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WASHINGTON CITY, SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1812.

PAID IN ADVANCE.

We are gratified on being able from so respectable a source to lay before our readers an authentic account of the phenomena exhibited by the Earthquake on the Mississippi:

New Orleans, Jan. 15, 1812.

Sir,

Believing the effects of the late *Earthquake* to have been different in different sections of the country, and that reports at Washington, however diversified were nevertheless such as to excite curiosity; I take the liberty of sending you the enclosed paper which, at a leisure moment may, perhaps, afford some little amusement, & which you will be pleased to dispose of in any manner you think proper.

I am, &c.

DI. BEDINGER.

Extract from the Journal of Daniel Bedinger on a voyage down the Mississippi:

December 13th, 1811. The barge Louisville, in which Doctor Foster

where the vessels lay. But about two hours after it subsided and the current again became gentle. The froth, too had passed down the stream and entirely disappeared before day*. In the mean time, the confusion which seemed to reign on all sides, was awfully alarming. Many acres of land in a body (as was discovered on the approach of day) had sunk to a level with the surface of the river, and some much lower leaving only the tops of the trees above water. Where the banks did not immediately tumble in, vast rents or fissures were made in the earth to an extent unknown. Some of these fissures received the waters of the river and other let out those of the neighboring lakes and ponds, with no inconsiderable roarings. Frequent rumbling sounds were heard, resembling distant thunder, and numerous heavy reports, indicative of explosions seemingly from the bottom of the river and the low lands adjacent together with the falling and crashing of many large and heavy trees at the same moment seemed to threaten universal destruction.

Immediately after the first shock, the thermometer was observed to be at 45. About 30 minutes after the first shock a second was felt; it was less violent and of shorter duration than

river, Kentucky, lost two boats with their cargoes by the rising of one of them. His first boat was bilged, and the other being lashed to her, they both went down together. The people were saved.

At 8 o'clock there was a slight shock and at 10 another. The boats now were within a short distance of the village at the *Little Prairie* and desirous of knowing what effects had been produced by the repeated shock abovementioned, at and near that place, Doctor F. and D.B. got into the skiff and went ahead of the larger vessels. When they approached the town, they found it altogether unsafe to attempt a landing as the banks were all broken to pieces and huge masses were, at short intervals, tumbling into the river. They however called aloud and were answered by a black man, who shewed himself at some distance off. From him they understood that all the inhabitants but himself had that morning, in the utmost consternation, fled into the country to the westward of the village. That the earth was broken in many places and the openings filled with water. The houses much injured — the only brick chimney in the place entirely demolished and that the shock at half past 7 had been much

Dec. 20th. Therm. 31 and 37. A shock at 11 A.M. just at passing of the 2d bluff. The weather cloudy with some rain this day. Came too below the 3d bluff.

December 21st. Therm. 47 and 51. A slight shock at half past 11 A.M. In the evening anchored off Fort Pickering at the 4th bluff. Landed near the trading house, or Agency & were told that the Earthquake had been felt there and also at the distance of 40 miles to the eastward; but no damage done.

December 22d. Therm. 49 and 50. Wind N.W. Felt a slight jar at 7 A.M. which was the last. Landed on the Louisiana side and could discover no traces of the earthquake at this place which was near Council Island. They afterwards found that the Earthquake had been less violent below — that its force gradually diminished to the southward. They obtained their information on this point, at the mouth of the river St. Francis, the Arkansas, Walnut Hills, Warrenton and Natchez. Below the 31st degree of N. Lat. they could not learn that it had been felt at all.

Bedinger, D. (1812)

Barges Venus and Ohio, captains Hedington and Beckle. The Mississippi it was observed, was lower than usual though not so low as it has been. The banks presented an elevation on an average of about 20 feet above the surface of the river. The winds were light and the weather gloomy.

