

Thirty Eight: The Hurricane That Transformed New England



In the annals of New England history, few events loom as large as the Great New England Hurricane of 1938. Known simply as "Thirty Eight," this colossal storm reshaped the region's landscape and left an enduring mark on its people.



Thirty-Eight: The Hurricane That Transformed New England by Shawn Robbins

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Thirty Eight originated as a tropical depression off the coast of Africa on September 11, 1938. Over the next few days, it intensified into a hurricane and began to track towards New England. On September 16, the storm made landfall on Long Island, New York, as a Category 3 hurricane with winds gusting up to 120 miles per hour.

As Thirty Eight moved inland, it weakened slightly but still wreaked havoc across southern New England. The hurricane's fierce winds caused widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure. Trees were uprooted, power lines were downed, and roads were blocked. In some areas, the flooding was so severe that entire communities were cut off from the outside world.

The human toll of Thirty Eight was also significant. The storm claimed the lives of at least 682 people in the United States, including 388 in New England. Many of the victims were killed by falling trees or drowning in floodwaters.

In the aftermath of the storm, New Englanders faced a daunting task of rebuilding. The federal government provided some assistance, but much of the work was done by local communities. Volunteers from across the region came together to clear debris, repair roads, and restore power. By the end

of the year, most of New England had been rebuilt, but the scars of Thirty Eight remained.

The hurricane also had a profound impact on New England's environment. The storm's winds and floods destroyed vast tracts of forest, creating new habitats for wildlife. In some areas, the landscape was so altered that it took decades for the ecosystem to recover.

Thirty Eight is remembered today as one of the most powerful and destructive hurricanes to ever hit New England. The storm's legacy is a reminder of the importance of being prepared for natural disasters and the resilience of the human spirit.

Additional Information

- The name "Thirty Eight" was assigned to the hurricane by the U.S. Weather Bureau. The bureau used a system of naming hurricanes alphabetically, and Thirty Eight was the 38th tropical storm or hurricane of the 1938 season.
- Thirty Eight was the first hurricane to make landfall in New England since the Great New England Hurricane of 1869.
- The hurricane's winds were so strong that they caused the roof of the Rhode Island State House to collapse.
- The flooding caused by Thirty Eight was so severe that it created a temporary lake in the Connecticut River Valley.
- The hurricane's impact on New England's forests was so significant that it led to the formation of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a federal

program that employed young men to plant trees and restore the environment.

Thirty Eight was a devastating hurricane that left an enduring mark on New England. The storm's winds and floods caused widespread damage and claimed the lives of hundreds of people. But in the aftermath of the storm, New Englanders showed great resilience and determination in rebuilding their communities. The legacy of Thirty Eight is a reminder of the importance of being prepared for natural disasters and the power of the human spirit.



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