

# The Daily Examiner.

## The Inyo Earthquake [of March 26<sup>th</sup>]

Incidents and Remarkable Escapes – The Damage to the Mines – The Hopes

April 13, 1872

The San Francisco *Examiner*

The Inyo *Independent* of the 6<sup>th</sup> records the following incidents of the earthquake:

B. L. Brown was writing at a high desk in the Pioneer stable, by the light of a tall kerosene lamp, a “comet” burner. The chimney of the lamp was thrown straight up and came right end down on the desk, where it remained standing, while the lamp fell over to the edge of the desk, the burning oil running to the floor, the flames of which Brown and Dow stamped out after they came in from the street, where they had gone for safety.

In this office forms and standing matter received a rotary motion from right to left, moving them nearly a quarter circle, and at the same time they and everything movable received a send to the south. A Gordon press was turned partially around on the floor. A small chimney running up inside the gable end of the building, dropped perpendicularly through a close-fitting, light, wooden bracket, ten feet from the top, without breaking it off or displacing it. That chimney was ‘taken in’ with remarkable celerity.

D. E. Hunter, who was sleeping in a small frame building near the steep banks of the creek near Camp Independence, reached the door in time to see the ground open under one corner of the house full eighteen inches. He had to jump across the opening.

### SAVED BY ATTENDING A BALL – REMARKABLE ESCAPES

Several members of Mr. Yaney’s family, of Bishop Creek, were attending a dance at a neighbor’s house on the night of the earthquake. A portion of a heavy stone chimney fell direct across the bed where, but for the dance, the two young ladies would have been sleeping, and their death would have been almost certain. This fact will do for a new text for those people who preach “special Providence,” as they always do when a boy is drowned while fishing on Sunday, or a young lady meets death while attending a dance.

One of the most unaccountable escapes occurred with Mr. Chaquette, being in an adobe house near the Post. He was sleeping in a bed adjoining that of his wife, who had by her side three children. Mr. Chaquette arose just as the building fell, and a 2 x 8 inch rafter broke across his pillow, while the other bed was crushed to the floor, killing a cat beneath and yet not injuring its occupants!

A noticeable case was that of a child of Mr. J. N. Rose, which tearfully begged and bitterly cried to be allowed to sleep with his father on that particular night. His pleadings were granted and his accustomed bed was buried in the ruins of an adobe wall.

### COURTING DURING THE BIG SHOCK

A young gentleman of Bishop Creek was “setting up” with his inamorata at the dead hour of 2:30 A.M., when the big shock came. The young lady, as in duty bound, fainted away. Our Adonis held her in his arms until she recovered, which required many minutes. The next day he swore he would “give \$20 a shock for earthquakes when setting up with an offish gal.” Shocking.

H. W. Robinson, stage man, was fast asleep in a small room, one side of which was canvas, in the second story of the station at Little Lake, seventy miles south of this place. His impression was that his team was running away with the stage, and singing out “Whoa! Whoa!” very lustily. During his endeavors to catch the lines he tumbled down upon the floor, when a new impression got possession of him, which induced him to “get out of that” as no man ever got out before. The building, however, did not fall, nor was any material damage done in that direction. Near the same place some heavy teams were in camp, the mules tied to the wagon, as usual. One of the teamsters jumped up, and throwing on brake, commenced to swear with great energy at the mules, in the belief that they were responsible for the whole trouble. He stopped when he heard the remark from another teamster, “You d-d fool, ‘taint the mule, it’s an earthquake!”

