

# The Great Earthquake of 1868



By Timothy Swenson  
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## Acknowledgments

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*Cover photo: A home in Hayward (courtesy Bancroft Library)*



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# Introduction

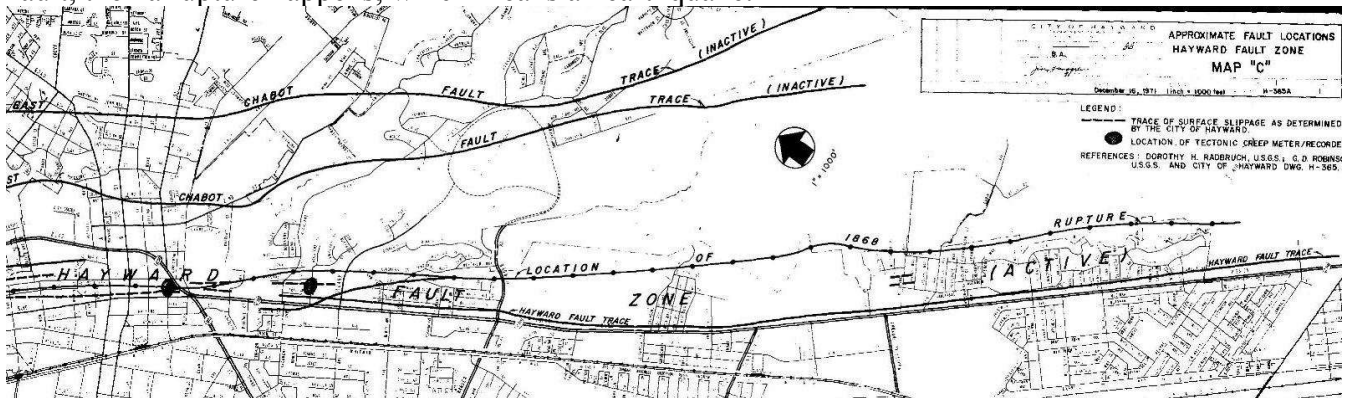
The morning of October 21, 1868, dawned clear with a temperature of fifty-nine degrees in downtown San Francisco. At 7:53 am, a 7.0 magnitude quake hit the San Francisco Bay Area. The quake on the Hayward Fault lasted for about 1 minute and was felt over most of Northern California. The quake was caused by a lateral shift along a 40 mile stretch of the fault, running from Fremont, north to Berkeley. Fissures also opened up along the fault, leaving long gaping holes in the ground.

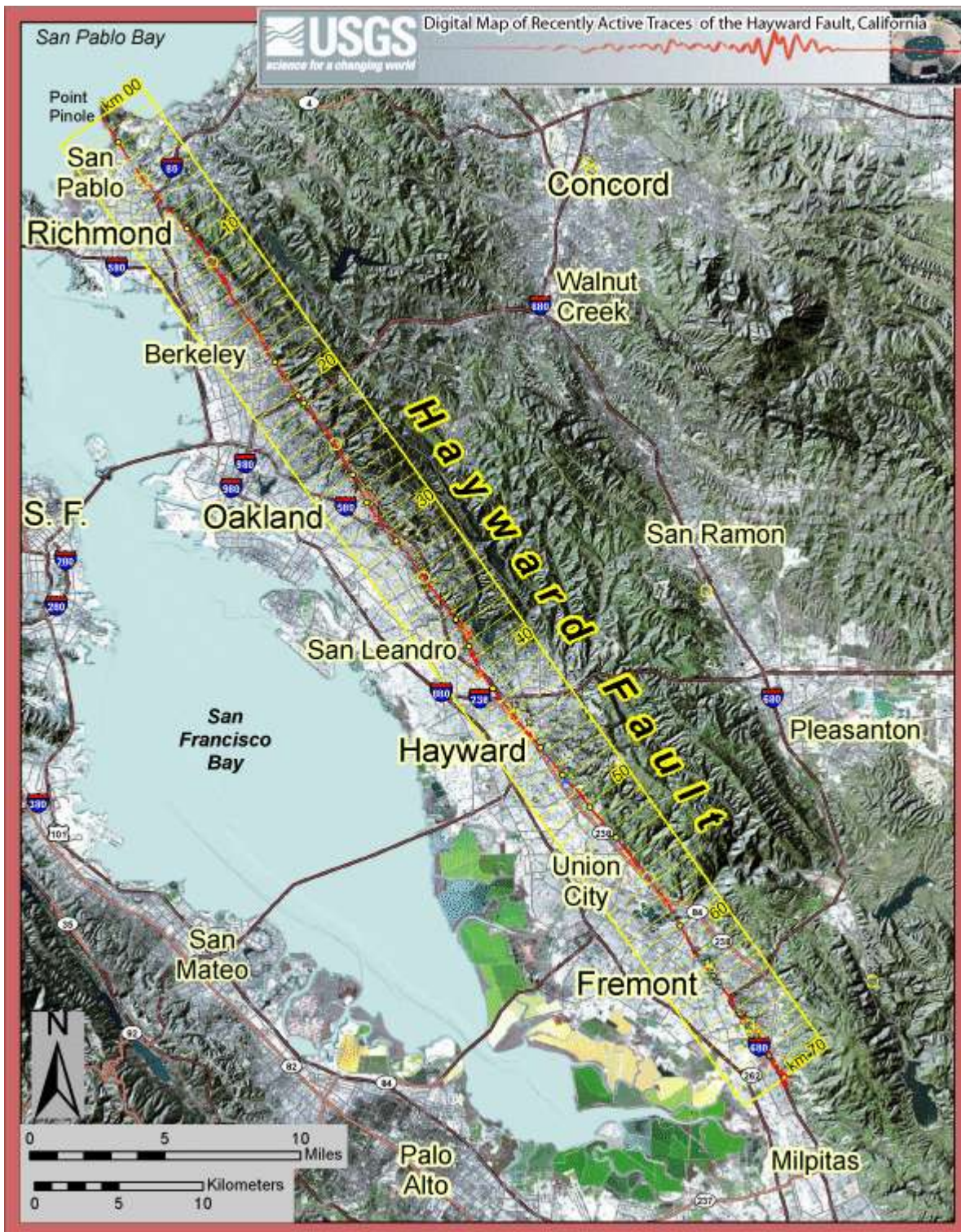
Although the epicenter of the earthquake was in the East Bay, most of the major damage to structures (by sheer numbers) was in San Francisco. This was because the East Bay was not as developed as San Francisco and had fewer brick buildings. The total reported death toll for the entire Bay Area was five, with thirty persons injured. Until 1906, the 1868 earthquake was considered the "Great Earthquake."

