

QUAKE SPELLED RUIN IN SAN JOSE

GILES B. LUMBARD WRITES OF
GREAT TRAGEDY.

Havoc and Death Wrought at Golden Gate—As Former Iowa Cityan Viewed It.

Mrs. T. M. Thompson and Mrs. Ed. Boerner are in receipt of a letter written in San Jose, Cal., by their kinsman, Giles B. Lumbard, formerly of Iowa City, which gives a thrilling and intimate account of the recent California earthquake and holocaust.

Lacking the stereotyped stiltedness of the "stories," written to sell, Mr. Lumbard's account, his impressions of the tragedy and its outcome, and his own experiences and those of his family are of interest to Iowa City people, because of their likeness to an unadorned, heart-to-heart talk with an old friend.

Mr. Lumbard, among other things, has the following to say.

A Personal View.

I will try to tell you a little of my own experiences during the past weeks, and try to describe some of the scenes and experiences that have come under my own observation.

After the first heavy shock was over, we dressed and went down town. A fire had started in one of the best buildings in town, at the corner of 2nd and San Fernando streets. It burned about a quarter of the block bounded by 1st, 2nd, Santa Clara and San Fernando streets. By now it was under control and nearly out. Another fire destroyed a small hotel in Santa Clara street. In this building six or seven people were burned to death. As soon as we reached the business part of the city, we began to see the effect of the shake. A few of the brick buildings went down into a pile of brick. Many others were partly destroyed. At the Ideal Tea Co.'s store, the whole interior of the store fell. Hobson's store fell flat, as did also the Elks hall.

New Ills Discovered.

Now that the excitement is a little over they find many buildings injured that at first seemed all right. The large box factory next to our fruit packing house between us and the depot, was completely destroyed and is nothing but a pile of kindling. Our building was not hurt at all, except a few lights of glass broken. You know the next day after the earthquake as soon as there was a train leaving here, which they thought would go through to the city, Glenn and I started for there, to see if we could find Floyd (a son of Mr. Lumbard). We got within six or seven miles of there then had to walk. For the last few miles, from the train, we saw the people fleeing from the city. The roads were thick with teams and automobiles, and people on foot, all getting away from the burning city. We left the train between Ocean View and Valencia street station. This, you know, was the second day of the fire, and what is called the Mission valley was burning. We had to go away round, skirting the foot of the high hills, and we could look over the city and see a thousand acres of burning buildings from where we were passing. And we saw scenes that would make your heart ache.

Some Sad Sight.

I saw a woman with little children, each carrying a bundle, stopping every little while to look back, then turn and wearily tramp on. Old women were wheeling barrows laden with bedding and cooking utensils. Baby buggies were loaded with household goods. Automobiles were filled high with trunks and bundles: then a lone Chinaman with his little cart: rich and poor, a great procession—all trying to get to the open country. And there were thousands and thousands of them, for you know there were from 200,000 to 300,000 burned out of their homes. We passed round this fire and reached the hills and upper part of the city above Van Ness avenue. Another big fire, the one that had burned all the business part of the city, was now up among the residences of the millionaires on upper California and Sacramento streets, and here we could see the great mansions, many of them costing over a million dollars each, great oceans of flames, and miles of it too.

A Sad Sight

A Fearful Sight.

I guess it was as fearful a sight as the world had ever witnessed. Most of Thursday night, we were in the streets, moving back as the fire came nearer. Every few minutes we would hear the dynamite explosions as they were blowing down block after block of dwellings, trying to check the spread of the fire. The streets were full of refugees, who had lost their homes and were being slowly driven back.

Unfortunate Women.

I saw thousands of women and girls, who had been burned out the day before, way down in the rooming houses, in the business part of the city. They had been slowly making their way back from the fire. Nearly every one was dragging her trunk tied by a rope in the handle, and some of those poor girls had dragged their trunks for over a mile up the sidewalks of those steep hills. They could go only a few steps, until they would have to stop and rest.

Let me tell you a wonderful fact. In all that vast fleeing throng, I did not see a woman weep. Their faces looked drawn and dazed, but all seemed willing to help one another. At one place, we helped an old woman drag her trunk across the street and start it down a hill, and as Addie had filled our pockets with sandwiches before I started from home, I offered two and she took them thankfully saying she had not eaten a thing since the night before and this was near midnight again—and she was only one.

Martial Law Rules.

The city was under military rule and the soldiers confiscated nearly all the conveyances for hospital and relief work. In front of one mansion we passed, was standing a splendid automobile. The people had closed up their home and with what they could carry, were out on the walk only waiting for the fire to get a little nearer before leaving their palatial home to go up in flames (which it did a little later). Just as we passed three soldiers rode up, and one said; "The United States Military wants that machine." The owner demurred; The soldier paid no attention, dismounted, took the name and number of the machine, filled out a blank and said; "Here is a receipt for your machine; the government will pay for it," ordered the ladies, some of whom were already in it, to get out, put a soldier in and off they went. and it was the same thing all through the city.

Exorbitant Prices

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A friend of mine paid \$250 to an expressman to haul a load of household goods a mile or less. About one o'clock Friday morning we went to the home of a friend, some ways beyond the fire and lay down and rested. Then we had a bite to eat.

Outdoors All Night.

We spent all of Friday among the people on the streets and in the parks and came home Friday night. We saw a boy friend of Floyd's who had seen and talked with him about 9 o'clock in the morning after the earthquake, so we knew that he was safe. As near as can be learned now 10,000 acres were burned over, about 15 square miles and this took all of the business and the best of the residence portion of the city.

gence portion of the city.

San Jose Acts Nobly.

I wish you could see the way our city of San Jose has taken hold of the burden so suddenly laid upon her. Everyone seemed to forget our own loss, which is not small (about \$3,000,000) and every one turned out to help the homeless ones from San Francisco.

Every lodge, society, church and club formed its relief corps, and opened headquarters near the depot. We gave our packing house for an emergency hospital as it was so handy to the depot. By Friday night we had a fully equipped hospital with at least 150 beds, plenty of trained nurses and lots of help, and two big cooking ranges set up in a yard next door, and by Saturday night we were having 150 or more people here all of the time.

Most of them were just tired out and exhausted, having slept out of doors two or three nights.

Deeds of Samaritans.

We gave them food, clothing and a place to sleep, and then got them free transportation to their friends wherever they might want to go.

Many Sad Scenes.

We see many sad scenes here at the hospital. We have husbands hunting for wives; mothers for children; and children for parents, separated from each other in the city. Hundreds are in this condition. We had one awful case here, a mother and her baby. Her husband deserted her. A baby was born in the park in the city after she was driven from her home by the fire. It was only two days old when they brought her here. She was very sick but is getting better now.

San Jose Does Her Duty.

This patient has a private room in one of our office rooms, and has two trained nurses who do nothing but attend to her case, one for day and one for night. She lost everything she had except the clothes which she wore. She even lost her wrap on her way here and this is only one case out of thousands. We have had over 20,000 refugees from San Francisco come to San Jose, and we helped every one of them.

Dramatic club success—"Profes.

Iowa City Press-Citizen

Iowa City, IA

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