

**DOCUMENTATION FOR THE NEW MADRID, MISSOURI, EARTHQUAKES
OF 1811-1812 FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN TRAVELERS FLOATING DOWN
THE MISSISSIPPI AND OHIO RIVERS
Ron Street**

Section 1: Settlements and Other Locations

Abingdon, Virginia

Date (?)

[*Democratic Clarion & Tennessee Gazette*, Jan. 23, 1812]

At Abingdon it is said there was no shock.

Alexandria, Virginia December 16, 1811

[*Concord Gazette*, Jan 7, 1812]

On Monday morning last two shocks of an earthquake were sensibly felt in this town, the first between 2 and 3 o'clock, the latter about 8.

There appeared to be one shock each time, and its undulations, might have continued 30 seconds - It had force enough to shake furniture in houses, and we have heard of some instance of clocks being stopped by throwing their pendulums out of their course of vibrations.

Alexander, Virginia January 23, 1812

[*Concord Gazette*, Feb. 4, 1812]

A shock of an earthquake was distinctly felt in this town yesterday morning, about 20 minutes after nine o'clock. Its duration was supposed to be about thirty seconds, and its motion from N.W. to S.E. Considerable sensations were excited by this event.

Alexandria, Virginia February 7, 1812

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 12, 1812]

There was another shock of an Earthquake felt at this place, at about 4 o'clock yesterday morning - its motion was about north-to-south - a gentle undulation, about the same in degree with that felt the 23d ult.

Allegany County, New York December 16, 1811

[*American Statesman*, Mar. 3, 1812]

The earthquake of the 16th Dec., was experienced with considerable severity in Charleston (S.C.) and in Allegany County, N. York. At the place last mentioned, clothes hanging on a line, and a kettle on the fire, swung backwards and forwards, very visibly to every person. A house is supposed to have rocked at least two feet both ways, and a door was observed to swing open and shut. The bells were set to ringing, and the water in the adjacent brook put into violent motion.

Annapolis, Maryland January 23, 1812
[*New York Evening Post*, Jan. 29, 1812]

From *The Annapolis Maryland Republican*

An Earthquake. - A severe shock of an earthquake was experienced by a number of persons in this city yesterday morning, the 22nd inst. about sixteen minutes before ten o'clock. Its duration is supposed to have been about two or three minutes from beginning to end, and its direction apparently from E. to S.W. This phenomenon was dissimilar in its nature and effects from any of the kind that we have heretofore heard of, as it was not accompanied or preceded by the usual rumbling noises, nor any sudden concussion of the earth, but a continued roll similar to that of a vessel in heavy sea. One circumstance which renders its effects more singular is, that it was very sensibly felt by some, while others, although in the same room, and perhaps within a few feet of them, were not in the least affected by its oscillation, and those who were in the street or (sic) air, were insensible as to any extraordinary motion of the earth. The first intimation to those who experienced its effects, was from the motion of everything around them, and a sudden sickness accompanied with giddiness in the head. We judge of the severity of the shock from the motion given to substances suspended from the ceilings of the houses. The fairest opportunity that was presented (to our knowledge) of judging of its force and direction, was from an ostrich egg, which was suspended by a string of about a foot in length from a first floor ceiling, which was caused to oscillate at least four inches from point to point - We are informed that the State House, which is supposed to be 250 feet in height vibrated at least 6 to 8 feet at the top, and the motion was perceptible for about 8 or 12 minutes. A number of clocks stopped and the ice in the bay and river cracked considerably. Some persons, who were skating, were very much terrified, and immediately made for shore. In the lower part of the city it appears to have been most forcible, some people being in the act of abandoning their houses, for the purpose of seeking safety in the open air. It is said that a noise like distant thunder was heard about 3 o'clock in the morning, and a slight motion, of the earth observed about 8, but neither were very sensibly heard or felt.

There was nothing extraordinary in the atmosphere, except that it was remarkably calm, and rather inclined to be warm, although there was a deep snow on the ground and for several days past it had been extremely cold.

Arkport, New York December 16, 1811
[*Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 6, 1812]

Messrs. Miner and & Butler,

A very singular phenomenon took place near Angelica, in the country of Allegany, on Monday morning the 16th of December, which I will state, as relayed to me by one of the eye witnesses. Early in the morning, about sunrise, as sitting at breakfast, he had a strange feeling, and supposed at first that he was fainting, but as sight did not fail, he then concluded that he was going into a fit, and removed his chair back from the table. - - He then had a sensation as though the house was swinging and observed clothes hanging on lines in the room were swinging, as also a large kettle hanging over

a fire. He observed that his wife and family appeared to be greatly alarmed, and still supposing that it was in consequence of his apparently falling into a fit, but on enquiry found that all felt the sensation. This continued, he supposed for at least 15 minutes. There was no noise or trembling, nor any wind, but only an appearance of swinging or rocking, as he supposed, equal to the house rocking two feet one way and the other. - - One of his neighbors felt the same, and on the Phillip Church, the same motions and sensations were felt. Mrs. Church was in bed, and when she felt the motion, and a strange sensation as if suffocating, she jumped out of bed, supposing the house was on fire. The motion was so considerable as to set all of the bells in the several rooms a ringing, and an inside door was observed to swing open and shut.

The same motions were felt up the river, about eight miles above, at a house near a small brook; the people ran out of the house, and observed the water to have the same motion. Accounts state, that the same motions have been felt at sundry other places 30 miles distant.

I could relate many other similar motions felt and perceived at the same time, but leave it for the present. How to account for it I know not. If you think it worthy of notice, you may make it public, and if the same similar motions have been felt in other places, doubtless it will be communicated. I should like to hear it accounted for on rational principles.

Christopher Hurlbut

Augusta, Georgia December 16, 1811
[*Poulston's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 2, 1812]

Augusta, Georgia, December 19

On Monday last, about half past 2 o'clock in the morning a severe shock of an earthquake was felt in this place, which continued by the best account to have been obtained, between one and two minutes - some persons think much longer - but considering the awful duration could not be accurately determined, without noticing its commencement and termination by a correct time piece. It was preceded by a hollow rumbling noise like distant thunder, or as someone described it, like the burning out of a chimney - - A tremulous motion of the earth followed, which increased in violence, till the agitation of the dwelling houses became considerably alarming. The motion of the dwelling house of the Editor of this paper, was somewhat like the rocking of a cradle - the family were awoke by it, and were equally surprised and alarmed. Similar sensations and effects were produced in many other families in town, and in some instances, persons supposed their chimnies were falling, and in others, they were apprehensive for the safety of their dwellings. So severe a shock of an earthquake we believed was never before experienced here, or as far as we know, in United States. Its course could not be determined we believe from our sensations we thought the house rocked from north to south; and that the east and west ends only experienced a tremulous motion. Some persons coming with their wagons four or five miles from town, state that they were alarmed at the motion of the earth and that the trees and bushes were violently agitated nearby. There was no wind during the concussion - the atmosphere was somewhat hazy, moist, and vapourished. About three quarters of an

hour after the first shock subsided, a second but much lighter one was felt, and at fifteen minutes before 8 in the morning, a third one occurred. A friend living about ten miles westward of this town informs us that he was alarmed between the hours of two and three on Monday morning, by a tremendous noise, resembling the falling of heavy bodies on the roof of his house and falling to the ground, and he immediately discovered his bed to be in great agitation, and that the whole house was shook, and the windows rattled as if operated by a violent wind – We have not heard how far it extended in other directions. - *Herald*.

Augusta, Georgia January 23, 1812
[*New York Spectator*, Feb. 29, 1812]

January 24, 1812

On Thursday last, two shocks of an earthquake quickly succeeding each other, were felt in this place between 8 and 9 o'clock in the morning - one of them nearly equaled, and some persons thought exceeded, in violence, the one experienced here on the 16th of last month - another slight shock was felt the night following at almost 11 o'clock - The reoccurrence of this remarkable and truly alarming phenomenon, is well worthy the attention of serious reflecting minds.

Augusta, Georgia February 7, 1812
[*Charleston Courier*, Feb. 21, 1812]

Earthquakes: Augusta, Georgia, February 13th.

Again we are bound to notice what is very justly considered among the most astonishing and alarming phenomena in nature.

On Friday last at 20 minutes before four o'clock in the morning another severe shock of an earthquake was experienced here and throughout the country in every direction from which we have yet heard; and in most places we believe with more severity than any preceding shock, it continued between three or four minutes. About 27 minutes 11 o'clock in the evening of the same day, a smart shock was also felt and though considerably less severe was to many more alarming than the previous one - this might have arisen from apprehensions previously excited and from the repetition of an occurrence so peculiarly exclusive to cause astonishment and terror. Indeed, given the settlement of this place we venture to say that a large proportion of our inhabitants lay down at night with feelings similar to them they experience when going to bed during the past week. Light tremulous motions of the earth continue occasionally to be felt.

From the accounts we have received we believe th Earthquake on Friday last, was more severe in several parts of the country than in this place - at General Twiggs, about 9 miles below this place, we understand that the agitation of the house was so violent as to break fifty squares of windows, and throughout the neighborhood, the concussion created general alarm.

By a gentleman from Jefferson we are informed, that on the plantation of Mr Ephraim Ponder, near Bier Creek, about 18 miles from this place, a body of earth about ninety feet in circumference, sunk as was supposed on Friday night last - that the earth being held on one side by the roots of a tree at the edge of the opening, and sunk in a sloping direction, and that the lower part of it was covered with water, in which bottom

was not found with a sixteen foot pole. The gentleman saw the opening, but does not know that any other attempt to find bottom was made, there being no pole at hand, when he was there, longer than the sixteen foot one - *Herald*.

Augusta, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*Liberty Hall*, Feb.12, 1812]

(Dec. 16 & Jan 23)

EXTRACT TO THE EDITOR - DATED
Augusta, (Ky.) Feb. 7th 1812

“GENTLEMEN - This morning we have experienced a very severe shock of an earthquake, at 20 minute past three o'clock: The vibrations continued three minutes, and appeared to come from the north-west: they came in quick succession, so that we perceptibly felt three perpendicular shocks more severe than other vibrations - these were much more severe than those of the 16th Dec. or 23d ultimo.”

Baltimore, Maryland December 16, 1811
[*The Democratic Clarion & Tennessee Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1812]

At Baltimore about 3 and 8 o'clock a shock was experienced and the undulations continued for 40 minutes.

Baltimore, Maryland January 23, 1812
[*Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1812]

Extract of a letter dated West River, January 23.

This morning, at about 9 o'clock, a friend of mine, Captain Franklin, Miss Webster, and myself, had just sat down to breakfast when Captain F. Observed, “What's that? An Earthquake!” at the same instant, we felt as if we were in the cabin of a vessel, during a heavy swell. This sensation continued for one or two minutes, possibly longer. For although I had the presence of mind to take out my watch, I felt too sick to accurately observe its duration. The feeling was by no means tremulous, but a steady vibration. A portrait, about four feet in length, suspended from the ceiling by a hook and staple, and about five eights of an inch from the side wall, vibrated at least from eighteen inches to 2 feet each side, and so very steady, as not to touch the wall. My next neighbor and his daughter felt the same sensation about the same time. The father supposed it was gout in his head. The daughter got up and walked to the window, supposing the heat of the fire had caused what she considered faintness. Two others that I have seen mentioned to have felt the same, but none of them had a thought of an earthquake. The two last being mechanics, and up late, mentioned that they were alarmed at about 11 o'clock last night, by a great rumbling, as they thought, in the earth, attended with several flashes of lighting, which so lighted the house, that they could have picked up the smallest pin - one mentioned, that the rumbling and the light was accompanied by a noise like that produced by throwing a hot iron into snow, only very loud and terrific, so much so, that he was fearful to go out to look what it was, for he never thought of an earthquake. I have thrown together the above particulars, supposing an extract may meet with corroborating accounts, and afford some

satisfaction to your readers.

P.S. - The lighting and rumbling noise came from the south - I have just heard of its being felt in several other houses, not any particulars more related.

Baltimore, Maryland February 7, 1812
[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 11, 1812]

Baltimore, Feb. 7
EARTHQUAKE

We are informed by several persons of respectability, that a shock of an Earthquake was very sensibly felt here this morning about half past 4 o'clock

Beaufort, South Carolina February 7, 1812
[Anonymous C. (1812), pg. 51]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman on a visit to Beaufort, South Carolina, to his friend in Philadelphia, dated on the 11th of February, 1812.

"Since I have been here I have been witness to the most alarming occurrences. Frequent shocks of an earthquake have been felt, of which you have no doubt have heard. Last Friday we experienced one more severe than any yet felt. It happened about four in the morning. I was lying awake in my bed, when I began to feel my bed shake, but being witness to so many, I was not at first much alarmed. The house began to shake more and more. I leaped from my bed in fear lest the house should fall, and in running across the room I staggered like one very much intoxicated. The house shook so much that I was forced to support myself by holding fast to the casement of the door of my room. I continued for four or five minute. I can only compare the motion to that of a ship at sea. The wall of our house was cracked in several places in consequence of it. The people here were very much alarmed, and the civil power have appointed a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer that the evil which seems to await us may be averted. From the looks of the weather today, I am afraid that we shall have another, but I pray God, that we may not be injured by it. You can imagine my feelings on the occasion. I feel a constant dread of being buried in the ruin of the house, or swallowed up by the earth."

Bedford County, Tennessee General
[Memories of Mrs. Mclinda Houston Estes as told to D.C. Allen, 45 years ago.
D.C. Alllen was the editor of the *Liberty (Mo.) Tribune* who interviewed Mrs. Estes
on April 30, 1901]

I have a great many recollections of Tennessee. The great earthquake at New Madrid, Mo., occurred in 1811, when I was two and half years old. The trembling of the ground extended as far as Bedford County, Tennessee. Because I was so young when this occurred, I hate almost to tell it, but I am sure I remember the earthquake. I was in bed when the shaking of the hose and furniture began – was afraid that I would roll out – and called mother.

Big Prairie, Arkansas

General

[Account of Mrs. Martha Eastwood, see comment at end of the account]

She (Mrs. Martha Eastwood) stated that she was living in a log house below Big Prairie, at the time of the shakes, her husband was sick; the house was shaken down and she barely made her escape with her sick husband, who was removed to a rail corn pen on which he laid until assistance could be procured, in doing so, going to her nearest neighbor, she had trouble in wading through water and crossing many deep and frequently wide crevices made by the shakes. The atmosphere was so warm, damp and dense that she could scarcely see to keep her way; there were instances where these crevices formed, running nearly north and south, that large oak trees and other kinds were driven up from the ground for many feet owing to the crevices separating their roots which could be seen on both sides of these earth fissures, caused apparently from the earth rolling in waves bursting and sinking, the gases forcing out water, sand and a substance like flakes and pieces of charcoal; the gas that was escaping and darkening the atmosphere blew these substances up several feet. This was accompanied with terrific roaring like distant, or like suppressed thunder. The locality was an elevated section of the country and the water did not remain long on the earth's surface or other portions of the country.

Comment: account was found in the Joint Collection of the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts

Birdsville, Kentucky (Lilburn Lewis', Rocky Hill farm) Dec. 16, 1811

[Rankin, J., 1837]

"...a sudden and surprising shock of an earthquake overturned the coarse and heavy ball wall, composed of rock and clay..."

Comment: From a letter of William Dickey to Thomas Rankin, dated October 8, 1824, other sources state that the chimney, not the back wall collapsed. Of course, the back wall might have included the chimney. The same letter indicates that the chimney collapsed again during either the January 23 or the February 07, 1812, event.

Boston, Massachusetts

General

Comment: The Boston Gazette carries several accounts of the earthquakes, including the fact that the event of February 7, 1812, was felt in New York City. The paper does mention any of the events as having been felt in Boston.

Brownsville, Ohio

February 7, 1812

[*The Palladium*, Feb. 26, 1812]

"...and at Brownsville, the agitation of the houses and their contents was so

great, as to induce people to leave their beds.”

Brownsville, Pennsylvania December 16, 1811
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 17]

At Brownsville, (Pa) is said to have been observed a slight shock on the morning of the 16th.

Brownsville, Pennsylvania February 7, 1812
[Anonymous C (1812), pg, 57]

They say a shock of an earthquake was felt in this place, on the morning of the 7th between the hours of three and four, which lasted upwards of 5 or 6 minutes. A number of houses were shaken to that degree that the inhabitants had to leave their beds, the articles in the cupboard were rattled on their shelves, and candles set to rocking, occasioned by the shaking of the houses. This shock was more sensibly felt on the bank of the river, than on the hills.

Cahokia, Illinois General Account
[McDermott (1949), pg. 317]

A great many houses have been badly damaged, but no one was killed. The earth opened in many places, especially about three miles from our monastery. Only sand and water came from the opening. Fortunately our poor cabins of wood and sand can withstand a great deal of shaking without much danger. Their undress logs piled one on top of another can be separated only with considerable force. Some stone and brick houses have had to be abandoned.

Canada January 23, 1812
[*The Providence Gazette*, Feb. 15, 1812]

The earthquake of January 23, was felt in lower Canada.

Cape Girardeau, Missouri December 16, 1811
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Dec. 22, 1811]

The concussions of the Earthquake which commenced at two o'clock on Monday morning still continue. We have experienced five severe shocks which split two brick houses, and damaged five brick chimneys in this place.

Cape Girardeau, Missouri January 23, 1812
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Feb. 29, 1812]

February 7, 1812

Cape Girardeau, February 15, 1812

Carthage is a large brick edifice, and was cracked to its foundation, and considerably damaged. Several chimnies had been cast down, by the shock of the 16th of December. Everywhere it was stated to him by those who witnessed the motions, that they were from the south of west, to the opposite point, or vice versa.

Carthage, Tennessee January 23, 1812
[*Carthage Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1812]

On the morning of the 23rd instant, about 8 o'clock the inhabitants of this place were again alarmed by the shock of an earthquake which continued between 4 and 5 minutes, it is generally believed to be felt nearly as severe here as the one in December, some slight shocks were felt during the day. The cause of the phenomenon still remains beyond our comprehension.

Charlestown, New Hampshire December 16, 1811
[*The Louisiana Gazette*, Mar. 14, 1812]

The earthquake of the 16th of December last was felt as far north as Charlestown, New Hampshire.

Charleston, South Carolina December 16, 1811
[*Chenango Weekly Advertiser*, Feb. 4, 1812]

At Charleston, S.C. a rumbling noise was heard, resembling distant thunder; which increased in violence of sound, just before the shock was felt. The vibrations of the St. Phillip's steeple, caused the clock bell to ring about ten seconds. Two other shocks were felt, one a little before eight o'clock, and the other ten minutes after that hour: the vibration of the second probably lasted more than a minute, and of the last two or three seconds. Many of the clocks were stopped and the water in different wells was much agitated. A looking glass, about three feet in length, hanging against a west wall, was observed to vibrate two or three inches from north to south.

[*The Times* (Charleston), December 16, 1811]

An Earthquake!

This morning, at a few minutes before three o'clock, a severe shock of an Earthquake was felt in this city. Its duration is supposed to be between two and three minutes. For an hour previous, though the air was perfectly calm, and several stars visible, there was at intervals, of about five minutes, a rumbling noise, resembling distant thunder; which increased in violence of sound just before the shock was felt. The vibration of St. Philip's Steeple, caused the church bell to ting about 10 seconds. Two other shocks were felt this morning, one a little before 8 o'clock, and the other 10 minutes after that hour; both slighter than the first, and of shorter duration; the vibration of the second lasted probably more than a minute, and of the last 2 or 3 seconds. Many of the clocks were stopped; and the water in the district well was much agitated. We have not heard

of any damage having been done by these repeated shocks: nor have we heard how far they have extended into the country; except they were felt at **Rantowle's**.

Such phenomena, until lately, were very rare. One is remembered to have happened on the 19th May, 1754 about 11 o'clock, A.M.; but it was very slight. Another slight one was felt on the 11th April, 1799, about 2 o'clock in the morning. In the year 1811, on the 15th January, another occurred and was felt at Columbia and Granby in this state, and at Augusta in Georgia, but not in Charleston.

[*Charleston Courier*, December 21, 1811]

We have experienced five successive shocks of an Earthquake here this day; they commenced about 3 o'clock, and continued with short intervals until eight o'clock this morning; the first of which was so severe that it awoke me out of a sound sleep and my bed appeared to be going from under me; it was so severely felt at the College that all the students ran into the yard, and indeed the alarm was so general that all the inhabitants got up. One of the wings of the College has separated some inches, and several bricks were thrown from the foundation of the Capitol. Report from December 16, 1811.

Charleston, South Carolina

December 17, 1811

[*New York Spectator*, Jan. 4, 1812]

Charleston, Dec. 18, 1811

Another earthquake was felt yesterday at fifteen minutes past 12 o'clock. Its duration did not exceed thirty seconds. The shock was so severe as to be very sensibly felt, generally by those in their houses, while those in the streets were not aware of it. Articles in a hanging position vibrated considerably, and as far as we can learn, their vibrations were from North to South. The shock on Monday morning about 3 o'clock was felt severely at Goose Creek and its neighborhood; fortunately without damage.

[*The Times* (Charleston), December 17, 1811]

Earthquake! – Another shock was felt today, at about half after 12 o'clock. It was a slight one, and of momentary duration.

[*Charleston Courier*, December 21, 1811]

Earthquake! – Another slight concussion was felt yesterday, at 3 minutes before 12 o'clock – being the seventh shock felt during this week.

Charleston, South Carolina

January 23, 1812

[*Concord Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1812]

Charleston, January 24

Earthquake - Yesterday morning, at fifteen minutes after nine o'clock, another shock was felt in this city. The vibratory motion was more severe than we experienced

last month, and continued for one minute. The pavements in several of the streets were cracked by the loosening of the cement; and a three story brick house on King Street, belonging to Mr. Brownlee, has received very considerable injury - the walls are cracked from the top to the bottom and the wooden work and plastering in the inside, are split and broken. Many persons in different parts of the city were sensible of the shock at 8 o'clock in the morning - Several families left their beds. Both the concussions were unaccompanied without any noise.

Charleston, South Carolina
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 48]

February 7, 1812

Charleston, Feb. 8th

Another severe shock of an earthquake was felt in this city yesterday morning at four o'clock. Its duration was much longer than any that has preceded it. A gentleman who was up at the time ascertained it to exceed three minutes. Its undulatory motion was much shorter and quicker than any we have before experienced. Books and other articles were thrown from shelves, and chairs and other furniture standing against walls, made a rattling noise at the time. It was nearly calm and cloudy. Thermometer at eight o'clock A.M. stood at 52.

[*Otsego Herald*, Saturday, Mar. 7, 1812]

From the Philadelphia Daily Advertiser

We are indebted to a respectable correspondent just from the extract of a letter from a gentleman in Charleston, South Carolina, dated February 7, 182.

The whole town is again in great dismay. - Fear and anxiety are depicted in every circumstance, and nothing of a cheerful nature occupies the conversation of any of the people. On the first instant at 5 o'clock P.M. a shock of an earthquake (too slight for us to feel) was perceived by several with whom we were that evening in company. Yesterday a trembling of the earth was observed five times by a gentleman who was all day engaged in writing and a watchmaker who had to desist from some nice work he was employed at. Neither of these vibrations, however were generally perceived. But a few minutes after four o'clock this morning, a shock far exceeding any of those of Dec. and Jan. awoke us from our sleep. - Good God! How awful are thy visitations: how dreadful are thy warning to the harden hearts of men! The bed shook as severely as if two men, one on each side of it, were jerking it two and fro; it seemed to be tossed up and down, as well as from side to side; the posts corners made a dismal rattling, and some of the handles of the drawers & door a frightful noise: the whole rocked like a ship, and we were for at least a minute and a half under the awful impression that we should be buried in its ruins, or swallowed up in the earth: to those who have never felt a severe earthquake, words can scarcely convey an idea of the solemn & terrific impression, which it produces: the idea of buried alive is sufficient to appall the stoutest heart and make a hero tremble. As you might suppose, the higher you are up the stairs, the more sensible the vibrations. A gentleman who felt in the room above us, says that he jumped out of bed under the full impression that the house would fall in ruins. No noise was heard by us until after the motion ceased, when a roaring like the troubled

sea, occasioned by a momentary perturbation of its waters upon breakers was heard very plainly.

Charleston, South Carolina February 10, 1812
[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 4, 1812]

Charleston (SC) - Feb. 12

More Earthquakes. - On Monday afternoon, one minute past four, a slight concussion of the earth was felt for a few seconds; and yesterday morning at 24 minutes past 6, there was another shock which continued about 30 seconds. A tremendous motion of the earth was distinctly felt through the whole of yesterday. Light pendulous articles vibrated frequently.

