

100 Years Ago

The News and Herald, Winnsboro,
S.C., September 8, 1886

An Earthquake

Several Distinct Shocks Felt in
Winnsboro
... Some of the Particulars

One of the severest earthquakes ever experienced in this county occurred on Tuesday night. There were no unusual natural phenomena to foretell the coming shock - on the contrary all nature seemed calm and serene. About 10 o'clock, however, the people were startled by a distant rumbling noise, when in the twinkling of an eye, houses began to shake, the earth rolled and confusion generally was rampant. People rushed from their houses in mortal fear - some yelled fire! others murder! It was a scene of the greatest awe and confusion. This shock lasted certainly thirty seconds striking terror to the bravest hearts. It was the strangest sensation imaginable. With all the noise and confusion, the earth quaking under the feet, the bravest were transfixed with fear. There was a general sigh of relief when it was over. People regained their accustomed equanimity when they saw no loss of life or serious damage to property. In less than ten minutes a rumbling sound was heard again and immediately after the same sensations were experienced, but in a much less degree. Then came a lull. Afterwards another shock and another until by 11 o'clock twelve distinct and unmistakable shocks were experienced. It was a time of terrible suspense. No one knew but that the next one would destroy our town. People generally left their houses anticipating more serious results from each successive shock. From 11 to 12 o'clock everything was quiet, and the people believing the worst had come retired for the night. Just as the town clock struck the hour of one, another shock came, but with little force. About

five minutes later there was another almost as severe as the first. No one knew what the next minute would bring forth, and all stood in constant fear. From 10 p.m. until 5 a.m., there were sixteen distinct shocks, varying more or less in intensity. There was a calm until 9 a.m., Wednesday, when another shock of slight intensity was perceived.

There was a lecture in the Court House by Dr. Barker on Phrenology. There was a large crowd present, and it was extremely fortunate that the lecture closed about five minutes before the first sensation. As it was about twenty-five people were still in the hall and at the first shock they were panic-stricken and all rushed for the door. By the presence of mind of Col. Rion and Sheriff McCarley, they were quieted without any damage.

At the same time an ice-cream festival was being held in the Thespian Hall. At the first rattle of the windows and rocking of the house, the ladies and children becoming panic-stricken, rushed from the building screaming at the top of their voices. A few cool heads prevented any loss of life there also.

Mr. F. W. Habenicht's bar was somewhat unfortunate. At the first shock, bottles began to rattle and the clerks fled in fear, leaving about twenty-five bottles of the finest liquors flowing upon the floor. Mr. Habenicht's loss is considerable.

Plastering fell from many houses. Mrs. G. W. Crawford, having retired, on first perceiving the sensation arose just in time to avoid a large piece of plaster falling from the ceiling. Many private residences were stripped of plastering...

The prisoners in jail implored the Sheriff to let them out for fear the house would fall upon them...

Everybody laughs now and has a little joke, but nobody but an ignorant person could look upon the thing without some misgivings.

The Earthquake at Horeb.

Messrs. Editors: A terrific ear-

thquake shock was heard and felt in this community last night between 9 and 10 o'clock. The whole earth seemed to rock like a cradle. In several instances parts of chimneys were shaken down and houses cracked and rocked to such a frightful extent that the inmates fled from them. Twelve lighter shocks followed at regular intervals, the last being about 3 o'clock. The terror stricken citizens would feel some relief from having some scientific reasons assigned for these unusual visitors. We experienced something of the same kind several years ago, which was apparently not felt elsewhere.

We have heard from several sections of the county for several miles this morning, and all tell the same terrific tale. As I write another shock is jarring my desk. The earth seems like a huge monster breathing heavily, and emitting it with vehement rage. We will anxiously await a hearing from other sections. More another...

UPPER HOREB.

*reel
file
Horeb
→ earth & quake (put in Fairfield History)*