YEAR 1855

Tannehill (1938) has listed two storms for the year 1855 and Ludlum (1963) has contributed one additional storm which had not been mentioned by Tannehill (1938). Therefore, there have been three known storms for 1855 until the present time. The author of this study has recently found three more storms for that year, increasing to six the number of known storms. The author's contribution represents a 100 percent increase.

Storm 1, 1855 (Aug. 6).

This is a newly documented case which is based on information which was published in newspapers. The New-York Daily Times, Aug. 20, 1855, p.2, col.6, made reference to a destructive storm at Tampico in August 1855. The newspaper stated that, on or about August 6, Tampico had a severe norther with continuous rains, causing a disastrous flooding of the city which resulted in very heavy damages and losses to goods and in destruction of life and property no less severe. The pilot station at the mouth of the river and a fort were washed away as well as the ground they occupied. Eleven vessels were at the bar and some of them lost their deckloads. It is said that this one was the worst inundation in Tampico over the last 30 years. This report that The New-York Daily Times reproduced from the New Orleans Picayune allowed one to place Storm 1, 1855 at Tampico, Mexico, on or about August 6 (Fig. 6).

No track for Storm 1, 1855 has been attempted. However, there are some indications that the storm might have developed in the Caribbean Sea late in July 1855. This suspicion is based on the following marine report: Bark "Bercaldine" (from Cartagena, Colombia, July 26). For the first four days out, an extraordinary fall of the barometer, a continuous N.E. heavy gale and irregular sea were observed. The captain supposed that there was a hurricane a few degrees north of the vessel's position. The bark's position was at lat. 11 21 N., long. 76 35 W. on July 28 (The New-York Daily Times, Aug. 21, 1855, p.8, col.6).

Storm 2, 1855 (Aug. 10).

This is also a newly documented storm by the author of this study. Although the storm was documented at a very high latitude, it should have previously existed at lower latitudes.

The following information helped documenting Storm 2, 1855: 1) Ship "James Foster Jr." experienced a severe hurricane from S.S.W. to N.N.W. at lat. 46 05 N., long. 38 10 W. on Aug. 10 (The New-York Daily Times, Aug. 30, 1855, p.8, col.6). 2) Ship "Rebecca" had a hurricane at lat. 50 N, long. 30 W. on Aug. 10 and also a second hurricane from the S.S.E. on Aug. 31 (The New-York Daily Times, Sept. 18, 1855, p.8, col.6). 3) Ship "Catherine" encountered two hurricanes on her passage from Le Havre to New York in 43 days (The New-York Daily Times, Sept. 15, 1855, p.8, col.6). Author's note: The first one must be Storm 2, 1855. 4) Bark "Houston" (from Liverpool July 12). Experienced a violent hurricane from S.W. on Aug. 11, which lasted for 6 hours (The New-York Daily Times, Aug. 30, 1855, p.8, col.6).

Storm 2, 1855 apparently attained hurricane intensity: all marine reports have referred to it as a hurricane. The track for Storm 2, 1855 in Fig. 6 was attempted because useful information for

track purposes was available from two vessels which met the storm at locations over 400 miles apart on the same day; the two remaining vessels did not offer the positions where they met the storm. Reports from ships "James Foster Jr." and "Rebecca" allowed one to infer that the storm was moving quite rapidly towards the northeast on August 10. The author of this study has arbitrarily placed the storm in the vicinity of 47 degrees North, 37 degrees West at 7 A.M. Aug. 10. Placing the storm near the "James Foster Jr." in the morning allowed him to have it near the "Rebecca" late on August 10.

Storm 3, 1855 (Aug. 11 or 14).

Storm 3, 1855 is the third storm the author of this study has documented for the year 1855. Again, information which appeared in the newspapers was crucial in determining this case.