Charleston, West Virginia Comment

Farmer's Repository: The 1811-1812 earthquakes are reported on in detail by the *Farmer's Repository*, but there is no mention of the events as having been felt in Charleston.

Chillicothe, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*The Supporter*, Dec. 21, 1811]

AN EARTHQUAKE

On the night of the 16th instant, at 2 o'clock and 15 minutes, three successive shocks of an Earthquake were felt in this town. They caused considerable alarm. Their continuance was about 3 minutes, and they were so violent as to make the houses shake as though they were ready to totter to the ground. At 3 o'clock and 4 minutes we were visited with another shock preceded with a subterraneous sound, resembling that of distant thunder, but which was not quite so violent as the first shock. Its continuance was about one minute. Forty and forty-five minutes after 3, we had a slight movement of the earth. At 7 o'clock and 16 minute we had two pretty violent shocks which caused the water in the streets to lash from side to side. Continuance about 2 minutes. At 8 o'clock and 5 minutes there was a tolerable hard shock. At 10 o'clock and 8 minutes - slight. - On the 17th, at half after 11 o'clock, A.M. we experienced a slight shock which was of short duration. From the best information which we have had relative to the course from whence these shocks preceded and from personal observations of a small pond of water, (at 7 o'clock in the morning) which lay immediately opposite of the office door, it plainly appeared to wave from East to West. There has been no damage done in this town, that has been heard of. We are informed, that the above shocks have been generally felt throughout this neighborhood.

[*Chillicothe Fredonian*, Dec. 18, 1811]

On Monday morning last between the hours of one and two o'clock, many of the inhabitants of this place were considerably alarmed by a sudden and violent trembling of their houses, which is supposed to have proceeded from an earthquake. The shock

was so sensibly felt as to cause many to leap from their beds. About 8 o'clock the same morning, a similar shock was experienced, which continued for the space of half of a minute - during which time the houses were considerably agitated. Neither shock was preceded or accompanied by any explosion.

[Samuel Williams Collection (1786-1859), Call Number: 1990.151.759, Ross County Historical Society, 45 W. 5th Street, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601]

Chillicothe, 18th December, 1811
[submitted to *The Scioto Gazette*]

On Monday morning last between two and three o'clock, we were visited by an Earthquake! of alarming severity. It was preceded by slight undulations which continued for some minute. The first shock was severe, and was followed in two or three minutes by another still more violent, which seemed to threaten the tottering houses and inhabitants with immediate destruction. About eight o'clock another shock was felt, but less violent than either of the former; and the day following, about noon, a shock, so slight as scarcely to be felt was the (last?) Noticed. Each shock lasted, perhaps, about fifteen to twenty seconds.

Contrary, I believe, to what is usually observed of earthquake, these concussions were accompanied by little or no noise, save that of a feeble, indistinct, undulatory sound, as of some concussion at a very great distance; and was heard by only a few.

Chillicothe, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*The Supporter*, Jan. 25, 1812]

On Thursday morning last, about nine o'clock, another considerable shock of an Earthquake was felt at this place. Its continuance was near two minutes, and appeared to come from the south-west.

[*Chillicothe Fredonian*, Jan. 28, 1812]

On Thursday the 23rd instant. at a quarter past 9 in the morning [sic] the violent shock of an earthquake was felt in this place. The trembling was so [sic] as to shake coffee out of cups [sic] of some of the inhabitants who were at breakfast. The shock was much more terrible than either of those heretofore mentioned in our paper of the 18th (December).

Chillicotte, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*The Supporter*, Feb. 8, 1812]

More Earthquakes

Yesterday morning, about half past 3 o'clock the inhabitants of this place were very much alarmed by another tremendous shock of an Earthquake. About a minute before the shock commenced a loud subterraneous noise was heard resembling that made by a heavy loaded wagon rumbling over frozen ground. The concussions began moderately, but soon became extremely violent, continuing with sudden jerks. The

houses continued to shake about 25 minutes, sometimes with such extreme violence that many were apprehensive of their falling down. One chimney was broken down and several bricks shook off of others; and several houses in town were considerably cracked. The morning was perfectly calm; and had truly an awful appearance; the moon shone dimly, being surrounded by a circle, and cast a shade as if apparently eclipsed, which, together with noise made by the trees in the woods, created in the minds of some, sensations totally indescribable - Several slight shocks have been felt since our last publications; but the one above described was much severer than any hereto forth felt in this place.

[*Chillicothe Fredonian*, Feb. 12, 1812]

Several severe shocks of earthquakes have been felt at this place since our last. That felt Friday morning, at 45 minutes past 3, was, we believe, much more terrible than any of those which preceded or followed it. It was preceded by a rumbling noise like distant thunder, and the shaking continued with more or less violence for about three minutes.

Christian County, Kentucky
[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 292]

December 16, 1811

In this county of Christian, (Kentucky) a fine and fresh spring of water was observed to run muddy for several hours. On examining it, after the feculence had settled, he found it to be strongly impregnated with sulphur; so much so that it was spoiled for domestic uses; indeed, it had been converted to one of the stronger brimstone springs he had ever met with.

Cincinnati, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*Liberty Hall*, Dec.18, 1811]

Monday Evening, Dec. 16

During the 12 hours, ending at 11 o'clock, A.M. of this day, our town has experienced several shocks of an earthquake. The first and most considerable as to force and time, occurred about 20 minutes after 2 o'clock. It shook the houses, rocked the furniture, opened several partition doors that were fastened with falling latches, and threw down bricks from the tops of some chimneys. Its duration was computed by different persons, from 2 to 5 minutes. In about half an hour, this vibration was succeeded by another, less violent and considerably shorter. At 20 minutes past 7 o'clock, or in five hours from the first, a third shock was felt. At 20 minutes past 7 o'clock, or in five hours from the first, a third shock was felt. It commenced gradually, became strong enough to produce all of the effects of the first, in a lesser degree, and nearly subsided in about a minute, when it was succeeded by a fourth, more violent than it, but of only a few seconds in duration. In about 8 or 10 minutes a fifth followed, occurred, but so slight as not to be generally observed. It is asserted by some, that 2 or 3 shocks were felt the preceding evening; but this, perhaps, is incorrect.

[Drake, D. (1815), pg. 233]

It was so violent as to agitate the loose furniture of our rooms; open partition doors that were fastened with falling latches, and throw off the tops of a few chimneys in the vicinity of the town. It seems to have been stronger in the valley of the Ohio, than in the adjoining uplands. Many families living on the elevated ridges of Kentucky, not more than 20 miles from the river, slept during the shock; which cannot be said, perhaps, of any family in town.

[Mansfield, J.M. (1812)]

The first and most severe happened at half past 2 o'clock of the 16th ult. when we were in profound sleep. It shook the house so violently as to wake everyone in it, at nearly the same time, the people of the whole country were roused from their sleep, & were seen walking to and fro, with lights from one house to another. The fowls were started from their roosts, & beasts were apparently agitated as much as human beings. At 8 o'clock A.M. of the same day another, though less violent shock was felt, and a number of others for 5 or 6 days.

Cincinnati, Ohio

December 16, 1811

[*Liberty Hall*, Cincinnati, December 18, 1811]

The above communication was written on Monday [Dec. 16th] evening. The same night the above was written, several persons state that a slight shock was felt about 9 o'clock; and yesterday, the 17th, about 12 o'clock, another slight shock was pretty generally felt, which lasted one minute.

Cincinnati, Ohio

December 17, 1811

[*Liberty Hall*, Dec. 25, 1811]

Earthquake
Friday Evening, December 20

On Tuesday [17th] at 15 minutes before 12 o'clock A.M. a seventh shock of earthquake was felt. It was short, and so weak as not to be observed by everyone. About half past 11 in the morning of this day, it appears, from the current testimony of several citizens that a slight shock of a few seconds duration occurred.

On Tuesday there was copious rain, with wind from the SE – S&S.W, veering in the evening to the N.W. in which direction it continued till last night. On Wednesday there were slight falls of snow – since that day the sky has been clear. On Tuesday the thermometer was at 42 degrees.

Z.

Cincinnati, Ohio

General

[*Western Spy*, Cincinnati, Dec. 28, 1811]

MORE OF THE EARTHQUAKE

Since the repeated shocks we experienced during the preceding week (of which

some notice was taken in our last number) every mail has brought us various accounts of this awful phenomenon, as felt in different parts of the western country. And, from what we already see, there can be no doubt that when future mails arrive, this earthquake will appear to have extended in various directions, over a great portion of the continent. Different conjectures are formed as to the quarter whence it originated, but none of the proofs in which they rest can be admitted as satisfactory *criteria*; since it is known that, according to the cavernous or other structure of the region lying in its range, the concussion will operate with a proportionate force, and be sometimes rebutted so as to deceive the perception with an apparently opposite direction of its course. Were we to hazard a conjecture of our own, it would be, that the convulsion had its source on the Missouri country; for it is well known to some, that, at a distance of about 1300 miles up that river, there exists a volcanic mountain, lying ten computed leagues above its northern bank, and which is frequently in a state of eruption – and it is from, this cause the pumice stones so often found floating down that and the Mississippi river.

Earthquakes are commonly classed as vertical and undulatory. The shocks of the former have been observed to proceed by a noise similar to that of carriages driven over a rough pavement; of the latter, a noise has commonly, if not always preceded them, resembling that of very distant thunder, or a storm of wind rushing through a forest. Persons of observation in this place & concurrent testimony had from elsewhere, sufficiently demonstrate (without recurring to other facts) that at least the first shock of the earthquake felt here and in many other places, was preceded by the latter sound.

It was our intention to have detailed this week, the substance of several accounts we have received from various parts concerning this extraordinary Earthquake – but, from the press of matter, it is of necessity reserved for our next; by which time we shall, doubtless, have additional facts to state.

Cincinnati, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*Western Spy*, Jan. 25, 1812]

THE EARTHQUAKE

Again forces itself into our columns. It is now the 41st day since this phenomenon began - and for the first three weeks every day witnessed its effects in one or more shocks. Since that time we have experienced intervals of one, or more days together, in which no concussions were perceived; or if perceived not generally known. The awful phenomenon has again begun to alarm the fears of our citizens for on Thursday night, the 16th inst. There were three shocks (one so smart as to throw off a brick from a chimney) between the hours of 11 and 1 o'clock; on Saturday another shock was felt, and on Sunday, one or more others. No other concussions were noticed till 9 o'clock on Thursday morning last, the weather a dead calm & hazy, with snow upon the ground, when a very smart shock occurred, equal in violence, say some, to that which happened between 2 and 3 o'clock of the 16th ult. It lasted about 3 minutes, and, in 5 minutes more was succeeded by another, but slight and short shock. These two were accompanied by a tremulous effect on surrounding objects, of nearly forty minutes duration, saving a few short intervals of rest. The preceding 3 or 4 days were intensely cold - but now weather was a moderate temperature, and the snow began to thaw a

little, the same day, about 9 P.M. there was another concussion, but too slight to be generally perceived; and on yesterday morning, at the same hour, another shock took place. Others were expected in the course of the day - the atmosphere is charged with hazy-like vapors; the temperature mild and the thaw general and rapid.

[Mansfield, J.M. (1812)]

This day (the 24th of January) at 44 minutes past 8 o'clock A.M. a shock, at least as violent as the 2nd (*) was felt. It continued 2 or 3 minutes with a tremor for some length of time after.

* refers to the second largest earthquake of Dec. 16, 1811

Cincinnati, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*Liberty Hall*, Feb. 12, 1812]

ADDITIONAL EARTHQUAKES

On Thursday the 4th inst. about 5 o'clock, P.M. a moderate shock of an earthquake was experienced by our citizens generally. Its duration was between one and two minutes. In the course of the following night, some slight tremors were perceptible, and on the next day, Wednesday the 5th, at least two shocks, of inconsiderable force, were observed by several persons. On Thursday the 6th, none seem to have been felt; but on the morning of the 7th, at 32 minutes past 3 o'clock, apparent time, a strong vibration occurred and was followed without intermission by two others; the whole occupying, according to the best observations that were made, about six minutes. They raised those sides of the houses which face S.S.E. and W.S.W. One of them threw a plum, hung by a line 7 feet long, three inches to the N.W. from a point over which it ordinarily rested. This was not only the strongest vibration that occurred at that time, but by far the most powerful that has been experienced here. It however, did less damage than was expected, by those who witnessed it. It threw down part of one chimney in town, and one of two in the vicinity of the town. It also widened the cracks that previously existed in some brick houses; and is said to have injured the Court-house. As that building, however, was already cracked, over several of the arches, from the bad execution of the masonry it is altogether uncertain to what extent it was injured by this shock. These strong vibrations, are said by some, to have been preceded by a light noise, but others who were awake and collected in mind and senses, observed neither. About 8 o'clock the same morning, another (but shorter and feeble) shock was perceived. During the remainder of the day, several gentle tremors were noticed. At 14 minutes past 8 o'clock in the evening a moderate vibration occurred continuing nearly a minute.

[Drake, D. (1815)]

It threw down the tops of more chimneys, made wider fissures in the brick walls, and produced vertigo and nausea in a greater number of people, than the earthquakes of either 16th December or the 23rd of January.

Circleville, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*Western Spectator*, Dec. 28, 1811]

Circleville, Dec. 18, 1811

On Monday morning last, between the hours of one and two o'clock, many of the inhabitants of this place were considerably alarmed by a sudden and violent trembling of their houses, which is supposed to have proceeded from an earthquake. The shock was so sensibly felt, as to cause many to leap from their beds. About 8 o'clock the same morning, a similar shock was experienced, which continued for the space of half of a minute - during which time the houses were considerably agitated. Neither shock was preceded or accompanied by any explosion. *Fredonian*

Circleville, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*Palladium*, Feb. 26, 1812]

At Circleville and Chillicothe, some chimneys suffered, and it was accompanied by the unusual rumbling noise.

[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 59]

Circleville, Ohio, February 12

Several very severe shocks of earthquake have been felt in this place since our last. That felt Friday morning, at forty-five minutes past three o'clock, was, we believe, much more terrible than any of those which preceded or followed it. It was preceded by a rumbling noise like distant thunder; and the shaking continued, with more or less violence for about three minutes.

Clarksburg, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*Western Spectator*, Dec. 21, 1811]

Clarksburg, December 16, 1811

A very severe shock of an EARTHQUAKE was sensibly felt in this place about half past 2 o'clock this morning. *Bystander*.

Comment. This account, from an Ohio newspaper, is identical to the next account specifically mentions Virginia in the heading. Clarksburg, Ohio, was not laid out until 1817 (Brant, 1902), whereas Clarksburg, Virginia (West Virginia), was formed in 1785. So it is concluded that this account refers to Clarksburg, Virginia (West Virginia).

Brant, S. L. (1902). The County of Ross, Henry Holcomb Bennett, editor, Madison, Wisconsin, 736 p.

Clarksburg, West Virginia December 16, 1811
[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Jan. 7, 1812]

Clarksburg (VA) December 16

A very severe shock of an earthquake was sensibly felt in this place about half past 2 o'clock this morning.

Comment, see comments under Clarksburg, Ohio. Clarksburg (VA), West Virginia, was formed in 1785 and had a courthouse by 1787.

Clinton Hill, Illinois December 16, 1811
[*National Intelligencer*, Feb. 20, 1812]

We have experienced a very violent shock of an earthquake on the 16th inst. - In this and the circumjacent neighborhood - and the convulsions have continued ever since at short intervals, but were much more moderate than the first.

Comment: Clinton Hill was a small community about 1 mile north of Belleville, Illinois, in St. Clair County. It had its own post office from Feb. 2, 1809 until Dec. 31, 1831.

Columbia, South Carolina December 16, 1812
[*Poulson's*, Jan. 1, 1812]

Columbia, South Carolina, December 17

The inhabitants of this town were much alarmed, yesterday morning, by the repeated shocks of earthquake. The first took place about half after two; which shook the houses as rocked by the waves of the sea; it was followed after the cessation of a minute by three slighter ones; and at 8 o'clock two others took place; and at 10 some slight ones. The S, Carolina college appeared to rock from its foundation, and a part of the plastering fell; which so alarmed the students they left the college without their clothes. It appeared as if all of the buildings would be leveled. The dogs barked, fowls made a racket, and a number of inhabitants were running about without lights not knowing where to go, so great was their alarm. During the shock, the air felt as if it was impregnated with steam which lasted for some time after the shock.

[*The Enquirer*, Jan. 4, 1812]

Columbia, South Carolina, December

About a quarter past 12 o'clock on yesterday last, the 17th inst. another smart shock of an earthquake was experienced by the citizens on Monday morning last, from what we have been able to learn, has been very extensive, and generally severe. In Laurens and Newberry, the only back districts we have yet heard from, it was so severe that it cracked and started some of the chimneys from their houses. By a gentleman from Charleston, we are informed, that the people there are so much alarmed, that many left their houses; that the bells in the churches rang, and that some of the clocks in the houses were stopped by the violence of the shock. From Strasburgh we heard it was equally severe, but fortunately no damage was done. At all of the above places the shock appears to have been felt at about the same time it was here.

Columbia, South Carolina January 23, 1812
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 40]

Columbia (S.C.) January 28

At nine o'clock on Tuesday morning last, the citizens of this place were again alarmed by another severe shock of an earthquake. Its duration was about three minutes, and in point of severity exceeded that of 16th December last. Several slight shocks have been felt since. The violence of the jar produced by the first shock, bent the lighting rod of the South Carolina College, threw down the plastering, and cracked the chimneys of some of the houses, and stopped clocks in others. The frequency of a phenomenon heretofore so rare, and in effect so awful and alarming, cannot fail to excite the utmost consternation even in the stoutest heart.

Columbia, South Carolina February 7, 1812
[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 11, 1812]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ONE OF THE PROFESSORS OF COLUMBIA
COLLEGE, TO HIS FRIEND IN CHARLESTON

Columbia, S.C., Feb. 11

Earthquakes have become almost familiar here; we had a shock this evening - that on Friday morning did some slight injury - Our young men generally have taken sleeping rooms out of College; and those who remain keep watch alternately, which I think a prudent precaution. I imagine that we shall learn that the whole Continent has been agitated; at least North America.

Columbia, S.C. Feb. 11

Ever since the 16th of December last the earth has appeared unsettled, and in almost constant tremor, and shocks of earthquakes are frequently felt with more or less severity. At a quarter before five o'clock in the evening of Tuesday last, a smart shock was felt; about half past three on Friday morning, it was followed by one that far exceeded in severity anything of the kind heretofore experienced here. It continued with considerable severity for about ten minutes, but the motion did not entirely subside, under ten or fifteen minutes. It shook off the top of one of the College chimneys, threw down the part of the inside wall in one of the Professor's houses; and partially affected other buildings. This terrible shaking of the earth excited the terror and alarm of every thinking mind; many took fright and ran into the street just as they left their beds. In the early part of the night following two slight shocks were felt, which so alarmed the inhabitants of the place that they would not venture to bed at all, and those that did, slept in their clothes.

Columbia, Tennessee December 16, 1811
[Mitchell, S.L. (1815), pg. 287]

At Columbia, in Tennessee, between two and three o'clock on the morning of 16th December, the inhabitants were suddenly alarmed by a violent agitation in the earth. It

was accompanied by a peculiar sound proceeding from southwest to northeast. Immediately after the shock had ceased, a very large volume of something like smoke was discovered to rise in the quarter whence the sound appeared to come; and pursuing nearly the same course, finally settled in the north, exhibiting the appearance of a black cloud. The shock was computed to have continued from ten to fifteen minutes.

Concord, New Hampshire General
[*Concord Gazette*]

Comment: The 1811-1812 earthquakes are reported on in the *Concord Gazette*, but there is no mention of the events being felt in Concord

Cooperstown, New York General
[*Otsego Herald*]

Comment: The 1811-1812 earthquakes are reported on in the *Otsego Herald*, but there is no mention of the events being felt in Cooperstown.

Coosawhatchie, South Carolina December 16, 1811
[*New York Spectator*, Jan. 4, 1812]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO THE EDITOR -Dated Coosawhatchie, Dec. 16
Several very sensible shocks of an earthquake have been felt in this village during the past 12 hours. The first, about 3 o'clock this morning, occasioned no small degree of consternation in some of the inhabitants. I am told that several trees in this neighborhood were thrown down - the poultry in several yards were thrown from their roosts. Again this morning, as I was sitting in my chair by the fire, I felt another which gave me a very sensible shock.

[*The Times* (Charleston), December 19, 1811]

This morning, between 2 and 3 o'clock, a shock of an earthquake was experienced in this neighborhood, which continued for two or three minutes; and to such a degree, as to shake the whole house, and cause the handles on the drawers and other furniture, to jingle – water was spilt from a tumbler which was pretty full, by the concussion. We experienced two other shocks, but not as severe as the first.

Coshockton, Ohio January 23, 1811
[*Kline's Weekly Carlisle Gazette*, Feb. 14, 1812]

Coshockton, Jan. 23rd, 1812

Mr. Editor,

This morning, at seventeen minutes past eight o'clock, a severe shake of an earthquake was felt at this place. It lasted nearly a minute; it shook so as to nearly half

empty a bucket, standing on the floor, full of water; and the river being frozen over, it caused the ice to crack considerably. A stone chimney in the house of Col. Williams in this place, seven by five feet square, solid and well built, was so severely shaken so as to cause it to crack in several places; and one or more brick chimneys in this place have been considerably injured by the shock. I have been informed that several houses in the neighborhood of this place were so shook that much of the chinkin dropt [sic] out; the commotion of the trees and bushes was so great as to cause persons in the woods to observe the phenomenon. The shock was succeeded by a thick haze; and several persons were affected with giddiness, although the air was quite serene at the time of the shock. The course of the above shock was from S.W. to N.E. nearly.

A. Johnston

2Dandridge, Tennessee January 23, 1812
[*Knoxville Gazette*, Feb. 3, 1812]

Communication

On Thursday morning of the 23rd inst., at 50 minute after 8 o'clock, a shock was felt by almost all of the citizens of Dandridge, which lasted about two minutes. The glass in all of the windows of the Courthouse continued to rattle. In the store of Messrs. Martin and Fain, such articles of Merchandise as were suspended, continued to vibrate for some time - from the country around, we have received no information.

Dayton, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*The Ohio Centinel*, Dec. 19, 1811]

Dayton, (Ohio) Dec. 19

On Monday and Tuesday last the inhabitants of this place were kept in continual alarm by repeated shocks of an Earthquake. The first, and by far the severest shock, was felt between two and three o'clock on Monday morning. It was so severe as to arouse almost every person in town from their slumbers. Some left their houses affright, and all were terrified at the unusual phenomenon. The horses and cattle were equally alarmed, and fowls left their roosts in great consternation.

It was not preceded by the usual token of a rumbling noise.

The earth must have been in constant tremor on Monday and Tuesday. A surveyor went out on Monday for the purpose of surveying a road in the neighborhood of this place, but being unable to get the needle to settle, he was obliged to desist. He tried it again on Tuesday, with the same effect.

Dayton, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*The Ohio Centinel*, Jan. 30, 1812]

ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE

Between eight and nine o'clock on Thursday morning the 23rd instant, we had another shock of an earthquake, more severe, it is generally supposed, than any of those which preceded it. We are told that it was equally alarming at Cincinnati and other adjacent towns.

Since the above, several slight shocks have been felt in this place. The most considerable happened on the morning of the 27th. It agitated the houses considerably, and articles suspended in the stores were kept in motion about one minute.

Dayton, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*The Ohio Centinel*, Feb. 13, 1812]

THE EARTHQUAKE AGAIN

On Friday evening the 7th about forty five minutes after 3 o'clock we were again alarmed by the awful visitor. Two shocks in quick succession were felt at this place. The rumbling noise which is the usual precursor and attendant of earthquakes was distinctly heard to precede and accompany both the shocks. Those who were not awake at the commencement, were sensible of but one shock, but there were certainly two, though the intermission was but momentary. There was an intermission, but in the noise and agitation of the earth, not a total one, but a perceptible degree of abatement in both. The noise appeared for a few moments to be subsiding, but recommenced with increasing loudness and continued until the second shock was nearly or quite at its length. It was by far the most awful, both in its severity and the length of its duration of any that have been felt in this town and has left impressions upon the mind which will scarcely erase. The motion was from the southwest and many think there was also a vertical motion and that the undulatory motion was shorter and quicker than usual. The air was cold and remarkably clear, but became hazy shortly after. Many of the inhabitants left their houses, the fowls left their roosts, and we are told, the brutal herd manifested the same consciousness of danger. In the evening of the same day two other severe shocks were felt - the first about forty five minute after 7 o'clock and the other about half past 10. It snowed, and the night was cloudy and extremely dark. A dim light in the southwest was seen by several for some time prior to the first shock in the evening and disappeared immediately after it.

