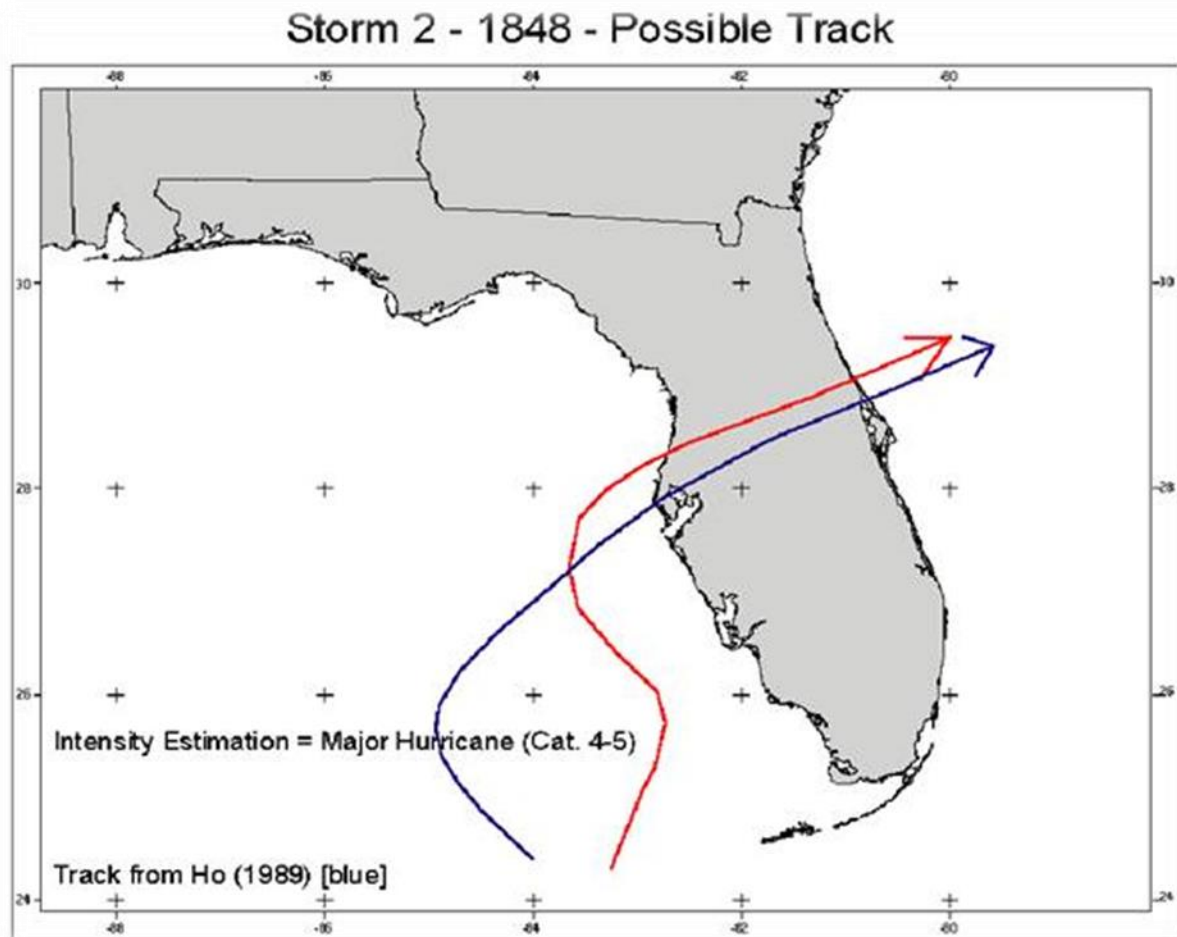


1848 Hurricane

Landfall: 25 September 1848

Winds: Estimated maximum winds of 88-117 knots

Surge heights: 15 feet above low water



Possible Tracks for the 1848 Tampa Hurricane. Image courtesy of James B. Elsner, Department of Geography Florida State University.