The following information has been found about Storm 3, 1855: 1) H.M.S. "Walverine" was wrecked off the Mosquito coast in a hurricane on Aug. 14. The captain and crew have been saved (The Times, London, Sept. 20, 1855, p.10, col.6). 2) H.M.S. brig "Walverine" was wrecked about 160 miles N. of Greytown on August 11 (The Times, London, Sept. 19, 1855, p.10, col. 4 and 5). The Mosquito coast was a British protectorate in Central America whose capital Greytown was located at the mouth of the San Juan River on the Caribbean coast, where the present border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica is.

The above information allowed one to place this newly documented storm near 12.5 degrees North, 83 degrees West either on Aug. 11 or on Aug. 14, 1855 (Fig. 6).

Storm 4, 1855 (Aug. 24-27).

Tannehill (1938) has listed this case as having occurred at Martinique and Santo Domingo. Garriott (1900) and Salivia (1972) has also mentioned this storm. The author of this study has produced the track which is shown in Fig. 6.

The Times, London, Sept. 19, 1855, p.10, col.5, stated that there was a hurricane in Barbados and northern islands and that two vessels were lost on each of the following islands: Barbados, St. Vincent, Martinique and Dominica. More specifics about the storm were published the next day by The Times. The Times, London, Sept. 20, 1855, p.10, col.6, stated that it blew a heavy gale at St. Croix on August 26 and that a vessel was totally wrecked on the southern part of that island. The same newspaper also stated that the severe gale occurred at Barbados on August 24 and 25. Further information on the storm appeared in The Times, London, Oct. 3, 1855, p.7, col.3 and 4): It was then advertised that the storm of August 24 had done considerable damage to the northern West Indies and that several vessels were lost. Roads were destroyed by rain and many houses were destroyed at St. Vincent and cane fields also suffered much there.

Salivia (1972) has indicated that, according to the newspaper "El Fenix" of Ponce, Puerto Rico, the wind from the N.E. refreshed there after midnight August 25-26, changed to E. by daybreak August 26 and increased to a heavy gale for 10 hours.

Rodriguez-Demorizi (1958) has included in his book: "La marina de guerra dominicana" an article about the storm in the Dominican Republic written by Sir Robert H. Schomburgk, the

British Consul at Santo Domingo. Schomburgk's article contains very valuable information about the storm in the city of Santo Domingo. According to Schomburgk, the barometer reading was 30.00 inches at 6 A.M. Aug. 26. Instead of rising after 4 P.M., the barometer continued coming down in a gradual manner and the wind and the rain increased as it got dark. The barometer reading was 29.65 inches at 9 P.M.; at 9:30 P.M., the reading was 29.50 inches and the wind was blowing very strong from the N. There was a momentary calm. At 10:30 P.M., the wind increased violently and changed to N.W., and the barometer descended to 29.45 inches. The wind changed from N.W. to S.W. at 10:45 P.M. At midnight (Aug. 26-27), the barometer was at 29.875 inches and rising and the wind was from the S. and gusty. The barometer remained stationary from 2 to 4 A.M. Aug. 27. The wind blew from the S. and E.S.E. The barometer reading was 29.94 inches at 5 A.M. Aug. 27 and rose to 30.03 inches about 9 A.M.

The track in Fig. 6 was started near Barbados to conform to the severe gale reported there on August 24. Then the storm is brought to the vicinity of St. Vincent where damage to many buildings and road destruction by rains occcurred. The position to the S. of Puerto Rico on Aug. 26 is in agreement with the heavy gale from the E. which occurred at Ponce for 10 hours starting about daybreak August 26, and the storm evolution over the Dominican Republic is in agreement with the discussion given by Sir Robert H. Schomburgk. The track for Storm 4, 1855 was ended over northern Haiti on August 27 because no evidence of this tropical cyclone has been found in Cuba, the Bahamas or the southwestern Atlantic on subsequent days.

The minimum pressure of 29.45 inches at Santo Domingo, very near the center of the storm, indicates that Storm 4, 1855 was probably in the threshold between an intense tropical storm and a minimal hurricane. This relatively weak character of the storm favored its apparent dissipation over the high mountains of Hispaniola.

