

THE WILLEY FAMILY,

A New-Hampshire Man Who Remembers the Great Landslide.

From The Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

Mr. Ebenezer R. Tasker, a son of one of the party who rescued the bodies from the famous Willey landslide in the White Mountains sixty years ago, has been visiting in Lewiston recently, and has told the story of the landslide. He said:

"I was a young boy then, and I suppose that the events of that fearful period when the mountains echoed for days with the noise of rumbling slides, are impressed more strongly upon my mind than they otherwise would be. Father had taken up a farm of 116 acres in 1821, and by 1826 had succeeded in partially clearing the land and had built a house and barn. For two years we had been 'burning over' the land, and that August we were looking forward to the Fall to finish this work. On the 28th of that month it began to rain, and many farms in Bartlett, Carroll County, were damaged with landslides that covered the loam with gravel and rubbish in great tracts. At Judge Hall's tavern in Bartlett the next day the farmers were sitting around the hearth when in came a man named John Barker, who told us about the fearful slide at the Willey farm.

"Barker had visited the Willey farm, and not finding the family, concluded that they were safe at the home of a neighbor, Abel Crawford. But others among us thought differently. That night Edward Melcher, Jonathan Rogers, Samuel Tuttle, Abram Allen, Samuel Stillings, Isaac Fall, and my father and myself, started for the notch. At Sawyer's River we found the stream so deep that the old gentleman, Crawford, was afraid to ford it, and Melcher carried him over on his back. We had supper at Crawford's at 11 o'clock that night. All night we were struggling up through the notch toward our destination. At last we arrived and as soon as day broke we commenced our search.

"The course of the mountain slide presented an appalling spectacle. Its track had reached to within three feet of the house and had carried away one corner of the barn. Rocks, trees, and broken timber laid piled up and ended over along the track. The avalanche seemed to have suddenly stopped, for the lower end was more than perpendicular. The upper crust hung over the lower part and formed several large caves. Great crowds had arrived, as the story of the missing family had spread far and wide. No sign could be found of the bodies, until at last, noticing a cluster of files about the entrance of one of the caves, my father called the attention of Mr. Edward Melcher to it, and the latter crawled in. He came out with a white, drawn face that scared me, boy as I was, nearly out of my wits. He told the crowd that he had seen the hand of a man jammed between two logs, and indicated where to dig.

"Three men took spades and soon revealed the body of David Allen, a hired man. Directly behind the body and clasping the hand of Allen was the body of Mrs. Willey. The remains of the rest of the family were recovered in like manner with the exception of three of the children, whose bodies were never recovered. I suppose the family had started to escape from the house upon hearing the avalanche bearing down upon them, and had been overtaken in the flight. They had a camp on the intervale near, to which they seem to have been going. The house was saved by a big rock deeply imbedded in the ground, which first stopped a hemlock tree and then turned the course of the avalanche.

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