

Earthquakes in Umatilla County; --- Oregon  
(From the Walla Walla Union of July 17, 1938.)

The earthquake which gave Walla Walla folks the jitters Wednesday night was probably the most severe felt here since the one which occurred the night of December 14, 1872 according to the records in the office of the Walla Walla Union. Quakes have been felt here at intervals since, but none were marked down as so severe.

The 1872 quake was a real one. It came at 10:03 P.M. and was the first felt since the country was settled by the whites. A trembling sensation was felt, accompanied by a sound resembling the rush of a heavy blast of wind. Next houses, trees, etc. began rocking from southeast to northeast.

Chandeliers in stores and saloons swung one to two feet and kept it up for 15 minutes. Pendulum clocks stopped, Everyone rushed to the streets.

At the foot of the Blue Mountains the shocks were more severe, locked doors were thrown open, people were hurled from their beds to the floor and chickens were shaken from their roosts. Cattle ran about in terror and dogs howled. No damage of consequence was reported.

Ten minutes after the first shock another was felt, and other light shocks were felt during the night. North of the Snake river over 100 shocks were reported felt during the night. The shock was felt at Portland, The Dalles, Wallula, Helena, Victoria, Colville, and elsewhere.

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..... residents of this region agreed that the focus of the disturbance (July 15, 1936) must have been a short distance west of Freewater. Although the quake was felt over a wide area of the northwest, the only actual damage was confined to the Freewater-Umapine district.

.....The shock was felt in all of eastern Washington, much of North Central Idaho, the northern tier of counties in Oregon, and was recorded on seismographs at Spokane, Seattle, Vancouver, Berkeley and Pasadena.

At Mont St. Michel's scholasticate, the nearest seismograph to the reported epicenter, a perfect record was obtained. The first shock was recorded at 11:09.30, and it lasted about 5 minutes. No primary or secondary shocks were recorded. The indicator was knocked off the recording paper by the violence of the first shock, but was returned by an automatic device.

- ... plaster cracked at Veterans' Hospital, at city hall...
- ... Cracking of cornice and smokestack at Freewater H.S. ...
- ... \$1000 through denting cans in the warehouse of Utah Canning Co...
- ... damage to cans in the Burke cannery .....
- ... fire in the bakery from spilled grease
- ... loss of a cornice from the U.P. Stage building..
- ... smashing of bottles in the liquor store, groceries, and drug stores ...
- ... fifty percent of the chimneys (Freewater) were twisted or shaken loose.

The damage at Milton was considerably less than at Freewater. A concrete house was badly cracked at Umapine, while it was reported that slides had occurred in an earth cut of the road leading to Umapine. Slikes were also reported in the Walla Walla river and Mill creek canyons. A chimney at a house at Umapine fell through the roof.