Detroit, Michigan January 23, 1812
[*Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan* (1906), pg, 111]

FURNISHED BY HON. R. E. ROBERTS, OF DETROIT

Hon. James Witherell, in a letter to a friend in Vermont, dated Detroit, Feb. 3d, 1812, records his observation of the effect of an earthquake here on the 23d of Jan. 1812, the first and only one of which there is any record or account. There not being any newspaper published here at the time, the event was not chronicled. Judge W. Said "the earthquake occurred in the morning at 30 minutes past eight o'clock as I sat reading by the fire at Col. Watson's. I felt an unusual sensation: I thought something must be the matter with me. I felt an agitation that I could not account for. But I soon observed that the walls of the house were in motion north and south. I got up, stepped to a bedroom door and asked my daughter if she perceived that the house trembled. She replied that she did, and someone was shaking her bedstead. I then discovered that a small looking-glass which was hanging on the wall, was swinging to and fro several inches, and the shade trees in the yard were waving considerably north to south.

Dr. Brown informed me that his stove oscillated very much, and that a cradle was set rocking smartly, though there was no one near it. A little girl who had crossed the lake in a vessel last fall, tottered about and called out, 'Oh, mother, we are in the vessel again!' Cook's house shook more than the others, probably because it was higher and the frame new and stronger. The ice in the river was split for several miles. A Frenchman at Grosse Point says his bowl of mush and milk split.

Judge W. also relates a strange event that occurred at Orchard Lake on the 17th Dec., 1811, at which time the whole interior of Michigan was a wilderness, untrodden except by Indians, Indian traders, and wild beasts. Judge W. Said: "The Indians said the waters of the lake began to boil, bubble, and foam, and roll about as though they had been in a large kettle over a hot fire, and that in a few minutes up came great numbers of turtles, and hurried to the shore, upon which they had a great turtle feast."
[Fuller, M.L. (1912), pg. 28]

Judge James Witherall, writing from Detroit, Mich., reported the first shocks were distinctly felt in the region. The weather was cold but calm. In February, 1812, he wrote that the earthquakes still continued.

"On the 3rd instant, 14 minutes past 4 p.m., a small shock was felt, the mercury low, but not quit in the ball; it had risen very considerably a few hours previous to the shock, On the 7th, at 4 p.m., the weather continuing moderate, the shock was strong, nearly equaling the one I previously mentioned to you, and continued about 90 seconds; on the same evening at half-past 7 another shock; at 55 minutes past 9 the same evening another small shock; at 11 another; and at 12 a.m. of the 8th, one which seem to produce a different motion, that is the pounding up and down instead of oscillation."

A.B. Woodward, another judge in Michigan Territory, wrote on April 7

"We have had nine shocks of the earthquakes here, of which I have an exact memorandum of eight and have somehow lost the time of the other. I felt four myself. I know only one person, a French lady, who felt the whole; speaking here of eight."

In a letter dated June 23, the same gentleman [A.B. Woodward] observes "In a late journey to the Riviere aux Tranches, in upper Canada, I found the number of shocks of the earthquakes felt there was exactly the same as here - that is nine."

Dorena, Missouri December 16, 1811
[Shaw, J. (1856), pg. 202]

While lodging about 30 miles north of New Madrid, on the 14th of December, 1811, about 2 o'clock in the morning, occurred a heavy shock of an earthquake. The house, where I was stopping, was partly wood, and partly brick structure; the brick portion all fell, but I and the family all fortunately escaped unhurt.

about four feet, and in the fissures are one half of large trees were seen standing on high and the other half on low ground. The plantation in the low ground remained otherwise uninjured.

Nashville Clarion

Comment: Ft. Bloant was on the Cumberland River, approximately 60 miles North east of Nashville or 110 miles northwest of Knoxville.

Fort Dearborne, Illinois (Chicago)
[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 14, 1812]

December 16, 1811

From a letter just received from Fort Wayne, it appears that the great shocks of the 16th Dec. and the 23d Jan. and the 7th inst. with many of the minor ones felt at that post. Those of the 16th Dec. were likewise experienced at Fort Dearborne, near the southern end of Lake Michigan.

Fort Knox, Indiana General Account

[Charles Larrabee, "Lieutenant Charles Larrabee's Account of the Battle of Tippecanoe, 1811," ed. Florence G. Watts, *Indiana Magazine of History* 57, no. 3 (September 1961), 225-247].

"...much must be delaid till I can see you/ from the 5th to the 7th inst my quarters [was stationed at Fort Knox] have been much shaken, caused by earthquakes, which for 7 or 8 minutes and some not so long, dureing which time the chimnes and plastureing are a falling/ there is from 3 to 4 shocks dureing an hour, some part of the time / they comum[ence] the four of Decr 1811 and still continue/..." (pg. 246).

[Larrabee describes Fort Knox as being 3 miles from Vincennes, Ind. (pg. 232), Which is Fort Knox II]

Fort Massac, Illinois December 16, 1811
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 22]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Fort Massac, to his brother in Maryland, dated Dec. 17, 1811.

I did not intend writing you this week, but a late dreadful phenomenon, which happened, and still continues to alarm the inhabitants of this neighborhood, will probably excite your anxiety as to my safety. You will no doubt before this is received, have heard of the Earthquake experienced in this quarter, and as stories of that knid swell on their travels, a particular sketch of it may not be unwelcome to you. At 2 o'clock yesterday morning I was awakened by the intolerable rattling and shaking of the house in which I live (40 feet by 30) which at first impressed me with the idea of fire. On reaching the gallery I immediately discovered the cause of my alarm - the shock continued about five minute, the upper story (in which I sleep) was so agitated as to threaten the whole fabric with ruin. However, the only damage it sustained is the loss of two brick chimneys which pierced the roof; they were broken off about six feet from the

[*Farmer's Repository*, Feb. 28, 1812]

In the evening we arrived at Fort Pickering, and were told by the people that they had felt the Earthquake very severely, and that it was felt many miles back, but we could not discover any other effects of it here than the falling of some loose fragments of the cliffs. They said it was felt most sensibly on this side of the river, but our observation decided that the greatest extent of damage was on the western side. They saw spouts of mud and water rise from the river near the shore to the height of 15 and 20 feet.

Fort St. Stephens, Alabama December 16, 1811

[*The Western Intelligencer*, Feb. 23, 1812]

Fort St. Stephens, December 24

On Sunday night the 15th Inst. The earth shook here so as to shake the fowls off their roosts, and made the house shake very much, again it shook at sunrise and at 11 o'clock the next morning, and at the same time the third day after.

Accounts are brought in from the nation that several hunting Indians who were lately on the Missouri have returned, and state that the earthquake was felt very sensibly there, that it shook down trees and many rocks of the mountains, and that everything bore the appearance of an immediate dissolution of the world! We give this as we got it - it may be correct, but the probability is that it is not.

Fort Stoddard, Alabama December 16, 1811

[*The Western Intelligencer*, Feb. 21, 1812]

NEW ORLEANS, December 26

A letter from Fort Stoddard mentions, that on the morning of the 16th inst. Two shocks of an earthquake had been felt. This is precisely the time it was felt in Natchez. It is evident that our being on an island and resting on the water, prevented us from feeling part of the shock.

Fort Wayne, Indiana

[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 14, 1812]

December 16, 1811

January 23, 1812

February 7, 1812

From a letter just received from Fort Wayne, it appears that the great shocks of the 16th Dec. the 23^d Jan. and the 7th inst. With many of the minor ones, were felt at that post. Those of the 16th Dec. were likewise experienced at Fort Dearborne, near the southern end of Lake Michigan.

Frankfort, Kentucky December 16, 1811

[*The American Republic*, Dec. 18, 1811]

About two o'clock on Sunday night was felt in this place a violent shock of an Earthquake. It continued for several minutes and produced a considerable vibration in

the houses. Small bricks are said to have fell from the top of the court house chimney. The shock has since been repeated, with irregular impulse, on Monday, and Tuesday, as often as seven times.

[*The Palladium*, Dec. 18, 1811]

On Monday morning last, at about half past two o'clock the shock of an Earthquake was very sensibly felt in this place, which lasted about two minutes. A little after three o'clock it was again slightly felt, and between seven and eight o'clock there were two more shocks, but neither of them so severe as the first. It shook houses so as to cause a very considerable alarm least they should fall, and some bricks were thrown off the tops of chimneys by it.

Frankfort, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*The Reporter*, Feb. 4, 1812]

Frankfort, Jan. 29

On Thursday morning last, about 6 o'clock A.M. this place experienced another severe shock of an earthquake; its duration was perhaps about one minute. In a few minutes it was succeeded by another less violent. A noise was very distinctly heard, previous to the first shock.

Frankfort, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*The American Republic*, Feb. 7, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

About half after three o'clock A.M. on this day, was felt in this place, another shock of an Earthquake, more violent, and durable than any heretofore felt. This is the fifty third day since the first shock was felt, no immediate nor immense number of vibrations have been perceived - but what is yet to come - we don't know - we shan't say.

[*Kentucky Gazette*, February 11, 1812]

On the morning of Thursday last, about half past three o'clock, another violent shock of an earthquake was felt at this place. We have heard of no material injury from its effects as yet - at Frankfort, Louisville, Paris, and Chillicothe - some chimneys and brick houses were slightly damaged. This shock was more severe and of longer duration, than any of the former - and caused very general alarm. Several shocks of less force have been noticed since.

[*The American Republic*, Feb. 14, 1812]

EARTHQUAKES

In our paper of the 7th instant we noticed, an Earthquake, more violent and of

greater duration than any preceding. On the night following, there were two other shocks of considerable force, and agitation; the first about nine , and the other about eleven o'clock P.M. and this morning between break of day, and sunrise, there was another very sensibly felt; besides many inferior tremors, experienced in the interim.

In point of actual injury, but little has occurred; some bricks thrown down from the top of chimneys, part of one or two gable ends of houses thrown down, and some small cracks in a few walls, seem to complete the list at this place. From the **Falls of the Ohio** [Louisville], and **Maysville**, we have information since Friday, from which it appears that injuries of the above kinds have been produced at these places in greater number and extent, than at this place.

Franklin County, Alabama General
[Latrobe, C.J. (1853), pg 179]

I was informed by a gentleman in Tennessee of the existence of a singular and antique fort on the summit of a mountain in Franklin County, Alabama, near Little Bear Creek, a tributary of the Tennessee River, but never read any notice of it. He stated that it was much damaged by the earthquakes of 1811-1812.

Fredericksburg, Virginia February 7, 1812
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 53]

Three distinct shocks of an earthquake were felt in this city yesterday morning. The first two were slight and perceived but by a few. The third, which came on at five minutes past four o'clock, continued about two minutes with considerable violence. The night was perfectly calm, no sound accompanied the convulsion; yet most of the inhabitants were instantly aroused from their slumbers by the tremendous motion of their beds, and the rattling of loose furniture. A gentleman who was awake through the whole, imagines, from the motion of his bed that the first shocks came from the north.

Georgetown, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*The Reporter*, Feb. 1, 1812]

Georgetown, Jan. 24

Yesterday morning, about 9 o'clock, this place was again visited by the concussions of an Earthquake. But one shock was felt, which was, perhaps, as severe as those that took place on the 16th ultime.

Georgetown, South Carolina December 16, 1811
[*Kentucky Reporter*, January 11, 1812]

From Georgetown (S.C.)

Several shocks of an earthquake were experienced in this town between the hours of three and eight o'clock on Monday morning. Great indeed was the consternation of the inhabitants, on the awful occasion. So severe were the shocks that the parade ground of the fort settled from one to two inches below its former level. A

tub of water sitting on a table in the barracks was upset by the jarring of the building.
Another severe shock was felt yesterday at 12 o'clock.

Georgetown, South Carolina
[Anonymous C (1812), pg, 52]

February 7, 1812

A shock far more severe than anything hitherto experienced, was felt in this place yesterday morning about four o'clock. The inhabitants were generally awakened by the shaking of their beds, chattering windows, and cracking of the houses. The earth assumed a vibratory or undulatory motion. Many who leapt from their beds found it almost impossible to keep their feet. Numbers experienced a nausea of their stomach. A rumbling noise was heard to precede the shock. A considerable light resembling the tail of a comet was visible in the west on the evening preceding. A similar light was observed on the evening of the 15th of December.

Georgia General
[Fuller, M.L. (1912), pg. 30]

The Hon. Israel Pickens, of Buncombe County, N.C., received a letter from the Rev. John Carrigan dated 28th of February, and containing the following information:

During my travels to and from the state of Georgia I made it part of my business to obtain the most accurate accounts of the present shaking of the earth from all parts. I have found that in all parts of the Continent the motion of the earth has been the same and its partially remarked in the same neighborhoods. In this country the first rocking (as it is generally called) was perceived on the 23d of December [16th?], a little before daylight. Since that time it has been observed almost every week through South Carolina and Georgia. Several persons in those states have told me they have felt it almost every day since. No damages have arisen more than a few bricks shaken off some chimneys. There is no truth in the report in circulation respecting the fall of Painted Rock and other extra ordinaries in Buncombe County. I gave my friend, Col Freeman, in Georgia, a call, who informed that he had particularly noticed some tall poplars in his lane during the time of the second shock rocking with equable motion from northeast to southwest which I found to be general. On the 7th and 16th instant the shaking has been general here.

Germantown, Pennsylvania
[Anonymous C (1812), pg, 56]

February 7, 1812

Mr. Poulson,

On the 7th instant having awoke about half past four o'clock in the morning, I was much surprised with an uncommon noise, like that of a heavy stage coach, going with great velocity over a stone pavement. The sound seemed to precede from north-west to south-east. The impression made on my mind was of an awful kind. I thought it must be an earthquake, and waited for a few minutes expecting the shock, but felt none. In the morning I mentioned what had passed, but none of my family were awake at the

Hartford, Connecticut January 23, 1812
[*Connecticut Courant*, Jan. 29, 1812]

On Thursday morning last, at fifteen minutes past 9 o'clock, a shock of an earthquake was sensibly felt in the neighborhood of this city.

Hartford, Connecticut February 7, 1812
[*Connecticut Courant*]

Comment: The February 7, 1812, event is not described as being felt in the vicinity of Hartford.

Henderson County, Kentucky December, 1811
[Fuller, M.L. (1912), pg. 28]

In the Green River region of Henderson County, Ky., the first shock, which was alarming in its nature, was followed through night and day up to December 30 by less violent shocks. On the latter date a shock more severe than any of those preceding was experienced, overturning nearly every chimney in Henderson County.

Henderson, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*The Weekly Register-Chronicle*, Jan. 25, 1812]

Earthquake. - Extract from a letter to the Editor dated Henderson, (Ky.) Dec. 28, 1811. "A severe shock of an earthquake was felt at this place on the 16th inst. At half past 2 o'clock, A.M. - many chimneys were cracked by the motion; - and at sunrise another shock threw down most of the chimneys so injured. We have had a shock every day since the 25th inst. I expect to send you a more particular account."

Comment: *Henderson was also known as Red Banks, see another account of the December 16, 1811, earthquake at Henderson, under Red Banks.*

Henderson, Kentucky January 23, 1812 (?)
[see *Uniontown, December 16, 1811*]

Herculaneum, Missouri December 16, 1811
[Mitchill, S.L. (1915), pg 290]

The testimony of Colonel Samuel Hammond, in a letter of the 16th February, 1812, which I received from him, was to the following effect. He confined himself to what he knew from personal observation. The first shock witnessed was on the 15/16th of December last. He was then in Herculaneum of Louisiana. A few seconds before the motion was felt, he and others heard a considerable roaring or rumbling noise, resembling a blaze of fire acted upon by wind. The first motion of the frame house on which he stood was tremulous. It began instantly after to rock violently. This continued, as he thought, from ten to twelve minutes. The vibrations of the chimney were,

perhaps, about three or four inches each way, and were in the direction of southeast and northwest. Its commencement was about two o'clock in the morning. One hour after there was a second, which was light, and of very short duration. No houses or chimneys were thrown down by either of those. About daylight of the same morning there was a third shock. The motion was very much like the first, but of short duration. This injured several brick and stone chimneys. Its duration, between one and a half and two and half minutes. About sunrise the same morning there was a fourth shock. The vibrations of the chimneys at twenty-five feet from the ground, were at least four inches each way. The direction was the same as the first. The motion of the earth was very perceptible. Cradles rocked, and church bells rang. Several chimneys were cracked to their bases, and some were broken off as low as the stem or funnel. In this last shock, the water in the river Mississippi was thrown into commotion, bubbling like boiling water; and, in a few minutes, the whole atmosphere was filled with smoke or fog, so that boat could not be seen within twenty paces from water's edge; and the houses were so shrouded as not to be seen fifty feet; this smoke continued all the forepart of that day.

Hickman, Kentucky General
[Dudley, T. (1858), pg. 423]

On the Kentucky side of the river there empties into the Mississippi river two small streams, one called the Obine, the other the Forked Deer. Lieutenant Robinson, a recruiting officer, in the United States army, visited that part of Kentucky lying between those two rivers in 1812, and states that he found numberless little mounds thrown up in the earth, and where a stick or a broken limb of a tree lay across these mounds they were all burnt in two pieces, which went to prove to the people that these commotions were caused by some internal action of fire.

Hodgenville, Kentucky (3 miles north of December 16, 1811
[Pousey, W.A., (1930), *Science*, 285-286]

January 23, 1812
February 7, 1812

Mount Gilead Kentucky Earthquake on Sunday night Decr. 15th, 2 of the clock at night a severe shock of an earth quake was felt. The motion of shaking continued about 15 minutes. About half an hour after this shock was over another was felt less severe, continued only a minute or two. The next day, Monday morning the 16th, a little after sun rise another shock was felt, the tremor continued a few minutes. Two other slight shocks were felt that morning - the next shock was on Sunday about midday not so violent as the first. The weather for some days before had been dull and cloudy. Again on the night of the 30th instant a shock was felt. Again on Jany (Thursday) 23 1812 at 8 o'clock in the morning another severe shock was felt. The tremor continued for several minutes. When it had stilled another shock was felt which lasted a minute or two. On Monday morning Jany 27th, a slight shock was felt - on Tuesday evening, 4th Feby 1812 a slight shock was felt. The trembling of the earth continued for several minutes suppd. 6 or 7 - and a rumbling noise was heard. These are the shock that we have felt at this place. By report hardly a day passes but the trembling of the Earth is more or less felt. In time of the severest shocks to attempt to walk you feel light head and reel about like

a drunken man. Again on the night of Thursday, the 6th Feby. About 4 o'clock A.M. a very sever shock was felt which lasted fully 15 minutes with a rumbling noise like distant thunder and three very distinct reports like cannon was heard at the end of it. Again on Friday night the 7th a smart shock at 8 o'clock then about 11 o'clock another less severe. Frequently you may feel a trembling of the earth when there is no visible appearance of shaking. It has invariably been cloudy weather about the time of the shocks and rains or snow shortly after. Again on the night 20th Feb. About 9 or 10 o'clock 2 slight shocks were felt the last of which continued to tremor for more than 15 minutes. Again on Saturday night 22d about 10 o'clock another slight shock.

Hopkins County, Kentucky December 16, 1812

[Pearce, H.R. (1958), pg. 53]

At a distance of 130 miles from the center of the quake, the shocks and tremors were distinctly felt in Hopkins County. The trees of the forest swayed, the houses rattled and shook, utensils were thrown down; and terror, as of the end of the world, was felt. Superstitious awe pervaded the community, religious fervor was renewed, sinners saw the light, and backsliders renewed their faith.

Hudson, New York December 16, 1811

[*Chenango Weekly Advertiser*, Mar 19, 1812]

Shocks of earthquakes continue frequently to be felt in various parts of the western and southern states - and in this city (Hudson) a number of shocks have been felt since the general one in December.

Jamaica, New York

January 23, 1812

[*Concord Gazette*, Feb. 4, 1812]

A shock of an Earthquake was felt at Jamaica, L.I. a little after 9 o'clock on Thursday morning. About the same time a noise was heard in this city, which by some, was said to be an Earthquake.

N. York Gazette

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1812]

NEW YORK, January 24
ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE

A correspondent, at Jamaica (L.I.) under [sic] of this day says - "Yesterday morning, at fifteen minutes after nine o'clock, a shock of an earthquake was sensibly felt in this village. Everything suspended in my house was set into motion for more than a minute. The motion was a steady swinging backward and forward. The shock was felt also by my family, and by several of our neighbors.

We understand that the shock was noticed by many people in this city.

Jefferson, Georgia February 7, 1812
[*The New York Evening Post*, Mar. 5, 1812]

By a gentleman from Jefferson we are informed that on the plantation of Mr. Ephraim Piedes [sic] near Brier Creek, about 18 miles from this place, a body of earth about 90 feet in circumference, sunk, as supposed on Friday night - that the earth being held on one side by the roots of a tree at the edge of the opening, sunk in a [sic] direction and that the lower part of it was covered with water, in which the bottom was not found with a sixteen foot pole. The gentleman saw the opening but does not know that any other attempt to find the bottom was made, there being no polls at hand, when he was there, longer than the sixteen foot one.

Jeffersonville, Indiana December 16, 1811
[Mitchill, S.L. (1812), pg. 288]

By information from Jeffersonville, in the Indiana Territory, on the opposite side of the Ohio, it was understood that the shocks were reiterated, and the writer of the account I am now copying, declares that the table was in motion from the earthquake, while he was employing his pen to describe the phenomena.

Kaskaskia, Illinois December 16, 1811
[*Western Spy*, Feb. 22, 1812]

As all authentic information from near the western extremity of our civilized population concerning the earthquake must be acceptable to the public (whose eyes are turned to that quarter for the cause) we insert the following extract of a letter from Robert Morrison Esq. a respectable inhabitant of Kaskaskia to a gentleman in this town. N.B. Kaskaskia is a little more than 100 miles above the Ohio River, and 60 miles below St. Louis.

We have been very much alarmed by a repetition of earthquakes since the morning of the 16th of Dec. The first happened about half past 2 o'clock - it was extremely severe and was succeeded by another just after sunrise the same morning, but somewhat less terrible. The subsequent ones have been more gentle, and occur three times about every 24 hours, for more than 10 days. For about 20 days past, we have experienced more than 3 or 4 shock and these but slightly felt (this letter was written in January). Various conjectures have arisen in the minds of our modern philosophers as to the causes that may have produced them. Some supposed they are occasioned by a volcanic eruption, others seem to think they were produced by the comet's near approach to the earth. There are however a few who are of a different opinion, and describe it to electricity [sic]. The latter opinion I have adopted.

Kaskaskia, Illinois General
[Brown, S. (1906), pg. 140]

The years of 1811 and 1812 were years of trouble and dismay in Old Kaskaskia. In the first of these years, the inhabitants were frightened beyond description by a

terrible earthquake which was felt in different degrees of intensity by the whole Mississippi valley. At Kaskaskia, the earth several times waved like a river agitated by the winds; the steeple of the church bent like a reed; the old bell rang with tremulous strokes like some unseen demon pulling on the bell cord; the cattle wild with nameless fear, ran to and fro filling the air with howling; the soil cracked so deeply in the very streets that they could not sound the bottom of the crevice, and the water drawn from it exhaled a most disagreeable odor; stone and brick chimneys fell down; houses cracked as if it were doomsday. The people, believers and nonbelievers, flocked to the church and listened with Catholic zeal to the stout old Father Donatien Oliver as he implored mercy from Him whom the elements obey.

Knoxville, Tennessee December 16, 1811
[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Jan. 7, 1812]

Knoxville, (Ten.) Dec. 16

Earthquake - About two o'clock this morning, this town experienced the shock of an earthquake, which lasted from three to five minutes, the rattling of the window glass and furniture in the rooms, was so great as to rouse every family in town - A second shock succeeded in half an hour, which continued about half a minute. - Between sunrise and breakfast, three others, each of a few seconds duration, were felt. We heard of no damage being done. - At the end of the first and largest shock, there were in a direction due north, two flashes of light, (an interval of about a minute between them) much resembling distant lighting.

Knoxville, Tennessee January 23, 1812
[*The Enquirer*, Feb. 6, 1812]

Knoxville; Jan 27
ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE

At 20 minutes before nine o'clock on Thursday morning last, a shock of an Earthquake, which lasted four minute, was felt in this town. The vibration is said by those who observed it to be from North to South. The oscillation much lighter than during that of the 16th ult. The wind was Eastwardly but light and variable; many people left their houses, and unfinished breakfasts and fled to the streets, some few articles were thrown from the shelves of the stores, but no damage done.

A light shock at half past 9, was observed. During the shocks on the morning of the 16th December, the weather was heavy, a solemn stillness of the air, and great contraction of the horizon each accompanied by a rumbling noise, resembling the rumbling of heavy loaded wagons on the pavements. On Thursday the weather was clear, nor did any noise accompany the shocks.