December 14th. To avoid tiresome repetitions, the temperature of the weather will generally be noticed in manner following viz. Therm. 29 deg. and 46, which implies that the mercury of Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at 29 deg. at sun-rise and 46 at 3 o'clock P.M. as was the case this day. The three barges above named and several other boats proceeded down the river. During the day there was little wind — the weather was very dark and foggy. In the evening came too at the Island No. 8 as designated by the Pittsburg "Navigator."

Dec. 15th. Therm. 40 and 49. Got underway and touched at New Madrid, a fine handsome bank, but the place little improved. Descended the river to the Island No. 13 which lies about the latitude of 36 deg., 20 north. The weather was very dark all day & had the appearance of what is sometimes called the *Indian Summer*.

December 16th. About 2 o'clock in the morning were alarmed by an unusual noise seeming under the bottom of the barge, attended with a violent trembling and shaking of the vessel; and as the boats in company were at the same time, equally affected all were soon convinced that the cause was no other than a violent shock of an earthquake which lasted, (without intermission) about 40 seconds. Immediately after which the boats rolled considerably (though there was no wind). The river appeared to be much agitated. It was suddenly covered with a thick froth. It rose at least 18 inches in a few minutes time, and became very rapid

time until day light, nothing material occurred, except repeated rumbling sounds, seemingly at a distance and a continual falling in of the banks of the river.

The boats, now all got under way and stood down the river. The thermometer at sun-rise was still at 45. No perceptible change was observed in the temperature of the river water. Nothing was seen like lightning, fire, smoke or anything of a volcanic nature. The weather remained dark and cloudy and the winds were light and variable.

About half past 7 o'clock A.M. there was another shock, which for violence (it was agreed by all on board) exceeded the first; but it lasted only about 20 seconds. Soon after was seen (a short distance from the headmost boat) a large spout or body of water rising from the river to the height of about 18 or 20 feet, when it seemed to burst, and was instantaneously followed by a loud report. Similar reports were heard from the neighboring low grounds at various distances from the river. A great number of old logs and trees of an enormous size, were cast up to the surface from the bottom of the channel, which caused the navigation (always difficult here) to be still more dangerous. The mischief done by these logs cannot be ascertained, but a Mr. Atwell of Salt

*It was afterwards concluded, that, as this froth was evidently produced by the ebullitions or bubbling of water, formed, during the concussion from the bottom and sides of the river, through innumerable ducts and openings — as it floated off, down the stream in so short a space of time, the most violent effects of the earthquake could not have extended on the river, to any great distance above this place.

obtained they returned to the barges, which by this time had passed the village+. They continued their course down the river. At 11 o'clock they felt a considerable shock, and 20 minutes after, another, not so severe. The thermometer at 3 p.m. was at 52. In the evening all the boats in company came too, near the Island No. 23. A landing was made on this island & it was found that every part of the beach, as well as the high land, had been much rent and torn to pieces. Numerous springs or holes remained which all had the appearance of having discharged large quantities of water, sand, mud and pieces of wood, which, in color and weight, greatly resembled mineral coal. Some specimens were brought away.

December 17th. Thermometer 53 and 49. The wind first west, then north-west; the morning very dark and cloudy. Descended the river this day to the head of the Canadian reach. At 6 o'clock A.M. two shocks, each of short duration. At 30 minutes past 11, one more violent. Occasional rumblings.

December 18th. Thermometer 30 and 45. Remained at anchor (being wind bound) all day. Wind strong at N.W. At 45 minutes past 11 A.M. a slight shock, and at 9 P.M. another.

December 19th. Therm. 24 and 36. Wind first west, then variable. A clear day. Proceeded to the first Chickasaw bluff and landed. On the high ground discovered no marks of the earthquake. Near the river banks were broken, but nothing like those at the *Little Prairie*. A slight shock or jar at 3 P.M.

+ Below this place the country is an uninhabited wilderness for several hundred miles, excepting only at the 4th Bluff, where there is a small settlement.