

Summary of Personal Accounts

Description: [Journal entry of postmaster at Hebron, Utah](#)
Author: Huntsman, Orson W.
[Info Categories:](#) B, E, G, I, N, P

Description: [Excerpt from a town history \(Enterprise, Utah\)](#)
Author: "Enterprise"
[Info Categories:](#) E, I, N, P

Description: [Letter from woman in Pine Valley to brother in Scotland](#)
Author: Bracken, Janet
[Info Categories:](#) B, E, P

Description: [Excerpt from family history: born in Gunlock, Utah on day of earthquake](#)
Author: Bracken, Erma Bowler
[Info Categories:](#) P

Information Categories

A -- Aid:

provide medical services, shelter, donations, loans, advice, encouragement, implement safety measures

B -- Building Damage:

structure itself plus windows and chimneys (typically damage visible from outside the building)

E -- Earthquake Description:

where, when, duration, direction, sound, motion, number and timing of aftershocks

G -- Geologic Effects:

changes at the Earth's surface, fault scarps, rockfalls, landslides, ground cracks, ground subsidence, sand boils, water spouts; effects on springs, lakes, wells

H -- Humor:

I -- Impact:

changes in daily routine; rumors; influx of reporters, politicians, cost in dollars

L -- Lifelines:

effects on transportation: roads, bridges, railroads, airports

effects on communications: telephone, telegraph

effects on power, gas, water, and sewer lines

effects on dams

N -- Nonstructural Effects:

effects on plaster, furnishings (typically damage or rearrangement of furnishings visible inside a building)

P -- People:

effects on and responses to, during and after; deaths, injuries, near misses

R -- Recovery:

clean up, rebuild

S -- Scientific:

explanation of the day

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Excerpt from: Diary of Orson Welcome Huntsman

Submitted by: Erma Bowler Bracken
Enterprise, Utah
December 1995

Explanatory Notes:

1. At the time of this diary entry Mr. Huntsman was living in the pioneer town of Hebron, Utah, located on Shoal Creek in the northwest part of Washington County. This town site had been a problem to its residents because the water supply was unreliable in dry years. However, they were divided in whether or not to abandon the town. Following the 1902 earthquakes which severely damaged the buildings of Hebron, the residents decided to sell their water rights and move to Enterprise. This finally took place in 1905. [This information is from the Hebron Cemetery Historical Marker erected in 1989.]

2. In February of 1902 (9 months before the earthquake) Mr. Huntsman's home burned down. He then put up a slab shanty to house his family while building a new rock house.

Sunday 28th. Arrived home on Sunday 28th after a long, cold, hard trip with good big loads of lumber. Then we renew our work on the rock house, which Chris Ammon finished mason work on the tenth day of October.

October. The next thing is to do the carpenter work, get the roof on, etc., but not having shingles enough to finish the roof, lack six thousand, and as I was all the carpenter that I could get and Frank Hunt was depending on me to do the work on his house, making so much work in all, so my wife and little Lamond took the team and went to Parowan and got the shingles needed to finish roof. They returned home on...

Saturday, the first of November, and I just got the roof partly on and got two of rooms partly finished and moved into, when the 17th of November (1902) there came such a severe earthquake at about the noon hour (12) that it almost upset every house in the town, chimneys from housetops fell in all directions, and porches came to the earth. Women and children came running out of their houses hollowing and screaming, gathered in the streets, and the earth would shake and tremble about every five or ten minutes, all that afternoon and night and, in fact, for weeks and months it would tremble and shake, insomuch that I never did do any more work on my rock house.

Most all the men folks were out of town off at work at the mining camps at the time of the earthquake. Most all the houses of the town were made of brick or rock, so the people all gathered together at my place and the tithing grainery to sleep at nights for some time, and they did not sleep in my rock house either, but my little slab house came in good play. As I said before, it was about 11 x 14 feet and there were over 30 persons make their beds on the floor to sleep, but they did not sleep much until they got used to the shaking and rocking of the earth. You could hear them all night, one saying to the other, "There, do you hear it?" "There, do you feel it?" Sure, it was laughable to hear them and to see them,

especially the first day of the earthquake, more especially the young women. When they would hear the noise a coming they would crowd up together like sheep, as if one would save the other. When the first shake came I was working at the work bench under a willow shed, when I heard what I supposed was a whirlwind. I looked to see where it was. I began to teeter to and fro and the willows over my head were shaking. I neither could see or feel any wind. The next second I looked and saw chimneys [chimneys] falling from housetops in every direction, no wind, the day was clear and beautiful as a summers morning. This earthquake will not soon be forgotten by hundreds of people. It was felt for hundreds of miles around, rocks was seen falling from mountain tops, but so far as I have been able to learn, it gave our little town and people rather the hardest shaking of any, for some of our houses were not safe to live in any more, and all were damaged more or less, except my rock house. No cracks about it, yet it was the tallest house in town and the chimney was the highest in town. It stayed upright. After all was over I looked to see it falling but it was shaking to beat time. My daughter, Lenora, came running out of the back door, stooped over with both hands holding her head. It looked for the house to fall on her, or at least the chimney looked as though it would sure come down on her before she could possibly get out of its way. I know of a surety it leaned three feet one way and then the other. My wife and I started to run to see if Arthur's folks were all right, when Lois came running out with her two little girls, one under her arm and leading the other, saying they were all right but every "damn" dish in the house was broken. Chris Ammon, the stone mason (a Norwegian) was just finishing a rock house for Frank Hunt, just laying the last rock on one of the gable ends, but he could not make the rock lay still. He soon discovered what was up, and in a second's time he was on the ground a running. Did not stop to come down the ladder but jumped from the scaffel [scaffold] to the ground. We had not as yet done any sleeping in our new house, slept in tent and wagon box and done most of our living in the slab house. The shaking up we got on the 17th of this month put a stop to all work, as it unsettled everybody, and I and family decided we did not want a rock house, therefore, I was thrown out of a job.