Knoxville, Tennessee February 7, 1812
[*Wilson's Knoxville Gazette*, Feb. 7, 1812]

Another and Another Earthquake

On Friday morning about 20 minutes before 4 o'clock we experienced a shock of an earthquake which succeeded in violence that of the morning of the 16th Dec. last. It

continued about 5 or 6 minutes, and shook the houses and furniture violently - slight tremblings were observed by some at intervals of a few hours during the day, until about 8 o'clock in the evening, when the furniture in our houses was again agitated by another shock - at 20 minutes before 11 at night - another shock of considerable violence was felt, which continued about 2 minutes. It is the opinion of many that not one day has passed, since the 16th Dec. unmarked by this phenomenon.

Lancaster, Ohio December 16, 1811
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 18]

Lancaster, (Ohio) Dec. 19

On Monday morning last, between the hours of 3 and 4 o'clock a severe shock of an Earthquake was felt in this town and neighborhood. The concussion was so great as to produce sensations similar to those occasioned by the rolling of a ship at sea. It was followed at sun-rise by another less terrible, but which (although there was a perfect calm at the time) agitated the forest, as if shaken with a gale. How far its effects were felt we have not heard.

Since writing the above, we have felt several slight shocks.

Lancaster, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*Western Spectator*, Jan. 26, 1812]

- see Marietta, Ohio of the same date

Lancaster, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*The Palladium*, February 26, 1812]

The inhabitants of Lancaster, Ohio were so affrightened, and astonished, as to fly from their dwellings to the street for safety.

[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 58] February 7, 1812

On Friday last, at 30 minutes past three o'clock, the citizens of this place were roused from their slumbers by another violent undulation of the earth. The concussion was terrible, and caused the astonished and affrighted inhabitants to fly from their habitations to the streets for safety. The shocks hitherto felt, when compared to this, were slight and feeble. The scene as awfully terrific. The pale faced moon emitting her feeble rays through a hazy atmosphere contributed to heighten rather than to dispel the gloom. The ringing of the bells occasioned by the violent agitation of the earth; the howling of the dogs; the bellowing of the cattle, and the running to and fro of horses, which evinced that even the brute creation were not insensible to this terrific convulsion of nature, and to their danger; the earth now apparently reeling to its centre, and now oscillating with the velocity of lighting to every point of the compass, served to produce sensations indescribable, and seemed to threaten those dire calamities, which in some countries are consequent on severe earthquakes. But providentially (and with gratitude to Heaven we write it) after five or six minutes of dreadful agitation, the conflict of the elements ceased, and we were measurably relieved from apprehensions, easier to be

conceived then described.

At twenty minutes past eight in the evening there was a considerable shake. It was followed at thirty-five minutes past ten by another more severe than the second, but far less terrible than the first.

Laurens, South Carolina December 16, 1811

- see Columbia, South Carolina of the same date.

Lebanon, Ohio December 16, 1811
[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 289]

At Lebanon, in Ohio, the alarm was so great, that many persons forsook their houses. The vibrations of the shocks seemed to be from east to west.

Lexington, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*Kentucky Gazette*, Dec. 17, 1811]

About half two o'clock, yesterday morning, a severe shock of an Earthquake was felt at this place; the earth vibrated two or three times in a second, which continued for several minutes, and so great was the shaking that the windows were agitated equal to what would have been in a hard gust of wind. We are informed by those who were awake at the commencement, that a sound like a distant thunder was heard to the westward, previous to the agitation of the earth. Several successive shocks were observed during the remainder of the night and two between 7 and 8 o'clock since day. We have heard of no material injury sustained in this neighborhood.

[*The Reporter*, Dec. 17, 1811]

Several shocks of an earthquake were felt by the inhabitants of Lexington, between 2 and 3 o'clock yesterday morning. We have as yet heard of no injury being sustained in this neighborhood.

[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Dec. 17, 1811]

On yesterday morning about half after 2 o'clock was experienced, a very severe shock of an Earthquake, at this place, it lasted about two minutes - about half after seven, it again was felt, but not in such an alarming degree.

Lexington, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*Kentucky Gazette*, Jan. 28, 1812]

We felt the shock of an earthquake at this place on Thursday last, about nine o'clock in the morning. Several other shocks are said to have been felt since.

[*The Reporter*, Jan. 25, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

Two shocks of an earthquake were very sensibly felt in this place, Thursday last - may are said to be noticed, in the course of that day, but the shock about 40 minutes after 8 o'clock in the morning, and another about 11 o'clock at night, were of sufficient violence to be felt very generally by the inhabitants.

[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Jan. 26, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

On Thursday morning last, about 9 o'clock, this place was again visited by a shock of an Earthquake. It was supposed to have been almost as severe as any heretofore experienced, and about the same duration. From the papers which have reached us since the last shock, it seems to have been very sensibly felt throughout the Western Country. At Louisville several chimneys were broken off, glasses were thrown off the tables, and fissures were made in the ground for an inch wide and several yards long.

Lexington, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*Kentucky Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1812]

Earthquakes

On the morning of Thursday last, about half past three o'clock, another violent shock of an earthquake was felt at this place. We have heard of no material injury from its effects as yet - at Frankfort, Louisville, Paris and Chillicothe - some chimneys and brick houses were slightly damaged. This shock was more severe and of longer duration, than any of the former - and cause very general alarm. Several shocks of less force have been noticed since.

[*The Reporter*, Feb. 8, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

Another shock was felt yesterday morning, about half past three o'clock. It was more severe than any which has preceded it since the first commencement. Previous to the shock, during its continuation and for some time afterwards, there was a loud rumbling like distant thunder.

[*Kline's Weekly Carlisle Gazette*, Feb. 28, 1812]

Lexington, Kentucky, February 11, 1812
Earthquakes

Between the hours of 3 and 4 on the morning of Friday last, a shock of the earthquake was felt in this place, much more alarming and violent than any which have hitherto been experienced. It was also of greater duration, and accompanied with rumbling noise and flashes of light from the N. West. The bricks on the houses, were in

some places, removed from their position. The buildings were violently agitated, and the walls are known in some instances, to have been cracked.

Little Prairie, Missouri December 16, 1811

- see *extracts from a letter to a gentleman in Lexington, from his friend at New Madrid (U..L.) Dated 16th Dec. 1811* - in Appendix

- Comment: U.L., an abbreviation for Upper Louisiana Territory

[Account of Michael Braunm]

Michael Braunm (father of Tecumsey Braunm, Miss Lizzie Braunm and Mrs. Victorine (Braunm) Horner, all yet living in Dunklin County [Mo.]) - was a married man living at the above mentioned place [Little Prairie] during the time of the earthquakes. In describing the catastrophe he stated that in one particular place on the Mississippi the earth rose like a great loaf of bread to the height of many feet, the uprising accompanied by a terrible rumbling noise. The swell finally burst with the most severe shocks of the period, and great quantities of sand, water, and black sulphurous vapor, were thrown out to nearly the height of an ordinary tree, completely darkening the atmosphere for some distance. When it was again light it was noticed that many acres of land had disappeared in the Mississippi, the current of which had retrograded for a short period of time. The rising motion and rumbling noise warned inhabitants, and they fled in dismay, so that no lives were lost. Mr. Braunm's residence was about a half mile from the seeming center of this particular shock, and when it subsided he placed his wife on a horse, walking in front himself, to search out a way over and between the deep fissures that had been made in the earth, and thud sought a quieter locality, as did the other inhabitants.

Comment: This manuscript was found in the Joint Collection of the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection - Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.

[Account of James Fletcher]
[*Wilson's Knoxville Gazette*, Feb. 10, 1812]

December 16, 1812

At Little Prairie on the 16th of December last, about 2 o'clock A.M. we felt a severe concussion of the earth which we supposed to be occasioned by a distant earthquake, and did not apprehend much danger. Between that time and day we felt several other slighter shocks, about sun rise another very severe one came on, attended with a perpendicular bouncing that caused the earth to open in many places - some eight to ten feet wide, number of less width, & of considerable length, some parts have sunk much more lower than others; when [illegible] one of these large openings are formed one side remains as high as before the shock and the other is sunk; some more; some less; but the deepest I saw was about twelve feet. The earth was, in the course of 15 minute after the shock in the morning nearly entirely inundated with water.

The pressing of the earth, if the expression is allowable, caused the water to spout out of the pores of the earth to the height of eight or ten feet. We supposed the whole country sinking, and knew not what to do for the best. The agitation was so great that it was with difficulty one could stand on their feet (illegible), some could not.

The air was very strongly impregnated with a sulphurous smell. As if by instinct we flew as soon as we could from the river, dreading most danger there; but after rambling about two or three hours, about a hundred gathered at Captain Francis Leseur's where we camped, until we heard that the upper country was not damaged, when I left the camp after staying there twelve days, to look for some other place, and was three days getting about thirty miles, from being obliged to travel around those chasms. Previous to my leaving the country, I heard that many parts of the Mississippi River had caved in; in some places several acres at the same instant. But the extraordinary effect produced that I saw was a small lake below the river St. Francis - The bottom of which is blown up higher than any of the adjoining country, and instead of water it was filled with beautiful white sand. The same effect is produced on many other lakes, as I am informed by those who saw them and it is supposed they are generally filled up. A little river called the Pemiscoe, that empties into the St. Francis, and runs parallel with the Mississippi, at the distance of about twelve miles from it, is filled also with sand. I only saw it near its head, and found it to be so, and was informed by respectable gentlemen who had seen it lower down, that it positively was filled with sand. On the sand that was thrown out of the lakes and rivers, lie numerous quantities of fish of all kinds common to the country.

The damage to stock & C was unknown. I heard of only two dwelling houses, a granary and a smoke house being sunk. One of the dwelling houses was sunk twelve feet below surface of the earth; the other, the top was about even with the surface; we supposed it sunk and the earth closed over them. The buildings through the country are much damaged. - We heard of no lives being lost, except seven Indians who were shaken into the Mississippi. This we learned from one who escaped.

Previous to the shocks coming on, we heard a rumbling noise like that of thunder. They continued until I left the country - some very severe. I cannot tell how many there were.

The Little Prairie was beautiful spot on the west side of Mississippi river, about 30 miles from New Madrid, and nearly west of Nashville, 150 miles - it was well settled.

The above account (by Mr. James Fletcher) is confirmed by letters reached from that country. A gentleman attempting to pass Cape Girardeau to the pass of St. Francis found the earth so much cracked and broke that it was impossible to get along. The course must be about fifty miles back of the Little Prairie. Others have experienced the same difficulty in getting along, and at times had to go miles out of their way to shun those chasms.

We have no idea that the principal cause of the shocks originated on the Mississippi. - We have not yet heard the worst.

Comment: James Fletcher's letter in Wilson's Knoxville Gazette, was dated Nashville, January 21, 1812

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Kaskaskia to the Editor, dated January 7th, 1812

[*The Luminary* (Richmond, Ky.)]

December 16, 1811

I have just conversed with a gentleman from New Madrid, who states that he saw in that place, many fissures in the earth for miles in length. The Little Prairie about twelve leagues below this place is actually sunk - Some of the buildings are thrown upon their sides; and others covered with water up to their roofs. Other accounts from below state that the country is much sunk and split.

Several violent shocks have been felt in this place [Kaskaskia].

Statement of Mr. Robert McCoy

General

In speaking of the great earthquakes, Mr. McCoy says: "That on the evening of the 17th day of December, 1811, the first earthquake was felt, which was the one that destroyed the Little Prairie, but the one that did material injury to the village of New Madrid was not until the 7th of February, following."

Comment: account found in the Joint Collection of the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.

Livingston County, Kentucky
[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 298]

February 7, 1812

Being on horseback in Livingston County, Kentucky, Mr. Riddick, on the morning of the 8th of February, was sensible of the earthquake. His horse refused to proceed, and bracing himself on his legs, stood still. The atmosphere was remarkably luminous for some time prior to the shaking of the ground. There was no moon shine; and yet objects could be seen to a considerable distance. On this occasion the brightness was general, and did not proceed from any point or spot in the heavens. It was broad and expanded reaching from the zenith, on every side, toward the horizon. It exhibited no flashes, nor concussions; but, as long as it lasted, was a diffuse illumination of the atmosphere on all sides; but no noise was distinguished until the shaking of the earth began; then the usual rumbling sound was heard.

Louisville, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 11, 1812]

Louisville, (Ken.) Dec. 20

On Monday morning the 16th instant, this place was visited by a most alarming Earthquake - the particulars of which, we are able to relate as follows. -About 15 minutes after 2, we discovered the atmosphere to have assumed a dark and gloomy appearance, but was quite calm; a few minutes after we heard a rumbling noise, resembling that of distant thunder, or a terrible storm, accompanied with a rattling which we at first concluded was the rolling of some heavy body over the floor of the adjacent room - next, that it was some carriage driving furiously along the street. Next it was a fire that produced the roaring; this increasing, we were induced to believe it was a

severe storm approaching, but finding the house operated on, in a manner never known before, (vibrating like a pendulum of a clock) - we attributed it to its real cause, an Earthquake - From the different comparisons and conclusions in our mind at the time, together with other circumstances, we are induced to believe, the continuation was from 4 to 6 minutes, though some say it was not so long; - about an hour afterwards, another shock was felt; and a little after sunrise, a third, which broke off several chimneys, and injured some houses otherwise, particularly Dr. R. Ferguson's, part of the gable end of which, was dashed in. It is probable the first shock was the principal cause of the injury done, as it was considerably the severest. We are happy to state that no lives were lost, or any person hurt. Since that time we have at intervals, experienced frequent shocks, though comparatively light.

Western Courier

Louisville, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*The Reporter*, Feb. 01, 1812]

Louisville, Jan. 24

Yesterday morning (23rd inst.) a few minutes before 9 o'clock the inhabitants of this place were again alarmed by an Earthquake, equal in duration to, and, it is thought, more severe than the first on the morning of the 16th ult. Several chimneys were broken off, clocks stopped, and glasses thrown off tables, and it is said by some, that fissures in the ground several yards long, and an inch and a half wide, were discovered in the street near Market House. (For the truth of the latter we will not vouch). Certain it is said that the citizens were very much alarmed, and particularly the Ladies.

Louisville, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*Muskingum Messenger*, Feb. 12, 1812]

Louisville, February 7

Another Earthquake - This morning, about fifteen minutes past three o'clock, equally or more severe, and of longer duration, than any experienced hitherto, at this place. No injury was sustained, except a few chimneys, and part of some parapet walls, which were broken off.

[McMurtie, H. (1819), pg. 239]

7th3 h. 15 m. A.M. the most tremendous earthquake yet experienced at this place, preceded by frequent slight motions for several minutes, duration of great violence at least four minutes, then gradually moderated by exertions of lessening strength,...

[*Kline's Weekly Carlisle Gazette*, Feb. 28, 1812]

At Louisville the gable ends of houses have tumbled down ...

[*Kentucky Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1812]

Earthquakes

On the morning of Thursday last, about half past three o'clock, another violent shock of an earthquake was felt at this place. We have heard of no material injury from its effects as yet - at Frankfort, Louisville, Paris, and Chillicothe - some chimneys and brick houses were slightly damaged. This shock was more severe and of longer duration, than any of the former - and cause very general alarm. Several shocks of less force have been noticed.

Mammoth Cave, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[Binkerd, A.D. (1869), pg. 17]

THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1812

Mr. J. Gatewood, a native of the county, and an employee in the saltpeter mines, frequently stated during his lifetime, within hearing of Mr. A.L. Mallory, my informant, that he was in the cave with a number of other workmen, during the occurrence of the earthquake that formed the lake in the lowland known as the "Kentucky Purchase," in the southwestern part of the State, bordering on the Ohio. The tremulous motion of the earth filled the miners with alarm, and they fled in the wildest confusion towards the entrance, which they did not reach until long after the danger was past, when they stepped forth with thankful hearts from what they feared might prove their sepulcher. Fortunately no one was hurt, nor were the mining operations interfered with. Since the cave has proved a safe retreat during violent earthquakes, it is hardly probable that it could be unsafe at other times. No accident or loss of life has yet occurred in the cave, from carelessness or foul play, within the memory of the reverend being - the oldest inhabitant.

Comment: It is assumed that the earthquake being described is the January 23, 1812, event, since this is the only major event that occurred during what most likely would have been working hours.

Marietta, Ohio December 16, 1811
[*Western Spectator*, Dec. 21, 1811]

EARTHQUAKE

On the morning of Monday the 16th inst, at 35 minutes past 2 A.M. the inhabitants of Marietta and the vicinity were alarmed by a violent shaking of their house, which was soon found to proceed from an earthquake. The same motion was felt at 20 minutes past three and at half past seven, when the tremor of the ground continued, we are informed until eight o'clock - and was again felt with less violence, on the following day, a few minutes before noon.

The sensations of different individuals on the first shock were different of course, but were generally those of alarm, aggravated beyond even what must naturally be felt on such an occasion. We suggested in our last the groundless apprehensions of our citizens concerning the Indian hunters, squaws, and papooses, encamped at no great distance from us. We regret to add, that instances of thieving and even housebreaking

have of late been alarmingly frequent among us. The motion and noise caused by the earthquake we believed was rather calculated to impress people just waking from a sound sleep with the idea that some persons were breaking into their houses. To many the idea of invading Indiana! was suggested with all of its horrors - and several seized their weapons to repel tomahawk. Some dodged with great skill to avoid being caught by invaders whom they fancied to have entered their castles. To others the idea of house breakers more naturally occurred.

The first shock was certainly very strong - but quite different from earthquakes which have previously been felt by the writer of this article. It was of much longer continuance and stronger with more regular motion, and less trembling.

By some, an explosion was heard - resembling the noise made by emptying loads of small stones, or that of a carriage in rapid motion on a pavement.

Marietta, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*Western Spectator*, Jan. 26, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE AGAIN

On the morning of Thursday the 23rd instant we again experienced the shock of an earthquake, which continued we believe about 4 minutes. The sensations it occasioned were similar to those felt in the former shocks; of which it was well remarked by the *Lancaster Press* that they resembled those arising from the rolling of a ship. We believe this shock was little less violent than the first and severest on the 16th utl. The printing stands reeled violently and a gentleman in the office heard a rumbling noise which caused him to look round just at the commencement of the shock.

Marietta, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*Western Spectator*, Feb. 8, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE AGAIN!

On Tuesday last a little before sunset, another shock of earthquake was felt in this place. Yesterday morning 20 minutes before 4 was felt another, of 5 minutes duration, more violent than any before felt. A young man who went out during the shock heard a noise like that of a storm preceding from W. or S.W. to E. Or N.E. - Our last Thursday's mail failed.

Marshall Ferry, Illinois (located in southeastern Illinois) General
[www.iltrails.org/1811il.htm: *The Illinois Earthquake of 1811-1812 as told by Daniel Berry*]

Mr. Wesley McCallister's story. He says: "my grandfather, Edward McCallister, came from Ireland when a small boy; grew up in Virginia and served as a soldier through the Revolutionary War; was in the battle of Cowpens with General Morgan. After the war, he married Miss DeHart, a French Huguenot, and settled in Kentucky. In 1810 he came to Illinois territory. At this time he had eight children, my father being the youngest. He came down the Green and Ohio rivers and up the Wabash in a piroque, landing at Chadd's ferry, where Marshall's ferry is now. He built a cabin and was living

there at the time of the earthquake. My father was a child about 4 years old, and remembers his mother gathering up the children and taking them to the pirouque; saying that if the earth sunk, they would be safe as the land and came ashore. All the stock was very much disturbed and frightened; horses nickering, cattle lowing, hogs squealing, and all the stock on the range returning to the house.

Maysville, Kentucky December 16, 1811

Comment: see *Washington, Ky. Of the same date*

Maysville, Kentucky January 23, 1811

Comment: see *Washington, Ky. Of the same date*

Maysville, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*The Palladium*, Feb. 26, 1812]

At Maysville, KY, the same injury was sustained....

Comment: refers to the phrase of "...some chimneys suffered..."

Meade, Breckenridge, and Harden Counties, Ky. (Junction of) January, 23, 1812
[Audubon, M.R. (1897), pp. 234-235]

THE EARTHQUAKE

Traveling through the Barrens of Kentucky (of which I shall give you an account elsewhere) in the month of November, I was logging on one afternoon, when I remarked a sudden and strange darkness rising from the western horizon. Accustomed to our heavy storms of thunder and rain enable me to get under the shelter of the roof of an acquaintance, who lived not far distance, before it should come up. I proceeded about a mile, when I heard what I imagined to be the distant rumbling of a violent tornado, on which I spurred my steed, with a wish to gallop as fast as possible to a place of shelter; but it would not do, the animal knew better than I what was forthcoming, and instead of going faster, so nearly stopped that I remarked that he placed one foot after another on the ground, with as much precaution as if walking on a smooth sheet of ice. I thought he had suddenly foundered, and, speaking to him, was on the point of dismounting and leading him, when he all of a sudden fell a-groaning piteously, hung his head, spread out his four legs, as if to save himself from falling, and stood stock still, continuing to groan. I thought my horse was about to die, and I would have sprung from his back had a minute more elapsed, but at that instant all the shrubs and trees began to move from their roots, the ground rose and fell in successive furrows, like the ruffled water of a lake, and I became bewildered in y ideas, as I too plainly discovered that all of this awful commotion in nature was the result of an earthquake.

I had never witnessed anything of the kind before, although, like every other person, I knew of earthquakes by description. But what is description compared with reality? Who can tell of the sensations which I experienced when I found myself rocking as if were on my horse, and with him moved to and fro like a child in a cradle,

with the most imminent danger around, and expecting the ground every moment to open and to present to my eye such an abyss as might engulf myself and all around me? The fearful convulsions, however, lasted only a few minutes, and the heavens again brightened as quickly as they had become obscured; my horse brought his feet to their natural position, raised his head, and galloped off as if loose and frolicking without a rider.

* *Herrick states (pg. 280) that Audubon was riding from Lexington to Henderson, Ky., and he should have written January, 1812. Herrick notes that Audubon was notoriously poor in keeping his dates straight.*

Herrick, F.H. (1917), Audubon, The Naturalist, published by D. Appleton & Co., 280 p.

Audubon's location is inferred from an early map of Kentucky designates the area near the junction of the three counties indicated as "The Naked Lands or Barrens." It is an area that Audubon would have had to cross in going from Lexington to Henderson, Ky.

Meadville, Pennsylvania

December 16, 1811

[*Pittsburgh Gazette*, Dec. 27, 1811]

By accounts from Meadville, and Waterford, we are informed, that severe shocks of an earthquake were felt at those places on Monday morning the 16th inst. at the same time as those experienced here. At Meadville, the one which happened at 3 o'clock was so sensibly felt, that many persons were awakened by the rocking of their beds, and the motion continued from 10 to 15 minutes. The one at 8 o'clock was nearly as severe, but did not continue so long - the top of the trees in the town were seen to vibrate for almost a minute, and the puddles of water in streets appeared in waves as if a sudden blast of wind had passed over them. On Tuesday about the middle of the day, a third shake was felt, but slighter than the others.

Mercer County, Kentucky

March 1, 1812

There was a slight shock of an earthquake felt here about three o'clock the morning.

Journal entry of Wednesday, March 1, 1812 found in the *Shaker Record Collection* in the archives section of the King Library at the University of Kentucky

Milledgeville, Georgia

December 16, 1811

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 11, 1812]

The Earthquake noticed in our last, says the *Augusta (Georgia) Herald*, was felt in every direction from this place as far as we have yet heard from. In Columbia, South

Carolina, sever successive shocks were felt in this place, and at about the same hours. In Milledgeville, the state house was shaken as to cause the clapper of the bell in the cupola repeatedly to strike. - In Savannah the shock was equally severe, as it was in different places in the country.

Montgomery County, Kentucky General
[letter of Joseph P. Howe to William W. Woodward, dated April 11, 1812]

We have had numerous & a number of very considerable agitations in the Earth, several persons were very much alarmed. The [sic] party, in particular, were in the general very much terrified, but their panic was soon over because sudden destruction did not overtake them.

Comment: letter was found in the "Wilson Collection" at the University of Kentucky, King Library.

Mortons Gap, Kentucky General
[Pearce, H.B. (1958), pg. 53]

A memento of the great force was left in the form of a crack in the brick work of the Thomas Morton brick building in the northern part of Mortons Gap.

Comment: The Thomas Morton brick building was the first and only brick building in the area at the time of the earthquakes.

Muhlenberg County, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[Bower, J. (1811)]

To see everything touching the earth, shaking-quivering, trembling; and men's hearts quaking for fear of the approaching judgment. Many families ran together and grasped each other in their arms. The people relinquished all kinds of labor for a time, except feeding stock, and eat only enough to support nature a few days.

