

## Report on October Snowstorms in the northeast United States Part II A look at other October Snowstorms.



Figure 1 Snowfall Records of the past from FOX 43 TV in York, Pa.

York, Pa received 9" snowfall from this October 29, 2011 storm along with many trees down and power outages. Check out the NOAA, NWS snowfall map from State College, Pa. near the beginning of this report.

Before this October 29, 2011 snowstorm, Baltimore City/BWI Airport records show that only 15 times since 1883 has there been a trace or more of snow fall in the month of October. There has been only 3 October snowstorms since 1883 and before 2011 with measurable snowfall at Baltimore, Maryland.

Here is the list of October snowfalls in Baltimore, Maryland.

- 1.Oct. 1889 Trace.
- 2.Oct. 1890 Trace.
- 3.Oct. 9, 1895 Trace.
- 4.Oct. 9, 1903+ Trace.
- 5.Oct. 1917 Trace.
- 6.Oct. 30, 1925 2.5" (Most on record.)
- 7.Oct. 1929 Trace.
- 8.Oct. 25, 1930 Trace.
- 9.Oct. 19, 1940 0.4" } 1.3" storm total.  
Oct. 20, 1940 0.9"
- 10.Oct. 29, 1952+ Trace.
- 11.Oct. 15, 1954 Trace. (??? This may have been a trace of hail from Hurr. Hazel.???)
- 12.Oct. 19, 1972 Trace.
- 13.Oct. 17, 1977 Trace.
- 14.Oct. 10, 1979 0.3"
- 15.Oct. 22, 2003 Trace.
- 16.Oct. 29, 2011 Trace.

This report done by Herbert Close, Jr.

Some data came from two web sites with NOAA.

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/climate/bwi/bwisnow.txt>

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/lwx/climate/bwi/Bwiioct.txt>

Some data came from Climatological Data published at the NCDC in Asheville, N.C.



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SEPTEMBER 30, 2006

## October: Can snow be far behind?

It's been 26 years since Baltimore has seen snow in [October](#). Maybe global warming has erased the possibility. But the fact that it CAN snow in Baltimore in October is enough to rate a mention as we welcome the new month, which starts tomorrow.

A total of nine snow events have been recorded in October, record-keeping in Baltimore began in 1871. The earliest ever recorded occurred on Oct. 9, 1895. It was just a trace, nothing measureable. And that record was matched with another trace on the same date eight years later - in 1903.

The earliest measureable snowfall was 0.3 inch, on Oct. 10, 1979. It's been much longer since we've seen any appreciable accumulation in October. The weather service records show a 1.3-inch snowfall on Oct. 19, 1940. And 2.5 inches fell on Oct. 30, 1925. That's the record for October.

I've always felt October was the prettiest month in Maryland, perhaps in a tie with April. The temperatures are comfortable, the sun is warm, the leaves are turning and we generally shed all the humidity that can make summertime unpleasant.

Average daytime highs in October - using the 30-year average at BWI - range from 73 degrees as the month opens, to 62 degrees by Halloween. The average overnight lows slide from 50 down to 39 degrees.

But it can also be pretty warm, and very cold. The record highs range from 97 degrees (on Oct. 5, 1941) to 80 degrees (Oct. 25, 1902). The record lows start at 36 degrees (Oct. 1, 1947), and slip on down to 25 degrees (on Oct. 24, 1969 and Oct. 31, 1966).

The average October produces 3.16 inches of rain. It will be interesting to see how long this current mini-drought continues into the autumn. BWI has seen just 0.67 inch of rain since Aug. 28. The wettest October day was Oct. 10, 1929, when 4.38 inches were measured in the city.

The driest October was in 1963, when only a trace was recorded at BWI. The wettest was in 1976, when 8.09 inches were measured. We'll sum up September tomorrow.

Figure 2 The above report by Baltimore Sun reporter Frank Roylance was provided to me by Lowell L. Koontz

## Scott Summer

• DC Weather Examiner

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### October Snow in D.C.

• October 20th, 2009 4:36 pm ET

Prior to this afternoon, it felt more like winter than fall lately and with all the cold days and chilly rains, I was curious to find out when and how much, if any, October snow fell in and around the District.