### EFFECTS AT THE MINES

At the Eclipse works, east of Owens River, the railroad is raised and “humped” in many places as if it had been driven together from the ends. This railroad is three miles in length, running nearly east and west. Captain Scoones and lady had a most wonderful escape. The first intimation either had of the great calamity was after they were buried under the ruins of their dwelling, into which they had moved the day before. The canvas lining was pressed down upon their faces by two feet of adobes and the roof. Mrs. Scoones providentially managed to get one hand loose, with which she tore a hole through the lining admitting air that came not a moment too soon, for, with mouths and nostrils filled with alkali dust, neither could have lived but a few minutes longer. With great exertions they finally extricated themselves. They would have both been crushed to pieces by the timbers except for one of those wonderful accidents, we may call it, that could not happen once in a thousand times. A piece of scantling, less than two feet long, struck the floor endways, and before it had time to topple over, a heavy roof timber, which otherwise would have fallen directly across their bodies, struck square on the end of this stick, thus holding up the roof and saving their lives. Some brute, who will doubtless live to stretch a rope, in answer to Mrs. Scoones’ screams for help, told her to “help yourself; we have go enough to do to take care of ourselves,” and went off leaving her to her fate! Mr. Polkinghorne and son finally, after escaping from their own house, came to their assistance, and did all in their power to render the lady comfortable, giving her his stockings and boots to prevent her from freezing, her own clothes being all buried up in the ruins. Captain Scoones feels under great obligations to Mr. Polkinghorne.

### AT THE KEARSARGE MILL,

west of this place, in the Sierras, the shock was quite severe, though no damage was done, except that the tramway appeared to be displaced in one place. Parties in the canons in the mountain, were enveloped in clouds of dust that came rolling down, but did not realize the power of the shock as did others in the opposite or Inyo range. In the latter range masses of rock were loosened and rolled into the canons, from which Mr. Warden and party had a most narrow escape from being crushed to pieces.

## CAMP INDEPENDENCE

At Camp Independence no houses fell entirely, except the gardener's, just below the main settlement; but Major Egbert's house had a large part of one wall to fall in, and the Post Surgeon's house had its whole front wall, facing south, thrown in. Next, southeast of this building, the soldier's mess hall and part of the Quartermaster's storehouses were badly shattered, parts of the walls falling, and the mess hall having to be at once pulled down to avoid accidents. The soldier's quarters lost part of its lower, east wall, and one house, occupied by two families of married soldiers was about demolished – both end walls falling in and the roof barely standing. The hospital and other buildings were much injured in the plastering, and the walls strained and cracked. All the buildings at the Post are considered unsafe and will be replaced by wooden structures, if the military authorities at San Francisco will authorize the expense.

Officers and men are living either in temporary structures of boards covered with canvas or in tents or shelter tents.

## PHENOMENA CONNECTED WITH THE EARTHQUAKE

Clocks stopped instantly, and what is still more remarkable, two others, one of which belongs to this establishment, that for some weeks past had persistently refused to turn a wheel, started to run at once, and continued to do so for ten hours afterward.

In P. Reddy's law office all the books and fixtures against the north wall of the front room were thrown down, while not a book was displaced in the library reaching to the ceiling which stood against the south wall of the same room. In the adjoining room (west) this order was exactly reversed. Nothing was disturbed on the wall, while everything, desks and book cases, were thrown down from the opposite wall.

Little children who do not realize the nature of the phenomena, remark when a shock, accompanied by the subdued roaring, is felt, that "it is thundering," or "the wind is blowing, ain't it mamma?"

Since the first shock animals of all kinds pursue the quiet tenor of their way, without taking the slightest notice of the continued manifestations of the underground commotions. Some streams ran black with alkali or mud, while others, but a short distance away, were pure and limpid as ever.

The power of the great underground king is everywhere manifest along the low, wet grounds, particularly at their junctions with the harder and more solid formations of the second benches and hills. On the higher lands fissures were opened, from which water spirited and continued to run for some time, where water, except from the rains of Heaven, never ran before.

The canons in the side of the mountains to the west filled up nearly to the summit of the hills on either side with dust, flying snow or fog, it was impossible to say which from the appearance. This all disappeared in about two hours.

A cloud of dust hung along the Inyo range as far up and down as we could see until about noon. This cloud of dust looked like a long, narrow streak of fog, straight underneath and somewhat ragged on top. The sun shone until noon with a sort of subdued glare, as though the atmosphere contained smoke.

## THE LOSSES

The "Independent," foots up the losses at Lone Pine at \$132,000, while the damage to the Eclipse Company's works cannot be less than \$14,000. At Independence the estimated damage is \$43,850, and at Camp Independence \$26,500.