price, upside down on Lake Huron

Bodies from the SS Wexford wash up on the beach at Goderich, Ontario

The LC Waldo, run around on the rocks off the Keweenaw Peninsula

“No lake master can recall in all his experience a storm of such unprecedented violence with such rapid changes in the direction of the wind and its gusts of fearful speed...It was unusual and unprecedented and it may be centuries before such a combination of forces may be experienced again.”

Lake Carriers Association report (1913)
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: The 1940 Armistice Day Storm

Daily Weather Map:

730am -- 11 November 1940
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: The Armistice Day Storm: 11 November 1940

Three large freighters and two smaller boats fell victim to the storm. The three freighters all sank in the same approximate area between Big Sable Point and Little Sable Point.

The **William B. Davock** sank a couple miles off Little Sable Point, its rudder hard to port as if rolled by a giant wave. All 32 hands were lost.

The **Novadoc**, heading northbound and running close to the Michigan shoreline, was caught by the sudden wind shift to the southwest. This pushed the freighter aground off Juniper Beach between Little Sable Point and Pentwater, where the pounding waves broke the ship in half. Seventeen crew members were rescued by the fishing tug **Three Brothers** after battling snow and icy winds for 36 hours; two men were swept overboard.

The Canadian freighter **Anna C. Minch**, bound for Chicago, broke in two and sank south of Pentwater near the **Davock**, with the loss of her entire crew of 24.
Great Storms of the Great Lakes: The Armistice Day Storm: 11 November 1940

The Plight of the Car Ferry City of Flint 32

The City of Flint on the beach at Ludington--12 November 1940

Coast Guard stringing up a life buoy

Looking south from the Flint at the Ludington lighthouse

Going out to retrieve bodies from the Davock

The Sinking of the *Carl D. Bradley*: 18 November 1958

100am -- 18 November 1958

Track of the Carl D. Bradley

“Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!

This is the Carl D. Bradley. Our position is approximately 12 miles southwest of Gull Island. We are in serious trouble. We are breaking in two and sinking. Any ships in the vicinity, please come to our aid...”

Sinking of the Carl D. Bradley

Location of the Carl D. Bradley

USCGC Sundew
Survivors...

Two survivors found on raft: 8:37am 19 Nov

Carl D. Bradley sinking: 5:45pm 18 Nov

Frank Mays being taken off the Sundew

Life Raft

Funeral mass for nine crew members of the Bradley

Loss of the Daniel J. Morrell: 29 November 1966

100am -- 29 November 1966

100pm -- 28 November 1966
Track of the Daniel J. Morrell


Last known photo of the Daniel J. Morrell, on the St. Clair River downbound for Buffalo—25 November 1966...3 nights prior to her sinking on Lake Huron.

A lone survivor...

Location of the Daniel J. Morrell

One survivor found on raft: 3:45pm 30 Nov

Location of the Daniel J. Morrell

Daily Weather Map:

700am -- 10 November 1975

Track of the Edmund Fitzgerald:

The Final Voyage of the SS Edmund Fitzgerald
09-11 November 1975

- SS Edmund Fitzgerald Track
- SS Arthur M. Anderson Track
Weather conditions during the afternoon and evening of 10 November: Surface Pressure

700am -- 10 November 1975

700pm -- 10 November 1975

Weather conditions during the afternoon and evening of 10 November: Surface Winds

100pm -- 10 November 1975

40-45kt Winds

400pm -- 10 November 1975

45-50kt Winds
Weather conditions during the afternoon and evening of 10 November: Surface Winds

700pm -- 10 November 1975

Arthur M. Anderson reports wind gusts of 75 knots (86mph) as it reaches area of Fitzgerald sinking.
Weather conditions during the afternoon and evening of 10 November: Wave Heights

100pm -- 10 November 1975

- Wave Heights:
  - 3.5-4m (11-13ft) Waves

400pm -- 10 November 1975

- Wave Heights:
  - 5.5-6m (18-20ft) Waves
Weather conditions during the afternoon and evening of 10 November: Wave Heights

800pm -- 10 November 1975

Arthur M. Anderson reports wind gusts of 75 knots (86mph) as it reaches area of Fitzgerald sinking.

400pm -- 10 November 1998

800pm -- 26 October 2010
Thank You