Well low and behold....today marks the date of the second highest snowfall recorded for the month! During the 1940-1941 winter season, October 20th brought 1.5" of snow to D.C., with the most accumulating snow; however, falling Oct 30, 1925 with 2.2".

The surrounding days, Oct 29th and 31st in 1925 also receiving snow! \*

1892 --October 5, Trace

1917 -- October \_\_ Trace

1925 -- October 30, 2.2" Also a trace of snow on 29th & 30th

1940 -- October 19-20, 1.5"

1954 -- October 15, Trace **Wrong this was a trace of hail** – Hurricane HAZEL

1957 -- October 27, Trace

1972 -- October 19, Trace

1974 -- October \_\_ , Trace

1979 -- October 10, 0.3"

The report above by Scott Summer was provided to me by Lowell L. Koontz.

DC Weather Examiner

## West Virginia Climate Summary, October 2005

During October, West Virginia stood at the crossroads between exceptionally wet conditions in the

Northeast and nearly bone-dry conditions in areas of the South that lie west of the Appalachians.

However, parts of the Mountain State were close enough to three sprawling Northeastern storms to

experience heavy rain from October 7-8 and 21-22 and witness early-season snow from October 24-26.

The first of the three storms involved the remnants of Tropical Storm Tammy, which contributed to

historic rains (locally 10 inches or more) east of West Virginia in the Atlantic coastal plain.

Selected 24-



hour totals in West Virginia included 2.24 inches (on October 7-8) in Martinsburg and 2.06 inches (on October 21-22) in Elkins. October 24-26 snowfall topped one foot in some northern mountain locations, and reached 3.0 inches in Clarksburg and 1.1 inches in Elkins. Clarksburg's previous snowiest October occurred in 1925, when 2.5 inches fell. While the central Appalachians' snow storm was getting underway on October 24, southern Florida was dealing with category 3 Hurricane Wilma, which was whisked across the western Atlantic Ocean by the developing "nor'easter." Temperature departures were similar to those observed in September, reaching +5°F in parts of West Virginia. Elkins (55.3°F; 4.7°F above normal) followed its 6<sup>th</sup>-warmest September with its 9<sup>th</sup> warmest October—and warmest October since 1984. Elkins also posted a high of 87°F on October 3, tying its monthly record established on October 6, 1900, and October 2, 1927. However, cold weather arrived in conjunction with the October 24-26 Northeastern storm and persisted until late in the month. The season's first freeze was reported statewide by October 29, when lows dipped to 26°F in Beckley and 28°F in Parkersburg. A day later, lows included 29°F in Charleston and Huntington. Some locations observed late-month temperatures in the teens, with Marlinton (Pocahontas County) reporting lows of 17°F on October 28 and 29.

**Preliminary Station Data, October 2005\***

***Temperatures (°F), Precipitation (Inches), and Departures from Normal***

**WV Station Avg Dep Hi / Lo Temp (Dates) Pcpn Dep. % of Nml**

**Beckley 54.6 +1.8 78 (2<sup>nd</sup>) / 26 (29<sup>th</sup>) 2.08 -0.56 79**

**Bluefield 57.9 +3.1 80 (2<sup>nd</sup>) / 30 (29<sup>th</sup>) 2.97 +0.36 114**

**Charleston 57.6 +2.5 85 (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>) / 29 (30<sup>th</sup>) 3.34 +0.67 125**

**Elkins 55.3 +4.7 87 (3<sup>rd</sup>) / 24 (30<sup>th</sup>) 5.24 +2.38 183**

**Huntington 57.5 +1.9 87 (5<sup>th</sup>) / 29 (30<sup>th</sup>) 2.57 -0.16 94**

**Martinsburg 57.0 +1.5 83 (2<sup>nd</sup>) / 30 (31<sup>st</sup>) 5.29 +1.89 156**

**Parkersburg 55.5 +0.1 86 (6<sup>th</sup>) / 28 (29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>) 3.30 +0.48 117**

**Nearby Stns Avg Dep Hi / Lo Temp (Dates) Pcpn Dep. % of Nml**

**Pittsburgh, PA 53.4 +0.9 84 (6<sup>th</sup>) / 32 (31<sup>st</sup>) 3.47 +1.22 154**

**Blacksburg, VA 56.0 +4.3 81 (2<sup>nd</sup>) / 25 (27<sup>th</sup>) 3.33 +0.14 104**

**Jackson, KY 59.6 +2.1 87 (5<sup>th</sup>) / 33 (29<sup>th</sup>) 1.57 -1.61 49**

\* Preliminary station data were supplied by National Weather Service offices in Blacksburg, VA, Charleston, WV, Pittsburgh, PA, Sterling, VA, and Jackson, KY. Compiled by Brad Rippey, Agricultural

Meteorologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The above report was provided to me by Lowell L. Koontz

WxHistory 10-10-79.txt

**<B><BR><BR>1979<BR></B>**

This was the earliest snow ever recorded in Richmond, Virginia.