# The Fault

The Hayward Fault runs from Fremont, north through Berkeley and ends somewhere in San Pablo Bay. The fault roughly follows the hills, but it does go through several cities. In Fremont, the fault is marked by the ponds next to the BART station. In Union City, the fault can be seen in the shift in Dry Creek at Garin/Dry Creek/Pioneer Regional Park. Through the hills of southern Hayward the fault can be seen by shifts in the ravines coming down the hillsides. In downtown Hayward, the fault runs right through the heart of downtown, under the 1930's City Hall, and through a number of buildings. Highway 13 was built in the valley created by the fault in the hills. In Berkeley, the fault runs under Memorial Stadium where creep in the fault can easily be seen by the offset in the stadium walls.

The Hayward fault runs parallel to a number other local faults. To the west is the well known San Andreas fault. To the east is the Calaveras fault and further east is the Clayton-Marsh Creek-Greenville fault. All of these faults are created by the Pacific Plate traveling northward at a very slow rate. As the plate moves north, the different faults are created by the stress of the Pacific Plate rubbing against the North American Plate. Movement in the faults is expressed in two ways, creep or ruptures. Creep is very small movement along the faults and can be seen in small shifts in pavement or sidewalks. A rupture is a sudden and large movement along the fault, sometimes measured in feet. The stress of the Plates moving causes the faults to get locked up and build up stress. Creep relieves some fault stress, but not all of it. When the stress builds up enough to overcome any locking of the fault, then a rupture happens, which means an earthquake.





(Map courtesy of USGS)

## **The Bay Area in 1868**

The year 1868 was only twenty years after the start of the Gold Rush and California had been a state for only 18 years. The Gold Rush greatly increased the population in California, but there was still many places where it was rural and had a low population density. The Bay Area was slowly transitioning from the Pioneer to the Victorian era.

Like today, the major population centers were the three cities of San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. San Francisco had a population of 150,000 in 1870. San Francisco took up only the western quarter of the peninsula. Oakland and San Jose were much smaller at 12,000 and 9,000 respectively. In 1868, Oakland was only that area to the north west of Lake Merritt. The towns of San Antonio, Fruitvale, Brooklyn and Clinton were their own separate entities.

Outside of these three major cities, the population density was low. The 1870 census shows Hayward had a population of 504. The county seat of Alameda County, San Leandro, had a population of 426. San Lorenzo had a population of 158. In Washington Township, the towns were actually smaller; Alvarado was 364, Centerville 203 (1880), Niles 186 (1880), and Mission San Jose 246 (1880).

The East Bay was the breadbasket for the three larger towns, esp. San Francisco. Although cattle was the main industry in the East Bay before statehood, it was quickly transitioning to fruit orchards, potatoes, wheat, and hay. Jose de Jesus Vallejo, of Mission San Jose, was operating a flour mill near the mouth of Niles Canyon starting in 1852.

Along the East Bay shoreline, landings cropped up to move the produce and hay from the East Bay to San Francisco and beyond. There was Mowry's, Jarvis, Plummer's, Barron's, Warm Springs, Robert's, Hayward, Eden, and San Leandro landings. Two-masted scow schooners were sailing all over the bay moving the goods that were needed by the people of San Francisco.

The year 1868 was still the time of the horse and buggy. The first railway line in the East Bay was built in 1867, but it did not connect to the East Coast until 1869. There were two roads connecting Oakland with Southern Alameda County. The first was what is now East 14th and Mission Blvd. The second is now Hesperian, Alvarado, and Fremont Blvds. This was known years later as Highway 17 up until the freeway was built.

