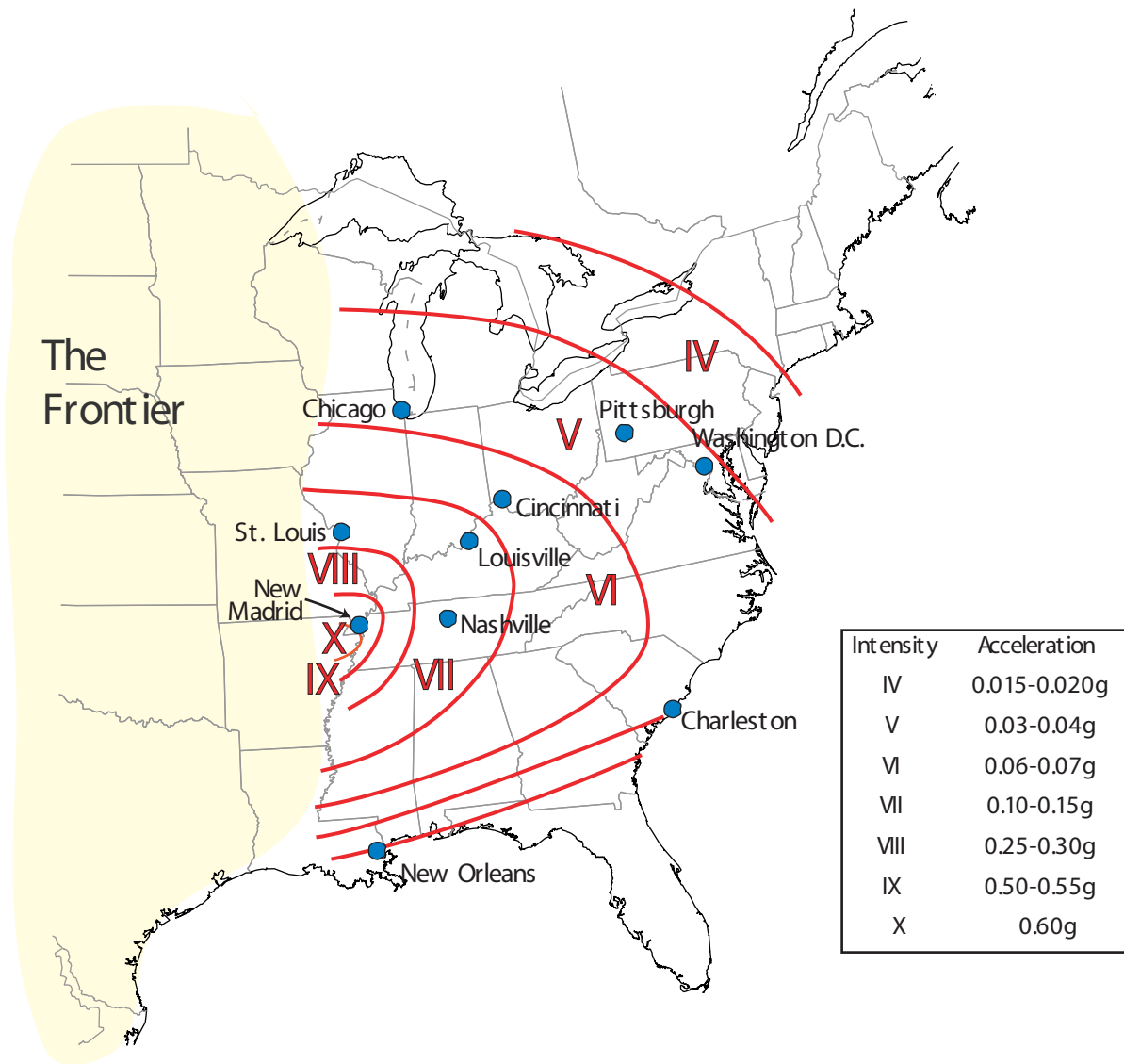


Estimated Shaking Intensities of the New Madrid Earthquakes



Intensity is a measure of shaking based on the damage to human-made structures and the perception of the shaking by those who felt it. One of the earliest intensity scales was developed by engineer Jared Brooks who recorded the intensity of shaking in Louisville, Kentucky cause by shocks in New Madrid earthquake sequence.

Today we use the Modified Mercalli Intensity scale, a twelve level measure of the intensity of ground

movement. The first three levels are not generally perceived by many people, but by intensity IV, almost everyone feels the jolt. The level of damage increases with successive intensities: An intensity level of VII can produce considerable damage to poorly built structures; regions that experience an intensity level of VIII or higher experience considerable damage to structures not prepared for earthquakes; a level of XII indicates total destruction.

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY



EARTHQUAKE CENTER

The New Madrid Earthquakes

Since the seismograph was invented about 70-80 years after these earthquakes we have no direct measurements of the shaking produced by the earthquakes. We can estimate the shaking intensity from personal and published accounts of the damage and perception of the shocks.

For more information, visit
http://www.eas.slu.edu/Earthquake_Center

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