The 18th was fair but cloudy and commenced snowing some time that night and snowed hard the next three days, clearing up in afternoon of the third day, 21st, and turned very cold, and there is no school or meeting and the cold weather does not stop the earth quaking day or night, but the quakes grow weaker and farther between. I think they will quit some time.

December. December comes in cold and shakey. The people of Hebron are now beginning to talk of vacating this old town and moving to Enterprise. I only hope they do more than talk. I have been talking that way for years, but the most of them would get mad whenever I would speak of moving the town. If the people do tear up and move, even now late as it is, it will be a good thing for them and boom to Enterprise, but it would have been much better all around had they moved long ago, but better late than never.

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Excerpt from: History of Enterprise by Joseph Fish, p. 198-199

Submitted by: Erma Bowler Bracken
Enterprise, Utah
December 1995

Monday, November 17 was a pleasant day, with no wind or clouds. But about noon there was sound like the rushing of a wind. All at once, the earth began to shake and the chimneys of houses and porches began to fall in all directions and the people came rushing out of their houses and gathered in groups in the street, as they were afraid that the earth would open and swallow them. Rocks were rolling from the mountain sides. One woman rushed out of her house with a child under one arm and leading another and said, "We are all right, but every damned dish in the house is broken." Most every house in the place was made of brick or rock and everyone of them was cracked from top to bottom; some of them quite bad. This earthquake was felt for a hundred miles around, but it appeared to have been the hardest at Hebron. These shocks, though a little lighter, continued all the afternoon at intervals, and as for that, for some weeks after, but gradually grew less and finally ceased altogether.

The people were now afraid to sleep in their houses, it being thought dangerous. They gathered together and part of them slept in the tithing granary that was made of lumber and 38 slept in Huntsman's slab shanty 11 by 14 feet that he had put up after his house had burned down in February. There was little sleep that night, in their crowded condition, their excitement, and then there were slight shocks during the night which again excited them.

The next day it commenced snowing and continued for three days and turned cold. This made it very bad for them as very few dared to sleep in their houses, because some of them were damaged so bad that it was dangerous to occupy them. During the holidays the people had partially recovered from their scare, most of them had gone back to their houses and during the holidays they had some dances. But some of their houses did not look very safe to live in. So ended the year 1902, cold and shaky. It is needless to say that this shaking up stopped all building and improvements.

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**Letter from: Janet Bracken of Pine Valley, Utah to her brother John McMurtrie in
Scotland**

Submitted by: Erma Bowler Bracken (daughter-in-law)
Enterprise, Utah
December 1995

Feb. 9th, 1903
Pine Valley
Washington Co.
Utah

John McMurtrie

Dear Brother,

Received your kind and some time ago was very glad to hear from you. We are haveing a very hard winter here it is so cold and the snow is deep.

Well about the Earthquakes that piece you sent me out of a news paper is just as correct as if you had been here to get the news. there is not a whole chimney left in town what is standing is badly shattered or completely tumbled over. our chimney was cracked loose even with the comb of the house so Cell [her husband Marcellus -- E.B.] got up and throwed it off. there was no loose bricks but we were afraid of another hard shock. we had shock right along for seven weeks and yet they are felt quite often they are very slight. I will have to tell you about one of my boys ,[?]ivian, he was on his way to school when the first big shock came he could feel the earth rocking and seen the trees waveing he thought it was something grand. he grabbed off his hat swinging it high in the air and jumping high hollering Yepeee untill he heard the great noise and seen all the chimneys coming off then he changed his tune he was frightened as well as every body else. No more. Write soon.

Your Sister

Janet Bracken

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Excerpt from: Hafen, Gary (1971); "History of Erma Matilda Bowler Bracken," The Francis Joseph and Annie Holt Bowler Family; The F.J. Bowler Family

Submitted by: Erma Bowler Bracken
Enterprise, Utah
December 1995

On the day the "Big Earthquake," November 17, 1902, I was born in Gunlock, Washington County, Utah, to Francis Joseph and Annie Parthina Holt Bowler. There were anxious moments following my arrival. For ten long days and nights father and a helper, Arthur Westover, kept constant vigil at mother's bedside, ready at an instant's notice to move mother to safety if another tremor should threaten to tumble the walls of our humble adobe home. I was given the name Matilda for my Grandmother, Matilda Hill Bowler, whom I was never privileged to see.

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