3Nashville, Tennessee December 16, 1811
[*The Clarion & Tennessean*, Dec. 17, 1812]

Earthquake

An alarming earthquake was felt in this town and the adjoining country as far as we have heard, about 15 m past two o'clock yesterday morning. The shocks, which continued until after day, were some of them very severe - so much so that the heaviest houses seemed to be racked to pieces, however we have heard of no real damage sustained, except the fall of some chimneys in the country.

This being the first shock of any kind ever felt in this place and commencing at the hour it did, terrified the citizens at first very much, until recollection assigned the true cause of the dreadful visitation.

It is generally supposed that an eruption of concussion must have taken place to the south, and we wait with anxiety until we hear from the southern country.

Nashville, Tennessee February 7, 1812
[Williams, S.C. (1930), pg. 78]

Andrew Jackson recorded (February 8th) that at Nashville the severity was such as to 'throw down chimneys and to crack walls.'

Natchez, Mississippi December 16, 1811
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Dec. 31, 1811]

Natchez, Dec. 18th, 1811

Sir,

Having made a few observations with respect to the Earthquake, which has drawn the attention of the citizens of this place and its vicinity within a few days past, I present them to you, thrown together in a hasty way, for publication, if you think fit, under the impression that they will not be uninteresting to your readers.

On the morning of Monday last the 16th inst. several shocks were felt - four have been ascertained by an accurate observer to have been felt in this city. The principal one, as near as can be collected, was about ten minutes past two o'clock, A.M. There was no noise heard in the atmosphere but in a few instances in certain situations - The shock was attended by a tremendous motion of the earth and building - felt by some for about one and half minutes; by others about five; and my own impression is, that I am conscious of it lasting at least three, have been awakened from my sleep. Several clocks were stopped at two or ten minutes after. Several articles were thrown off the shelves; crockery was sent rolling about the floor; articles suspended from the ceiling of the stores vibrated rapidly without any air to disturb them, for about nine inches; the plastering in the rooms of some house was cracked and injured; the river was much convulsed, so much that it induced some of the boatmen the landing, who supposed the bank was falling in, to cut adrift. The shocks in the morning were six or half after, one of them considerable. The vibration of suspended articles, wherever room would admit, from east to west. Accounts from Louisiana state, that the first shock was felt about ten minutes past 2 A.M. at Black River, thirty miles distant, and at different places on the road to Rapide, where the trees were violently agitated. It was also felt on the river at a considerable distance above and below Vidalia - The shock was also felt as far up as the Big Black, and at the different intervening towns; in the vicinity of Washington the trees were observed to be much convulsed, nodding their heads together as if coming to the ground.

Another shock was experienced yesterday at fifteen minutes past eleven o'clock, A.M. The houses in several instances shook considerably, and suspended articles in the stores were violently convulsed. Some clocks were again stopped, and in one of the stores a cowbell was heard to tinkle.

[*The American Republic*, Jan. 10, 1812]

Natchez, December 19

A pretty strong shock of an Earthquake was felt in this city, about 2 o'clock on Monday morning last, a slighter one between day-light and sometime on the same morning, and another slight shock about noon the next day. The probable distance from the producing cause of these shocks, gives room for entertaining, fearful and melancholy apprehensions that the effects, where they have been most severely felt, have been dreadful and desolating indeed.

Newark, New Jersey December 16, 1811

The Sentinel of Freedom, the local paper, carries several accounts of the earthquakes, but it does mention that the earthquakes of December 16, 1811, were felt in Newark. Based on the fact the fact that January 23, 1812, event was felt, the two reports taken together suggests that the ground motions from the December events were too weak to awaken individuals in Newark.

January 23, 1812

[*The Sentinel of Freedom*, Feb. 4, 1812]

A slight shock of an Earthquake was felt in this place Thursday morning on the 23rd of January, about the hour of 9 in the morning. It was particularly noticed by a family at breakfast in a cellar kitchen, and caused a very sensible rocking of a weaver's loom standing in the room. In another dwelling house such was the agitation, that it was deemed prudent to hold a looking glass, suspended against the wall for fear it should fall. It was particularly noticed by persons residing in the vicinity of the river.

February 7, 1812

Comment: *The Sentinel of Freedom* carries several accounts of the 1811-1812 earthquakes, but it does not mention the earthquakes of February 7, 1812, as having been felt in Newark. Based on the fact the fact that January 23, 1812, event was reportedly felt in Newark, this suggests that the ground motions associated with the 4 a.m. February event, were too weak to awaken individuals.

Newbern, South Carolina February 7, 1812

[Anonymous C, pg. 52]

At four o'clock yesterday morning, a strong and alarming shock of an earthquake was felt in this town. Its duration was, perhaps, two minutes; some think it continued much longer. The rocking, or rather jerking was often reported and violent. It seemed as if some monstrous weight had rolled, or swung almost out of the power of force which was restraining it, and that power by desperate tugs and efforts wrenched it back again. It went off with a tremendous like quivering of a vessel at sea, after it has

sustained a rugged stroke from an enormous and impetuous wave.

A few minutes before eleven o'clock last evening another shock was felt by many persons, nearly equal in force and violence to that in the morning.

Newberry, South Carolina

December 16, 1811

Comment: *see Columbia, South Carolina of the same date*

New Bourbon, Missouri

December 16, 1811

[*Osteege Herald*, Mar. 28, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

We give the following account of 24 shocks of an earthquake, from our friend, James Moore, Esq. and as he relates from his own experience, he is entitled to our thanks and credit.

Terrible Earthquake

New Bourbon, Territory of Louisiana

First shock precisely five minutes after 2 o'clock in the morning and lasted ten minutes, was very severe, the night very clear and calm, a hard white frost, many chimneys damaged - 2nd shock precisely 3 o'clock, lasted three minutes extremely severe, everything in full convulsion; as near as I was capable to make observation my house rocked about eight inches; at 4 o'clock a thick fog closed to the earth - 3rd shock began twelve minutes after 7 o'clock in the morning and lasted four minutes, so severe that several chimneys fell and much damage was done, breaking crockery ware, looking glasses, &c. Some of the chimneys shook from their foundations flat to the earth, my chimney split from the foundation to the chimney floor but no person hurt - 4th shock twenty-nine minutes after 7 o'clock but slight, lasted two minutes - 5th shock fifty minutes after 7 o'clock but lightly felt - ten minutes after the fog very thick, a mist falling out of the fog. - 6th shock six minutes after 10 o'clock in the forenoon, lasted two minutes but light - 7th shock forty minutes after 11 o'clock, very slight - 8th shock fifty minutes after 11 o'clock, light - 9th shock fifty six minutes after 11 o'clock, lasted two minutes &c hard - 27 minutes after 12 the fog very thick, at 48 minutes after 12 o'clock a fine mist falling, 15 minutes after 1 o'clock the fog rose a little from the earth - 10th shock thirty-six minutes after 1 o'clock, but light; the fog settled to the earth again at four minutes after 2 o'clock, the fog rose a little at 45 minutes after 2 o'clock, the fog rose so high that it resembled a thick cloud, 30 minutes after 3 o'clock in the afternoon the fog began to settle again, at 15 minutes after 5 o'clock in the evening the fog very thick but appeared yellow - 11th shock at twenty-six minutes after 5 o'clock in the evening, lasted one minute very severe, 10 minutes after 7 o'clock extremely dark, at 30 minutes after 8 o'clock a fine mist falling, 10 minutes after 9 o'clock no mist falling and appeared more light but no stars to be seen - 12th shock forty-five minutes after 10 o'clock lasted one minute, but lightly felt, it began to rain hard - 13th shock fifty minutes after 10 o'clock lightly felt, and still continued to rain a little and grew harder until five in the morning of the 17th day when the rain stopped - 14th shock at 5 o'clock precisely sensibly felt - 15th shock twenty-five minutes after 11 o'clock lasted two minutes and severe, the wind high from

the northwest and very black clouds; forty-five minutes after 12 o'clock it began to rain and was very cold, at 4 it broke away and the sun appeared, but of a yellow color, the wind very high from the west and cold, at sunset the moon appeared very high and clear - 16th shock forty-eight minutes after 5 o'clock in the evening, lasted about one second but very severe; 55 minutes after 5 o'clock the blazing star or comet was plain to be seen in the west but near the moon, the wind continued to be very high and cold. At day break 18th morning at 2 o'clock some snow flying in the air, the shocks all appeared to come from the west and passed to the east - 17th shock began fifty-seven minutes after 8 o'clock in the evening lasted nearly two minutes and hard - 18th shock at midnight and lightly felt, the night very clear and cold, no wind. On the morning of the 19th day the sun rose clear but yellow and continued the same color, the wind changeable from south to west, in the morning the wind moderated and the sky clear and cold - 19th shock thirty minutes after 7 o'clock in the evening, severely felt; at 35 minutes after 3 o'clock the moon appeared of a yellow color through a vapor between the moon and the earth, the night was clear; on the morning of the 20th a small cloud appeared in the east at day break &c it became haze at sunrise - 20th shock at seven minutes after 11 o'clock in the forenoon, lasted 4 minutes extremely hard; at 15 minutes after 12 o'clock the clouds very thick but a white color; at 2 o'clock in the afternoon still remained thick but more black, at 3 o'clock a light south wind the air very chilly, it began to rain at 6 o'clock in the evening and continued half an hour, at 7 o'clock very dark. On the morning of the 21st day the sun rose very pale and yellow, at 10 o'clock the wind shifted from south to the west, the whole day continued very warm and pleasant; during the whole day the sun appeared very yellow, at 7 o'clock in the evening a cloud appeared in the east of a crimson and yellow color - 21st shock at 11 o'clock in the evening a noise was heard like distant thunder and immediately shock of the earth but light; the night continued clear and very still, many light shocks felt at different times between the other shocks of which I did not take notice - 22nd shock 22nd day thirty minutes after 12 o'clock, lasted two minutes and sensibly felt; the sun rose pale and warmer and yellow, sun set a cloud pointed from the sun of a uniform color to the west and north and northeast more black and heavy, the wind rose about 10 o'clock in the evening from northeast and continued to blow very hard. Monday morning the 23rd clear - 23rd shock twenty-four minutes after 2 o'clock in the morning, continued to be very sensibly felt two minutes, the wind still, high - 24th shock at 11 o'clock at night, sensibly felt.

James Moore
December 24, 1811

Comment: New Bourbon was two miles south of Ste. Genevieve. It was settled by French royalists after the Revolution. The settlement never thrived, however, and it has since disappeared. [Williams and Shoemaker, (1930), Missouri, Mother of the West, Vol, 1, published by, The American Historical Society, Inc., New York]

New Haven, Connecticut

December 16, 1811

Comment, see New Haven, CT, Feb. 7, 1812

New Haven, Connecticut
[Anonymous C. (1812), pg. 45]

January 23, 1812

New Haven, January 27, 1812

Messrs. Walter & Stute

I observed in the *New York Spectator*, an account of an earthquake at Jamaica, in Long Island, and in New York, on Thursday morning the 23rd instant, a littler after nine o'clock. The same earthquake was felt by myself and family, about the same time. The sensation produced was, that of dizziness of the head, or a gentle swinging of the head and body, which inclined one to support himself in his chair by seizing hold of some fixed object. It continued about half a minute, or perhaps a little longer. It was not preceded by any sound, nor accompanied with jar, or sudden concussion.

N.W.

(A similar sensation was felt at the same time by one of the Editors of this paper, while sitting in his chair in the act of reading - *Connecticut Herald*).

New Haven, Connecticut December 16, 1811
[Anonymous C. (1812), pg. 56]

February 7, 1812

Another earthquake was felt in this city on the morning of Friday last, the 7th inst. about three o'clock. The preceding sound awakened me and some others of my family; but it was not a rattling sound, like that of May 16, 1791, and which is usual; but a succession of thumps, like the bounding of a ball upon the floor, or like the steps of a heavy person walking slowly, and shaking the floor. The first impression which I and my family had, was that some person was walking in the house; but I soon perceived that the sounds became less distinct, and appeared to pass off to the southward or eastward. The interval between the sounds were nearly a second each. I perceived no great concussion; but in an upper room a loose window shutter was heard to crack. The continuance of the sounds after I awoke, was a minute, or perhaps a little longer. A gentleman in my neighborhood was awakened by the creaking of a loose board in the floor of a room, and I saw a looking glass vibrate and strike the wall a number of times. Other persons perceived the effect of the earthquake, but it being at a time when people are generally in sound sleep, it was generally perceived.

It is a fact not generally known, that the concussion of December sixteenth, was perceived in this town. An apothecary saw vials suspended to the ceiling oscillating; but the motion was too small to be perceived, except by very sensible objects.

New Madrid, Missouri
[*The Reporter*, Feb. 1, 1812]

December 16, 1811

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER TO A GENTLEMAN IN LEXINGTON, FROM HIS
FRIEND AT N. MADRID (U.L.) DATED 16TH DEC. 1811

About two o'clock this morning we were awakened by a most tremendous noise,

while the house danced about, and seemed as if it would fall on our heads. I soon conjectured the cause of our trouble, and cried out it was an Earthquake, and for the family to leave the house, which we found very difficult to do, owing to the rolling and jostling about. The shock was soon over, and no injury was sustained, except the loss of the chimney, and the exposure of my family to the cold of the night. At the time of the shock the heavens were very clear and serene, not a breath of air flirting; but in five minutes it became very dark, and a vapor which seemed to impregnate the atmosphere, had a disagreeable smell and produce a difficulty of respiration. I knew not how to account for this at the time, but when I saw in the morning the situation of my neighbor's houses, all of them more or less injured, I attributed it to the dust and [sic] &c. which arose from their fall. The darkness continued until day break; during this time we had eight more shocks, none of them so violent as the first.

At half past six o'clock in the morning it cleared up, and believing the danger was over I left home, to see what injury had been experienced by my neighbors. A few minutes after my departure there was another shock, extremely violent - I hurried home as fast I could, but the agitation of the earth was so great that it was with difficulty that I kept my balance - The motion of the earth was about twelve inches to and fro. I cannot give an accurate description of this moment; the earth seemed convulsed - the houses shook very much - chimneys falling in every direction - the loud hoarse roaring which attended the Earthquake, together with the cries, screams, and yells of the people, seems still ringing in my ears.

Fifteen minutes after 7 o'clock we had another shock. This was the most severe one we had yet had - the darkness returned and the noise was remarkably loud. The first motions of the earth were similar to the preceding shocks, but before it receded we rebounded up and down, and it was with difficulty we kept our seats. At this instant I expected a dreadful catastrophe - the uproar among the people heightened the coloring of the picture - the screams and yells were heard at great distance.

One gentleman, from whose learning I expected a more confident account, says, the convulsions are produced by the world and moon coming in contact and the frequent repetition of the shocks is owing to their rebounding. The appearance of the moon yesterday evening knocked his system as low as the Earthquake leveled his chimneys. Another person, with a very serious face, told me that when he was ousted from his bed, he was verily afraid the day of judgment had arrived until he reflected that the day of judgment could not come at night.

Tuesday 17th - I never before thought the passion of fear so strong as I find it here among the people. It is really diverting, or would be so to a disinterested observer, to see the rueful faces of the different persons that present themselves at my tent - some so agitated that they cannot walk. Several men I am informed, on the night of the first shock deserted their families, and have not been heard of since. Encampments are formed of those that remain in the open field of 50 and 100 persons each.

Tuesday, December 24th. - The shocks still continue - we have had eight since Saturday - some of them very severe, but not sufficiently so to do further injury, I have heard of no lives being lost - several persons are wounded. This day I have heard from the Little Prairie settlement on the bank of the Mississippi, about 30 miles below this place, there the scene has dreadful indeed - the face of the country has been entirely changed - Large lakes have been raised and become dry land - fields have been

converted into pools of water. Capt. **George Ruddell**, a worthy and respectable old gentleman, and who has been the father of that neighborhood, made good his retreat to this place, with about 200 souls. He informs me that no material injury was sustained from the first shock - when the 10th shock occurred he was standing in his own yard, situated on the bank of the Bayou of Big Lake, the bank gave way, and sunk down about 30 yards from the water's and he could see up and down the stream. It upset his mill and one of his dwelling houses sunk considerably; the surface on the opposite side of the bayou, which before it was a swamp, became dry land; the side he was on became lower. His family at this time, were running from the house towards the woods; a large crack in the ground prevented their retreat into the open field. They had just assembled together when the eleventh shock came on after which there was perhaps not a square acre of ground unbroken in the neighborhood, and about 15 minutes after this shock the water rose round waist deep - The old gentleman in leading his family endeavoring to find higher land, would sometimes be precipitated headlong into one of those cracks in the earth which were concealed from the eye by the muddy water through which they were wading. As they proceeded the earth continued to bust open, and mud, water, and stone coal were thrown up the distance of thirty yards - frequently trees of a large size were split open 15 or 20 feet up. After wading 8 miles, he came to dry land.

I have heard of no white person being lost as yet - Seven Indians were swallowed up; one of them escaped; he says he was taken into the ground the depth of two trees in length; that the water came under him and threw him out again - he had to wade and swim four miles before he reached dry land. The Indian says the Shawnee Prophet has caused the earthquake, to destroy the whites.

Saturday 28th Dec. - We have had a few more feeble shocks, in all sixty seven.

December 16, 1811

[*Knoxville Gazette*, Monday, Feb. 10, 1812]

Dated New Madrid, Louisiana, December 28, 1811

I wrote to you on the 11th of this month, which letter you will not probably receive before you will this. We are yet safe and unhurt from the Earthquakes. It commenced at half past one of the night of the 15, a violent shock threw down my chimney - between that and day eight more, the 11th threw down the remaining chimney and turned us out doors.

It was not as severe as about 30 miles below the Mississippi at the Little Prairie settlement, the scene has been awful, indeed the face of the country has become entirely changed, large lakes was [sic] raised and became dry land - while many fields have been covered with water. Captain George Riddle, and old and respectable inhabitant of this country is my informant - he made his escape with about 200 souls. He tells me that at the first shock they experienced no injury, at the 10th shock he was standing in his own yard, his plantation is situated not far from the bank of the Bayou, the bank gave way about 30 yards from the water edge as far as he could see up and down, whilst he was looking at this, his attention was arrested by a noise, he turned and saw a cow running, much frightened toward him, the earth opened just before her, she being unable to stop her progress plunged into the gulph [sic]. - He now apprehending

eminent danger ran with his family about 300 yards, to an eminence where he had not been more than 15 minutes with the 11th was followed by the gurgling up of water, in which they soon found themselves to their waist - the old man still endeavoring to find higher land, leading on his family, would sometimes be precipitated head-long into the cracks of the earth covered by the water in which they were wading [sic], while all around the earth would open and sand, water and coal-stone would be thrown up in abundance to the distance of 30 yards. - No white person lost their life - seven Indians out of eight was swallowed up who were encamped together. The Indian who escaped, says he sunk the length of two trees in the ground and an explosion threw him out - when by wading and swimming several miles he found firm land. - The Indian says it is the Shaeonec [sic] Prophet who has occasioned it in order to destroy all the whites.

[Bringier, L. (1821)]

February 7(?), 1812

Earthquakes and Eruptions

On the sixth day of January [February?] 1812, during the earthquakes which destroyed New-Madrid, and which were felt two hundred miles around, I happened to be passing in its neighborhood, where the principal shock took place. The violence of the earthquakes having disturbed the earthy strata impending over the subterraneous cavities, existing probably in an extensive bed of wood, highly carbonized, occasioned the whole superior mass to settle. This, pressing with all its weight upon the water that had filled the lower cavities, occasioned a displacement of this fluid, which forced its passage through, blowing up the earth with loud explosions. It rushed out in all quarters, bring with it an enormous quantity of carbonized wood, reduced mostly into dust, which was ejected to the height of from ten to fifteen feet, and fell in a black shower, mixed with sand which its rapid motion had forced along; at the same time, the roaring and whistling produced by the impetuosity of the air escaping from its confinement, seemed to increase the disorder of the trees, which every where encountered each other, being blown up, cracking and splitting, and falling by thousands at a time. In the mean time, the surface was sinking, and black liquid was rising up the belly of my horse, who stood motionless, struck with a panic of terror.

These occurrences occupied nearly two minutes; the trees, shaken in their foundation, kept falling here and there, and the whole surface of the country remained covered with holes, which, to compare small things to great, resembled so many craters of volcanoes, surrounded with a ring of carbonized wood and sand, which rose to the height of about seven feet.

I had occasioned a few months after, to sound the depths of several of these holes, and found them not to exceed twenty feet; but I must remark the quicksand had washed into them. The country here was perfectly level, and covered with numerous small prairies of various sizes, dispersed through the woods. Now it is covered with slacks (ponds) and sand hills or mounticules, which are principally where the earth was formerly the lowest; probably because, in such places, the water broke through with more facility.

A circumstance worth noticing, was a tendency to carbonization, that I perceived in all vegetable substances soaking in the ponds that produced these eruptions. It was about seven months after the event had taken place, that I made these remarks, on the

spot before mentioned. The same earthquake produced a lake between St. Francis and Little Prairie, distant twenty-seven miles from the Mississippi river. This lake much resembles the Big Lake on the Red river, inasmuch as the trees are standing upright in all of them, and sunk about thirty feet when the water is high. They are all evidently modern lakes, whose beds were, not long since, part of the forest.

[Statement of John Verner] February 7, 1812
[*Muskingum Messenger*, April 4, 1812]

Russellville, (Ky.) Feb. 20

Arrived at this place on Friday morning last, Mr. John Verner and crew, from New Madrid, from which place we learn that they were at shore about five miles below that place on Friday morning, the 7th instant at the time of the hardest shock, and water filled their barge and sunk it with the whole of its contents, losing everything but the clothes they had on. They offered at New Madrid half of their loading for a boat to save it, but no price was sufficient for the hire use of a boat a few hours, but could not get it. The town of New Madrid has sunk twelve feet below its former standing, but is not covered with water; the houses are all thrown down, and the inhabitants moved off, except the French who live in camps close to the river side and have their boats tied near them in order to sail off in case the earth should sink. It is said that a fall equal to that of the Ohio [Louisville] is near above New Madrid, and that several whirls are in the Mississippi river, some being so strong as to sink every boat that comes within its suction; one boat was sunk with a family in it. The country from New Madrid to the Grand Prairie is very much torn to pieces, and the Little Prairie almost entirely [illegible]. It was reported when our informants left the country, that some Indians who were in search of other Indians who were lost, had returned and stated that they had discovered a volcano at the head of the Arkansas, by the light of which they traveled three days and nights. A vast number of sawyers have risen in the Mississippi river.

No pencil can paint the distress of the of the many movers!

Wes. Courier

Statement of Eliza Bryan General
[Letter Written by Eliza Bryan to the Reverend Lorenzo Dow]

Dear Sir:

On the 16th of December, 1811, at about 2 o'clock a.m., a violent shock of earthquake, accompanied by a very awful noise, resembling loud, but distant thunder, but hoarse and vibrating, followed by complete saturation of the atmosphere with sulphurous vapor occurring total darkness. The scream of the inhabitants, the cries of the fowls and the beasts of every species, the falling of trees, and roaring of the Mississippi, the current of which was retrograde for a few minutes, owing, as it is supposed, to an eruption in its bed, formed a scene truly horrible.

From that time until about sunrise a number of lighter shocks occurred, at which time one more violent than the first took place with the same accompaniments.

There were several shocks in a day, but lighter than those mentioned, until the 23rd of January, 1812, when one occurred as violent as the severest of the former ones, accompanied by the same phenomena.

From this time on until the 4th February, the earth was in continual agitation, visibly waving as a gentle sea. On that day there was another shock, nearly as hard as the preceding ones; next day, four such and on the 7th, at about 4 o'clock a.m., a concussion took place so much more violent than those preceding it that it is denominated, the hard shock."

The Mississippi first seemed to recede from its banks, and its waters gathered up like a mountain. Leaving for a moment many boats, which were on their way to New Orleans, on bare sand, in which time the poor sailors made their escape from them.

Then, rising 15 or 20 feet perpendicularly and expanding, as it were, at the same time, the banks overflowed with a retrograde current rapid as torrent. The boats, which before had been left on the sand, were now torn from their moorings and suddenly driven up a little creek at the mouth of which they had been laid, to a distance in some instances of a quarter of a mile.

The river, falling immediately as rapidly as it had risen, receded within its banks with such violence that it took with it whole groves of young cottonwood trees which had hedged its borders. They were broken off with such regularity in some instances that persons who had not witnessed the fact, could be with difficulty persuaded that it had not been the work of man. The river was literally covered with wrecks of boats.