KRIC had but a trace of snow on this date.

**<BR><B>(Ref. Richmond Weather Records - KRIC)</B><BR><HR>**

This is also the earliest snow ever recorded at the Annandale-Barcroft Hills station 0.5 inches.

KDCA had 0.3 inches on this date and the greatest snowfall in October was 2.2 inches on October 30,

1925.

**<BR><B>(Ref. Annandale-Barcroft Hills records) (Ref. Washington Weather Records - KDCA) </B>**

**<HR>**

Dale Enterprise west of Harrisonburg had 8.0 the heaviest early snow in more than 143 years records

there back to 1868

**<BR><B>(The Weather Channel)</B><BR><HR>**

**<B>The record earliest snowstorm for Washington, DC. ---</B>**

Washington's earliest measurable snowfall occurred on October 10, 1979.

National Airport reported only 0.3 inches of snow; however, much heavier snow fell to the west of Washington causing significant tree damage in the mountains of Virginia.

The tree damage was especially severe because the trees had not yet lost their leaves, allowing huge

amounts of snow to accumulate on the branches.

The storm began on October 9th when a low- pressure area moved east through New York state and

Massachusetts.

A storm blanketed Worcester, MA with 7.5 inches of snow, a record snowfall total for so early in the

season for that location.

Washington was in the warm sector of the storm and temperatures topped out in the low '70's before the

trailing cold front swept through during the late afternoon.

During the nighttime hours, unseasonably cold air surged down the East Coast. As cold air invaded the

D.C. area, a second storm center took shape over the Carolinas.

A chilly rain broke out that evening and continued all night. By midnight, the temperature had fallen to 50

degrees F.

The relentless drop of the mercury continued during the pre-dawn hours and many people in the northern

and western suburbs awoke to see snow falling.

During the early morning a burst of 1 - 3 inches of snow fell in central and northern Montgomery County

and a coating of snow accumulated in Fairfax and lower Montgomery County.

The precipitation tapers off in all sections between 7 and 9 A.M. but by 10:00 A.M. a new band of heavy

snow broke out this time centering its fury on the southern half of the metropolitan area.

Huge snowflakes were accompanied by lightning and thunder. By noon, the worst was over and the

snow tapered off.

During the second burst 3 inches of snow fell in the central and southern parts of the region.

A snowfall maximum of 3.0 inches was centered in Fairfax County.

Aside from the October 10, 1979 storm, there have been only two measurable October snows on record

in Washington.

Those took place October 19, 1940 with 1.5 inches and October 30, 1925 with 2.2 inches, the greatest

snow in October.

**<BR><B> (p. 86-87 Washington Weather Book 2002 by Ambrose, Henry, Weiss)</B><BR><HR> Boston, Massachusetts had 0.2 inches of snow which was also their earliest measurable snowfall. <BR><A href="http://www.glenallenweather.com/historylinks/boston/10oct.htm"><B>(Ref. NOAA Boston**

**Weather Events)</B></A>**

**<BR><A href="http://www.glenallenweather.com/historylinks/wilson/oct/oct1-10.htm"><B>(Ref. More**

**Information About This Storm)</B></A>**

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The above information was provided to me by Lowell L. Koontz

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**I would like to give a special thanks to all those who helped with this report.**

**Thanks to Lowell L. Koontz for all the great information he provided on past October snowstorms. Lowell provided news reports, weather maps, and weather records.**

**Thanks to ACON Coordinator Kevin Shaw for all the snowstorm information on the snowstorms of 2011 and 1979.**

**Thanks to Caroline and the staff of the NOAA Central Library and the Metro Climate Review for the October 10, 1979 snowfall information for the DC metro area.**