## **The Earthquake**

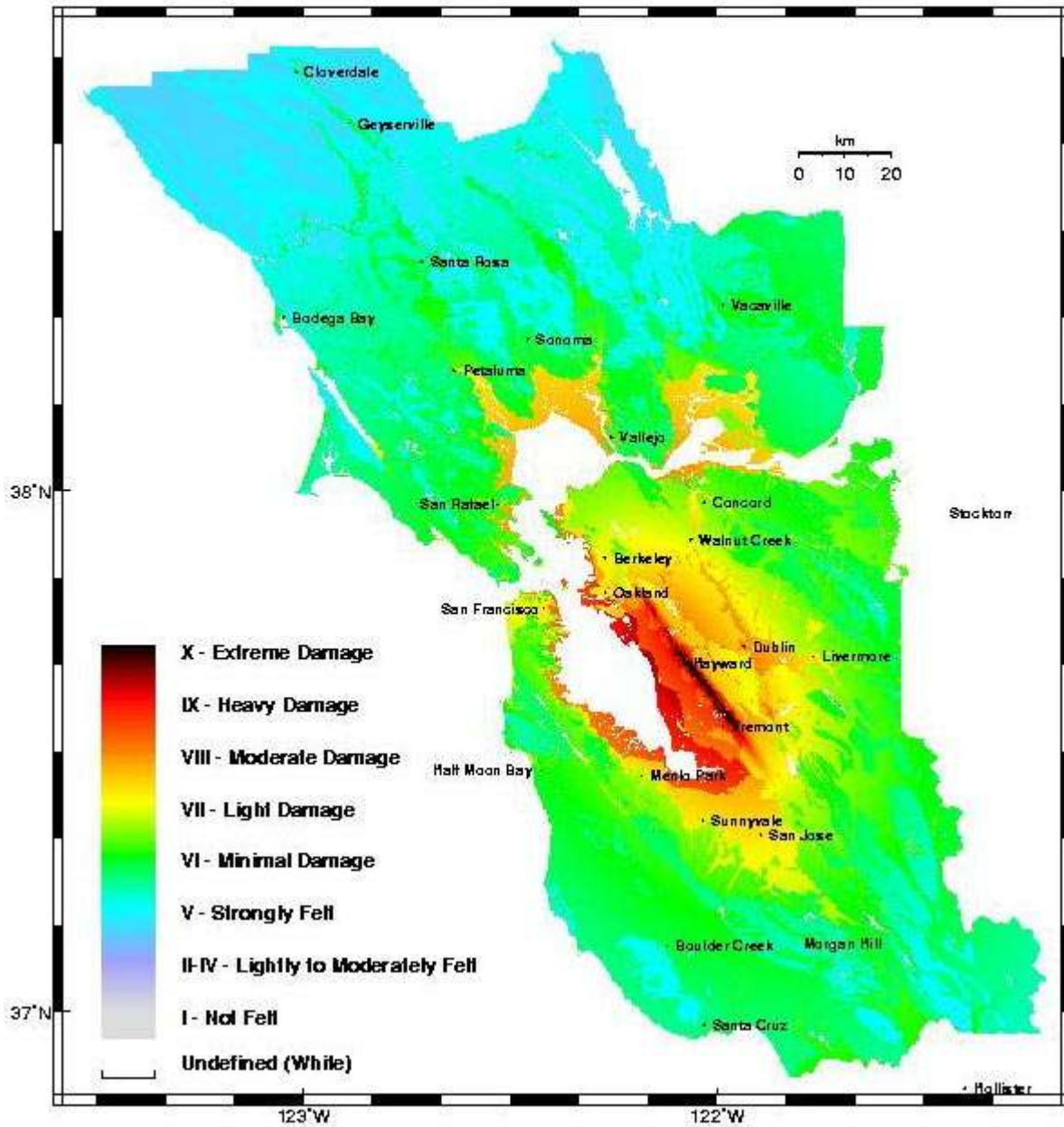
The main quake hit at 7:53 am, measuring a magnitude of 7.0. The shock traveled from the southwest to the northeast. A total of 36 aftershocks were recorded within 12 hours of the main earthquake. The major aftershocks were timed at 8:26 am, 8:44 am, 8:47 am, 9:11 am, 10:15 am, 3:12 pm, 3:17 pm, and 4:08 pm.

The main earthquake caused a crack to open in the ground from 6 inches to two feet. The crack was traced from Mills College in Oakland all the way to Warm Springs at the southern end of Alameda County. There was also an off shift in the land where the western part of the fault moved as much as six feet to the north. Displacement was seen in both creeks and fences crossing the fault.

# U.S.G.S. Estimated Intensity Map

1868 Earthquake on Hayward Fault

GMT Dec 17 09:39



*(Estimated Earthquake Intensity Map for the Bay Area - Map courtesy of USGS)*

## **The East Bay**

The East Bay was the area closest to the earthquake, with the fault running close or through most of the towns of the East Bay. The strongest shaking was felt here, but damage was low due to the low population and low number of brick buildings.