Storm 5, 1855 (Aug. 31- Sept. 2).

This storm has been listed by Tannehill (1938) as having occurred in the Atlantic near 50 degrees North, 40 degrees West. However, the author of this study has found information which has allowed him to track Storm 5, 1855 for the three-day period Aug. 31- Sept. 2. His track is shown in Fig. 6.

The following information is available about Storm 5, 1855: 1) Ship "Atlantic" encountered a very heavy gale from S.S.W. to S.W. west of Sable Island on August 31 (The New-York Daily Times, Sept. 7, 1855, p.8, col.6). 2) Ship "Catherine" encountered two hurricanes on her passage from Le Havre to New York in 43 days (The New-York Daily Times, Sept. 15, 1855, p.8, col.6). Author's note: The second hurricane encountered by this vessel must have been Storm 5, 1855. 3) Ship "Rebecca" experienced a hurricane at lat. 50 N., long. 30 W. on Aug. 10 and a second hurricane from S.S.E. on Aug. 31 (The New-York Daily Times, Sept. 15, 1855, p.8, col.6). The information provided by the ship "Atlantic" allowed one to estimate a 7 A.M. position for the storm near 43.5 degrees North, 62 degrees West on August 31. Storm 5, 1855 was then postulated to have moved to the vicinity of 50 degrees North, 40 degrees West late in the night of Sept. 1-2: this procedure roughly satisfied the location statement given by Tannehill (1938). Finally, the storm track was ended near 52 degrees North, 33 degrees West on Sept. 2.

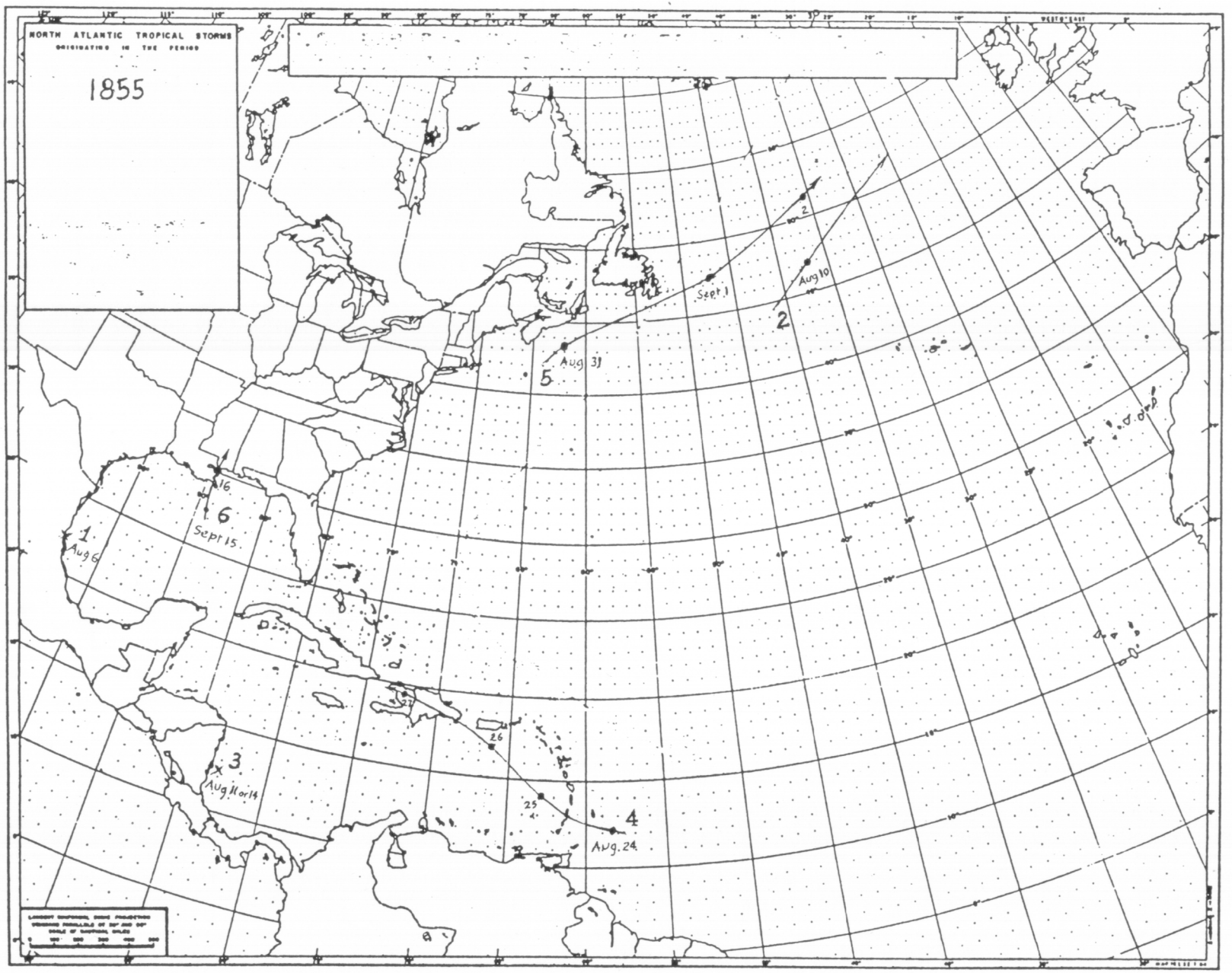
NORTH ATLANTIC TROPICAL STORMS
ORIGINATING IN THE PERIOD
1855
1
Aug 6
2
Aug 10
Sept 1
3
Aug 11 or 14
4
Aug. 24
5
Aug 31
6
Sept 15