**Thanks to Jeff Taylor for Climatological Data on the October 1940 snowstorm.**

**Thanks to David Leshner for all the climatological data that he has supplied me with.**

**Thanks to weather observers Stan Rossen, Marty Brumback, Robert Rickell, and Ray Muller for their help.**

**Thanks to Gary Gallaher for his help with my report in ACON.**

**Thanks to Ed Stannard of the New Haven Register.**

**Thanks to all the weather observers of ACON, Cocorahs, CO-OP Observers, SKYWARN, National Weather Service, and Emergency Management, and the general public for their snowfall and storm reports.**

**Special thanks to all the staff and offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, and the Environmental Data Service.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Sterling, Va.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, State College, Pa.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Mt. Holly, Pa.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, New York, NY**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Binghamton, NY**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Taunton, MA**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Portland, Me.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Grey, Me.**

**NOAA, National Weather Service, Caribou, Me.**

**NOAA, NWS, STORM PREDICTION CENTER, NORMAN, OK**

**NOAA, NATIONAL CLIMATE DATA CENTER in Asheville, N.C.**

**The American Meteorological Society**

**(NOAA, NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SATELLITE DATA AND INFORMATION SERVICE)  
NOAA ENVIRONMENTAL VISUALIZATION LABORATORY**

**Figure 1 NOAA, NESIS**

**Figure 2 NOAA, NWS, State College, Pa.**

Figure 3 WGAL Channel 8 in Lancaster, Pa.

**Figure 4 Data provided by NOAA, NWS, Sterling, Virginia.**

**Snowfall Amounts**

**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE STERLING VA  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MOUNT HOLLY NJ  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE BINGHAMTON NY  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE NEW YORK NY  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE TAUNTON MA  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE CARIBOU ME**

**CLIMATE REPORT FROM THE NWS AT GRAY, ME**

**AREA FORECAST DISCUSSION  
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE STATE COLLEGE PA**

**A report by Matt Daniel of earthsky.org**

**“Unprecedented snowfall hits New England late October 2011”.**

**<http://earthsky.org/earth/unprecedented-snowfall-hits-new-england-late-october-2011>**

Figure 5 GOES Satellite Photo from NOAA

Figure 6 Water vapor image from NOAA GOES Satellite photo



**“ Review of Snow-tober 2011” by NOAA, NWS in Taunton, Massachusetts.**

Figure 7 NOAA, NWS U.S. Map of watches and Warnings.

**[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/post/historic-october-northeast-storm-epic-incredible-downright-ridiculous/2011/10/31/gIQAp7LZM\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/post/historic-october-northeast-storm-epic-incredible-downright-ridiculous/2011/10/31/gIQAp7LZM_blog.html)**

Figure 8 Visible GOES Satellite photo

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NWS STORM PREDICTION CENTER NORMAN OK

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National Centers for Environmental Prediction  
Storm Prediction Center  
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Norman, OK 73072 U.S.A.

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**Special thanks to the media, all the newspapers, broadcast media, and private forecast services, ACCUWEATHER, THE WEATHER CHANNEL, Capital-Weather-Gang of the Washington Post, earthsky.org, and the DC Weather Examiner.**

**Washington Post, Washington, D.C.**

**The Baltimore Sun, Baltimore, Md.**

**The Evening Sun of Hanover, Pa.**

**The Carroll County Section of the Evening Sun in Westminster, Md.**

**The Carroll County Times, Westminster, Md.**

**The New Haven Register, New Haven, Ct.**

**Daily News Record**

**WGAL TV Channel 8 in Lancaster, Pa.**

**FOX 43 News in York, Pa.**

**Thanks to Google for all their help in my research.**

**For further reading on October snowstorms including the historic snowstorm of October 29, 2011 check out the web sites from Google and the World Wide Web. There are many great reports out there including the web sites of the above credits. Check them out!**

**In the months ahead, I hope to do a follow up report on early snowstorms focusing on storms from the 1800s back. I've been continuing my research in old diaries, garden books, journals, weather history books including those by David M. Ludlum. I was hoping to include that information in this report. However this report was quickly becoming too large and this report was taking much longer to finish than I thought it would. I will have to do a second report. There are a number of very interesting October storms that hit the northeast United States in the past. I would like to share those with you.**

**Until then, take care and Happy Holidays!**

**Herbert Close, Jr.**