

Sept. 3, 1821: Category 4 Hurricane Hits Coast, Engulfs Cape May County

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE MAY — While the world has turned its attention to Hurricane Dean, residents ask themselves, “Could it happen here?”

The answer is yes. In 1821, Cape May experienced a Category 4 hurricane. While no living person remembers the storm, newspapers of the day and the military gathered information.

While storms were not named in the 1800s, the 1821 hurricane is often referred to as the Norfolk and Long Island Hurricane.

According to the Web site Hurricaneville.com, the 1821 storm was the last major hurricane to make a direct landfall in this state. The Category 4 hurricane hit Cape May on Sept. 3, 1821. It was believed to have had winds of 135 mph.

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