

(Dec)

THE EARTHQUAKE. (Extract of a letter from a gentleman on his way to New Orleans, to a friend in this place - dated 20th December.)

"We entered the Mississippi river on the morning of the 14th, and on the night of the 15th came to anchor on a sandbar, about 10 miles above the Little Prairie. Half past 2 o'clock in the morning of the 16th, we were aroused from our slumbers by a violent shaking of the boat. The alarm was considerable and various opinions as to the cause were suggested, all found to be erroneous; but after the 2nd shock, which occurred in 15 minutes after the first, it was admitted to be an earthquake. We weighed anchor early in the morning and in a few minutes there came on in quick succession, two other shocks, more violent than the former. It was then daylight. The bank of the river gave way in all directions, and came tumbling into the water; the trees were more agitated than I ever saw before then in the severest storms, and many of them from the shock they received broke off near the ground, as well as many more torn up by the roots. As we proceeded down the river, we observed every part of the banks of the Mississippi. In some places 5, 10 and 15 acres have sunk down in a body, even the Chickasaw Bluffs, which we have passed did not escape.

sunk land

The inhabitants of Little Prairie and its neighborhood all deserted their homes, and retired back to the hills or swamps. The only brick chimney at that place was entirely demolished by the shocks. The ground is cracked and torn to pieces in such a way as to make it truly alarming; indeed some of the islands in the river that contained from one to two hundred acres of land have been nearly all sunk, and not one yet that I have been but are cracked from one end to the other and has lost some part of it.

LP.

There have been in all 41 shocks, some of them have been very light; the first one took place at half past 2 on the morning of the 16th, the last one, at 11 o'clock this morning (20th). The last was not as severe as some of the former, but it lasted longer, about 1 1/2 minutes. During the period we frequently heard rumbling noises at a distance when no shocks were to us perceptible. I am fearful when I arrive at Natchez to hear that the whole city of Orleans is entirely demolished and perhaps sank.

Immediately after the 1st shock and those which took place after daylight the whole atmosphere was impregnated with a sulphurous smell.

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