

## **THE GREAT STORM OF AUGUST 27, 1667**

(A letter from Thomas Ludwell to Lord Berkeley of Stratton—a favorite of King Charles II, and the elder brother of Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia)

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1667

Right Hon'ble

(He describes Virginia as "...now much reduced to a very miserable condition by a continual course of misfortunes," and lists them as follows:) ...in April we had a most prodigious Storm of hail many of them as big as Turkey Eggs which destroyed our younge Mast (nuts on the ground) and fruit, and forward English grain (wheat, Rye, oats) brake all the glass windowes and beat holes through the tiles of our houses, killed many young hogs and cattle...(in June) it fell to raining and continued for 40 days together, which spoiled much of what the hail had left of our English graine.

But on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, followed the most dreadful hurricane that ever this country groaned under, it lasted 24 hours began at North East and went round northerly till it came to West and so on till it came to South East where it ceased. It was accompanied with a most violent rain but no thunder, the night of it was the most dismall tyme that ever I know or heard off, for the wind and rain raised so confused a noise mixt with the continual cracks of falling houses and the murmer of the waves impetuously beaten against the shores and by that violence forced and as it were crowded up into all Creekes, Rivers, and Bays to that prodigious height that it hazarded the drowning of many people who lived not in sight of the rivers yet were forced to climb to the tops of their houses to keep themselves above water, carried away all the foundations of the fort at Point Comfort into the river...

...all the Elements were at strife which of them should do most towards the reduction of the Creation into a second Chaos, it was wonderful to consider the contrary effects of that storm, for it blew some ships from their anchors and carried them safe over shelves of land, yet knocked out the bottom of a ship...in eight feet of water more than she drew...(As) to the ruins of our plantations, of which I think not one escaped, the nearest computation is at least 10,000 houses blown down, all the Indian grain (corn) laid flat upon the ground, all the tobacco in the fields torn to pieces and most of that which was in the houses perished with them..."