

# Tremors Are No Cause for Alarm

*From News Wire Services*

ALBANY — New Yorkers and New Englanders were caught by surprise or even panicked by Friday's "moderate" earthquake, but geologists say the Adirondacks are prone to an occasional shudder, and more may be in store.

Geologists and seismologists, however, all said Friday the public should not be alarmed.

Gerald Friedman, a geologist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, said tremors in the Adirondack region are more common than is generally recognized.

More than 350 sizable quakes have been recorded in New York since 1720, and many micro-earthquakes have been known to crackle through the Blue Mountain Lake-Saranac Lake region.

The micro-quakes are so small only highly sensitive seismographs can measure them.

Skidmore College geologist Ken Johnson said micro-quakes relieve earth stresses that might otherwise build up to "the big one."

For some reason, he added, quake activity in the Adirondacks has picked up during the last 10 years, and New Yorkers should not be surprised to feel the earth slip with more frequency.

"I don't think it's a hazard," Mr. Johnson added. East Coast quakes are generally not as severe or lethal as upheavals that have wreaked havoc in California.

There were no reports of serious damage or injuries in Friday's quake, although earth movements were felt as far west as Buffalo and south to Olean and Salamanca. Boston, Mass., Mon-

treah, and New York City also reported tremors.

The quake's epicenter was six miles northeast of Blue Mountain Lake, in Hamilton County, a village of about 1,000 people in the Adirondack State Park region, 85 miles north of Albany.

Frank Revetta, a geophysicist at the State University College at Potsdam, said the mountains, anywhere from 800 million to 1.1 billion years old, are still very much alive.

"The rocks are under high stress and they're breaking," he said. In addition, the area is still slowly rising in response to the withdrawal of glaciers thousands of years ago.

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"From a seismologist's point of view, this event is interesting, it is exciting, it's one of the larger ones, but it is important to realize that it is really nothing unusual," said Walter Mitronovas, a seismologist with the New York State Geological Survey.

Mr. Mitronovas said earthquakes the size of the one centered near Blue Mountain Lake occur in New York State about once every 10 years. Friday's earthquake registered a 4.5 to 5.2 on the Richter scale on various readings taken and was considered a "moderate" quake by experts.

"The actual earthquake break in rock ... was about eight miles (below the Earth's surface)," said Robert Fakundiny, state geologist and chief of the New York State Geological Service.

During a news conference in Albany, Mr. Fakundiny said there were three places in the state where many small tremors have been recorded: near Attica in Western New York; southeastern New York near Highland Falls and northern New Jersey; and in the northern Adirondacks.

The biggest earthquake in New York's history took place in 1944 around Massena and registered 5.9 on the Richter scale.

The Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory affiliated with Columbia University sent a team of about eight geologists to Blue Mountain Lake Friday, senior research associate Klaus Jacobs said.

"They will deploy portable instruments to chase the shock waves to their source to determine aftershocks," Mr. Jacob said.

While the quake may have hit with no warning, geologists say they are well aware of the Blue Mountain Lake area, which Mr. Jacob called "a hot spot of seismic activity."

Friday's quake could have caused damage if it had hit a more populated area, Mr. Jacob said.

The Buffalo News/Saturday, October 8, 1983