Fig. 6

Storm 5, 1855 should have gradually become extratropical towards the end of the period Aug. 31- Sept. 2.

Storm 6, 1855 (Sept. 15-16).

This storm has not been mentioned by Tannehill (1938); only Ludlum (1963) has mentioned it. The author of this study has prepared the two-day track for Storm 6, 1855 which is displayed in Fig. 6.

The New-York Daily Times Oct. 3, 1855, p.8, col.6, stated that the ship "Orphan" experienced a severe gale from the S.S.W. at lat. 27 15 N., long. 85 40 W. on September 15. A second marine report stated that the schooner "Oregon" had a heavy blow of wind in the night of Sept. 15 on her voyage from Sabine Pass to New Orleans (The New-York Daily Times, Oct. 1, 1855, p.8, col.6).

The steamer "California", which had left the Lake end of the Pontchartrain Railroad at noon Sept. 15, experienced such a gale about midnight Sept. 15-16 that her captain decided to weather the storm at Round Island, where the vessel anchored at 3 A.M. Sept. 16 (Ludlum, 1963). According to Sullivan (1986), increasing gales from the E.S.E. swept the Mississippi Sound after midnight Sept. 15-16 and the storm approached its maximum intensity about 3 A.M. The wind at Bay St. Louis blew from the E. on Sept. 15 and increased all through the night and moderated near daybreak on Sept. 16. A dead calm was experienced there around 9 A.M. and then the wind blew from the S.W. for about three-fourths of an hour as fully twice as it had blown over the whole storm (Ludlum, 1855). The steamer "Creole", which had landed passengers at Bay St. Louis around 1 A.M., was at Bayou Portage during the height of the storm. Encouraged by the fact that the wind had abated there near noon Sept. 16, her captain decided to steam out of Bayou Portage and sailed down the bay only to meet winds that struck with vengeance from the S.W. (Sullivan, 1986).

The track in Fig. 6 was based upon the information above and it should be mentioned that the storm motion during the morning and early afternoon of Sept. 16 was very slow.