### **Fremont Area**

Fremont was incorporated in 1956. Before that there were the five towns of Mission San Jose, Centerville, Niles, Irvington, and Warm Springs. The reports on the earthquake used the original town names.

### **Mission San Jose**

Mission San Jose was built out of unbaked adobe bricks and wood. Adobe is not known for standing up well to the shaking of an earthquake. The 1868 earthquake destroyed the Mission Church. Witnessed by E.S. Ehrman, the roof of the church came crashing down, causing a large cloud of dust. Luckily the five mission bells were not damaged in the quake. Smaller nearby buildings to the Mission church were also damaged or destroyed by the earthquake.

Mr. N. Ainsworth, a Mission San Jose resident, said this about the earthquake; "I was curled up in a big rocking chair, reading, and my two sisters were outside playing, when suddenly there came a swaying of the house. This lasted only a short time, then the house began to shake in earnest. My sisters began to cry and scream. I jumped out of the chair to go to them, and ran from the room, bumping against both sides of two doors. I finally reached the porch and succeeded in catching hold of a post. I distinctly remember that the pump in the yard was pumping as if someone had hold of it; and small rocks on the hill in front of the house were rolling down the creek. The milk pans had been resting on shelves of slats, some pans slipped entirely out, some only halfway. The milk and cream were on the floor. My brother was hauling a load of wheat to San Jose. When the earthquake was at its worst, he thought his team was choking down and jumped off his wagon to find he could hardly stand. I was told at the time that the water spurted up in the streets of San Jose and out in the road between Milpitas and San Jose, to the height of several feet. The old Mission church, which was of adobe, was shaken down, as were several other buildings at the same place. On the mountain above the old Mission, much above a place called Peacock Springs, a great crack in the earth appeared, which looked as if the lower part of the mountain had parted and slipped down."

The adobe home built by Jose de Jesus Vallejo, at the corner of Mission and Washington, across from the church, was severely damaged in the earthquake.

### **Warm Springs**

Most of the damage in Warm Springs centered around Warm Springs Landings. It is in Warm Springs that the crack from the fault ended.

Mr. H. Curtner who owned a large farm in the Warm Springs area, reported the following; "The crack

past along the foot-hills at an elevation of 350 to 450 feet from Niles southward, back of Mission San Jose, disappearing near the county line. In some places the fissure showed a fault of 10 to 12 inches."

Mr. Durkee has this to say about the damage at Warm Springs Landing; "The warehouse and wharf on the slough fell, also Dixon's house. Cracks in the vicinity of Milpitas flowed artesian water for 48 hours after the shock."

### **Centerville**

The stores of C. J. Stevens and J. Salze were destroyed and most of the goods of both stores were lost. The home of Dr. Selfridge was partially destroyed, and his daughter was injured. Bamber's hotel was badly damaged after settling 2 feet.

Near Tyson's Lagoon (now Lake Elizabeth), Mrs. Tyson had this to say; "A tank swayed north, then south, and fell. The lagoon parted lengthwise down the middle and threw water and mud both ways. After the earthquake the lagoon was dry for 3 years." Another family member, H. Tyson had this report; "A crack went through the old Shinn place, crost the Centerville-Niles road about 0.6 miles southwest of the Southern Pacific Railway track, and past thru the Tyson Lagoon." Later, J. C. Shinn would report that after the earthquake, his father's home, sitting directly on the fault, was split in two, with one side dropping about a foot. Later analysis would indicate that there was a 30 cm drop along the fault near the Shinn property.

### **Irvington**

In Irvington, Mr. R. B. Crosswell reported the following; "Thru the north side of town a crack split the hillside, opening 7 or 8 inches and showing a fault for 8 or 10 inches. It crost the county road 500 feed north of the Southern Pacific Railway depot. Its trend was N. 45 degrees to 50 degrees W. From these low hills the crack seemed to pass over into the tule ponds north of town."

Another witness, J. McD. Preston had this to say about the earthquake many years later; "I was then about 15 years of age. My home was near Irvington. When the shock came, I was alone in the house with my baby brother. My mother was in the milk house, about 10 steps from the kitchen door. She called to me to get the baby. Tho I was thrown the length of the dining-room, I managed to get the child over my arm, face down, and a pillow on top. Then, falling and crawling, I worked my way back to the open kitchen door. My mother was on the ground. Every time she tried to get up, she was thrown again, and the milk in the buckets was spilt over her. My two brothers, my step-father, and the hired man were also down and were trying to get to the house by crawling and falling. As I set there, I could see the ground in waves like the ocean. After the main shock, I think we had 100 shocks during the first 24 hours. The ground opened; we traced a crack thru town, and the ground settled several inches in one place. Not a house was left with a chimney on it."



## Union City Area

In 1959, Union City was incorporated from the two towns of Alvarado and Decoto.