The surface of the earth was from time to time by these hard shocks, covered to various depths by sand which issued from fissures that were made in great numbers all over this country. Some of these closed up immediately, after they vomited forth their sand and water. In some places, however, a substance resembling coal or impure stone coal, was thrown up with the sand.

It is impossible to say what the depth of the fissures was; we have reason to believe, that some of them were very deep.

The site of this town was settled down at least 15 feet, but not more than a half mile below town there does not appear to be any alteration of the bank of the river.

Back from the river, large ponds, or lakes, which covered a large part of the country, were nearly dried up. The beds of some of them were elevated several feet above the former banks, producing an alteration from the original state of 10 or 20 feet, and lately it has been discovered that a lake was formed on the opposite side of the Mississippi, in the Indian country, upwards of 100 miles long and from one to six miles wide of a depth from 10 to 50 feet.

We continue to feel light shocks occasionally. It is seldom that we are more than a week without feeling one, and sometimes there are three or four in a day. There were two this winter past, much harder than for two years past; but since then they appear to be lighter than they have ever been.

Your humble servant,
ELIZA BRYAN

[Statement of A.N. Dillard] General

[Source, see comment at end of account]

It was the night of the 16th December, 1811, that the first shock occurred. The weather had been warm and pleasant, and the air filled with that peculiar haze characteristic of the Indian summer, except that it was more damp. About midnight, while the French, who constituted the bulk of the population at New Madrid, were engaged in dancing and frolicking, the first shock came on, and was of sufficient violence to shake down many of the houses and fences. The greatest consternation prevailed. The entire population rushed into the open air; and there, in the midnight darkness, and upon the rocking earth, Protestant and Catholic, side by side,

Knelt down

And offered to the Mightiest

solemn supplications; - for, in that fearful hour, human aid was unavailing.

The shocks extended over a period of twenty or thirty months. Sometimes, they would come on gradually, and finally culminate; again, they would come without premonition, and in terrific force, and gradually subside.

In, every instance, the motion was propagated from the west to southwest. Fissures would be formed, six hundred and even seven hundred feet in length, and twenty or thirty feet in breadth, through which water and sand would spout out to the height of forty feet. There issued no burning flames, but flashes such as result from the explosion of gas, or the passage of the electrical fluid from one cloud to another. I have seen oak trees, which would be split in the center and forty feet up the trunk, one part standing on one side of the fissure, and the other part on the other; and trees are now standing which have been cleft in this manner.

My grandfather had received a boat-load of castings from Pittsburgh. Which were stored in his cellar. During one of the shocks, the ground opened up immediately under the house, and they were swallowed up, and no trace of them afterwards obtained.

I regard the region as still subject to these agitations. A few years ago I saw the effects sufficiently violent to shake the bark off the trees, and to sway their tops to and fro.

The region of St. Francis is peculiar. I have trapped there for thirty years. There is a great deal of sunken land, caused by the earthquakes of 1811. There are large trees of walnut, white oak, and mulberry, such as grow on high land, which are now submerged ten and twenty feet beneath the water. In some lakes, I have seen cypress so far beneath the surface, that, with a canoe, I have paddled among the branches. Previous to the earthquakes, keel boats use to come up the St. Francis River, and pass into the Mississippi, at a point three miles below New Madrid. The bayou is now high ground.

Comment: manuscript found in the Joint Collection of the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and the State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts

[Statement of Mr. Robert McCoy] General

[Source, see comment at end of account]

In speaking of the great earthquakes, Mr. McCoy says: "That on the evening of the 17th day of December, 1811, the first earthquake was felt, which was the one that destroyed the Little Prairie, but the one that did material injury to the village of New Madrid was not until the 7th of February, following."

Source: *found in the Joint Collection of the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.*

New Orleans, Louisiana December 16, 1811

[*from* Official Letter Books of W.C. Claiborne, 1801-1816, by: William C.C. Claiborne Dunbar Rowland, pub. By: Jackson, Miss. State Dept of Archives and History, 1917]

February 9th, 1812

To a Lady

Permit me the honor Madam to introduce to you, Mrs. F. of this city, who accompanied her husband on a visit to the City of Washington. The very [illegible] disposition of this lady will soon make you [sic] & her virtues will gain her esteem.

Mrs F. - can give you the character of this interesting Society accompanied with such details, as will be most agreeable; - She can also state particularly the alarm which has recently been excited here, by that dreaded phenomenon of Nature, and Earthquake. - On the night of the 16th instant, a trembling Earth interrupted the Gaiety of the Season, & many Ladies retired from the Ball Room seriously frightened. On the evening of the 7th a like trembling, more than the one proceeding, excited our apprehensions. - I was attending (at that time) a Theatrical Representation, which amused & interested a numerous audience. -

The night was unusually serene, and without, and within all was tranquility. - On a sudden, the vibration of the Chandeliers attracted every Eye: - The whole house undulated:- The Comedians ceased to set: - after a moment of most profound silence, a general expression of fear was heard from the Ladies, & anxiety for their safety, filled me with Inquietude. - It was however of short duration; for in and about a Minute & a half the Earth became composed, and to a kind providence we are still indebted for life & protection. - I am not however without serious apprehensions, that elsewhere, the Shock has been more terrible, & attended perhaps with consequences, that will be regarded by all, who can feel a sympathy for human woe. - The train of reflection, to which this subject naturally leads, presents [illegible] to my view the heart-rendering Scenes which took place at Richmond in Virginia, on the evening of the 26th of December last.

New Orleans, Louisiana

January 23, 1812

[*The Louisiana Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 24, 1812]

A slight shock of an earthquake was felt in this city yesterday morning, at about nine o'clock. The wind was from the southward, light and gentle, and the morning fine - it lasted but a few seconds & but few felt it. At the time all is hustle in the city - but many proofs, such as clocks stopping, glass shades, and different kinds of glass ware and

crochery shaking, the feelings of many who either writing or reading, prove the fact. We may expect to hear more on the subject from the northward & eastward.

New Orleans, Louisiana February 7, 1812
[*The New York Evening Post*, Mar. 5, 1812]

New Orleans, Feb. 8.

There was another shock of an earthquake felt in this city yesterday morning about half past 3 o'clock – It is said to have been much more stronger than the one felt some time ago.

[*The Supporter*, February 22, 1812]

At New Orleans the shock was slightly felt; --

Newport, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*Liberty Hall*, Dec. 18, 1811]

The first shock was felt in Newport, on the opposite side of the river, where it threw down the top of a chimney; also four miles down river, where it did the same damage. We have received intelligence of its occurrence at Great Miami, 18 miles N.W. of Springfield, 15 miles N. And in Clermont county, 30 miles east of this town.

Newport, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*United States Gazette*, Feb. 17, 1812]

Extract of a letter dated Newport (Ky.) February 1, 1812

We have experienced at this place many shocks of an earthquake; some so light that they were not generally felt; but on the 23rd ult. there was one, which ended up so severe a jolt, that I could scarcely keep my feet. On the 27th at 9 A.M. we had another smart shock. The whole number noticed in this neighborhood, I suppose to be upwards of 50. We have not hear of any other damage consequent on these concussions, except the loss of 6 flat boats and their cargos on the Mississippi, owing to the obstructions occasioned by them in the navigation of this river. Old logs and trees which have been lying for ages at the bottom, now stand erect in every part of its bed.

New York, New York December 16, 1811
[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 10, 1812] February 7, 1812

New York, Feb. 8

Yesterday morning, at half past four o'clock, a smart shock of an earthquake was felt in this city.

[*Farmer's Cabinet*, Feb. 24, 1812]

New York, Feb. 10

The earthquake was very distinctly felt in this city on Friday evening, and occasioned considerable jarring of kitchen utensils, vibration of suspended articles, sensible motion, dizziness and alarm, in many intelligent and respectable families; while nothing of it was perceived by others, or the watchmen &c. The shock continued nearly two minutes. On Friday morning a commotion nearly familiar in its circumstances, was experienced in Philadelphia. And on Thursday evening a shock was experienced by several persons (says the *Commercial Advertiser*) in this city. The earthquake of the 16th of December to the 30th inclusive, which was felt from the Atlantic to the Ohio and Missouri, was also experienced to a very great degree in Rockland County and on the Jersey shore opposite of the city, but not even suspected this side of the Hudson. There has been no instances of such continued and repeated shocks recorded in the history of this country.

New York, New York January 23, 1812

[*New York Spectator*, January 29, 1812]

Another Earthquake. On Thursday morning, about ten minutes past nine, another shock of an earthquake was felt in this city, by most of the inhabitants. It appears to have affected some parts of the city more violently than others; for whilst some were seriously alarmed by it, there were many who did not perceive it. The cups and saucers on the breakfast tables were heard to rattle; and picture frames on the walls were seen to vibrate.

[*New York Spectator*, Feb. 1, 1812]

Another Earthquake - A severe shock of an earthquake was experienced by a number of persons in this city yesterday morning, the 22nd inst., about sixteen minutes before 10 o'clock. Its duration is suppose to have been about two or three minutes from beginning to end, and its direction apparently from E. to S.W. This phenomenon is dissimilar in its nature and effects from any of the kind w have heretofore heard of, as it was not accompanied or preceded by the usual rumbling noise, nor any concussions of the earth, but a continued roll similar to that of a vessel at sea. One circumstance which renders its effects more singular is, that it was very sensibly felt by some, while others, although in the same room, and perhaps within a few feet of them, were not in the least effected by its operation, and those who were in the street or open were insensitive as to any extraordinary motion of the earth. The first indication to those who experienced its effects, was from the motion of everything around them, and a sudden and deadly sickness accompanied with a giddiness in the head.

[*The Providence Gazette*, Feb. 1, 1812]

A shock of an earthquake was felt in New York and Long Island on Friday morning last.

New York, New York February 7, 1812

[*New York Spectator*, Feb. 8, 1812]

Another Earthquake - We understand that the shock of an earthquake was sensibly felt, between four and five o'clock this morning, by many of our citizens. A shock was also felt by a few, about 11 o'clock last night.

Norfolk, Virginia December 16, 1811
[*Kentucky Reporter*, Jan. 11, 1812]

FROM NORFOLK

This morning two distinct shocks of an earthquake were felt in this place; the first, (and according to most accounts) the most violent, was about 3 o'clock. It was so severe as to awaken a number of persons out of their sleep. The shock at two very short intervals might have continued about a minute. The shaking of the bed is described, as if a strong man had taken hold of the posts, and shook them with all the violence in his power. Several clocks were stopped. - The houses were shaken with great violence. Again about 8 o'clock another shock was felt, by a greater number of persons, as many had risen; this also very violent. The most sensible effect produced by this, that we have yet learned, was that of throwing a pipe of wine off the skids, in a ware house on Commerce Street. Before our next, we expect to obtain some further particulars respecting this (in our climate) unusual convulsion of nature.

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 23, 1811]

Norfolk, December 16

EARTHQUAKE

Two very sensible shocks were felt in this town, and as we learn in Portsmouth, at 3 o'clock this morning and at 8 - we have not time to give particulars. The clocks were all stopped, and doors and things suspended from the ceiling of the shops and stores, oscillated violently though a dead calm prevailed - its course was from West to East.

Norfolk, Virginia January 23, 1812
[*The Enquirer*, Jan. 28, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE AGAIN

An earthquake, the same in its effects and duration as the one of the 16th December last, was felt in town yesterday at 3 minute after nine in the morning. Many persons were inclined to doubt the evidence of sensation, and were willing to ascribe the concussion to any but the true cause; but the consternation being experienced in every part of town at the same instant, left no doubt of its being the shock of an Earthquake.

The morning was perfectly calm, yet articles suspended from walls and ceilings were shaken to and fro with a violence that even the wind could not have produced. Persons who were standing or walking felt a sensation similar to that produced by the

rocking of a ship in a boisterous sea; many were thrown off their equipoise, and could with difficulty keep from falling. Every clock in the place was stopped.

Norwich, New York December 16, 1811
[*Chenango Weekly Advertiser*, Feb. 6, 1812]

Several severe shocks of an earthquake were felt in various parts of the southern and western states, about the middle of the month of December. From statements in the various papers we have collected the following. It has been observed that a slight shock was felt in this city. The agitation of the earth was such as to cause the vibration of watches in the watch-makers window - and a kettle of water hanging in the fireplace, vibrate sufficiently to cause the overflowing of the water.

Nottingham, Maryland (39.364/76.452) January 23, 1812
[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 296]

At Nottingham, in Maryland, the shock was alleged to have happened twenty minutes after nine, and to have lasted a minute. The writer of the account was sitting in a room with two other persons, occupied in reading, when he was asked by one of them what made the chamber shake so? This called attention to them all to the movement, which they described as having the same effects as the rolling of a vessel on an agitated sea.

Onondaga, Valley, New York December 16, 1811
[*Chenango Weekly Advertiser*, Mar. 19, 1812]

At Onondaga Valley an earthquake was felt on the 16th December, and another shock on Thursday morning of the 16th ult.

Ozark Village, Arkansas December 16, 1811
[*Farmer's Repository*, Feb. 28, 1812]

Chimneys were said to have been demolished and some houses injured, ...

Paducah, Kentucky General
[Dudley, T. (1858), pg. 423]

About four miles above Paducah, on the Ohio river, on the Illinois side, on a post-oak flat, a large circular basin was formed, more than one hundred feet in diameter, by the sinking of the earth, how deep no one can tell, as tall stately post-oaks sank below the tops of the tallest trees. The sink filled with water and continues so to this time.

Paris, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*The Reporter*, Feb.1, 1812]

Paris, Jan. 25

A considerable shock of an Earthquake was felt in this town on Thursday morning last, about 50 minutes past 8 o'clock. The shaking continued about one minute and a half, causing doors to fly open, and things that hang pendulous positions to shake violently. Several of the citizens were somewhat alarmed, and 6 or 7 persons were shocked or stunned so as to produce sensation something like fainting. We have not heard what effects this shock has produced in other places, but from what was felt here, we expect to hear of concussions as dreadful as those experienced at various places on the 16th of December last.

[*Kentucky Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1812]

February 7, 1812

On the morning of Thursday last, about half past three o'clock, another violent shock of earthquake was felt at this place. We have heard of no material injury from its effects as yet - at Frankfort, Louisville, Paris, and Chillicothe - some chimneys and brick houses were slightly damaged. This shock was more severe and of longer duration, than any of the former - and caused very general alarm. Several shocks of less force have been noticed since.

Pensacola, Florida

December 16, 1811

[*Moniteur De La Louisiana*, New Orleans, Dec. 28, 1811]

(Abstract of an article published in French)

Letter in French from Pensacola, Florida describing the effects of December 16, 1811 earthquake there. Mentions rattling of louvers and plaster cracking. Mentions that the earthquake was also felt at Natchez, Mississippi.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania December 16, 1811

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 23, 1811]

EARTHQUAKE

Mr. Poulson,

The shock of an earthquake which you mention in your paper of this morning, as being felt in Alexandria last Monday morning, were likewise felt in this city - particularly the one stated to have taken place about 8 o'clock. Being in bed awake, the street perfectly quiet, I perceived the curtains of the bed and windows shake, struck with this singular circumstance I awoke my wife, who likewise perceived it, and in a few minutes after we both very sensibly felt the undulation. I purposely looked at my watch to ark the time, and fount it 10 minutes past 8 o'clock. Two ladies who slept in the room above mine, made the same observation, the leaves of some flower-pots which were in their room, were so much in motion, that one of the ladies thought it arouse from the draft from an open window. I did mention the circumstance to several of my acquaintances at the time, but have met with no confirmation till I saw the account from Alexandria in your paper.

A Subscriber

Yours,

Saturday, December 21

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania January 23, 1812

Comment: *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser makes no mention of the January 23, 1812, earthquake as having been felt in Philadelphia*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania February 7, 1812
[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 8, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

Several distinct shocks or undulations of the Earth, were felt in this city yesterday morning, a few minutes before four o'clock. To several persons it appeared as if their bedsteads were raised under them by a pressure below.

One gentleman describes it, as being so violent as to force open a folding door of the a wardrobe in his bed chamber, and others state, that their chamber doors were thrown open, and articles suspended loosely from ceilings and walls were kept in oscillation for more than a minute. The undulations were more sensibly felt in the Southern than in the Northern part of the city.

Mr. Poulson,

The Earthquake which happened this morning was by my watch at 4h and 24m A.M. - I find by T. Parker's Regulator, that my watch was slow 3m and 30s, this will give the correct time, 4h 27m 30s A.M. The duration of the trembling was at least 1m and 30 s probably (?) With short intervals of quickness. The person who awaken me at the commencement, stated that it began with a noise, resembling the very quick passage of a dray over hard ground. The motion appeared to be from West to East or East to West.

All the furniture of my chamber was much agitated particularly the bed in which I slept, and the drawer handles of a desk and book case, standing on the west side, which continued to rattle for some seconds after the motion of the bedstead had ceased.

I send you these particulars with the assurance that you may depend upon the correctness of the time - Perhaps other persons may have similar observations at different places, by comparing which together, an idea may be formed of the center from which the numerous late shocks have proceeded. W.V.

Pinckeyville, South Carolina February 7, 1812
[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 14, 1812]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE COLUMBIA GAZETTE

I felt on Thursday night, about two hours before day, an Earthquake which shook the house much more than any I felt during the last session of the Legislature; it was preceded by a noise like distant thunder. The fowls were driven from their roosts by the

vibration of the trees on which sat, the hogs squealed, and the dogs barked - it was sufficient to appall the stoutest heart; it has been severe with you as with us, I fear the College has sustained much injury.

Pineville, South Carolina
[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 286]

December 16, 1811

It was observed, by Dr. Macbride of Pineville (S.C.) that the earthquake terrified the inhabitants exceedingly.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania December 16, 1811
[*The Pittsburgh Gazette*, Dec. 20, 1811]

On Monday morning last, about three o'clock, the citizens of this town were greatly alarmed by the shock of an Earthquake; a number of persons from the shaking of their houses, were so alarmed as to jump out of bed. About 7 o'clock, the same morning, there was another shock, though not so evident as the first.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania February 7, 1812
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Mar. 14, 1812]

Pittsburgh, Feb. 14

On Friday morning the 7th inst. about 4 o'clock, a shock of an Earthquake was severely felt in this tow. The effects of this convulsion were much more sensibly felt, than the one which happened on the 16th of December. Many of the houses were violently shaken.

Pittsfield, Massachusetts General
[*The Sun*]

Comment: None of the 1811-1812 earthquakes are described in *The Sun* as having been felt locally.

Portage des Sioux General
[Flagg, E. (1838). *The Far West or a Tour Beyond the Mountains*, New York, in Thwaites, Reuben Gold (1906). *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, Vol. XXVI, Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 370 pp.]

Pp. 288-289. Portage des Sioux, a small French village on the Missouri, North of St. Charles. It was terribly shaken in the great earthquakes of 1811, many of the old cottages having been thrown down and his [Flagg's host] own house rent from Turret to foundation-stone – the chasm in the brick wall yet remaining.

Princeton, Kentucky December 16, 1811

February 7, 1812

[Memoirs of William Calhoun Love, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister in

Caldwell County, Kentucky. {<http://home.hiwaap.net/~woliver/WC Love/html>}}

In the close of the year of 1811 in the month of December 11, if I mistake not, the earthquakes commenced on Sunday night between midnight and day. We were all aroused from sleep by the lumbering noises like thunder and the shaking of the house⁽¹⁾ while mother set up in bed and exclaimed: "Judgment! The Judgment of God upon the world for its wickedness!" We all put on our clothes in great consternation, waiting for day, but sometime before day, the neighbors began coming in and wishing to know my mother's opinion as they all knew her to be a woman well read, so they got the Bible and read, and turned from place to place. Just before day, they came to the conclusion that it was an earthquake. So our minds was somewhat eased. Just after light there came a very hard shock⁽²⁾. We all ran out of the house for it seemed to be reeling. The horses eating corn out of the big trough in the yard, run off; the fence seemed like it would over, everything appeared I had up to this time been like the young ruler Mark 10:20. Morals and my wicked heart never yet been shown me. Some three weeks after the last shake I was the worst scared boy you ever saw.

We had heard of the ground shaking at New Madrid. One morning, a while before day there was one of the hardest shakes⁽³⁾. We were all roused up, fearing the house would fall. We rushed to get out. Just then the dirt chimney fell the dirt bouncing upon the hearth. I thought it was water and that the earth was sinking. I jumped some two feet high out into the yard and it was some little while before I really believed I was not in water knee deep. Such times was never seen before; people going to meeting day and night and crowding the alter to pray, singing and shouting, professing religions and sins. I feel rejoiced that I can say with the prophet Isa 26:9 and from my own knowledge that after more than half a century has past that a goodly number of those there and then set out for heaven and have gotten there, while some tired on the way and became sore and turned aside. I myself was not idle, but strive always for perfections of the best of Christians,

Comment: I interpret events (1) and (2) to be the two largest events on the morning of December 16, 1811, and event (3) to be the February 7, 1812, event because of the time of night at which it occurred.

Putnam, Ohio

see comments for Zanesville, Ohio

Raleigh, North Carolina December 16, 1811
[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Jan. 7, 1812]

Raleigh (N.C.) - Dec. 20 - On Monday morning several slight earthquakes were noticed in this city. The first, which was sensibly felt by all who were awake at the time, happened between 2 and 3 o'clock. Two others took place about 7 o'clock, but were not so distinctly felt, except by some members of the Assembly who were in the statehouse, and considerably alarmed by the shaking of the building.

[*Charleston Courier*, Dec. 27, 1811] December 16, 1811

December 17, 1811

Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 20. - A shock of an earthquake was felt in this city about 2 o'clock and again at 7 o'clock on Monday morning last. The latter it is said continued for forty seconds, shook the furniture of houses, and alarmed a committee then in session in the chamber so much that they precipitately left the State house. The shock was not as we can learn, accompanied by any noise. About one o'clock Tuesday many persons described a very curious shock [Dec. 17th aftershock] and sensation which they experienced, attributed to the highly electric state of the atmosphere. Some felt a sudden sensation of heat and giddiness, and the hats of the members of the House of Commons then in session, were lifted or moved upon their heads.

Raleigh, North Carolina January 23, 1812
[*The Enquirer*, Jan. 30, 1812]

Raleigh (N.C.) Jan. 24

A slight shock of an earthquake was felt in this city about 8 o'clock yesterday morning. It continued only a few seconds.

[*Raleigh Star*, January 24, 1812]

A shock of an earthquake was felt by many of the inhabitants of this city, between 8 and 9 o'clock yesterday morning – its duration was about one minute.

[*Raleigh Star*, January 31, 1812]

The earthquake of the 23d inst. has been generally observed, and it is said to have been much more severe than any of those which happened in December.

Raleigh, North Carolina February 7, 1812
[*Raleigh Star*, Feb. 14, 1812]

A smart shock of an earthquake was felt in Raleigh around 0400 local time on February 7, 1812.

[*Raleigh Star*, Feb. 12, 1812]

Earthquake – Another shock of an earthquake was felt in this city and various other places, about 4 o'clock on Friday morning last the 7th instant. A condensed account of what the papers in the United States have furnished respecting the different earthquakes which have happened lately, follows. The shocks seem to have been more severe to the southward and westward, than to the northward. At **Chillicothe**, after the 16th of December, the motion of the earth continued for several days. The steam boat on the Mississippi (which has reached Natchez) was much affected by the shock. It is said a high bluff of considerable extent had fallen into the river. At **Natchez** the shock was severe, but at **New Orleans** it was not felt, owing as the editor o one of

the papers supposes to the town being on an island (erroneous supposition no doubt). At **Nashville**, log houses were so violently shaken, that where the chimneys pierced the roof, they were generally broken off. Several square feet of the Piney river, it is said, had sunk (those sinks are common in that country without earthquakes). In **Annapolis**, of the State-house is 250 feet high, and it vibrated at the top about 6 feet. The Captain of the guard at **Charleston** heard the bell of St. Phillips Church ring about 40 peals. He ran to the guard to prevent an alarm. The Sentinel stationed in the steeple at St. Michaels Church (a man is always there to observe fires) said the steeple undulated he believed 5 feet, so as to throw him down. In some places the earthquake was accompanied with noise, in others not. Many persons were affected with nausea and giddiness. The motion of the earth gave the sensation of swinging, and was not jarring or tremulous. Its cause may exist in the volcanoes of South America or in those discovered by Lewis and Clark, in their journey to the Pacific Ocean.

Red Banks (Henderson), Kentucky

December 16, 1811

[Mitchill, S.L. (1815), pg. 288]

At the Red Banks, on hundred and fifty miles below Louisville, it was stated in a letter to my friend, the hon. Anthony New, dated January 4, 1812, "that there had been from twenty to thirty shocks of earthquakes at that place. They began on the morning of December 16, at about half after two o'clock. The first one, and another at sunrise the same morning, were most violent indeed. We had to flee our houses. Several chimneys were thrown down, and many others so wrecked and cracked as to be very dangerous. The noise which accompanied the several shocks is said to have come from the west."

