

LAKE TAHOE WAVES AND WATERSPOUTS.

From the Virginia (Nev.) Enterprise, Oct. 1.

Although Lake Tahoe is not a very large body of water, yet at times it "boileth like a pot." Tremendous gusts of wind rush down the surrounding gorges from the summit of the Sierra Nevada Mountains most unexpectedly, and those who navigate the waters of the lake in sail-boats must at all times—even in what seems the best of weather—keep a bright lookout for squalls. At this season the lake is very dangerous for small craft, and there are frequently times when the steamers dare not venture out. A few days ago, at the time when the recent general snow and rain storm was browing, some gentlemen of the Comstock, who were at Tahoe City, witnessed a grand and remarkable spectacle. The day was windy and the lake rather rough, but a number of persons stopping at the hotel—our Comstockers among the number—concluded to go to the end of the long wooden pier and try their luck at fishing. They had not been long at the end of the pier before their attention was attracted by a great roaring. Looking across the lake in the direction of Glenbrook, they saw a regular cyclone approaching. Before the hurricane came a long unbroken wave, at least 15 feet in height. Knowing that this would sweep the whole line of the pier, all present beat a rapid retreat to the shore. When at a safe distance the party turned to gaze upon the incoming wall of water. While thus employed they were startled by a tremendous roaring to the northward, and a moment after a cyclone from that direction struck the lake. This went before it a huge wave which had soon attained the height of that coming from the southward. In a few minutes the two waves came together. When they struck a column of water and spray was sent into the air to the height of at least 100 feet. The collision of the two waves was followed by a report that sounded like a heavy clap of thunder. A moment after this grand shock of the waters five or six huge waterspouts made their appearance, all within an area of three or four miles, and carried great columns of water and spray to the height of several hundreds of feet. These circled to and fro over the lake for some 10 or 15 minutes, and then one after the other subsided, and for a time thereafter there was almost a dead calm. Waterspouts are very frequently seen on the lake at this season. This is owing to the peculiar situation of the lake, under the crest of the main ridge of the Sierra Nevada range of mountains. When a fierce gale from the west crosses the ridge it plunges down the great cañons and thus are brought to bear on the lake conflicting currents of air. When a hurricane is blowing from the west immense volumes of air appear to be dammed up and compressed behind the ridge of the Sierras, which at times escape and come over and down the gorges in tremendous puffs. No navigator of the ocean sees half as many waterspouts in a three years' voyage as are seen by persons residing at Lake Tahoe in a single season.

The New York Times

Published: October 22, 1882

Copyright © The New York Times