### Alvarado

The brick shop and stable of A. J. Lattin was destroyed. The wooded beams from the stable tumbled in such a way as to shield the horse in the stable from being hit by any falling debris. The brick store building, owned by J. J. Stokes, was destroyed with some loss to its contents. On the property of Mr. Dyer, an 8 foot fissure opened up. Most of the brick chimney's in town were destroyed or damaged. The bridge was damaged by the quake, making it useless.

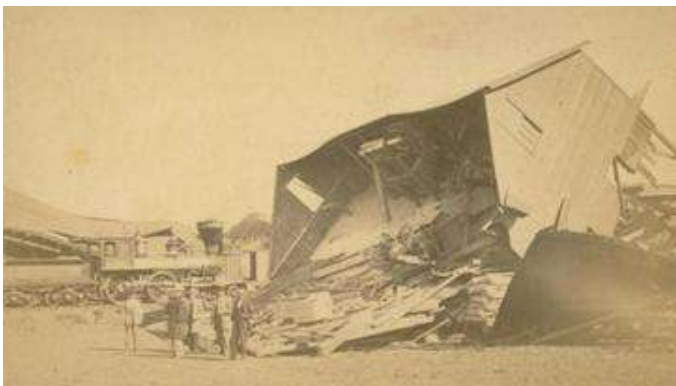
### Decoto

In 1868, Decoto was not quite setup as a town and was mostly a farming community. As the railroads were built, the town of Decoto would take shape. Mr. Decoto (one of three brothers for whom Decoto was named) had this to say about the earthquake: "Opposite of Decoto a crack appeared about one-third of the way up the slope. It opened 10 or 12 inches at the surface and faulted about as much on the plains side. The level lands waved like the ocean, and the waves seem to approach from the south"

## Hayward

The fault runs right through the downtown part of Hayward. Many older buildings show the fault creep fairly evidently.

A warehouse holding hundreds of stacked wheat sacks had collapsed, the roof sitting on the sacks. The flour mill of Morse & Hesleps had basically fallen over. The



*Flour Mill - Hayward (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*



*Warehouse - Hayward (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

entire building was leaning over to one side at a forty-five degree or more angle, almost like it had rolled over. The roof on the side that was leaning over slid off, exposing the interior of the second floor. A warehouse across the railroad tracks from the mill was also severely damaged.

A wooden house had one section settle so much that there was a slope between the two sections of the house. Pierce's house was also leaning to one side. One side of the foundation had collapsed tilting the other side up. Except for the tilt, the rest of the home was undamaged.



*Overview of Hayward (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

A later account from the *Hayward Journal* had this to say; "... two people were killed. The shocks continued at intervals for days afterwards. A great many people slept in tents for weeks following. Not a chimney hardly was standing. The Spoerer Hotel was knocked off its underpinnings and it shook about the plaster from its walls besides smashing the crockery and bending fixtures. The flour mill of P. C. Heslep in the lower part of town was overturned and the walls of Edmonson's Warehouse caved in and damaged thousands of sacks of grain. Mrs. Lockwood resided in the house later owned by William Pierce. She was inside when it turned over and landed her in the cellar. The shock made her crazy. The peculiar phenomena was the old fence long since missing running up the side road to Hayward Hotel back of this office, one or two boards being bent like a bow as though forced together. The ground cracked open to the width of three or four



*Pierce's House - Hayward (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

inches and a crack extended from this place to Niles along the foothills. People thought the valley was going out of sight and they began to think of the hereafter. Large numbers congregated in Kimball's Grove and Rev. Seymour presided. There was no joke in the matter and the pastor prayed eloquently and appealed to that power above to save them from the expected destruction."



*House in Hayward (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

## San Leandro

The morning of the earthquake, the Court and County offices, located at Clark and Davis Streets, were not open. Coming early to work, J. W. Josselyn, Deputy County Clerk, was already at work in the Courthouse. When the earthquake struck, he stepped through the front entrance of the building, where he was struck by the falling stone cornice, killing him. Under-sheriff Borein was injured when he was stuck in the head by debris. He was staying in his quarters, next to the jail. He was able to escape from his quarters, but he left the jail keys behind. The five prisoners were able to be released from the jail, after the door was broken down. The attempts to get them out through a windows failed. As soon as the earthquake ended, the four persons who were waiting in the County Clerks office, were able to climb out through a window, over some debris. The Courthouse was completely destroyed in the earthquake.



*Alameda County Courthouse (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*



*Alameda County Courthouse (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*



*Closeup of Courthouse (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

The Estudillo home was damaged. Store and homes in San Leandro suffered some damage. It was reported that only one brick chimney survived the earthquake. Like further south, fissures opened in the streets and fields. The earthquake seemed to affect the local water sources, as the springs near the County hospital stopped flowing, and new springs were created by some of the fissures. The dry San Leandro Creek was soon running with a foot and a half of water in it.

After the earthquake, the Court and County offices were set up in the Methodist Church on Hays Street. Quick repairs were ordered on the Courthouse. The damaged jail was covered by a



*Estudillo Home (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

wooden building, with iron cells. A fireproof building was constructed for the Recorder's office. The repairs and construction were completed before the end of the year. On January 4, 1869 the Court and County offices were moved in the repaired Courthouse.