Damage descriptions:

Excerpts from:

<http://www.wunderground.com/blog/fredwx/great-1848-tampa-hurricane>

- Estimated maximum winds of 101-135 mph moved NNW just off the west coast of Florida causing considerable damage at Charlotte Harbor as it passed to the west. As the storm moved northward along Florida's west coast it appears to have turned to the NE and then ENE making landfall near Clearwater during the early afternoon of Sept. 25, 1848.
- All the wharves and most public building at the fort were destroyed and that flooding was exceptionally great but no lives were lost at Ft. Brooke. The post surgeon reported that the tide rose 15 ft above low water and the water rose very fast between 1000 and 1400. It was also reported that all of the vessels in the port were driven up the river and destroyed by the high winds and storm surge.
- In 1848 a second hurricane hit Tampa one month later in October causing a 10 ft tide in the Bay.
- In 1848 Tampa was a small village of fewer than 200 people
- An interesting legend regarding the 1848 Hurricane is that it created a new pass through a barrier island which was discovered by a reformed pirate named John Levique. Today the pass is known as "John's Pass"

Excerpts from:

<http://oceanweatherservices.com/blog/2016/09/23/the-great-tampa-gale-of-48/>

- Category 3 storm.
- Making landfall near Clearwater.
- Other accounts stated that great waves covered most of the islands within the bay and that the garrison at Fort Brooke was almost completely inundated by water and waves pounded and destroyed the barracks, horse shed and other structures and only the tops of the trees could be seen. The recently opened lighthouse at Edmont Key was badly damaged and had to be rebuilt.
- Every building on the bay and river was destroyed except for the Palmer Hotel which was badly damaged. At the Garrison the church on the beach, the soldier's barracks, the Indian agent's office and the Ferris residence, store and warehouse were wrecked. According to Juliet Axtell, the wife of the Army Chaplain, "there were not more than

four or five buildings left standing” and she concluded in a letter that “Tampa was no more.

- Second hurricane visited the Florida West Coast on October 11-12th. In Tampa this storm was not as intense as the earlier one; however, it did cause a storm surge to about 10ft in Tampa Bay.

- Excerpts from:

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20120529/COLUMNISTS0404/205295000?p=2&tc=pg>

- Amidst a torrential downpour and whipped by hurricane winds, monstrous waves crashed ashore through most of the day," Brown wrote. "By noon water levels had risen by 15 feet, and there they stayed for hours."
- Damage was reported as far inland as today's Sebring and as far south as Charlotte Harbor. But none suffered more than Tampa, which saw Fort Brooke destroyed as well as most privately-owned buildings.

Excerpts from:

<http://majikphil.blogspot.com/2012/08/tampas-hurricane-history.html#!/2012/08/tampas-hurricane-history.html>

- Wade weathered the storm in Fort Brooke, in what is now downtown Tampa.

Excerpts from:

http://baynews9.com/content/news/baynews9/news/article.html/content/news/articles/bn9/2012/9/25/great_gale_of_1948.html

- The pressure and storm surge is more like a strong category 3 or even a category 4 hurricane.
- Only five buildings were left standing in Tampa, and all were damaged. Fort Brooke was destroyed.
- The “Gulf met the Bay” in Pinellas which was cut in half by the storm surge. Waters from Tampa Bay flowed back through the middle of Pinellas County to reach the Gulf of Mexico. Allen’s Creek was a half a mile wide at its mouth.

Excerpts from:

http://www.nrlmry.navy.mil/port_studies/tr8203nc/tampa/text/sect3.htm

Table XIV-4. Water Level data for Tampa Bay and adjacent waters during near passages of tropical cyclones as extracted from records maintained by the National Weather Service Office, Ruskin, FL.*

Date	Water Level Data
1848 Sep 25	Tide 15'**
1848 Oct 16	Tide 10'**
1910 Oct 18	Water 9' <u>below</u> MLW in Hillsborough River - usual depression 1'.
1921 Oct 25*	Tide 10.5'** highest since 1848
1935 Sep 2-4	Tide 5.3' above MLW
1944 Oct 18-19	Tide 3.1' above MLW
1945 Jun 24	Tide 5.2' above MLW
1950 Sep 3-6	Tide 6.5' above MLW
1966 Jun 8-9	Tide 4.5'**
1972 Jun 18-19	Tide 5.6' above MSL

*Height for October 25, 1921 was measured at the "local office of United States Engineers" at the waterfront of Tampa on Hillsborough Bay. The specific locations of other measurement sites were not recorded.

**Zero reference not specified.

Excerpts from:

<http://www.floridamemory.com/exhibits/timeline/>

1830: First Florida census: population 34,730

Excerpts from:

<http://www.sarasotahistoryalive.com/stories/journals-of-yesteryear/southwest-florida-history-littered-with-hurricanes/>

- Major storm hit the Tampa Bay area and destroyed Fort Brooke.