Comments: *Red Banks is the name of the first settlement at the location that became Henderson. The phrase "...one hundred and fifty miles below Louisville..." means down river (the Ohio river) from Louisville. The term "above" would mean upriver.*

Richmond, Kentucky

February 7, 1812

[*The Luminary*, Feb. 8, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE AGAIN!

Yesterday morning, about half past 3 o'clock we were visited by another shock of an earthquake — much more violent — and of much longer duration than any that preceded it. When will these commotions of the earth cease to harm us?

TWO MORE SHOCKS

Since our paper has been made up we have experienced two more shocks of an earthquake; one between 7 and 8 o'clock and the other about 10 o'clock last evening - the last was the most violent.

Richmond, Virginia

December 16, 1811

[*Kentucky Reporter*, Jan. 11, 1812]

From Richmond

A Card - A little after eight o'clock this morning, I thought I perceived signs of an earthquake in every object around me. Still I mistrusted the testimony of sensations so often illusive. Upon mentioning this to others, I hear that not only at the above time, but in the course of last night, similar symptoms of a general concussion have manifested themselves. If you think it worthwhile, inquire into this phenomenon, which, perhaps, you have yourself remarked.

Yours Very Respectfully
L.H.G.

[*Western Spectator*, Dec. 28, 1811]

RICHMOND, Dec. 17

We understand that an Earthquake was witnessed by many people in the city - that 3 o'clock in the morning there were 3 successive shocks; another about 6; and again about 8. - Several persons were under apprehension, that thieves had broken into their houses in the city, the bells, both above and below, were set a ringing.

Enquirer

^We Suppose on the 16th

Spectator

Richmond, Virginia January 23, 1812
[*The Ohio Centinel*, Feb. 27, 1812]

RICHMOND, Jan. 25

Another earthquake was distinctly felt in this city on Thursday morning last, about 9 o'clock. Some persons were rocked in their chairs. Some staggered as they stood. Hanging keys oscillated. Doors and windows flapped. Bedsteads and tall articles of furniture were moved to and fro; Those who were at breakfast saw a violent ripple on the surface of tea and coffee. A few ran out of their houses in great alarm. The convulsion was more sensibly felt on the hill than below it; in high than in low houses. We distinctly felt two of these convulsions, with the lapse of 15 or 20 minutes between them.

[*Farmer's Repository*, Feb. 7, 1812]

Richmond, January 25 [23?]. About half after 9 o'clock this morning, a severe shock of an earthquake was felt in this city. Like the last it was more sensibly felt on Shocke and Richmond hills than in the lower parts of the city. Books were thrown from shelves.

Richmond, Virginia February 7, 1812
[*Farmer's Repository*, Feb. 21, 1812]

Richmond, February 8. Another earthquake was felt in this city yesterday morning (the 7th) about 5 minutes before 4 o'clock. The undulation was more powerful than any we have felt before. People were awakened; bedsteads rocked; pendulous bodies vibrated and everything was felt to tremble. The shock was felt for 1 or 2 minutes and there could have been two or more shocks. There appeared a rumbling noise like the motion of a wagon over pavement. A chimney was tumbled onto the roof of a house.

Rockland County, New York December 16, 1811

Comment: *see New York, N.Y., same date.*

Rogersville, Tennessee January 23, 1812
[*Wilson's Knoxville Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1812] December 16, 1811

Extract of a Letter from a man in Rogersville

This morning a few minutes before nine o'clock, we felt a severe shock of an earthquake in this town, which lasted about 3 minutes; the motion appeared to come from the west, wind east, and a light breeze, the shock was much greater than that felt on the morning of the 16th ult. Indeed it was so great that the motion of the earth much resembled that of a ship on a heavy sea.

Russellville, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[Anonymous C. (1812), pg. 4] December 16, 1812

Russellville (Ken.) Jan. 29th

An earthquake equally as considerable as the one felt about five weeks since, was felt at this place on Thursday morning last, at eight o'clock and several slight ones have been felt since. The one on Thursday was, we understand, much more considerable at Hopkinsville than the first.

Russellville, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[Anonymous C. (1812), pg. 59]

Russellville (K.) February 12.

About half past three o'clock on Friday morning last this place was visited by another earthquake, the convulsion of which was infinitely more considerable than any previously felt; it was succeeded by several lighter ones. On Friday night there were three light ones, and we have several times felt moderate shocks. That Little Prairie is the seat of the eruptions we have every reason to believe, from the statements we have heard from travelers from that distressed part of the country; though it was not our opinion when we received Mr. Fletcher's statement, which is confirmed by all the people from that country with whom we have conversed. We are told that every individual who has the power to move, is doing so. Many flee precipitately with nothing but their clothes and a few blankets to shield them from the inclemency of the weather. Whole estates were offered for a single horse. We feel! let the reader! but we cannot describe,

nor could our informants, what was felt by men of large families and small fortunes, with their helpless women and children who were not able to withdraw from their scene of dread and horror!

St. Louis, Missouri December 16, 1811
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Dec. 21, 1811]

Earthquakes

On Monday morning last, about a quarter past two, St. Louis and the surrounding country, was visited by one of the most violent shocks of earthquake that has been recorded since the discovery of our country.

As we were all wrapped in sleep, each tells his story in his own way. I will also relate my simple tale.

At the period above mentioned, I was roused from sleep by the clamor of windows, doors and furniture in tremulous motion, with a distant rumbling noise, resembling a number of carriages passing over pavement - in a few seconds the motion and subterraneous thunder increased more and more: believing the noise to proceed from N, or N.W. and expecting the earth to be relieved by a volcanic eruption, I went outdoors looked for the dreadful phenomenon. The agitation had now reached its utmost violence. I entered the house to snatch my family from its expected ruins, but before I could put my design in execution the shock had ceased, having lasted about one and three fourth minutes. The sky was obscured by a thick hazy fog, without a breath of air. Fahrenheit thermometer might have stood at this time at about 35 or 40°.

At forty seven minutes past two, another shock was felt, without any rumbling noise, and much less violent than the first, it lasted nearly two minutes.

At thirty four minutes past three, a third shock nearly as tremulous as the first, but without much noise, it lasted about fifty seconds, and a slight trembling continued at intervals for some time after.

A little after day light, a fourth shock was felt, but with less violence than any of the others, it lasted nearly one minute.

About 8 o'clock, a fifth shock was felt; this was almost as violent as the first; accompanied with the usual noise, it lasted about half a minute; this morning was very hazy and unusually warm for the season, the houses and fences appeared covered with white frost, but on examination it was found to be vapor, not possessing the chilling cold of frost; indeed the moon was enshrouded in awful gloom.

At half past eleven, a slight shock was felt, and about the same hour on Tuesday last, a smart shock was felt - several gentlemen declared, they felt shocks at other intervals.

No lives have been lost, nor has the houses sustained much injury, a few chimneys have been thrown down, and a few stone houses split.

In noticing extraordinary events, perhaps no attendant circumstances should be deemed unimportant: This is one of that character, and a faithful record of appearances in such cases as these, may form data for science. Viewing the subject in this way, it may not be amiss to notice the reports of those who have explored the extensive plains and mountains of the west.

On the margin of several of our rivers pumice and other volcanic matter is found.

At the base of some of the highest of the black mountains, stone covers the earth, bearing marks of the violent action of fire, Within [illegible] miles of the great Osage village on the head waters of that river, and [illegible] from this town, it is said that a volcano had ceased to burn for the last three years, and it is thought to have now broke out in some quarter of our country. Upon the whole, this has been an uncommon year; the early melting of the snow to the north raised the Mississippi to an unusual height. The continued rains in the summer and the subsequent hot weather, and consequent sickness amongst the inhabitants, rendered that period somewhat distressing. - Autumn, to this time, has been unusually mild, and health pervades the land in every quarter.

Since writing the above, several slight shocks were sensibly felt, to the number ten or twelve.

Editor

[*Louisiana Gazette*, Feb. 8, 1812] February 7, 1812

On Thursday morning last, between 2 & 3 o'clock, we experienced the most sever shock of an earthquake that we have yet felt, many houses were injured, and several chimneys were thrown down; few hours pass without feeling slight vibrations of the earth. Should we ever obtain another mail, we shall be attentive in recording the progress in every quarter.

Spartanburg (?), South Carolina December 16, 1811
[*The Times*, Dec. 18, 1811]

From Stone, St. Paul's Parish, to the Editor of the *City Gazette*, dated December 16

At ten minutes before three this morning, we were very much alarmed by the shock of an Earthquake, which was very severe, and lasted about two minutes. The wind which was light, was N. W.; the sky tolerably clear; except a few clouds in the N. W. horizon. The shock was so violent, that it awoke Mr. S. and all the family; we were soon assembled in the parlor, where we remained until day light, expecting a return of the awful phenomenon, which, providentially, did not take place. - Even the fowls instinctively left their roosts, and ran out into the yard, nor did they return.

Salem, Massachusetts January 25(?), 1812
[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1812]

A slight shock of an earthquake, it is said, was experienced at Salem Massachusetts on Saturday [Jan. 25?] evening last.

Comment: the date and time does not correspond to any of the larger earthquakes in the New Madrid sequence

Salem, North Carolina December 16, 1811
[*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, Vol. VII, 1809-1822]

Salem Diary, 1811, pg. 3139

In the third hour of the morning there was a fairly strong earthquake shock, which was repeated in the eighth hour, but much less severely.

Bethabara Diary, 1811, pg. 3156

Between two and three o'clock this morning an earthquake was felt in our town and in the neighborhood. Many of our members were awakened, and in the church and parsonage the doors rattled suddenly and waked us.

Bethabara Diary, 1811, pg. 3160

In the third hour of the morning we felt an earthquake, and in the eighth hour another, though less severe.

Salem, North Carolina

January 23, 1812

[*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, Vol. VII, 1809-1822]

Salem Diary, 1812, pg. 3165

This morning about nine o'clock we again felt an earthquake.

Savannah, Georgia

December 16, 1811

[*The Ohio Centinel*, Feb. 6, 1812]

THE EARTHQUAKE

Savannah, Dec. 23

The repeated shocks of Earthquake, which have been felt in this place, since the morning of the 16th, having drawn forth some speculations and hypotheses from the scientific, I shall take the liberty of giving as perfect account of the phenomena as they occurred, as my observations, assisted by that of others, will enable me to do.

About 3 o'clock of the morning of the 16th, a shock was felt which produced an oscillating movement of the houses, and lasted nearly a minute. It was not preceded by any noise usually portend of this phenomenon, nor was its approach announced by any other appearance, than a great serenity in the atmosphere. An hour afterwards another shock was felt, but of shorter continuance than the other, and a person then up, has said, that he observed at the same time a tremulous undulating motion of the earth like the rolling of waves. At 8 o'clock a noise resembling distant thunder was heard, and was soon after followed by a shock which appeared to operate vertically, that is to say, by a heaving of the ground upwards - but was not sufficiently severe to injure even furniture or glasses. This shock was succeeded by a thick haze, any many people were affected by giddiness and nausea. Another shock was experienced about 9 o'clock at night, but so light as not to be generally felt - and at half past 12 the next day (the 17th) another shock was felt, which lasted only a few seconds, and was succeeded by a tremor which was occasionally observed throughout the day affecting many with giddiness. At half past 6 o'clock a very thick haze came on, and for a few minutes a sulphurous smell was emitted. At 9 o'clock last night, another was felt, but so slight as to have escaped the observation of many who had not thought of attending particularly

to the operations of this phenomenon. At one o'clock this morning (23d) another shock took place of nearly equal severity with the first of the 16th. Buried in sleep, I was not sensible of this, but I have derived such correct information on the fact, that I have no reason to doubt it; but I have observed since 11 o'clock this morning frequent tremors of the earth, such as usually precede sever shocks in other parts of the world.

[*The Time* (Charleston), December 19, 1811]

Earthquake!

Savannah, December 17

Four shocks of an earthquake have been sustained by our town, and its neighborhood within the last two days. The first commenced yesterday morning, between 2 and 3 o'clock, preceded by a meteoric flash of light, and accompanied with a rattling noise, resembling that of a carriage passing over a paved path way, and lasted about a minute. A second succeeded almost immediately after, but its continuance was of much shorter duration. A third shock was experienced about 8 o'clock in the morning, and another to-day about one.

Persons from **White Bluff** (about 8 miles from town, southwardly) felt it very sensibly: and several who were up at the time, state that the movement of the earth made them totter as though they were on shipboard in a heavy swell of the sea. Those who were up at the time, conceive its direction to have been from south-west to northeast.

We have received communications on the subject, apparently hastily drawn up. Having promised a very particular account by a scientific gentleman, we have laid by all except the following, which had been previously in type.

At three minutes past three, yesterday morning, the shock of an earthquake was sensibly felt in Savannah. The undulating motion of the earth, continued upward, of two minutes to the belief of the writer: and appeared to be from north to south. Was this occasioned by the retiring of the comet from our sphere? The mercury, in Fahrenheit's Thermometer, trembled excessively. At a quarter before nine, the tremulous motions of the earth continued.

The observations of others say, that, at eight yesterday morning, there were also distinct shocks, and it is very possible that a violent earthquake has occurred in the West-India Islands or South America.

Republican

[*The Times* (Charleston), December 26, 1811)

FROM THE SAVANNAH REPUBLICAN

Mr. Evans. – The repeated shocks of Earthquakes, which have been felt in this place since the morning of the 16th inst. Having drawn forth some speculations and hypothesis from the scientific, I shall take the liberty of giving as perfect account of the Phenomena as they occurred, as my own observations, assisted by that of others will enable me to do.

About 3 o'clock, of the morning of the 15th, a shock was felt which produced an

oscillating motion of the houses, and lasted for nearly a minute, it was not proceeded by any noises which usually portend this phenomenon, nor was its approach announced by any other appearance, than a great severity in the atmosphere. An hour afterwards another shock was felt, but of shorter continuance than the (illegible); and a person than up, has said that he observed at the same times tremendous undulating motion of the earth, like the rolling of waves. At 8 o'clock, a noise resembling distant thunder was felt, and soon after, followed by a shock which appeared to operate vertically, that is to say, by a heaving of ground upwards – but was not sufficiently severe to injure even furniture, or glasses. This shock was succeeded by a thick haze, and many people were affected by giddiness, and nausea. Another shock was experienced at about 9 o'clock at night, but so slight as not to be generally felt – and at half past 12 o'clock the next day, (the 17th) another shock was felt, which lasted only a few seconds, and was succeeded by a tremor which was occasionally observed throughout the day, effecting many with giddiness. At half past 6 o'clock, a very thick haze came on, and for a few minutes a sulphureous smell was emitted. At 9 o'clock last night, another was felt, which continued four or five seconds, but so slight as to have escaped the observation of many who had not tho't of attending particularly to the operations of this phenomenon. At 1 o'clock this morning, (the 23rd) another shock took place of nearly equal severity with the first of the 16th. Buried in sleep, I was not sensible of this, but I have derived such correct information on the fact, that I have no reason to doubt it: but I observed sine 11 o'clock this morning, frequent tremors of the earth, such as usually precede severe shocks in other parts of the world.

Article continues for several paragraphs with the letter writer's various ideas as to the cause of the earthquakes – not copied.

A Subscriber
Savannah, Dec. 23rd, 1811

Savannah, Georgia January 23, 1812
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 41]

Savannah, Georgia, Jan. 23

A severe shock of an earthquake was here this morning a few minutes after nine o'clock. It was much more forcible than those noticed by us lately, and continued for more than a minute. The nausea of the stomach, giddiness of the head, and movement of unfixed bodies, were as sensible in this, as on similar occasions lately noticed. Its direction, by some, is supposed to have been east to west; by others, north and south; and by some both ways. Looking-glasses and lamps vibrated, and fixtures in several apartments were so violently shaken, that the nails were loosened.

Savannah, Georgia February 7, 1812
[*The New York Evening Post*, Mar. 5, 1812]

Savannah, Feb. 10.

The inhabitants of our city had hardly recovered from the alarm excited by the frequent shocks lately experienced, when they were again aroused on a mid-morning by a severe and tremendous earthquake which commenced about 4 o'clock and continued

for two minutes; this awful and most impressive visitation was preceded by a large rumbling, resembling the noise of a number of carriages following each other, and the motion of the earth was so violent as to occasion numbers to rush from their beds to their doors, to avoid the danger which might arise from falling buildings. We are happy to state, however, that no injury has been done. The horizon immediately after the modulation of the earth had ceased, presented a dreadful appearance; the black clouds which had settled around it, were illuminated as if the whole country to the westward was in flames; and for fifteen minutes a continued roar of distant but distinct thunder added to the solemnity of the scene. A storm of wind and rain succeeded, which continued until about six o'clock, when a vivid flash of lightening was immediately followed by a loud peal of thunder. Several gentlemen who were in the market at the time distinctly perceived a blaze of Fire which fell between the center and south range of the market. To those who have made the wonders of nature their study, we leave the calculation whether the eruption has taken place in some distant part, or whether we are again to suffer severe trials.

A slight motion sufficient to cause vibrations was distinctly felt at ten minutes before nine on the night preceding the above, and at eleven another smart shock took place - the clocks, the pendulums which vibrated from North to South stopped, and several rents have been discovered in brick buildings were without doubt occasioned by it.

Sevierville, Tennessee

December 16, 1811

[Diary of Hugh Blair of Sevierville, Tenn., dairy entry of December 16, 1811]

December 16th, 1811. The Town Sevierville Experienced the shock of an earth quake, but not noticed by all its inhabitants - Descriptions of it at Knoxville it happened between 12 and 1 o'clock Begun with a rumbling more like distant thunder and caused the earth to shake for some minutes a flash of fire was discovered to the Northward. At this place it alarmed the whole town by the noise of the rumbling and rattling of the windows and furniture of the houses - three other shocks happened in succession between that and sun rise but lighter. The further westward the harder.

Sevierville, Tennessee

January 23, 1812

[Diary of Hugh Blair of Sevierville, Tenn., dairy entry of January 23, 1812]

Another earth quake January 23^d 1812, 50 minutes after 8 o'clock lasted two minutes. Caused the glass of the window to rattle considerably without and sound perceivable here.

Shawneetown, Illinois

General

[Berry, B. (1908), pg. 77]

The houses of Mr. Land's neighbors were of the kind I have mentioned [log cabins]. But this was "in the country." In the towns it was different There were some pretentious buildings in Shawneetown, but not many. Fearon, in his sketches says there were only about thirty in 1817. Some of them had stone chimneys. These were

tumbled down.

My friend Mr. Charles Carroll of Shawneetown, tells me that he remembers Mrs. Eddy the wife of Judge Eddy, relating what she heard her mother say about the terror stricken people of Shawneetown: "How they ran out of their homes into the road, and how the chimneys fell down."

Comment: *The location Shawneetown in 1811-1812, is now referred to as "Old Shawneetown."*

South Union, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*South Union Shaker Journals*, Kentucky Library Manuscript February 7, 1812
Division, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky.]

Monday, Dec. 16, 1811 (pg. 160)

Earthquake - A heavy one at 5 minutes past 1 A.M. others succeeding. At 20 minutes past 7 another hard shock shaking trees and buildings - several more thru the day.

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 1811 (pg. 161)

Earthquakes - 2 shocks last night - so quakes off the year 1811.

Friday, Feb. 7, 1812 (pg. 164)

Earthquakes - A tremendous at 3 A. M. - there has been 2 previous on the 4th & 5th but not so great as this morning.

Earth trembling - after the great shock as if the chimneys might - another occurred ½ past 7. Another on the 8th. Another on the 10th. Another on the 11th & 17 & 18 & 23 & 24 & 25 & 26 & 28th. The like never known here before. It seems as though our little hall might be shaken to pieces quite easily.

Tuesday, May 5th, 1812

Earthquake (?) A. M.

Comment: *The Shaker complex, South Union, was being built at the time of the 1811-1812 earthquakes, only the foundations for the buildings had been dug. Workers were living in temporary log and framed quarters, and a small brick building; and these structures would have had chimneys of some type [personal comm., Tommy Hines, Director, South Union, April 26, 2005].*

Spencer County, Indiana December 16, 1811
[Latrobe, C. (1835), pg. 89]

When they arrived about five miles above the Yellow Banks [Owensboro, Ky.],

they moored the boat opposite the first vein of coal, which was on the Indiana side, and had been purchased in the interim of the State government. They found a large quantity already quarried to their hand, and conveyed to the shore by depredators who had not found means to carry it off, and with this they commenced loading the boat. While thus engaged, our voyagers were accosted in great alarm by the squatters of the neighborhood, who inquired if they had not heard the strange noises on the river and in the woods in the course of the preceding day, and perceived the shores shake - insisting that they had repeatedly felt the earth tremble.

Comment: Along the Ohio river in the early 1800's, it was fairly common to find families who had floated down river on flatboats in the Fall and go as far as they could before ice formed on the river. Early in the Spring, after the ice had broken up, they would resume their journey down river in order to get to their destination before Spring planting. These families, as well as those who permanently settled on land they did not hold title to, were collectively referred to as squatters. The 'transient' squatters would not have built cabins, but would have used their flatboats as their living quarters.

Springfield, Ohio

December 16, 1811

Comments: See Zanesville of the same date. In 1811-1812 there were two localities referred to as Springfield, the modern-day city northeast of Dayton and that part of Zanesville west of the Muskingum river. The latter area was originally named Springfield, changed to Putnam shortly after Ohio became a state, and then in the 1830's Putnam was incorporated into Zanesville.

Springfield, Tennessee

December 16, 1811

[*New York Spectator*, Jan. 29, 1812]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Springfield (Ten.) to his brother in Washington City, dated Dec. 18, 1811

We have since yesterday morning about 2 o'clock, experienced one of the most sublime, grand and awful scenes perhaps on record; the of the 15th being remarkably dark and cloudy, accompanied by a stillness in the air equal to the silence of the tomb; at a little past 2 o'clock, Mr. - and myself being awake, there appeared to be a rattling of something similar to wind at a distance; we were however undeceived, by a rattling of things in the house, and through a sensible rocking of the same, to a very great degree. - I made up a light as soon as possible, and opened the door, more effectually to discover the cause, when, to my utter amazement. There was a perfect calm, and nothing but an agitated rolling of the earth from south west to north east; this continued I think from sever to ten minutes, when a second shock, though much lighter than the former, alarmed us, if possible, more than the first. An interval ten took place until sunrise, when another shock, equal I believe to the first, gave us fresh alarm; I walked out into my yard, - with difficulty I could stand steady; - saw the earth under my feet oscillate, as plainly as I ever saw the pendulum of a clock, for some minutes; it then

Troy, Miami County, January 8, 1812

Comment: *It is believed that the January 8, 1812, date is a misprint, February 8, 1812 is more likely.*

Uniontown, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*Martinsburgh Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1812]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Uniontown, Kentucky to his friend in this place, dated 31st January, 1812

We have been ever and ever terrified with earthquakes since the 16th of December which are still felt every day more or less - They have been extremely severe in this neighborhood - have thrown down one Maj. Taylor's rooms. Thirty miles below this there is a crack in the earth 3 miles in length, several inches wide; and from thence down perhaps 150 miles below in New Madrid, the earth (particularly the river bottom and islands) is dreadfully torn to pieces and sunk. A widow who lives at a place where the bottom is sunk below the surface of the water in due time sought safety with her two children on a large log in the yard and floated from 2 o'clock in the morning in the 16th December until late the next day before she was relieved. Every brick chimney in this country has been shattered to the earth. Mrs. Brent's at red bank, which was rebuilt after the first shock has been again shattered to the ground. The earth in this part of the world must be inordinately charged with electric fluid, by the last summer and fall which was excessively dry.

Vincennes, Indiana December 16, 1811
[*The Western Sun*, Dec. 21, 1811]

Earthquake. Several shocks of an earthquake have been felt this week - Monday morning last (about 3 o'clock) there were three within a few minutes of each other - another was felt about sunrise and several more that day - more or less have been felt every day since. Much alarm has been excited, but no damage done that we have heard of, except two or three brick chimneys that were cracked, and the roofs of several houses thrown off.

Vincennes, Indiana January 23, 1812
[*The Western Sun*, Jan. 25, 1812]

On Thursday last about 8 o'clock we had another severe shock of an earthquake, which shook off the top of some chimneys, but no other damage was sustained.

Vincennes, Indiana February 7, 1812
[*The Western Sun*, Feb. 8, 1812]

On Friday morning the 7th inst. at 15 minutes after 2 o'clock, we experienced another heavy shock of an earthquake. It shook off the tops of several chimneys, without doing any other injury that we have learnt - Since which several have been felt,

though much lighter than the first.