At Robert's Landing, R. C. Vosc reported the following; "Our house broke into three pieces, each part falling outward. A boiler of hot water was on the stove, and with the first deafening jolt, the hot water came my way, giving me a bath I have never forgotten. Horses fell to the ground and men clung to some quince trees nearby. Captain Peterson, of the steamer San Lorenzo, who is now deceased, was walking along the road to Robert's Landing when he heard a great rumble off across the fields toward San Leandro. He looked quickly in the direction and over a mile away could see the great wave rapidly approaching. He rushed to the side of the road and had caught hold of the fence by the time the shock broke. Near him on the road a 6-mule team was drawing a load of grain, and all the mules fell flat and could not regain their feet until the great jolt was over. During the 3 or 4 succeeding days there were 150 shocks; none, of course, with anywhere near the extent of the heavy one."

## Oakland

In Oakland, most of the brick buildings suffered some form of damage. The majority of the homes were built of wood, so the overall damage was fairly low. Boadman's brick building on Twelfth Street had its firewall come crashing down, damaging the awning. A Mrs. Cord had rushed out of her house and was standing next to the Boadman's building when the firewall collapsed. A single brick struck her on the head, causing injury and loss of consciousness. Shattuck and Hillegass' building, where the Police Court was located, was shaken and deemed unsafe for occupation. The selves had fallen in Ratcliff's grocery on Eighth Street. With a crash, the chimney of the "News" newspaper office fell through the Editorial office, missing all inside.

The Broadway wharf buckled during the earthquake, causing 50 tons of coal to be spilled into the estuary. Trestles through out Oakland were misaligned because of the earthquake.

The original home and the guest building of the Peraltas, located at what is now Coolidge Ave. and Paxton Ave., were destroyed by the earthquake. Peralta Hacienda Historical Park has concrete markers for the location of the original Peralta home. The Peraltas rebuilt in 1870 with an Italianate Victorian



(Courtesy Bancroft Library)

farmhouse which still stands in the Fruitvale district of Oakland. The Peraltas were the original grant owners of Rancho San Antonio.

At the time of the earthquake, construction was taking place on the First Baptist Church of Oakland, at the corner of 14th and Brush. Deacon N. J. Thompson was near the top of the steeple when the earthquake struck, he yelled down to his companions to stop the foolishness and stop shaking the steeple!

After the initial quake, an order was issued by Mayor Merritt to do a safety check on all chimneys before any fires were lit in them. In the towns of San Antonio, Brooklyn and Clinton (now part of southern Oakland), the earthquake was felt stronger, causing the railroad to San Antonio to be displaced, and the brick building of Fredrick Schimelpfenings to collapse, with other brick buildings receiving some form of damage.

The Deaf and Dumb Asylum was under construction at the time of the earthquake and suffered major damage. Both the side and front walls had large portions fall down. The other two walls would have to be torn down and rebuilt. The chimneys were all knocked down. The building, built of stone, was touted as one of the strongest-built buildings in the state.

In his history of Alameda County, Woods had this to say about the earthquake in Oakland; "In comparison to the desolation sustained in the neighboring towns, Oakland did not suffer much damage. The casualties in crockery and glass ware were very great, and many chimneys were laid low. Portions of the wharves were carried away in some instances, while walls were cracked in almost every house and deep excitement reigned supreme in every household."

## San Francisco

With San Francisco having more brick buildings and more buildings in general, the amount of damage was more extensive than the East Bay, even though the Hayward Fault is in the East Bay.

The San Francisco City Hall was so damaged that all business with the City was suspended. The front facade had loose stones, held in by their own weight. Inside City Hall, the walls were cracked with gaping holes in a few places. The upper story of the building was a total loss. The Probate Court and Twelfth District Court, on the first floor, were severely damaged. At the time the opinions varied about whether the building could be saved or not. During the earthquake, the prisoners were panicking. Because they could not escape from the building, they all feared that the building would collapse around them.



*Battery St. (courtesy Bancroft Library)*

Judge Provines called his Court to order to release those held for drunkenness and ordering Captain McElory to send the other prisoners to the County Jail, which had not received any damage.

On Stockton Street, the center spire on the Jewish Synagogue was thrown down and the rear wall was knocked down. Most of the other buildings on the street had cracked plaster and numerous broken windows. Pickerings drug store and the office of Dr. R. Cole were badly damaged. The glass bottles in the drug store were shattered and strewn about. A number of statues of Dr. Coles had fallen and been damaged. He also lost furniture and expensive glassware. At 1323 Stockton St., the building of Mr. Lendhardt, a carpet dealer, was seriously damaged. The front wall was torn off the side of the building and was in danger of collapse.

On Pacific Street, those buildings west of Stockton St. did rather well during the earthquake. East of Stockton St. the damage was more severe. The building at the corner of Dupont (Grant Ave.) and Pacific had the rear wall open two or three inches. The building housed a lodging house, two restaurants, a drug store, butcher shop, boot store, grocery store, and bakery. During the earthquake, one of the bakers, in exiting the building, was struck the leg by a falling brick. Luckily he was only slightly injured. Bottles and merchandise in the drug store and grocery store were scattered.

In Chinatown, then bounded by Kearney, Stockton, Washington and Pacific, the brick firewall of a building collapsed and smashed a small shanty building in the alleyway. One Chinese woman was stuck by falling timber was badly cut on the head. Other firewalls were partially fallen or damaged so badly that they eventually had to be torn down.

On Sansome Street, there were quite a number of buildings damaged. Most of the damage was south of Washington Street. At the corner of Merchant and Sansome, the Deffebach & Co. building had its firewall knocked down. The building at the corner of Clay and Sansome, occupied by George W. Clark, wall-paper dealer, was slightly damaged. A building on the same corner, occupied by a grocery store, the Empire Restaurant, and Kohler's musical and toy store, had its firewall destroyed and windows were smashed. In the rush to get out of the Restaurant, the owner, Mr. Blumenthal and two other men were severely injured. The building of importers of crockery and glassware, Hayes and Lawton, suffered damage of their stock. Some of the walls of the American Theater building were knocked down. The awning in the front of "The Hole in the Wall" saloon was smashed. The Bank of California at Sansome and California, was damaged with stones moved out of their places.

On Washington Street, the perfume dealer, C. Paturel, lost a few bottles and had his windows smashed. The drug store of McBoyle & Co. was badly wrecked, with the shelving thrown down. The windows in the Gros' Drug Store were broken. Mr. Peter Alfritz was struck in the foot by a brick falling from the firewall, when he was making his escape



*Railroad House (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

from the building of Delapaine & Co.

West of Montgomery Street on Clay Street the buildings were not very damaged. A few broken windows and cracked plaster was all that could be seen. East on Montgomery, the damage was severe. This was ground that was reclaimed from the Bay. The firewall of the McAllister's building fell down, striking a woman pedestrian and breaking her leg. The building of the California Wine Works lost its firewall, burying a forty year old Chinese man by the name of King Young and William Strong. Both were killed by the falling bricks. Mr. Strong was in the Mining Press office and rushed into the street for safety. Those that stayed in the building suffered no injuries. The cigar and tobacco warehouse of A. S. Rosenbaum and the adjacent Railroad House were almost destroyed. The Clay Street ends of these buildings were completely collapsed.



*Reimstein Clothing (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

At the Clay Street wharf, the ships swayed back and forth as if on rough seas. The wharfs themselves, shook and trembled. Piles of wheat and brick fell with some spilling into the bay. The horses on the wharf panicked and reared. All the while, the waters of the Bay looked calm.

On California Street, most of the damage was on reclaimed ground. At 314 California Street, the clothing factory of S. Reinstein, was damaged with the foundation sinking sixteen to eighteen inches. Being a brick

building, this kind of damage would cause the building to be rebuilt. The carriage depot of O. F. Willey was also damaged. The building occupied by the Pacific Pump Manufacturing Company and an adjoining one story building were completely destroyed. The walls fell down, the roof fell in and the floors were out of position.

On Sacramento Street, between Montgomery and Sansome, the damage to buildings was pretty severe. On the Donahoe's Bank building, the plastering was cracked in several places. The building next to it, occupied by John Hodge & Co, stationers, George Stevens, printer, and Levin & Gilmore, tobacconists, had several large openings in the walls. Across the street the old Knickerbocker Engine House, occupied by A. J. Plate, an arms dealer, settled ten or twelve inches. The building next to it, housing Black, Robbins & Co, paper dealers, Wigmore's furniture, and Turnbull & Smith's printing office, also settled almost a foot. The Deeth & Starr bakery was badly damaged.

On Market Street, the lumber yard of Blythe and Wetherbee had the lumber pile knocked down, but no real damage was apparent. At the box factory of Hobbs & Gillmore, the chimney for the factory engine, collapsed, taking with it about



*Bush & Market (Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

twenty square feet of the roof. Those working under this section of the building escaped any injury. The workers in the factory, about two or three hundred men, rushed from the building. Mr. Seaver, fell over a pile of collapsed lumber, breaking his left arm. At the Santa Cruse lime and fire-brick depot, bricks were knocked down and broken. The old building of Coffee & Risdon, plus the new building being constructed, were demolished by the earthquake, causing numerous injuries among the construction workers. The ground around the building sank a couple of feet, and a fissure opened up. At the drug store of George Dickey, glassware and other items were damaged.

On Fremont Street, a new building for Wilson and Doble was slightly damaged. The top of the walls came down and the foundation was shattered. The sign for the Pacific Saw Manufacturing Company was thrown to the ground and smashed. Chimneys and furnaces sustained damage at the brass foundry of William Garrett.

At the corner of Mission and Fremont Streets was the Brokaw's Mill, which suffered a significant amount of damage. The most damage was to the storage room for moldings. The street in front of the Mill sank two or three feet.



*(Courtesy Bancroft Library)*



*(Courtesy Bancroft Library)*

The Union Foundry was heavily damaged. At the center of the building, where a pile of pig iron was sitting, the ground sank a couple of feet. This caused the pig iron to fall against one of the walls, smashing things, and causing a fair bit of damage. A few of the employees were injured because of the earthquake.