Vincennes, Indiana
[*The Western Sun*, Feb. 22, 1812]

February 7, 1812

EARTHQUAKES.

Between the hours of 3 and 5 on morning of Friday last, a shock of the Earthquake was felt in this place, much more violent and alarming than any which have hitherto been experienced. It was also of greater duration, and accompanied with a trembling noise and flashes of light from the N.W. The bricks on the houses were in some places, removed from their positions. The buildings were violently agitated, and walls are known in some instances to have been cracked. At **Louisville** the gable ends of houses have tumbled down, and at **Frankfort** we hear that the penitentiary has partially suffered.

Except the last, all the other shocks which have occurred, seem to have been very generally and sensibly felt throughout North America. Orleans has entirely escaped, and few other places have been visited with but light shocks and experienced very little alarm or injury.

From **New Madrid**, we learn that several men deserted their families, and have never been heard of since – that several persons were wounded in their houses – that about **Little Prairie**, where the earth burst open, mud, sand, water, and stone coal were thrown up to a considerable distance; and that large trees were split open 15 to 20 feet up. At **Massac** on the Ohio, the earth on both banks of the river, has been rent by a fissure 16 or 18 inches wide.

A Natchez paper, states that several gentlemen had arrived at that place from the **Chickasaw bluffs** on the Mississippi, who inform that the damage sustained at that place from the earthquake, was immense. Previous to their leaving, seven Indians came in, who had been out as far as the Rocky mountains, in the northwest in pursuit of game. Those Indians who are known and can be relied on are said to have (illegible), that when they left their camps, the mountains appeared to be trembling to pieces and large trees were snapped off at their roots, and dashed together in the greatest disorder – rocks as large as houses were thrown into the valleys from the tops of the mountains in many places the earth seemed to be much heated, and every direction were to be seen evident signs of volcanic eruptions. The Indians rode day and night believing from the convulsive shocks which they felt, that a general destruction was to (illegible), and determined to perish with their relatives amidst the material wreck.

Vincennes, Indiana General
[*The Vincennes Weekly Western Sun*, Aug. 2, 1873]

The governor's mansion [Grouseland] ...It was rent by the great earthquake of 1811. Colonel Miller, of the U,S, Army, was sleeping in the house at the time, and springing from the bed with a sword in his hand rushed into the corridor, where he met the Governor, and exclaimed, "how many of the red devils have we to fight?" General Harrison replied that there were no Indians, it was an earthquake; and in later years

used to relate the incident with great humor.

[*The Vincennes Weekly Western Sun*, Oct. 25, 1873]

The earthquake of 1812 gave the mansion a severe shock, leaving some cracks in the walls which are still visible where they have been repaired.

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Warren County, Ohio

December 16, 1811

[Letter of David Darrow]

or January 23, 1812

“...for the Lord God of Haven shook terribly the earth and the place and the houses they were setting was shaken and the doors and the windows and seats to that degree - that the man was struck with a paleness and some fled out for safety clear across the street and took hold [illegible] for protection.”

Comment: taken from a letter by David Darrow, dated January, 1812. The letter was found in the Shaker record collection of the archives of the King Library at the University of Kentucky.

Warren County, Ohio

April 27, 1812

[Union Village Shaker Community, Journal entry of May 2, 1812]

Last Monday we were favored with another shock of the earth.

Comment: The above quote is taken from a letter found in the Shaker record collection of the archives of the King Library at the University of Kentucky.

Washington, D.C. December 16, 1811

[*Kentucky Reporter*, Jan. 11, 1812]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24

Earthquake - The agitation of the earth described in the subjoined articles was sensibly felt, about the same time as mentioned below, by many persons in this city, though not so violent as it is stated to have been in other places.

[Fuller, M. L., 1912]

Washington. - On the morning of Monday, the 16 December, 1811, several shocks of an earthquake were felt in Washington. The first of these happened at 3 o'clock, and in some house was considerable enough to shake the doors and windows and wake persons from their sleep. There were successive tremors. Tassels of curtains were seen to move, and pitchers of washing stands were heard to rattle upon their basins. The second was very distinguishable and was believed by many to pass from southwest to northeast. The alarm was so great in some families that searches were made from room to room to discover the robbers who were imagined to have broken into the house.

A second shock, though lighter, was experienced about 6 o'clock, and a third about 8.

A gentleman standing in his chamber at his desk and writing, in the third story of a brick house upon Capitol Hill, suddenly perceived his body to be in motion, vibrating backward and forward and producing dizziness. Not suspecting at the moment that the uncomfortable sensation was caused by an earthquake, he examined his desk to know whether it stood firm. Finding that it did, he dropped his pen and, turning his eyes upward, discerned that the looking-glass and other hanging things near him were in similar motion.

Another person was near a table placed beneath a mirror. Feeling a giddiness come upon him, he seized the table for support. The general agitation of the chamber and house ceased in a minute; but the looking-glass, which was suspended in the usual manner, continued to swing for some seconds longer.

Washington, D.C. January 23, 1812

[*Farmer's Repository*, Jan. 31, 1812]

Another Earthquake - On Thursday morning, about 10 minutes past nine, another shock of an earthquake was felt in this city, by most of the inhabitants. It appears to have affected some parts of the city more violently than others; for whilst some were seriously alarmed by it, there are very many who did not perceived it. The cups and saucers on breakfast tables were heard to rattle; and picture frames, etc., hanging on the walls were seen to vibrate.

[*Philadelphia Aurora and General Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1812]

Extract to the Editors of the Baltimore American – dated Washington, Jan. 23.

A slight shock of another earthquake was felt by a number of persons in the city, about 9 o'clock this morning. I heard one gentleman say, that it continued two minutes, with an intermission of a few seconds during the time.

Washington D.C. February 7, 1812

[*Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 12, 1812]

Washington City, February 8

Yesterday morning about four o'clock, another smart shock of an Earthquake was felt in this city. Several persons of whom we have heard, were awakened from their sleep and much alarmed by it; in one instance a part of a ceiling of a room was shaken down by it. From the hour at which it occurred, it was not felt by many, and its duration, &c., differently described.

[*Ostego Herald*, Feb. 22, 1812]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A. METCALF, MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO
THE EDITOR, DATED WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7, 1812

Sir - We have experienced a third shock of an earthquake since my arrival at Washington. It commenced a few minutes after 4 o'clock this morning, and continued three or four minutes - - Shook the house severely, much more than either of the former shocks. Its direction appeared to be from north to south - was not attended with any rumbling noise as is usual on such occasions.

[Madison, James (1812), pg. 526]

There was one here this morning at 5 or 6 minutes after 4 o'clock. It was rather stronger than any preceding one, and lasted several minutes; with sensible though very slight repetitions throughout the succeeding hour.

Washington, Kentucky December 16, 1811
[*Natchez Gazette*, Feb. 13, 1812]

From Marietta to Limestone [Maysville] the shocks had been felt all along the River. At the latter place they had been violent; and at Washington, four miles from thence on the Road to Lexington, some chimneys were thrown down.

Comment: *Maysville, Ky., was formerly known as Limestone.*

[*American Statesman & Columbian*, Dec. 24, 1811]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN IN WASHINGTON (KY) TO
HIS FRIEND IN THIS PLACE, DATED THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1811

Dear Sir

On Monday morning, a very sever shock of an earthquake was experienced at this place and Maysville, but much more severely and oftener at the latter place. From whence two or three families have removed. These successive shocks continued until yesterday evening. Tuesday, a large quantity of black matter was seen floating down the river, which, upon examination, was found to resemble soot and charcoal finely powdered. It was supposed an eruption had taken place on the big Sandy; and on the same day, a person arrived at the point, and stated, he had been informed, as he passed the mouth of the Big Sandy, that about 12 acres of the coal hill, 3 or 4 miles above the mouth had fallen in.

Washington, Kentucky January 23, 1812
[*The Reporter*, Feb.1, 1812]

Washington, KY; Jan. 25

A considerable shock of an earthquake was felt at this place on Thursday morning last about 15 minutes past 9 o'clock. It commenced with a jar or vibration of the earth, and lasted about a minute, and terminated in a rumbling noise, similar to distant thunder. We are informed that it was also felt in Maysville at the same time and continued much longer, and in a short time was succeeded by two others the same day.

Washington, Mississippi December 16, 1811
[*Louisiana Gazette*, Dec. 31, 1811]

“...in the vicinity of Washington the trees were observed to be much more convulsed, nodding their heads together as if coming to the ground.”

Washington, Pennsylvania December 16, 1811
[*Liberty Hall*, Jan. 1, 1812]

At Pittsburgh and Washington (Pa.) however, which are something more than 40 degrees, it was felt, but in a slight degree. At the latter place but one shock, it appears, was experienced.

Waterford, Pennsylvania December 16, 1811
[*Pittsburgh Gazette*, Dec. 27, 1811]

see Meadville, Pennsylvania, of the same date.

Webster County, Kentucky February 7, 1812
[*History of Union County Kentucky* (1886), pg. 353]

EARTHQUAKE

The great earthquake, which destroyed New Madrid in the spring of 1812, and opened up Reel Foot Lake, is distinctly remembered by Mr. Sammuel Sellers. He says the earth was not still for four days. His father had lived, previously to moving to Union County, in Webster County, and when the earthquake came on the people flocked the roads to his house to inquire if the world was coming to an end. The atmosphere, during the earthquake, resembled Indian Summer.

Wheeling, West Virginia December 16, 1811
[Anonymous C (1812), pg. 60] January 23, 1812 February 7, 1812

By a kindness of a friend of the author has been favored with the reading of a letter from Wheeling, Virginia, on the banks of the Ohio, dated January 17, 1812. The writer was formerly a resident of Philadelphia, and from his well know character for veracity and intelligence, his statement, it is believed, may be implicitly relied upon; as it contains a distinct and comprehensive relation of all the shocks which came under his notice, from the first, on the morning of the sixteenth Dec. To the time when the letter was written, it will constitute a very appropriate termination of this history.

We were surprised by the earthquake which happened on the morning of the sixteenth of December last. I awoke me. I immediately ascertained it to be an earthquake, called all the children up, and prepared them for the worse events. It caused the house to crack loudly in all of its joints, as well as the doors, windows, and bedsteads. Since then we have experienced a great many others, some of equal, but the greater part of lesser violence. As I made some notes on the times, perhaps a

transcript may not be unacceptable. Monday sixteenth December, 1811, had a shock of an earthquake at Wheeling, between two and three o'clock, A.M. which continued about fifteen minutes. It appears from those persons who happened to be awake at its commencement, that it came on gradually, until it advanced in strength to make the houses and bedsteads crack loudly. It then gradually went off. About eight A.M. it was again felt, but not so violent in its undulations as before. At a quarter before one P.M. it was again experienced, but much weaker; but the surface of pools continued to show small motion for some hours afterwards. On the seventeenth at noon, a faint shock was again felt - also on the twenty-fourth at two o'clock in the morning. First January 1812, a slight on, between eleven and twelve at night, and again at three the next morning. Twenty-third January at fifteen minutes past nine A.M. experienced a shock nearly equal to the first one of sixteenth December preceding. Twenty-seventh January between eight and nine A.M. a slight shock was sensible to a few persons, and at noon, a motion of the earth was perceptible. Sixth February a slight shock was felt about four P.M. but on the morning of the seventh, a few minutes after four o'clock, a severe shock was experienced, and by most persons judged to be more severe than anything preceding.

Ebenezer Zane's stone house was much cracked; many persons left their house; our kitchen chimney was cracked to such a degree as to leave it in a tottering situation; one of Col. Chapline's hearth stones was broken into five pieces. At nine P.M. a slight shock occurred. This day several persons were affected with giddiness in their heads and a nausea on their stomachs. At 11 P.M. another shock of about third degree of violence was felt; children were awakened and ran into our chamber with their clothes in their hands, as they had done the morning preceding. Frequent slight shocks were felt during the night. Since then, undulating motions are felt generally, every night. Last night many motions, approaching to shocks, were felt by many. From the vast many throes that are daily and nightly happening, it would appear, that they proceed from volcanic eruptions, deeply seated in the bowls of the earth, and that should they burst forth, vent would be given to a vast body of fluid matter, which would cause those ebullitions to subside.

White County, Illinois General
[Berry, D. (1908), pp 74-76]

I have met but two people who had had any personal experience with the earthquakes. These were Mr. Yearly Land and his mother. Mr. Land, when I first knew him, was about fifty-seven years old, and his mother was nearly ninety. His father, Robert Land came to the Territory from South Carolina, and found a home place in what was then, the northern half of Gallatin county, and his family was one of only six families in that part of Gallatin, in that time, in 1809. The 3d Principal Meridian had just been run. The government survey of the country - where Carmi and Hawrhorne Townships now are - had just been done by Arthur Henrie under contract with Jared Mansfield, Surveyor General of the United States. The land office at Shawneetown was not established until 1812.

At the time of the earthquake, in November, 1811, Mr. Land was a boy past nine years old; but the happening of that four or five months shaking made an impression on

his mind that was clear and bright when he was ninety years old. He said the ground would shake and then rock and roll in long waves. After a short quiet spell, there would be another shock and roll.

His father had a clearing in the woods and just on the south edge of what is known as Big Prairie. In this woodland, extending southward to the hills on the Little Wabash, were oak trees of wondrous size. There was rarely any undergrowth. This primeval forest was like a well kept park. I remember those trees.

I mention this timber to give point to Mr. Land's narrative. He said in these long continued rollings, the tall timber would weave their tree tops together, interlock their branches, then part and fly back the other way, and when they did this "blossom ends of the limbs would pop like whip lashes; and the ground was covered with broken stuff."

In the prairie, about two miles west of his father's house, a big crack was made in the ground, and you could not see to the bottom of it. The ground on the south side of the creek sunk down about two feet. "This crack" was on the land afterward owned by Mr. Jacob Parker on the N. W. Qr. Of Sec. 35, T. 5, S. R. 10 E. 3d p. m.

It was well defined when I first saw the place in 1858. Across a field that sloped slightly upward to the north, was a well marked line of uplift or downfall. The lower side to the south. This line extended east and west. It started on some high ground, west of the field, extended eastward through the woodland and was lost in some swamp land further on. It could be traced about two miles. The field was in cultivation for wheat when I first saw it, and the slope of the uplift, or northern side, was about six feet long, as it had been worked down in cultivation.

South and eastward from this farm was a wide extent of low flat, untimbered land, extending to the Marshall hills, on the Big Wabash, eastward, and nearly to the Little Wabash southward. In those days this land was not outflowed by the Big Wabash. It was covered by a verdurous of grasses and was splendid summer and winter range, or pasture for horses, cattle, and swine.

There were many square miles of this level plain, and over it, in the earthquake times, piles and piles of pure, snow white sand were heaved up. In the words of Uncle Yearly Land, as we called him, these piles "were the size of a bee-gum to three or four wagon loads."

To understand this, you will have to know what a "bee-gum" was.

It was a section about twenty inches long, cut from a hollow gum log about fourteen or eighteen inches in diameter. It was placed, with many others of it kind, open end on a raised platform of split logs. The top end was closed in with river clapboards weighted down with stones; or pinned down with wooden pegs. In these, vast swarms of bees, unvexed by moth or other enemy of civilization, stored there honey, which was a splendid substitute for the sugar and molasses of later times.

This sand was so white and clean, that, in the words of Mr. Land, "it would not stain or soil the whitest linen." These piles of sand showed evidence of water. The sand remained in piles until washed down by succeeding rains.

In this shaking and rolling of the earth, from November until the following March, no buildings were damaged and only one person was hurt.

In reply to my inquiry of old Mrs. Land, the widow of Mr. Robert Land, as to the personal injury of the people, she "minded" of only one. "That was the Williams girl, who had her feet badly burned by a skillet lid, loaded with hot embers, tumbling off the

skillet, and pouring the hot coals on her bare feet. She was burnt scan'al-us."

I asked about the houses: if they did not fall down. "I never heard of any that was hurt," replied Mr. Land.

Comment: Berry attributes the lack of structural damage to the house in the above account to the method of construction. He states, that a typical cabin of the time was "built like a basket, it was just as flexible and yielding to all the whims of the unlooked for visitor."

The Shawneetown referred to, is now Old Shawneetown.

William Henry, New York January 23, 1812
[*The Quebec Mercury*, Feb. 10, 1812]

We are informed that a smart shock of an Earthquake was felt at William Henry, on the 23 ult.

Williamson County, Tennessee December 16, 1811
[McRaven, H. (1949)]

The Reverend Joseph Tarkington, born in Davidson County 1800 and grandfather of the noted American novelist, Booth Tarkington, gives an interesting account of the earthquake in his autobiography, published in 1887. Joseph Tarkington, then eleven years of age, had moved with his parents to Williamson County. He writes that his father had returned from Alabama the day of the earthquakes, December 16, 1811. His father had just built a tall, frame house, and it shook so much that night that his father "called for the children to come downstairs for fear it would fall. So all came down in spasms of fear, ..." Some said the house was pushed, and went out to see what had done it.

"They saw nothing – no ropes to pull or poles to push the house with – and came in, continued to discuss the strange condition of things. It was agreed that nothing should be said about it, as no one would believe what they would tell of the strange commotion. But in the morning, people came from all directions, telling the same story of their houses being badly shook. While discussing the matter, father set out on the table, some brandy and water, and asked his frightened neighbors to drink. An old colored woman came up to father and asked 'Mass, did any of you try to shake my house down last night?' Another said, 'I though the horses were rubbing my cabin down.' One said it was something in the ground; for she felt the ground shake in her yard. Father said very key shook in its lock. Then it shook the water and brandy on the table. Only one tasted them. While the gathered neighbors stood by the door in the yard, afraid to go into the house, a distant heavy murmur, like low-down thunder, was heard. All eyes turned to the south-west.

The house began shaking. The boughs of a tree in the garden shook, while the air was still. Water in the vessels ran over. Some said the end of the world was nigh; others, that it was a sign of war with England. The meetings, directly after, were well attended. Some when who never had gone before. By day and night men sought God. ...

“In parts of Tennessee, the chimneys and houses fell. The chimney in father’s house, built of stone, two stories high, was split eight or ten feet in the breast. At one meeting, the Rev. Mr. McConico, a Baptist preacher, was preaching, when the cry was made that the house was sinking, and, such was the chronic terror of the people, the whole congregation was in confusion; some running away, shouting, ‘He is coming! He is coming!’; some screaming for mercy; some fell out of the gallery of the meeting-house; others lay down groaning and crying. One man tried to get out through a large chink between the logs of the house, but could not turn his foot to get it out, and had to be pulled back ...”

Wilmington, Delaware December 16, 1811

[*New York Spectator*, Jan. 4, 1811]

Wilmington - Dec. 17

Yesterday between the hours of 2 and 3 o’clock in the morning, was felt in this town a slight shock of an Earthquake, which was repeated about 8 o’clock.

Wilmington, Delaware January 23, 1812

[*The American Watchman*] February 7, 1812

Comment: The American Watchman for the months of January through March, 1812 was reviewed for articles about the 1811-1812 earthquakes. The paper carried several articles about the earthquakes, but nowhere does it mention the events as being felt in Wilmington, Delaware.

Wilmington, North Carolina December 16, 1811

[*Charleston Courier*, Dec. 27, 1811]

Wilmington, N. C., Dec. 17 - Yesterday between the hours of 2 and 3 o’clock in the morning was felt in this town a slight shock of an Earthquake, which was repeated about 8 o’clock.

Worcester, Massachusetts General

[*National Aegis*]

Comment: The earthquakes of 1811-1812 are not described in the National Aegis as being felt in the vicinity of Worcester.

Worthington, Ohio December 16, 1811

[*The Western Intelligencer*, Jan. 1, 1812]

EARTHQUAKE

This singular and unusual phenomenon has been lately experienced in this western country. On the 16th utl. several severe shocks were felt in the southern part of the state, and in Kentucky. The first, which was also the most severe, was between two and three o’clock in the morning. Accounts from various places differ in some degree,

respecting its duration. In Frankfort, Kentucky, it is said, to have continued from two to five minutes, and to have been preceded by a rumbling sound, and some damage was done to buildings in that place, but none were material. In Cincinnati and its vicinity, as many as six or seven different shocks were noticed during the morning, and the tops of several chimneys were shaken off. At Chillicothe it was noticed, but the concussions were not so severe as further south. It was felt in this place by some, but the shocks were so light, as not to be generally noticed. The sound and motion seemed to proceed from the southwest. It is probable that some further information will be received, and it would be gratifying to us, to learn the cause of this singular convulsion of nature.

Worthington, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*The Western Intelligencer*, Jan. 24, 1812]

Yesterday between the hours of eight and nine in the morning, an earthquake was very severely felt in this place. - The shock appeared to come from the west or southwest, and was nothing more than a rocking of the earth to and fro, without and sudden concussion or jar, and is supposed to have continued about one minute.

From the different accounts, received verbally and collected from news-papers, of those which happened two or three weeks ago, it would appear that the shocks had been much more severely felt, near the banks of the rivers, than other places, A reason for this, however, we are not able to give, and that it was absolutely the case, we will not pretend to assert, but it appears that they were scarcely noticed at Chillicothe, except along or near the banks of the largest streams.

Worthington, Ohio February 7, 1812
[*The Western Intelligencer*, Feb. 7, 1812]

At half past three o'clock this morning, another shock of an Earthquake was experienced in this place, more severe, and of longer duration than any that have preceded it of late. No material damage has been done to our knowledge.

York [Toronto], Canada December 16, 1811
[*The York Gazette*, Jan. 24, 1812]

Earthquake - The agitation of the earth described in two subjoined articles was sensibly felt, about the same time as is mentioned below, by many persons in this city, tho' not so violent as it is stated to have been in other places.

York [Toronto], Canada February 7, 1812
[*New York Spectator*, Mar. 14, 1812]

There were five shocks of an Earthquake, some severe, felt on the 7th inst., but no damage was done.

Zansville, Ohio December 16, 1812
[*Muskingum Messenger*, Dec. 18, 1811]

EARTHQUAKE

Two shocks of Earthquake were sensibly felt by most of the inhabitants of this town, the town of Springfield, and adjacent country at 3 o'clock in the morning of Monday the 16 instant.

Many persons were suddenly awakened from their sleep by the tremulous motion of their beds - the shaking of their houses, doors, and windows. It lasted full two minutes.

At 8 o'clock A. M. - experienced a considerable shock, which continued at least 4 minutes - the Cupola of the courthouse was moved to and fro - the iron rod vibrated 8 or 9 inches - the sign posts and trees put on undulatory motions - the clapping of windows was heard more than a hundred yards distance - several clocks were so jarred as to be suddenly stopped - the vane on the courthouse was considered the best criterion to judge of the direction (for a breath of wind could not be discovered) and this was from North East to South West.

At 10 minutes after 10, another slight shock was felt. At 25 minutes after 12, another shock, very slight, was felt.

On the next day (17th) at 5 o'clock in the morning a shock, which lasted 2 minutes, surprised many before they got out of their beds.

At 5 minutes after 12, a shock which lasted full 3 minutes, caused great agitation of the steeple of the courthouse, as the on of the day preceding.

It has, we have learned, extended to a considerable distance through this state.

No injury has been done. From the most minute enquiry it cannot be discovered that any sound or explosion preceded any of the shocks.

The weather immediately preceding this strange occurrence in this country was cloudy, mild, and calm, portending a storm and rain; - at about 7 o'clock P. M. it drizzled a little which continued till about 10; after which it became warm, very calm, and somewhat foggy. The day afterwards was mild, calm and mostly cloudy, with rain in the afternoon.

The atmosphere of the fall months had been generally calm with dry and moderate weather.

Comment: Present-day Zanesville is divided by the Muskingum river. At the time of the 1811-1812 earthquakes, that part of Zanesville west of the river, when first settled, was referred to as Springfield. On January 20, 1814, it was officially renamed Putnam. Then in the 1830's, Putnam was annexed into Zanesville.

Zanesville, Ohio January 23, 1812
[*The Messenger*, Jan. 29, 1812]

Another shock of an earthquake, supposed to be fully as severe as the one on the 16th ult. was felt here on Thursday last, about 6 o'clock A. M. A slight shock was also plainly felt on Monday [January 27] morning last.

Zanesville, Ohio February 7, 1812

[*The Messenger*, Feb. 12, 1812]

On Friday morning last, at about 45 minutes past three o'clock A.M. we experienced a more violent shock of an earthquake than heretofore felt. A number of slight shocks have been felt since, sometimes two or three a day. We anticipate direful accounts from the south-west, in consequence of the late main shock.

[*The Palladium*, Feb. 26, 1812]

At Zanesville, Ohio, it was alarming...