At Fremont and Howard Streets, the Gas Works suffered damage. Part of one of the side walls collapsed into the street. Two other walls suffered enough damaged that they had to be demolished. The chimney toppled and caused further damage.

The Customs House, housing Customs, the Internal Revenue Service and the Post Office was damaged. The walls opened up two or three inches, causing the Post Office to close and the Customs work to be moved to rooms

occupied by the Internal Revenue Service.



The Marine Hospital at Rincon Point was so badly damaged that it was not considered safe to occupy it. The patients were moved to another, safer, location. At the City and County Hospital, the rear and eastern walls were cracked. The patients panicked and many had to be restrained by the nurses to keep them from fleeing down the stairs and outside.

At the Mission Woollen Mills, the floor settled causing some of the machinery to come out of alignment. Settling also occurred in the boiler house, but no damage was done to the machinery. At the Deaf and Dumb Asylum on Fifteenth Street, the upper portion of the wall was thrown down, falling into the girls' bathroom and out onto the yard. The girls had just finished in the bathroom and had left before the earthquake struck.

All across the city, various other buildings were damaged or had contents damaged. Many brick walls and chimneys sustained damage. Cracks in walls were found all through the city.

## **San Jose, Peninsula and other Areas**

### **San Jose Area**

In San Jose, the Presbyterian Church and Moody's Mill were damaged. The Baptist Church, Masonic Hall, Lyon's Store and many other buildings were slightly damaged. City Hall and the Public Schools reported no damage. The St. Joseph Church was badly damaged in the earthquake.

In Milpitas, W. Bellou reported the following; "Along Coyote Creek, the ground was cracked from Boot's ranch to the San Francisco Bay, the cracks being on the bay side and following the winding of the creek. As in 1906 much water was ejected from the cracks, and Coyote Creek rose."

In Santa Clara the most damage reported was of fallen chimneys.

### **The Peninsula**

In Redwood City, the American Hotel was damaged, as was the Court House and Public School, which had to be let out early. The firewall on Merrill's Block tumbled down.

J. A. Graves relates his experience of the earthquake from San Mateo County. He and his father, with some Chinese laborers, were sacking potatoes in the field when the earthquake struck. The field was within view of San Bruno Mountain. Here is what he said:

"All at once my father called to me and said: 'Look at that fool mountain!' Beginning at the northern end, it was dancing up and down. The motion was traveling southerly."

"While we were looking, my father again said: 'Look at that freight train!' which was proceeding north on the San Francisco tracks. The train was weaving up and down like a snake. The next instant we all saw, coming towards us from the northeast, a wave of earth. It looked to me to be six feet high. When it reached us we were all knocked down, the sacks of potatoes were overthrown. I felt a peculiar

weakness in my knees and could not get up for a few minutes. I was not frightened. It was some sort of an electric affection of the knees. My father complained of the same feeling. The Chinamen shouted to each other in terror and as soon as they got on their feet they started towards our home, where they were staying in a small house near the barn. They never stopped at their house, but kept on to the village of Colma, half a mile beyond, where they caught a stage which took them to the street-car line to the Mission in San Francisco. They did not come back for three days. "

"My father and I sacked and sowed up the potatoes that were dug, gathered the sacks into a pile, covered them with weeds and potato vines, to prevent sunburn, and then went home. When we got there, my mother called to us to come to the milk-room. About a dozen pans of milk had been milked that morning. Every pan was empty. They did not turn over. The milk simply splashed out with the swaying motion. "

"Between the first shock at 8 o'clock in the morning and midnight, there were thirty-seven distinct shocks, none of them of great severity. My greyhound, Flora, had a warm spot on a hillside, back of the house, where she would lie in the sun and was protected from the wind which came from the ocean, but passed over her. A short time before any of us felt any of the additional shocks, she would come running to the house whining with terror. I suppose that she was that sensitive that, lying on the ground, she detected the coming shock before it manifested itself by motion. "

## **Other Areas**

In the Santa Cruz mountains an eyewitness described seeing the tall redwood trees swaying like "fishing-rods" and the dead limbs came crashing down to the ground. Rocks and boulders were loosened by the earthquake and rolled down the hillside, blocking various roads. It was reported that Pescadero Creek ran muddy for a few minutes, with gases bubbling up. When a match was put to the bubbles they would flame up for a second, showing that the bubbles came from some flammable gas. In Gilroy, the earthquake mostly damaged just the local chimneys.

In Marin County the earthquake was easily felt, but the strength was not too great. The chimney at the County Courthouse was damaged. In Petaluma and San Rafael, most of the damage was done to brick chimneys. A large stone building had its front thrown down. One corner of the American Hotel was so badly cracked that the building would have to be demolished. Grocery and drug stores suffered from lots of broken glass. In Santa Rosa, a large number of brick buildings and chimneys sustained damage.

The earthquake was felt as far away as Marysville and Grass Valley, but there were no reports of any damage.

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